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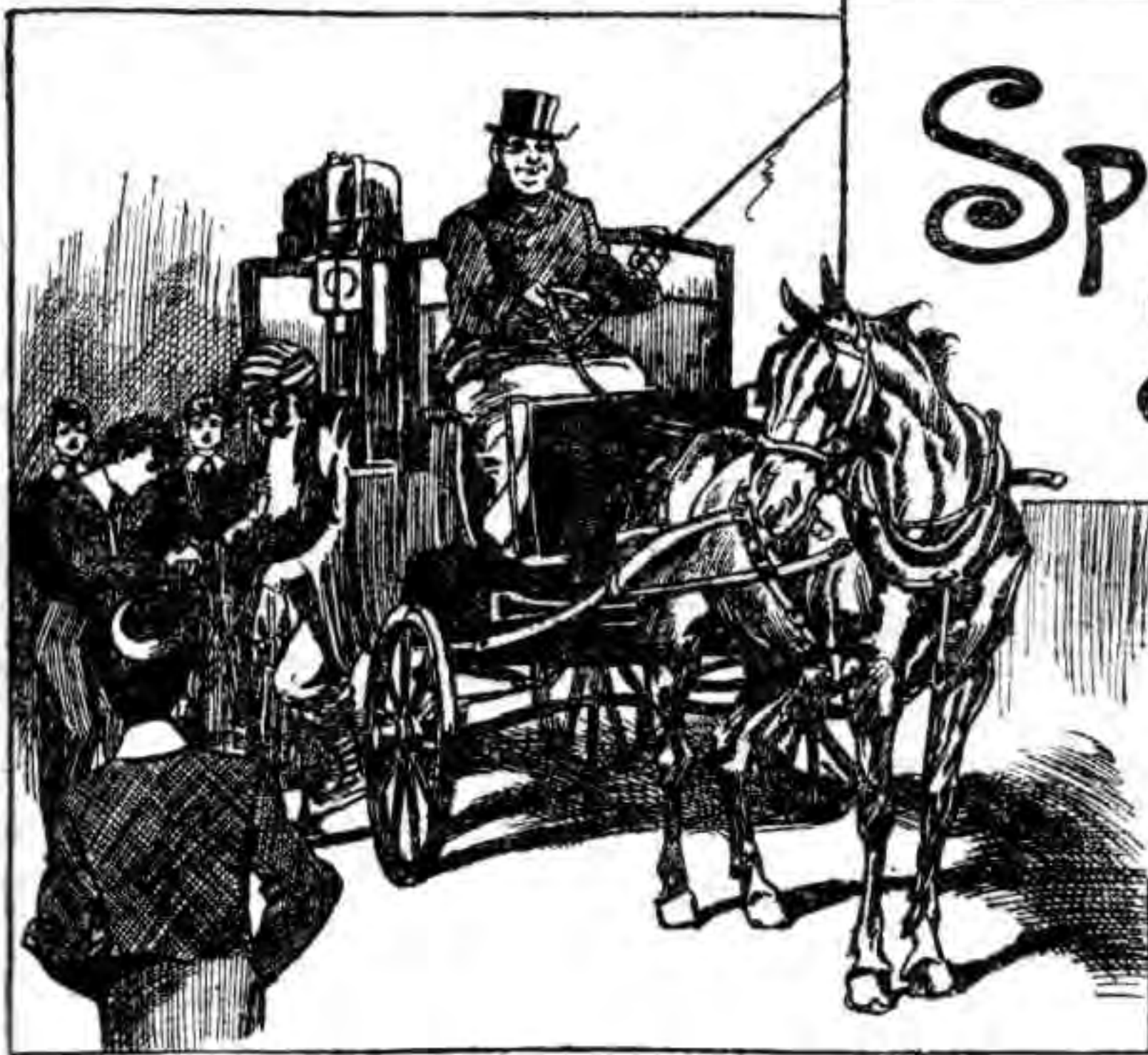
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Harry Wharton &
Co. at Greyfriars.

... BY ...

**FRANK
RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Astounding Discovery.

BOB CHERRY, of the Greyfriars Remove, came up the stairs three at a time.

Bob Cherry's eyes were gleaming, and his face was wildly excited.

He crashed into Billy Bunter on the stairs, and hurled him headlong, and a wild yell rose from the fat junior as he sat down with a loud bump.

But Bob Cherry did not heed; he did not even seem to see Bunter. Certainly he must have heard him. But he did not turn his head. He rushed on. Billy Bunter sat on the stairs, and put his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and roared.

"Ow! Oh! Cherry, you beast! Yow!"

But Bob Cherry was gone.

He reached the Remove passage, and dashed along to the door of No. 1 Study, and hurled it open.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were in that study, both busily engaged in writing out Latin lines imposed by their Form-master, Mr. Quelch. Mr. Quelch had an unreasonable objection to cricket-talk in the Form-room, and he had given Wharton and Nugent a hundred lines of "Virgil" each as a reminder of the fact. The chums of the Remove were

grinding out lines at a great speed when Bob Cherry burst in. He came in with a rush, and unable to stop himself in time, brought up against the study table, which he grasped to save himself.

The table rocked!

There came a simultaneous yell from Wharton and Nugent, as showers of blots spurted from their pens, and the inkpot slid along the table and deposited itself, upside down, upon Wharton's imposition.

"Oh!"

"You ass!"

Bob Cherry gasped.

"I've got it!"

Wharton and Nugent glared. For the moment they looked as excited as Bob Cherry.

"You fathead!" shrieked Wharton. "Look at my impot!"

"Look at mine!" yelled Nugent.

Bob panted.

"Never mind the impot! I've got it!"

"What have you got, you ass—a bee in your bonnet?"

"I don't care what you've got!" yelled Nugent. "I know what you're going to get! Collar him!"

"Here—hold on—"

"That's what we're going to do."

"Oh, leggo! Help!"

Bob Cherry was swung off his feet in the grasp of his indignant chums, and he descended upon the floor with a bump that made the study shake. A folded paper fluttered from his hand and fell upon the carpet. Bob Cherry roared.

"Ow! Hands off, you ass! Hands off, you chumps! I—I've got it!"

"You've got it now, certainly," growled Wharton; "and now you can write my impot. over again, you fathead!"

"And mine!" growled Nugent.

Bob Cherry sat up dazedly. He occupied the next two minutes in telling his chums what he thought about them. Then he gave a sudden yell.

"The paper! Where is it?"

"What paper?"

"I've dropped it."

Bob Cherry jumped up like a jack-in-the-box, and groped over the floor for the paper that had fluttered from his hand. He found it, and picked it up, and then glared at the two Removees.

"Lucky it wasn't lost, you howling asses!" he exclaimed.

"Might have been ten thousand pounds out of our pockets."

Wharton and Nugent stared blankly.

"Ten thousand what?" demanded Wharton.

"Ten thousand which!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Pounds!"

"Pounds of what—soap?"

"Or pickles?"

"Sovereigns, fathead—sovereigns, ass—sovereigns, idiot!"

The chums of the Remove looked at him compassionately, and Nugent tapped his forehead in a very significant way.

"Poor old Bob!" said Nugent softly. "Does it run in the family?"

"Eh?"

"Queer it should come on suddenly like this," said Nugent thoughtfully. "It must be the hot weather. It affects dogs in the same way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses!" roared Bob Cherry. "I tell you I've got it!"

"Yes, I can see you've got it; and what you want to get now is a strait-waistcoat, and a ticket for Bedlam—not a return ticket."

"You—you—you—"

Words failed Bob Cherry. He waved the fragment of folded paper in the air. A fat face, adorned with spectacles, looked in at the open door. It belonged to Billy Bunter. Bunter wanted to know what was the cause of the excitement.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

But no one heeded him.

"I've got it, you asses!" panted Bob Cherry. "Call in Johnny Bull and Marky, and we'll go over it together."

"Go over what?" asked the perplexed Wharton.

"The document."

"What document?"

"This one—the clue."

"Clue!" said Wharton and Nugent together.

"Yes, ass. The clue to the treasure."

"Oh!"

"Ten thousand quid, at least!" said Bob Cherry excitedly. "I suppose you've heard of the smuggler's treasure in the caves at Pegg? Well, this is a clue to it."

"What?"

"I've got the clue—the missing document! I've found it!"

"Rats!"

"I tell you I have!" shrieked Bob Cherry. "And—Hullo, hullo, hullo! Get out, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You've been listening!" roared Bob Cherry, turning upon the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter backed away in alarm.

"I—I haven't, you know. I—I didn't hear you say a word about the smuggler's treasure, and I don't know you've got a clue. I say—Oh! Ow! Yaroo!"

Billy Bunter finished his remarks in the passage, with Bob Cherry's heavy boot making active play behind him.

The fat junior disappeared in the direction of the stairs with a wail of anguish.

Bob Cherry came back excitedly into the study.

"Now do you understand, you silly asses?" he exclaimed. "It's a big fortune for all of us. Of course, the Government will want to take a whack, but there will be ten thousand quid for us. Ten thousand golden quidlets!" He waved the valuable document in the air. "What do you think now?"

"I think my impot's spoiled," growled Nugent, who was vainly endeavouring to get the blots off his paper. "Quelch won't pass this."

"Blow your impot!" yelled Bob Cherry, exasperated. "Don't I tell you that I've got a clue to the smuggler's treasure?"

"Yes, you tell us," said Nugent, in a tone which plainly implied want of belief in the accuracy of the information.

"Look at it, then—"

"Look at my impot—"

"I—I'll take it along to Marky, then!" howled Bob Cherry. "Of all the silly asses—"

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh.

"All serene, Bob; keep your hair on. We'll look at it, at any rate; but I can't help thinking that ten thousand quid won't be picked up quite so easily."

"I tell you I've got the clue."

"Oh, all right!"

"Fetch in Marky and Johnny Bull, and we'll go over it together," said Bob Cherry. "Let Inky come too. We ought to stick together over this, and share and share alike."

"Hurrah!" said Nugent sarcastically. "I'll have a motor-car, a gold watch, and a jam-tart out of my whack!"

"You—you ass—"

"Peace, my children," said Harry Wharton pacifically. "Sit down, Bob, and I'll fetch in the trusty band of treasure-hunters—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Nugent.

"Ass! Fathead! Chump! Bubbling duffer! Chortling jabberwock—"

Bob Cherry's list of compliments was not concluded, and he was still going strong when Wharton left the study. He returned in a few minutes with Johnny Bull and Mark Linley of the Remove. Bull and Linley were both grinning, apparently regarding the discovery of the treasure clue in the light of a joke. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed them into the study.

"Shut the door!" said Bob Cherry.

"And lock it!" said Frank Nugent, with great solemnity.

"And barricade it!" said Johnny Bull.

"The barricadefulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

Harry Wharton laughed and locked the door. A squeaky voice came through the keyhole.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"But I want to see the document—"

"Buzz off!"

"Open the door!"

"If I open the door, I'll come out and wipe up the passage with you!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Clear out!"

"I say, you fellows, if you don't let me have a whack, I'll tell Coker—"

"I'll give you a whack!" said Bob Cherry, dragging the door open, and rushing into the passage. "I'll—"

But Billy Bunter was already vanishing round the corner. He did not want the kind of whack Bob Cherry intended to give him. Bob came back into the study and locked the door again, and frowned at the circle of grinning faces.

"Now for the giddy treasure!" said Frank Nugent.

Bob Cherry laid the paper on the table and spread it out.

"Look!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Very Valuable Clue.

HARRY WHARTON & Co. gathered round and looked at the paper.

In spite of their incredulity as to its great value, they were curious about it.

The story of the supposed smuggler's treasure was an old one at Greyfriars. The story went that the old gang of

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"I want my money back," said Billy Bunter. "You remember changing a shilling for me, Bob Cherry?" Bob Cherry gasped. "Why, you-you— A dozen fellows saw you come in on the nod!" he yelled. (See Chapter 17.)

smugglers who had run cargoes in the caves of Pegg Bay, some hundred years before, had been surprised by the revenue officers, and captured or slain, and that, while cornered by their enemies, they had buried in one of the caves the proceeds of their lawless dealings. It is said that a large sum of money in gold was hidden beneath the rocks in one of the great caves under the towering Shoulder, and certainly many persons in the vicinity had placed faith enough in the legend to explore the caves for the supposed treasure.

Greyfriars fellows, often enough, explored the caves on half-holidays, with one eye open for a clue to the hidden gold of the dead-and-gone smugglers.

But no one had ever found it.

That the smuggler captain had left a written clue to the hidden gold, and that the clue was still in existence, was part of the legend; but, if the clue existed, it was certainly safely out of sight.

Bob Cherry's announcement that he had found it, therefore, was so startling that the juniors of the Remove might be excused for receiving it with smiles.

But Bob was evidently in deadly earnest.

Genuine or not, the clue he had discovered had impressed him as the right one, and, like a true chum, he had hurried

to take his friends into his confidence, with the idea of seeking the treasure and sharing it with them.

And, indeed, the juniors looked a little more serious as they scanned the paper Bob Cherry had spread upon the table.

It was a very old, dirty piece of rough paper, and it was written upon in exceedingly bad writing and bad spelling, which, of course, were only to be expected from a smuggler captain.

It ran as follows:

"Serch in the Half-Tyde Cave, 12 fathoms from the high-watermark at full tide. Here lies the gold of Captain Firebrace."

That was all.

"There! What do you think of that?" Bob Cherry exclaimed triumphantly.

"There was an old smuggler called Captain Firebrace at Pegg, once upon a time," said Frank Nugent thoughtfully. "The fishermen tell yarns about him now. He's the man who's supposed to have buried the gold in one of the caves."

"The man who did bury it, you mean?" said Bob Cherry. Nugent laughed.

"Yes, if you like. But, look here, anybody could write out that paper, Bob. Where did you find it?"

"Lot depends on that!" said Johnny Bull, with a shake of the head.

"Might be a jape, you know!" remarked Mark Linley.

"The japefulness might be terrific," suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

Bob Cherry snorted.

"The paper's genuine enough," he said. "You can see for yourself that it's jolly old!"

"Well, it certainly looks old!" agreed Wharton.

"But where did you get it?" demanded Nugent. "If it's any good, I suppose it wasn't lying about loose, was it?"

"That's the part which shows how genuine it is," said Bob Cherry enthusiastically. "Do you remember the other day when we were in Courtfield, I bought an old book at the secondhand bookstall?"

"Yes, I think I do," said Wharton. "But—"

"Well, I was looking at that book just now in the Close," said Bob. "It's an old book about ships, and I dare say it belonged to one of the smugglers once; it's a very old book; perhaps to Captain Firebrace himself—"

"Ahem!"

Bob Cherry glared.

"If you are going to begin a-hemming—" he exclaimed.

"Sorry!" said Wharton apologetically. "I meant to say rats!"

"Look here, you ass—"

"Order!" exclaimed Nugent. "Let's have the rest of the old book. What about it?"

"Well, I was turning over the leaves when this dropped out!"

"By Jove!"

"It had been in there ever so long," said Bob Cherry. "I've not noticed it there before, but then I haven't really looked through the book before. I've been going to, but I haven't had time. The paper has been in the book ever since it was put there—"

"Go hon!"

"A hundred years ago, I should think—I dare say Captain Firebrace, or one of his band, was the original owner of the book, and put the treasure clue in it to keep it safe."

"Possibly!"

"Not possibly—certainly!" said Bob Cherry. "It's just come to light, and we're going to lift the treasure. It's ours!"

The juniors looked at one another.

There certainly seemed to be something in it; only they had never more than half-believed in the existence of the treasure at all, and it seemed such a wonderful stroke of luck, coming upon the clue in this way, that they could hardly help having some doubts.

"Well, what do you think," demanded Bob Cherry; "isn't it wonderful?"

"Yes, it seems rather wonderful," said Johnny Bull.

"Ass! I mean, isn't it wonderful luck?"

"Well, ye-es!"

"The wonderfulness of the esteemed luck is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in his soft tones.

"We're going to lift the treasure," said Bob Cherry positively. "It's a half-holiday to-morrow, and we can take some spades and go!"

"Well, it's worth trying, anyway!" said Mark Linley.

"Everybody in Pegg, at any rate, seems to be agreed that there is a smuggler's treasure buried somewhere, and I suppose it's a chance. Ten thousand quid would come in very handy!"

"Very handy indeed!" grinned Nugent.

"Only it seems a little too good to be true," said Johnny Bull, with a chuckle.

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Well, if you fellows don't believe in it, I'll take it on by

myself!" he said wrathfully. "Blessed if I ever saw such a set of doubting Thomases. Of course, it's genuine enough! You can see that the paper is as old as anything!"

Wharton took the paper to the study window and scanned it carefully there.

"The paper looks old enough," he said, "but I suppose anybody could get a piece of old paper for a jape. It looks to me like a flyleaf torn out of some old book!"

"Just what Captain Firebrace would have in his pocket," said Bob Cherry. "I don't suppose smugglers in George the Third's time had writing-cases in their dressing-bags." This was said with great sarcasm.

"No, I don't suppose they had!" agreed Wharton. "Not likely to have had many books about them, either, for that matter."

"Oh, of course, you're bound to raise difficulties," said Bob crossly. "Anybody would think that treasures grow on every giddy bush, by the way you turn up your nose at this one!"

Wharton examined the paper carefully, and held it up to the light.

"The writing doesn't seem quite so old as the paper," he remarked.

"Well, it wouldn't, would it?"

"No. And— Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eh?"

Harry Wharton yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry glared at him in great exasperation. Wharton was standing by the window, but no longer looking at the paper. He was holding his sides and rocking with laughter.

"You ass!" roared Bob. "What are you cackling about?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's the joke?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you—"

Wharton staggered against the wall of the study, apparently on the verge of hysterics. There were tears of merriment streaming down his cheeks.

"Oh, dear!" he gasped. "Ha, ha, ha! Excuse me, I can't help it—ha, ha, ha—I'll explain in a minute—ha, ha, ha, ha!"

And he went off into a fresh shriek. Bob Cherry rushed across the study, and grasped him by the shoulders, and jammed him against the wall. Wharton almost collapsed, laughing till he was breathless. Bob Cherry shook him violently.

"What are you laughing at?" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! The—the paper!"

"What about the paper?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ass! You chump! What the—"

"The water-mark!" shrieked Wharton. "Ha, ha, ha! It's water-marked and dated! Ha, ha, ha! 1888! Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry staggered back.

"What!" he gasped.

Wharton roared.

"Look at it!"

Bob Cherry caught up the treasure clue—which should have dated from the days of the redoubtable Captain Firebrace. He held it up to the light with a trembling hand. There was a shriek of laughter from the juniors as they crowded round to see it. For when the light shone through the paper, the water-mark was revealed distinctly—the name of a paper-manufacturing firm, a trade-mark, and a date! And the date was 1888.

"Eighteen-eighty-eight!" yelled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry did not say a word. He simply glared at the paper. Nugent hung on to the table and shrieked. Johnny Bull lay on the hearthrug and kicked up his heels. Harry Wharton was too breathless to laugh any more; he sobbed. It was only too evident that Bob Cherry was the victim of some humorous youth who had written out that valuable clue and placed it in the book for him to discover.

"It's—it's a swindle!" gasped Bob Cherry, at last.

"Go hon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I remember now Temple of the Fourth was looking at the book yesterday," grunted Bob Cherry. "I found him in my study. I punched his nose—"

"You punched it too late," grinned Mark Linley. "Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors roared again.

"Oh, dry up," said Bob Cherry crossly. "I'm blessed if I see anything to cackle at, anyway."

But the chums of the Remove evidently did. They roared!

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COKER of the Fifth was in his study.

Coker had a benevolent grin upon his face, and Potter and Greene, his study-mates, had their sunniest smiles on.

There was a fragrant smell in the study of toasted muffins and hot cake. Coker was standing a brew—a very frequent proceeding on the part of Coker of the Fifth. Coker had heaps of money, and he spent it most lavishly, and perhaps that was one of the reasons why Coker had a following in the Fifth Form at Greyfriars. Certainly it wasn't for his brains, as the Remove fellows often declared.

"Jolly good muffins, Cokey," said Potter, "and the jam's all right."

"My aunt sent it," said Coker. "I asked her to send me jam this time instead of a box of Lynx's Lozenges for Little Lungs. I told her it made my chest better."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker looked at his watch.

"When you chaps have done tea, we'll take a trot down to the village," he remarked.

"Plenty of time," said Potter, with one eye on the pile of buttered muffins. "Anything on?"

Coker nodded.

"You chaps believe in palmistry?" he asked.

"In which?" asked Potter, almost choking over his muffin in his surprise.

"Palmistry!"

"What's that?"

"Telling things from your fist," said Coker. "Chap looks at the lines of your hand, and tells you whether you're going to get married, and how many wives you're going to have!"

"At a time?"

"No, ass—one after another, of course. Tells you whether you're going to cross the sea, and whether you're going to have accidents, and that kind of thing. It's fun. Of course, I don't believe in it. But it's fun."

"Blessed if I know there was a giddy palmist in Friardale," said Greene, speaking with his mouth full of muffin. "We had a ventriloquist there once!"

"This chap is travelling round, you know," explained Coker. "He's a Hindu palmist, named Bhownanagree!"

"My-hat, what a name!"

"All the fellows say they don't believe in the rot, but a lot of them are going," said Coker. "The chap's only in Friardale for three days, and this is the last. Hobson, of the Shell, has seen him, and he says the palmist told him, from his hand, that he had lately crossed the water. Hobson's been over to Boulogne, you know. It's queer. Of course, there's nothing in it."

"Of course not," said Greene.

"But a chap might as well go," said Coker. "Ionides, of the Sixth, that Greek boulder, went. But he's superstitious. He believes in it, and I heard Loder say that he came out looking quite scared. Don't know what Bhownanagree told him."

"Well, it would be fun," said Potter. "He might be able to tell you if you're going to get into the First Eleven before the cricket's over."

"You know what Shakespeare says," remarked Coker oracularly. "There are more things in something-or-other than are dreamt of in your what-its-name. I've always thought that's very true."

"Well, it sounds jolly deep," agreed Potter. "Another muffin, please."

"Might as well go," said Greene, who could see that Coker meant to go. "Does the johnny charge anything?"

"Bob a time," said Coker.

"Oh," said Greene, "I don't believe in it, anyway! Hardly worth the trot down to the village, is it?"

"Of course, I shall stand the bobs, and we could get some ginger-pop at Uncle Clegg's, coming back," remarked Coker.

"Anywhere you like to go, Coker, I'm your man," said Greene cheerfully. "Start as soon as you like."

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter blinked into the study through his big spectacles.

Coker grinned.

"Wonderful nose that porpoise has got," he remarked. "He must have smelt the muffins from the Remove passage."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really," said Billy Bunter, "I didn't even know you were having tea; but as you're so pressing, I'll have some!"

"Well, my word—"

"I've got a secret to tell you fellows," said Bunter hurriedly, as Potter reached out for the poker. "I—I want to take you into it, because—because I like you, and I know you'll do the fair thing by me. Would you like to make ten thousand quid?"

The Fifth-Formers stared at him.

"Kick him out," said Coker. "This ain't a lunatic asylum."

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"But, I—I say, you fellows, it's all right," persisted Bunter. "The clue to the smugglers' treasure has been found."

"Eh?"

"I know where it is."

"Boosh!"

"Oh, all right. I'll go to Temple and Dabney," said Bunter, turning towards the door. "They'll help me to find it, if you won't."

"Hold on," said Coker curiously. "You can have a muffin, Bunter. What do you mean about the clue being found? Who's found it?"

"Bob Cherry's got it."

"Honest Injun?"

"I saw him rush into the study with it," said Bunter. "I don't know where he found it, but he was awfully excited about it. He biffed me over on the stairs, and didn't even stop to see whether I was hurt."

"Perhaps he knew you were!" suggested Potter.

Billy Bunter sniffed. He was not in a mood for Potter's humorous remarks.

"By Jove," said Greene, "might be something in it. I saw Bob Cherry reading a book in the Close awhile ago, and he jumped up suddenly and yelled out 'Eureka!' That meant that he'd found something. He might have found the document in an old book. Such things have happened. An uncle of mine once—"

"Have you seen the paper, Bunter?" asked Coker.

"Yes—Bob Cherry had it in his hand."

"I mean have you read it?"

"I didn't get a chance. The beasts slung me out of the study, and locked the door," said Bunter. "I should have been willing to go shares with them, and place my superior brain power at their disposal. You know what asses they are. They won't be able to find the treasure, though they think they can."

Coker's eyes glistened.

"My hat! I'd like a look at that document," he said.

"That's my idea," said Bunter eagerly. "You—you chaps are seniors, you know, and you can make them give it to you, and—and I'll go even shares, for putting you on to it. You can easily lick them if they object."

"Right enough," said Potter.

Coker rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"I don't know if that would be quite cricket," he remarked. "If Bob Cherry found the paper, I suppose it belongs to him."

"Findings ain't keepings," said Bunter. "That's been proved in law. If you pick up a quid in the street, and keep it, you can be sent to prison, same as if you'd stolen it out of a chap's pocket."

"That's true," said Greene. "I've seen a case in the paper."

"And it seems rotten for those blessed fags to have such a thing, and muck it up, and p'raps give the show away to somebody else who'll lift the giddy treasure," Potter remarked.

Coker nodded.

"S'pose we make 'em give it to us, and hand 'em an equal share of the treasure if found?" he remarked. "We want to play the game."

"Well, that would be fair. But supposing they won't?"

"Then we'll make 'em," said Coker. "What's the good of being seniors if we can't make the fags do as we tell 'em?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Let's go and see 'em now, before they have time to blab it out," said Coker.

"Good!"

"I—I say, you fellows, don't tell 'em I told you," said Billy Bunter, rather nervously. "You—you see, they might regard it as sneaking."

"Well, it is sneaking, ain't it?" demanded Coker.

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"But we won't mention your name," said Coker. "And look here, don't you jaw this over the school. If there's anything in it, we don't want all Greyfriars following us when we go to look for the treasure."

"Of course, I shan't say a word," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "I hope you don't think I'm a talkative chap—"

"Pile into the muffins while we're gone," said Coker. "That'll keep you from jawing. Nothing else will, I believe. Come on, you fellows."

And Coker & Co. quitted the study, looking very eager. Billy Bunter did not need inviting twice to pile into the muffins. He piled into the muffins, and the jam, and the cake, and, in fact, everything that was on the table, and the clearance he made was simply marvellous.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Rivals for Riches.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were in a tired and breathless state. They had laughed till they had no laughter left in them, and no breath either, and they were sitting about the study, gasping. Even Bob Cherry had joined in the laugh at last, against himself. The comic side of the joke had been slow in coming to him, but it had come at last. But for the discovery of the water-mark on the paper, the chums of the Remove would undoubtedly have spent the following afternoon in searching the caves of Pegg for the hidden gold of Captain Firebrace, and they could imagine the reception Temple, Dabney & Co. would have given them on their return. They would have been a standing joke to Greyfriars for a long time to come. And although Bob Cherry was very disappointed to discover that the treasure clue was worth exactly the paper it was written on, and no more, he was very glad that the discovery of the water-mark had nipped Temple's little plot in the bud.

The chums of the Remove were trying to recover their breath, when the handle of the study door was suddenly turned from outside. The door did not open; it was locked. There was a sharp knock.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" called out Bob Cherry.

"We want to come in!" came Coker's voice through the keyhole. "It's very important. Open the door!"

"Oh, you can go and eat ccke!" said Nugent.

"Open the door!"

"Rats!"

Coker kicked at the door.

"Open this door!" he said through the keyhole. "It's no good trying to keep us out. Look here, we know you've got that clue, and we want to see it."

"That what?" ejaculated Wharton.

"The clue to the smuggler's treasure."

"My hat!"

Coker kicked again. The chums of the Remove exchanged glances.

"Bunter's told him!" murmured Nugent. "Coker's come for the mysterious document. My only hat! Don't giggle, you chaps. Quiet—quiet!"

"What do you mean?"

Nugent suppressed a yell.

"Why, you duffers, don't you see, we'll let Coker rag us into giving him the paper, and the more he has to rag us for it, the more he'll believe that it's all serene. And they can go and hunt for the giddy gold."

There was very nearly a yell of laughter in the study as Nugent concluded. But the Removites, with a heroic effort, suppressed their merriment. The mysterious document had very nearly taken them in. Under the circumstances, it was certain to take in Coker & Co., if they played their part well. And certainly the members of the Remove Dramatic Society were capable of doing that.

"Oh, my only summer chapeau!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"What a jape!"

"Quiet! We've got to be serious—terrified——"

"Ha, ha——"

"Shut up!"

Bob Cherry nearly choked.

Crash!

Coker, Potter, and Greene were kicking at the door. It shook and groaned under their attack. Wharton hurried to it and shouted through the keyhole.

"Hold on, Coker! We don't want you to bring a crowd here, you know!"

"No, I dare say you don't, under the circs.," said Coker.

"But we'll jolly well kick the door in if you don't open it!"

"Well, if you won't go away——"

"We jolly well won't!"

"No fear!" said Potter and Greene.

"Stop kicking the door—I'll open it!"

"Buck up, then."

Harry Wharton unlocked the door, and threw it open. Coker, Potter, and Greene strode into the study. Coker pushed the door shut behind him. He did not want to have any eavesdroppers on such an important occasion.

"Now, then," said Coker, "where's that paper?"

The juniors were all looking as solemn as owls now. They stared at Coker as if they did not understand him.

"What paper?" asked Nugent.

Coker laughed sneeringly.

"You jolly well know what paper," he said. "I want to see it, to see whether it's genuine or not. I'll give you my opinion on it."

"That's all right," said Wharton. "We've made up our minds about that."

"Well, where is it?"

Bob Cherry put his hand ostentatiously over his pocket.

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"You're not going to see it," he said. "I found it, and it's mine."

"Findings keepings," said Frank Nugent.

"That ain't the law," said Coker. "Still, I don't say that I'm going to take it from you, exactly. The fact is, I'm going to—to be generous with you."

"Rats!"

"Heaps of 'em!"

"Look here," said Coker, controlling his temper with difficulty, "as seniors, it's our—our duty to look into a thing of this kind. If the paper's genuine, it's jolly important. The story goes that there's a big box of golden guineas, worth ten thousand quid or more."

"'Nuff for us all!" said Potter.

"Big share each, if we whack it out," said Greene.

Bob Cherry looked indignant.

"Why should I share out with you?" he demanded. "I found the paper. It was in an old book that I bought with my own money. I told my own friends, so as to share it with them. I'm not sharing ten thousand quid with you Fifth-Form chaps."

"You're jolly well going to show me that paper," said Coker. "I just want to see if it's genuine."

"Then you'll remember what's on it, and start hunting for the treasure," said Bob Cherry.

Coker coughed.

"All's fair in war, and in—in getting rich," he said. "I admit the paper's yours, if you found it, but there's nothing to prevent us from shadowing you, and following you when you go to lift the treasure. Then we shall find it at the same time, and share."

"That's not cricket."

"That's what we're going to do," said Coker. "The best thing you kids can do is to hand me the paper, upon my promise to give you equal shares all round in what we find."

The juniors looked at each other dubiously. Coker saw his advantage, and pressed it.

"Seniors like us could get it better than you kids could," he said, "and we could keep a crowd of fags from following us, too, and you couldn't. We'll agree to keep the whole matter dark among ourselves, and share alike. Lucky for you it isn't Loder or Carne instead of me. They'd take the paper away and give you nothing."

"Well, if you signed a paper agreeing to hand us our share——" said Nugent thoughtfully.

The juniors remained grave with a very great effort, at the thought of such a paper being signed by Coker. It would make a valuable ornament for the study afterwards, framed.

"I'll do that," said Coker—"that is, of course, if there's anything in it."

"And you'll swear not to let it go any further if we show you the paper?"

"We'll promise, honour bright."

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"You'll have to swear, in such a serious matter as this," he said. "Ten thousand golden guineas is a serious thing."

"The seriousness is terrific."

"Well, we—we don't mind," said Coker, with a glance at Potter and Greene, who nodded assent.

"Swear by—lemme see—by the bones of your aunt's sisters," said Nugent.

"Eh?"

"I mean the bones of your ancestors."

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know!"

"You sha'n't see the paper unless you do!" said Bob Cherry.

Coker hesitated a moment.

"Well, all right," he said at last. "I swear by the bones of my ancestors to keep the secret. There!"

"Potter and Greene, too," said Nugent.

"I don't suppose they ever had any ancestors," suggested Johnny Bull.

"Look here——" began Potter wrathfully.

"Oh, yes!" said Nugent. "There's a Potter mentioned in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. There have been Potters from the earliest times."

"And Greens too," said Wharton thoughtfully. "When Adam was a vegetarian he must have lived on greens."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you kids are looking for a thick ear——" began Potter and Greene together.

"Oh, swear!" said Coker. "Don't waste time! Swear!"

Potter and Greene, looking very red, swore by the bones of their ancestors, the Removites keeping up a solemn look all the time, like a circle of owls. And then Bob Cherry, with a deep sigh, as if it were a wrench to him, drew the mysterious document from his pocket and laid it on the study table.



Coker picked up the card with a trembling hand and carried it nearer the mouth of the cave. There was a message written there in handwriting that was quite modern. It ran: "With Captain Firebrace's compliments!" The Fifth Formers looked at it with sickly expressions. "I don't understand!" muttered Greene. "Where is the buried treasure?" (See Chapter 10.)

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Capture.

COKER pounced upon the paper, and Potter and Greene pounced upon it at the same time, with the not surprising result that their heads came together with a concussion as they leaned over the table at the same moment.

Crack!

"Ow!"

"Yow!"

"Yah!"

The Removites burst into a yell of laughter. They had been feeling inclined to laugh for some time, and now they let it go. Coker & Co. glared at one another and rubbed their heads savagely.

"Ow! You ass—"

"Oh, you fathead—"

"Oh, you frabjous chump—"

Coker snorted, and bent over the table again. This time Potter and Greene were a little more careful how they put their heads together. Coker's head was the hardest of the three, and he had come off decidedly the best.

"Search in the Half-Tyde Cave, twelve fathoms from the high-water mark at full tide. Here lies the gold of Captain Firebrace."

The three heroes of the Fifth read the thrilling lines out.

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together. Then they gazed at one another with gleaming eyes, and read it over again.

"My hat!" said Coker, in a hushed voice.

"Great Scott!" murmured Potter.

"Ripping!" said Greene.

"If this paper's genuine," said Coker, "it means a fortune for the lot of us. Ten thousand guineas in ten shares—that's a thousand guineas each."

"Phew!"

"Who's the tenth?" demanded Harry Wharton. "There's only nine of us here."

"Chap who told us," said Coker. "Never mind his name."

"I think we can guess it," growled Bob Cherry.

"I say, as seniors we take a bigger whack than the juniors, of course," said Potter. "I think it ought to go double shares to us."

"Quite so!" said Greene.

There was a shout of indignation from the Removites.

"Rats!"

"No spoofing!"

"Honour bright!"

Coker hesitated. He was very much inclined to agree with Potter and Greene. But his better nature prevailed. After all, he was not a bad fellow at heart, though very much inclined to "swank," and possessing an enormous

opinion of his own importance and consequence. He shook his head.

"No!" he said nobly. "We'll stick to the bargain—equal whacks all round."

"You'll jolly well have to," growled Bob Cherry.

"And you're going to sign the paper about it," said Nugent.

"I'll take charge of this document," said Coker.

Bob Cherry clutched at it.

"Not till you've signed the agreement," he said.

"Now, look here, Cherry—"

"Stand by the door, Wharton; don't let him get away with it."

"What-ho!" said the captain of the Remove, putting his back to the study door. "No larks, Coker! Play the game!"

Coker & Co. exchanged glances. They were big seniors, certainly; but the Removites were six to three, and Harry Wharton & Co. were famous fighting-men in the Remove. Upon the whole, it was wisest to avoid trouble.

"What sort of a paper do you want me to sign?" asked Coker, after a pause.

"Just state that you're going to look for the smuggler's treasure, from the clue we give you, and that you hand this study equal shares."

"Well, I suppose that's all right."

"Of course it is. Fair play's a jewel."

"The all-rightfulness is terrific!"

"Here's a pen," said Harry Wharton, "and a sheet of paper. Write away."

Coker sat down and wrote, in his sprawling hand and original spelling:

"I hereby promise to hand H. Wharton, F. Nugent, J. Bull, M. Linley, R. Cherry, and H. J. R. Singh equal shares in the smugglers' treasure when discovered, in acknowledgement of having received from them the clue written by Captain Firebrace.

(Signed), HORACE COKER."

"That all right?" demanded Coker.

"That's all right," Bob Cherry blotted the sheet, and picked it up and placed it carefully in his pocket. "But look here, you'd better let me have the paper; we should be able to find it better than you Fifth Form fatheads!"

"You cheeky young ass—"

"No, stick to the bargain," said Wharton. "Coker can look first, and if he doesn't find it this week, he can hand the paper back to us, for us to have a try if we like."

"All serene," said Coker. "I agree to that. The directions are plain enough, and I shall go and get it at once."

"Can't," said Potter. "The tide's in now."

"Oh, blow the tide!" said Coker crossly. "I forgot that. To-morrow afternoon, then. I'll let you kids know when I've found it."

"Right-ho!"

And Coker & Co., very well satisfied with the result of their visit to the Remove passage, quitted No. 1 Study, Coker carrying away the precious paper folded up in his pocket-book.

Harry Wharton closed the door after them.

The footsteps of the departing Fifth-Formers died away down the long passage. Not till the sounds had died away did the Removites allow themselves any audible expression of their feelings.

Then they almost wept.

"Oh, my only respected Aunt Marie!" sobbed Bob Cherry. "I suppose exchange is no robbery; but I'd rather have this document I've got than the one I've given Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker didn't think of looking for a water-mark," chuckled Nugent. "Coker doesn't bother about little things like that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-ha-fulness is terrific!"

"Ten thousand guineas!" murmured Johnny Bull. "My hat! A thousand guineas apiece! It would come in handy, as we all happen to be nearly stony. Tell you what, you fellows, you can have my whack for ninepence down, in cash."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Removites laughed till they cried.

Meanwhile, Coker & Co. had gone on their way rejoicing. The extreme unwillingness of the Removites to part with the paper, and the strict terms they had made about it, had banished any suspicion of a jape. The paper was genuine, to Coker & Co. Had not the tide been in, in Pegg Bay, the chums of the Fifth would have started off at once to explore the cave under the Shoulder for the hidden gold.

But as it was, it had to be postponed until the following

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day. But the following day, fortunately, was a half-holiday, and as they went back to their study Coker & Co. discussed the excursion, and made their plans.

Billy Bunter was finishing the last morsel on the table when they came in. The fat junior glanced at them a little nervously. Coker had told him to pile in, certainly, but he had not told him to make the table look as if a swarm of hungry locusts had passed over it.

But, to Bunter's relief, Coker did not seem to notice his destructive operations upon the once well-spread table. Coker was in high good-humour.

"Is it all right, you fellows?" asked Billy Bunter eagerly, wiping his mouth.

"As right as rain," said Coker.

"Got the paper?"

"Yes, rather!" Coker tapped his pocket. "Here it is."

"Show it to me!"

Coker grinned.

"No fear!"

"Oh, really, Coker," exclaimed the Owl of the Remove indignantly, "I put you on to the thing in the first place, and I'm entitled to see the paper!"

"You may be entitled to see it, but you're jolly well not going to see it," said Coker grimly. "We're not going to have the clue gassed all over the school. You'll have your whack when we find the treasure, and that's more than you deserve."

"Oh, really—"

"Buzz off!" said Coker. "I'm ready to go down to the palmists, you chaps, when you are."

"Come on," yawned Potter. "We'll ask him if we're likely to find a treasure, and see what he says."

"Good wheeze!" said Coker heartily. "That will show whether there's anything in him or not. Let's get off. A lot of fellows are going, and we don't want to have to wait turns."

"I say, you fellows," persisted Billy Bunter.

"Br-r-r-r!" said Coker.

And leaving the Owl of the Remove still expostulating, Coker & Co. walked away.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Palmist.

THERE were indeed a good many Greyfriars fellows who had made up their minds to pay a visit to the Fakir Bhowanagree in the village of Friardale. All of them, of course, declared that they didn't believe a word in palmistry, and were actuated only by curiosity. At the same time, some of them looked a little nervous as they waited in the outer room at the fakir's quarters, and some of them who had gone in to see the wise man of the East came out looking quite startled.

The fakir had apartments in one of the old houses in the High Street, and visitors clambered up a rickety staircase, and were shown into a room to wait. As their turns came, they were admitted into another room adjoining.

When Coker & Co. arrived there they looked a little sheepish at finding seven or eight Greyfriars fellows waiting in the outer room, all of them looking sheepish, too.

Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were there, and Harry Wharton & Co. came in soon after Coker.

The chums of the Remove were grinning. It had been Johnny Bull's idea to come, and bring Hurree Jamset Ram Singh with them, and start him talking in Hindustanee to the fakir.

As the fakir was in all probability a native of the country with a countenance specially made-up for his profession, the humorous Removites considered it an excellent joke to "spring" a real Hindu upon him. As Bob Cherry put it, it was worth a bob to see his face when Hurree Singh began talking in Hindustanee.

There were heavy curtains hanging at the open doorway leading from one room into the other. It did not occur to the unsophisticated youths that those hangings did not bar out the sound of voices, and that the palmist, if he chose, could watch and listen to them as they chatted in the waiting-room, without being seen himself.

A bell rang, and the hangings were pulled aside. A solemn-faced man of an ebony complexion, dressed in baggy red trousers, a mantle, and a turban, showed out the latest visitor who had consulted the palmist. It was a stout farmer of Courtfield, and he had gone to learn about the prospects of the harvesting, and he came out looking very pleased.

The palmist had been able to tell him that he was a

ANSWERS

farmer, and that he was anxious about his crops, and that he would have a splendid harvest, all of which delighted and surprised the simple gentleman.

Temple & Co. were the next due, and the black man signed to them.

"The fakir is ready, sahibs!"

"I suppose my friends can come in with me at the same time?" said Temple, indicating Dabney and Fry.

The black attendant salaamed.

Then he led the way into the inner room.

Temple, Dabney & Co. followed him across the room, and then through more hangings into a third apartment. Here they found the great man.

In spite of their disbelief, they were a little awed at what they saw. Mr. Bhownanagree had a good eye for colour effect. The room was darkened by heavy purple curtains at the windows, and lighted by a scented lamp which showed a dim light over hangings and cushions of sombre hues.

The palmist, in Eastern costume, sat upon a divan, with his face composed to statuesque gravity. His complexion was of a deep brown, and his brows and moustache were of an intense black. He did not move as the juniors entered, but inclined his head slightly as the black attendant announced them in some foreign tongue, which the juniors took to be Hindustanee.

"Hoo joo kee kigo top!" said the black man, salaaming.

"It is well!" said Bhownanagree, in a deep voice.

The black man retired to the middle room.

Temple & Co. were incredulous, but they were impressed, and they felt a little nervous about beginning.

"Speak, sahibs!" said the fakir.

"Oh!" said Temple, as Fry and Dabney remained silent.

"Oh! You—you are Mr. Bhownanagree?"

"It is so!"

"You—er—will look at my hand?"

"Place your hand here, young sahib!"

Temple rather nervously laid his hand upon a little inlaid table close to the fakir.

Mr. Bhownanagree turned over his hand with thick brown fingers, and scanned it closely.

"Ki go kum!" he murmured—perhaps in Hindustanee.

"Ah, you are a schoolboy!"

"Go hon!" murmured Temple.

"You come from a great school that is not far away, and you do not believe in palmistry!" said the fakir sternly.

"Oh!" muttered Temple.

The Indian gentleman scanned his hand keenly. The lines upon Temple's palm seemed to possess great interest for him.

"Ah, you have been away—away from school for weeks!"

"We generally are in the holidays!" said Temple.

"You are a great player of games," said the fakir. "In the English game of cricket you excel."

Temple began to think that there was something in palmistry, after all.

"That's right enough!" he confessed.

"I see here—ah—the line of life is very much mixed with this other line—you will be a great cricketer all your life!" said the fakir. "When you are twenty—no; when you are twenty-four—you will be asked to play for your county, and you will refuse, because you will have a large estate to administer. But you will be persuaded, and you will play for your county with great distinction."

"By Jove!" said Temple.

"A long life, and a prosperous life," said the fakir dreamily. "Little troubles, which will be overcome—and much public honour. I can tell you no more!"

Temple drew his hand away, very well satisfied. As he said afterwards to his friends, the chap was jolly keen, even if there wasn't anything in palmistry.

Fry submitted his hand to the ordeal next.

The Hindu gentleman muttered in some unintelligible language, and then translated into English for Fry's benefit.

"A long life," he said—"an unusually long life—you will live to be a hundred years old or more. You will gain great scholastic distinction, and will gain money—but not much. You will never be a rich man."

"Oh!" said Fry.

"But you will never be in want, and you will have four sons and two daughters, who will all distinguish themselves in the world."

"My hat!"

Dabney put his hand out for inspection. Dabney's hand occupied the fakir longer than the other two, and he shook his turbaned head solemnly over it. Dabney began to feel very nervous.

"Ah, trouble—trouble!" said Mr. Bhownanagree. "Many troubles will come—you will cross the sea, and be in great danger. But you will survive!"

"Oh, good!" murmured Dabney.

"A life of adventures," said the fakir—"many adventures and many dangers, but triumph in the end, and—yes, it is clearly marked—a title of distinction—either the peerage or high military rank! My art tells me no more!"

"Well, that's good enough!" said Dabney.

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ONE
PENNY.

The fakir reached his hand out towards a bell.

"Hold on a minute!" said Temple, who had been watching the fakir keenly. "May I speak a word before we go?"

"Pray hasten; time presses!"

"We've paid a bob each—" began Temple.

The palmist made a gesture of scorn.

"Talk not to me of money! The base necessity of our bodily nature compels me to accept it. But you have paid my slave. Speak not to me of it!"

"But a half-quad—" suggested Temple. "You see, I've got lots of money; and some friends of mine are coming in here, and—if you could tell 'em a special kind of fortune, there's a half-quad."

He laid a half-sovereign on the table. The Hindu gentleman's eyes glistened. Mr. Bhownanagree's advertisements declared that he was palmist to many crowned heads in Europe, and so it was kind and generous of him to tell fortunes in a remote country village at a shilling a time. Such a great man could not, of course, have been in want of mere money. And yet his eyes glistened very greedily at the sight of the glimmer of a gold coin. Temple remarked it, and was satisfied.

"I can but tell what is written in the hand!" said the palmist.

"Yes, yes, of course; I know that!" agreed Temple.

"But if you'll allow me to make a little contribution to—the funds—"

"Let the money lie there!" said the palmist.

Temple nodded.

"All serene! Now, some chaps from my school are outside, and I fancy they're going to ask you what luck they'll have in searching for a treasure."

"A treasure!" said the palmist. "Tell me of it!"

"They think they're going to find a treasure in a cave near the sea, over at Pegg," Temple explained—"a treasure that was buried in a cave by a smuggler. It's supposed to be ten thousand guineas in gold."

"What have I to do with this?"

"Nothing, of course; but it would encourage them a lot if you read in their hands that they were going to find it. Otherwise, they mayn't take the trouble of looking for it, which would be a pity, of course. You see, they've found a paper giving a clue to the giddy treasure, and they mayn't quite believe in it."

The ghost of a smile flitted over the Hindu gentleman's bronze face.

"Be it so!" he said.

He touched the bell.

The turbaned attendant came in and showed out the heroes of the Upper Fourth. The half-sovereign disappeared beneath the ample robes of the Fakir Bhownanagree.

Temple, Dabney, and Fry looked very solemn as they returned to the waiting-room.

"Well, what luck?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh, ripping!" said Temple.

"Believe in it now?" asked Coker.

"Well, the chap said some wonderful things," said Temple. "Jolly good idea to ask his advice if you're going in for anything, anyway."

"Time!" said Coker.

And Coker, Potter, and Greene followed the turbaned black into the inner room.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Coker Hears Something to His Advantage.

COKER looked with eager curiosity at the fakir. Mr. Bhownanagree gave him the slightest inclination of the head.

"Ki kum to go," he murmured. "Ah, I forgot; you do not comprehend. Give me your hand."

"These chaps have only come with me," explained Coker. "It's my fist I want you to tell. Here you are!"

The fakir scanned his palm.

"I don't want to know about long life, and getting married and things," said Coker. "I've got something on at present—something I'm going to look for. I want you to tell me, if you can, whether I've got a chance of finding it."

The fakir's eyes gleamed for a moment.

"A treasure," he said, without looking up from Coker's palm.

Coker jumped. Potter and Greene looked amazed.

"I—I say, how did you know that?" gasped Coker.

The palmist smiled serenely.

"There are few things that are unknown to me," he said quietly. "In the lines of your palm I read them all, the past and the future."

"Well, I know the past pretty well myself," said Coker.

"It's the future I want to know about. I want to know whether I shall find the treasure."

"That's it," said Potter.

The Hindu scanned the Fifth-Former's big palm again. "Gold—much gold!" he murmured. "The line of riches crosses three times the line of life in early youth. Gold—much gold!"

"Good!" said Coker, with glistening eyes.

"Gold—in many pieces. It will not be in bars, or in ingots, but in coin. Yet—no—it will not be in the current coin of the realm! Strange!" murmured the fakir.

"What's strange?" asked Coker.

"It is strange. You will obtain possession of a great sum in gold, but it will be gold coinage of a kind no longer used in currency. It is plainly marked here."

Coker and his chums exchanged amazed glances. It seemed like magic, and their doubts as to the genuineness of palmistry faded away.

"Guineas, perhaps!" suggested Coker.

"It is possible," said the palmist softly. "I cannot tell that. But it is a large sum—ten thousand pieces of gold—in old coinage."

"My hat!"

"Anything else, sir?" asked Greene eagerly.

The palmist assumed a dreamy expression.

"I see a wide sea—a great cave," he murmured. "There are armed men. They bury the gold in the cave. Time passes—many years! Ah, they are smugglers, and they have buried ten thousand pieces of gold, and they lie yet hidden from all human eyes."

"And I shall find them?" exclaimed Coker, trembling with excitement.

"I have said it."

"My hat!" said Greene. "It's simply marvellous!"

"The clue will guide you," said the fakir. "You have a paper—"

"Quite true!" said the astounded Coker.

"That paper will guide you. You will seek in a cave by the sea, and find the hidden treasure. I can tell you no more."

"That's enough, by Jove!" said Coker, withdrawing his hand. "I'm much obliged to you, sir. If any ass tells me in future that there's nothing in palmistry, I'll punch his silly head."

Coker laid a half-crown on the table.

"I'd like to pay a bit extra for that," he said.

The palmist waved his dusky hand carelessly.

"Let the money lie!"

"All right, sir. And—and I'll remember you when I get the guineas," said Coker. "This is simply ripping. I must say I'm sorry I ever laughed at palmistry."

"Since you are now convinced, it is no matter," said the palmist; and he touched the bell.

Coker & Co. were shown out. Their delighted faces as they came into the outer room attracted attention at once.

Micky Desmond and Vernon-Smith went in next. Temple, Dabney & Co. had already departed, and the chums of the Remove were all who remained in the room now.

"Did you ask him about the treasure?" questioned Bob Cherry.

Coker nodded eagerly.

"Yes; but he knew about it before I mentioned it."

"Eh!"

"He read it in my hand!"

"What?"

The Removites stared blankly at Coker.

"It's a fact," said Coker emphatically, "palmistry is genuine enough. I simply told him I was going to search for something, and he looked at my hand, and said it was a treasure, and was in gold coins now obsolete, and buried in a cave by the sea."

"Fact!" said Potter.

"My hat!" said Wharton, puzzled. "How on earth could he have known that?"

"Palmistry!" said Greene.

"Ahem! Yes, but—"

"The guineas are as good as ours," said Coker gleefully. "Come on, you chaps! We may as well get some picks and spades ready, and put 'em in the old barn, so that we can pick 'em up as we go down to the cave to-morrow, and not attract attention."

And Coker & Co. departed in high feather.

The Removites remained astounded. They could not doubt Coker's statement, and they were simply staggered by the statement. How had the palmist known anything about the treasure, and the smugglers' cave?

"It's jolly queer!" said Johnny Bull.

"The queerfulness is terrific!"

Mark Linley smiled.

"I think it's pretty certain that Temple put that mysterious document in Bob's book, where he found it," he remarked.

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"Yes, but—"

"And Temple went in to see the fakir before Coker did?" grinned Linley. "Don't you think he put him up to it?"

Wharton nodded thoughtfully.

"But Temple fancies we're going to search for the giddy treasure," he said. "He doesn't know anything about the paper being passed on to Coker."

"No; but if he put the palmist up to it, he wouldn't give names. The man doesn't know our names. He would prime the fellow with a yarn to tell anybody who asked about searching for a treasure—and Coker did it. Temple intended the hoax for us, and Coker's got it instead."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites burst into a roar of laughter. There was no doubt that the Lancashire lad's explanation was correct.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry, gasping. "Temple's gone away, thinking we're going to be filled up with that yarn, and Coker's got it instead of us. Poor old Coker! He'll be a firm believer in palmistry now."

"Until he doesn't find the treasure," remarked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you think there's anything buried in the cave at all?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather," said Wharton. "My idea is that Temple & Co. have buried something there—some paper with a funny message on it, perhaps. When Coker finds it, he will feel like scalping the giddy palmist."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! It's time for us!"

Micky Desmond and Vernon-Smith were shown out. Vernon-Smith was smiling in a sneering way, but Micky Desmond looked impressed.

"Got it all right?" asked Nugent.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm told that I shall live to be seventy-nine, and have lots of money, and get married twice," he replied. "The man's an awful humbug. But I knew that before I came here. And I don't believe he's a Hindu at all."

"Why not?"

"He's got Hindu colour, but European features, that's all," said Vernon-Smith. "He would have to get up very early in the morning to take me in. I asked him to tell me something about the past, and he said my father was dead. This is the first I've heard of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, and he told me things," said Micky Desmond. "He said that I was born in an island."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And that I crossed the sea more than once every year, and faith, it's thrue, because I go home to Ireland every vac., you know."

"He might possibly have guessed from your talk that you were Irish," said Vernon-Smith, with heavy sarcasm.

"Faith, and sure I don't see how he could," said Micky, with a puzzled look. "Me English is jist the same as you fellows spake intirely, and there's nothing to give me away as being Oirish!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sahibs, the fakir is ready!"

Micky and Vernon-Smith departed, and Harry Wharton & Co. rose to go into the inner room. Nugent whispered to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Don't forget to pitch it to him in your lingo, Inky."

The nabob of Bhanipur grinned.

"The rememberfulness is terrific," he replied.

And the chums of the Remove were shown into the Presence.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Inky Talks Hindustanee.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. bowed politely to Mr. Bhowanagree, who inclined his head. A somewhat startled look shot into his eyes at the sight of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Evidently he had not expected to meet a Hindu in the quiet village of Friardale.

"Talk to him, Inky, as you speak his language," said Wharton.

The fakir made a gesture.

"I speak the language of the country I chance to be in," he said impressively.

"The preferfulness of my esteemed self to speak the honourable language of my native land is terrific," said the nabob.

"Ahem—"

"Kyah kahte ho?" asked the nabob cheerfully, that weird-sounding sentence being Hindustanee for "What do you say?"

"Ahem—"



Blake seized Herries and backed him into an armchair, but the determined junior still blew. Gore retreated into the passage, and blew. Reilly roared, and Bishop's flute shrieked. Kangaroo chuckled, and started with a banjo. The unhappy founders of the Concert Party yelled. "Shut up!" "Dry up!" "Oh!" (For the above humorous incident see the grand, long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, entitled "TOM MERRY'S CONCERT PARTY," by Martin Clifford, which is contained in our popular companion paper, "The Gem" Library. Out on Thursday. Price One Penny.)

"Kyah kahte ho?" repeated the nabob inquiringly. A slightly pink look came through the brown on the cheeks of the palmist.
"Tumko kyah hua hai?" asked the nabob.
That sentence meant, "What's the matter with you?" but it was evidently as incomprehensible to the fakir as to the juniors at Greyfriars.
"Speak English," he said at last.
"But the preferfulness to speak your own language——"
"Give me your hand!"
"Phir kaho," said the nabob.
"Eh?"
"Phir kaho. Agar tum yih kam no karoge, to main ek paisah nahin dungah."
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.
Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's remark, translated into English, meant, "Say it again. Unless you do so I won't pay you." But the unhappy palmist might as well have been listening to Chinese.
"I work in silence," he said at last. "It is not necessary to speak. Give me your hand."
Hurree Singh gave him his hand.
"Ah!" said the palmist spitefully. "A short life—a very

short life. You will be killed by a cricket-ball before three weeks have elapsed."
The nabob grinned.
"Poor old Inky!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is what comes of talking to a palmist in his native language when he doesn't understand it."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Silence!" exclaimed the palmist fiercely. "You have come here to mock. Begone!"
"Sach bat!" exclaimed the nabob indignantly.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Go!" thundered the palmist.
And the juniors, without waiting to have their palms read, retired into the outer room, laughing.
Three or four more fellows were waiting there.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Loder!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.
"Going in? Ask the fakir whether the time will ever come when you'll give up bullying?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Ask him whether you'll win next time you play with old Cobb?" said Johnny Bull.
Loder clenched his hand.
"Get out, you cheeky young cubs!" he growled.

"One moment," said Ionides. "You have had your palms read?"

"Only Inky. The palmist got fed up with us," explained Bob Cherry. "Inky began to talk to him in his native language, and, of course, he didn't understand it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What?" exclaimed the Greek.

"He doesn't understand Hindustanee," grinned Bob Cherry. "I suppose he's left India so long that he's forgotten it."

"Then he is a cheat—an impostor!" exclaimed the Greek senior.

"Of course he is. What did you think he was?"

Ionides gritted his teeth. Ionides was not a pleasant fellow; he had a passionate Southern temper, and he was very much of a bully. His black eyes were gleaming now with rage.

"You have been to see him before?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes," hissed the Greek—"yes. He told me to come again—my palm was difficult to read. That it was strangely marked, and that my fortune would be a strange one; that misfortunes were gathering over me, but by consulting my palm again he could tell me the truth. But that so strange a hand taxed his energies, and he could tell me nothing unless I paid him in gold."

"The awful swindler!" said Harry Wharton indignantly. "I suppose he could see that you were rich, and guessed that you were—ahem!—an ass!"

Ionides ground his teeth savagely.

"Have you paid him in gold?" asked Nugent.

"I paid him one sovereign—I am to pay him another to-day."

"Phew! Those chaps must make giddy fortunes when they come on superstitious people," said Johnny Bull.

The Greek scowled.

He was, indeed, superstitious, and he could see clearly enough now how the cunning impostor had read his character, and played upon it. Probably the many shillings the palmist gathered from ordinary visitors did not form a great proportion of his profits. When he came upon a rich and superstitious client, he probably worked such a rich vein for all it was worth, and made an excellent thing out of it.

"The client!" he exclaimed. "If he is pretending to be a Hindu, he is an impostor, and not a true palmist at all."

"Are there any true palmists?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come!" said Ionides, taking Hurree Jamset Ram Singh by the shoulder. "Come! Speak to him in Hindustanee in my presence."

"The pleasurefulness will be terrific," grinned the nabob.

And he accompanied the angry Greek into the audience-chamber.

Mr. Bhownanagree looked angry, too, as the Indian school-boy entered with Ionides. Heracles Ionides frowned at him.

"You are a Hindu?" he exclaimed.

"I have travelled from the lands of the Orient," said Mr. Bhownanagree, with a great deal of dignity.

"Then let me hear you speak to this boy in Hindustanee."

"Ah! I refuse."

"Why?"

"The boy is an unbeliever. By conversing with unbelievers my power is weakened."

"Chup raho!" said the nabob. "Dur ho!"

"Answer him!" yelled Ionides.

"I refuse! Leave my room!"

"Give me back my sovereign which I paid you, then," said Ionides: "otherwise I will call the police."

If Mr. Bhownanagree could have turned pale through his artificial complexion, he would certainly have turned pale then.

"Take your money!" he exclaimed, throwing a sovereign on the table. "Take the filthy lucre, and depart!"

Ionides picked up the sovereign.

"You are a cheat and a rascal!" he said.

And he stamped out of the room.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed him, grinning. Mr. Bhownanagree, when they had gone, made some very, very emphatic remarks—not in Hindustanee, but in very homely English.

"Got the quid back?" asked Loder.

"Yes. The man is a rascal. Let us get out of here. Oglegora pame!" muttered the Greek between his teeth.

"Come on, I say!"

And Ionides and Loder went their way. Harry Wharton & Co. followed them out, laughing. They were glad that the fraud had been compelled to disgorge the sovereign, but they had no sympathy to waste upon Ionides of the Sixth. They strolled back towards Greyfriars, and near the school gates they encountered Coker & Co.

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"It's all right," said Coker mysteriously.

"What's all right?" asked Harry.

"We've got the picks and the spades. We've hidden them in the old barn, and we can stop for them to-morrow as we go over to the cave. The tide will be out all the afternoon."

"Oh, good!"

"Look here!" said Coker condescendingly. "I've been thinking it over, and you fags can come if you like. You can help with the digging, and help to carry away the gold afterwards. It will be pretty heavy—ten thousand guineas. We'll take cricket-bags to carry it away in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you ass?"

"Only—only thinking how ripping it will be coming back with cricket-bags full of golden guineas," said Bob Cherry.

"It will be ripping, you know," remarked Johnny Bull.

"The rippingfulness will be terrific."

"Well, will you come?" asked Coker. "You can if you like. I've asked Potter and Greene, and they don't mind."

"Might attract attention going in a crowd," said Wharton solemnly. "We'll stick to the arrangement, I think. You chaps search first, and if you can't find it—"

"Oh, we shall find it, all right!"

"Good! That's enough."

And the chums of the Remove went into the School House to look for a quiet place where they could laugh unheard by Coker & Co.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Retreat of the Ten Thousand.

DURING morning lessons at Greyfriars the next day, there were two parties who found it a little difficult to keep quite grave in class. There were the Famous Four in the Remove, and Temple Dabney & Co. in the Fourth. Temple Dabney & Co. were full of suppressed merriment at the thought of the Famous Four going in search of the treasure in the smugglers' cave. Harry Wharton & Co. were greatly tickled at the idea of Coker & Co. going in search of it.

Coker & Co., on their part, were in a mood of cheerful anticipation. As Coker remarked, ten thousand guineas weren't gathered up every day by a little digging. Potter and Greene were much exercised in their minds about the sharing-out. A thousand guineas each to the other parties seemed rather a lot to part with—especially as it had been proved by palmistry that Coker was really destined to find that treasure. But Horace Coker would not hear of receding from the compact. Like Brutus, he was an honourable man. Equal whacks all round was the arrangement, and that was the arrangement Coker was going to stick to.

Coker was very glad when morning lessons were over. He wanted to get to the Half-Tide Cave in Pegg Bay, and get that treasure lifted. True, it must have lain there for a long time; but now that the secret was out, the sooner it was taken care of the better. Coker could hardly eat at dinner-time, so great was his impatience to be gone.

After dinner, the three heroes of the Fifth took their cricket-bags for conveying the treasure, and started off. The Famous Four watched them go; and Bob Cherry threw himself in the grass on the cricket-field and went into hysterics.

Coker & Co. hurried off to the old barn, and there they picked up the spades and picks that had been concealed in readiness. Then they walked round the Black Pike to the bay, and hired one of the boats which enterprising fishermen at Pegg let out to the boys. The spades and picks were put in the boat, and Potter sat down to steer, and Coker and Greene pulled out over the bay.

It was a glorious summer's afternoon, and the wide bay backed up by cliffs, and the sea stretching out beyond in the sunlight, made a beautiful picture. But the Fifth-Formers had no eyes for scenery just then. Golden guineas danced before their eyes.

They pulled across the bay to where the great Shoulder towered aloft, broken at its base into rocks and reefs, where the currents ran in lines of white foam.

The entrance to the big cave was wide open, yawning dark as they neared the cliff. At high tide the cave was overflowed with water, and entrance was impossible; but now the tide was well out, and only a couple of feet or so of water flowed in the cave. It was enough to float easily in.

"Ten thousand quid!" said Potter, breaking the silence.

"Guineas!" said Coker.

"Seems to be too good to be true," said Greene.

"True enough!" said Coker. "Ten thousand! It's a heap of money, you know. We're like the giddy Persians who were after Xenophon!"

Potter and Greene stared.

"Why are we?" demanded Green, in astonishment.

"Because we're after the retreat of the ten thousand," said Coker.

"Eh?"

"It's a pun!" said Coker, in explanation.

"Is it?" said Greene. "Where does the pun come in?"

"Well, of all the asses——"

"Never mind, I'll take your word for it," said Greene pacifically.

Coker snorted.

"Ass! Xenophon retreated with ten thousand Greek chaps, didn't he, when he was in the war with somebody somewhere—in Asia, or somewhere——"

"Did he?"

"Of course he did!" roared Coker. "Haven't you ever heard of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand?"

"But they were Greeks," said Greene; "they weren't guineas!"

"I know they weren't, asses! But the guineas are hidden in a secret place—well, a secret place is a retreat, isn't it—double meaning to the word retreat, you see——"

"Well?"

"Well, the hiding-place of the ten thousand guineas is the retreat of the ten thousand, isn't it, in a manner of speaking?"

"Jolly queer manner of speaking, I think," said Greene, with a shake of the head.

"You—you ass! I'll explain——"

"It's all right," said Greene. "Is it a joke?"

"You—you fathead, of course it is. We're like the Persians because we're after the retreat of the ten thousand. See?"

"No, I don't quite see, but it's all right!"

"You blithering chump——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Greene.

"What are you cackling at?" yelled Coker.

"Your joke!" said Greene, innocently. "You said it was a joke!"

"You—you—you——"

"I thought you wanted me to laugh!" said Greene, with an injured air. "You said distinctly that it was a joke. Didn't he, Potter?"

"Certainly!" said Potter. "I heard him!"

Coker contained himself with difficulty.

"Oh, dry up," he said. "Here we are at the cave!"

The boat glided into the wide opening.

Coker and Potter and Greene fended it off from the rocks, and the boat floated on to the furthest extremity of the water, and there Coker made the painter fast to a pointed rock.

The Fifth-Formers jumped out and clambered up the wet rocks.

"Twelve fathoms from highwater-mark!" said Coker. "Bring the spades!"

"How much is a fathom?" asked Greene.

"Six feet, you ass!"

"What size feet?"

"Twelve-inch feet, you fathead! I'll measure!" said Coker. "We ought really to have brought a measure. Of course, you fellows couldn't think of that!"

"Well, you didn't think of it, did you?" said Greene.

"I've got other things to think of!"

"Making rotten puns about Persians and things is one of them, I suppose," said Greene sarcastically.

"Get the spades out!" roared Coker. "And if you want a thick ear, you've only got to say so, George Greene!"

"You've got a thick head without saying so!" murmured Greene, as he pitched the spades and picks out of the boat. "Here you are!"

"I'll measure the distance," said Coker, stopping at high-water-mark on the sloping floor of the cavern. "We ought to have a measure; but I can pace it!"

"Hold on!" called out Greene. "How many paces?"

"Six to a fathom!"

"Didn't you say it was six feet to a fathom?"

"Yes."

"Well, six paces won't do!" said Greene obstinately.

Coker glared.

"Why not?" he demanded.

"I mean six of your paces," explained Greene. "That would come to more than a fathom!"

Coker was speechless for a moment. Coker's feet were of a goodly size, but he did not like to be reminded of that fact. He did not answer Greene, but he rushed at him, and Potter had only just time to seize him and drag him back.

"Lemme go!" roared Coker. "I'm going to punch his silly head. I'm not going to have him being funny here!"

"Hold on——"

"I'll smash him——"

"You were funny in the boat yourself, you know," said Potter. "Shut up, Greene! Look here, Cokey, we didn't come here to row. Get on with the pacing!"

"Well, if he's funny again, there'll be a row!" growled Coker, and he calmed down and began pacing out the fathoms.

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ONE
PENNY.

Potter followed him, marking off each fathom as it was paced out, until twelve had been marked off.

This brought the Fifth-Formers almost to the end of the cavern. Potter looked about him, and uttered a cry.

On the hard, sandy floor of the cave was a mark.

"Look!" he cried.

Deep in the hard ground a cross had been cut, and under it had been hacked two letters—"C. F."

"Captain Firebrace!" exclaimed Coker, with gleaming eyes.

"Yes, rather!"

It was all the proof that they needed. They had evidently found the spot. The discovery restored complete harmony. Coker and Potter with picks, and Greene with a spade, set to work at once, and the cave rang with the echoes of their shovelling.

THE TENTH CHAPTER. The Great Treasure.

CLANG!

Clang!

Crash!

The three Fifth-Formers dug away with amazing energy.

Coker & Co. were not distinguished as hard workers in the Form at school, but they were different beings now. The certain knowledge that ten thousand golden guineas lay beneath them, bucked them up amazingly.

The ground looked hard, but it did not prove very hard under their efforts. It would have made more suspicious fellows think that it had recently been disturbed in that particular spot.

But Coker & Co. had no time to think of that.

Their picks and spades clanged busily, and the cavern rang with echoes.

It was dim in the cave, shafts of sunlight falling through clefts in the rock overhead, hardly sufficient to light them on their work. But they did not mind little difficulties like that.

They began to perspire over their work. The cave was cool and shadowy; but they soon felt very warm.

"Hard work!" gasped Potter, at last.

"Ground ain't so hard as might have been expected," said Coker. "Worth a bit of trouble to dig up ten thousand golden guineas."

"Yes, rather!"

"What I don't like is whacking it out among those Remove kids, after we've had all the trouble," said Greene.

"Well, we got the paper from them, you know."

Crash!

"My pick's struck something!" exclaimed Potter eagerly.

"Hold on a minute!"

Coker and Greene ceased to dig, and Potter bent down and scraped in the excavation with his hands, and uttered a cry.

"There's a box here!"

"A sea-chest, I expect," said Coker eagerly.

"N-n-no!" said Potter. "It—it looks like a biscuit-box."

"A what?"

"Or a small egg-box."

"What utter rot!" said Coker contemptuously. "How could the smugglers possibly have had an egg-box here?"

"Well, it looks like it."

"Oh, rats! Let me see!"

Coker pushed Potter aside, and bent down in the excavation. He stared in amazement as he saw the wood with the dirt scraped away from it. It was not more than eighteen inches below the surface, and the wood was almost clean, and looked very new. For wood that had been buried a hundred years in the earth, it was in a wonderful state of preservation.

"This—this is jolly queer——" muttered Coker.

"Blessed if I understand it!" said Potter. "The wood ought to be mouldy by this time, or jolly deeply stained, anyway."

"Let's get it out."

They hooked the picks under the box, and loosened it in the earth. To their amazement it did not weigh very much. Coker had worked out that morning in figures that ten thousand guineas in gold must weigh something like a quarter of a ton. But there was certainly not the weight of a quarter of a ton in that box. Its weight was not more than a few pounds at most.

The Fifth-Formers had very queer expressions upon their faces now.

The box was jerked out upon the floor of the cave, and it turned out to be a wooden grocer's box, a couple of feet long, and carefully nailed up.

Upon the dirty white wood, in black, stencilled letters, was the name "Huggett, Grocer, Pegg."

"Mummy hat!" ejaculated Coker. "That's one of old Huggett's boxes—a soap-box, I believe. How on earth did it come here?"

"It's been buried here," said Greene.

Coker gave him a glare.

"That's pretty clear, you silly ass, as we've just dug it up," he said. "The question is, who buried it, and why, and—what's in it?"

"The guineas can't be in it!" muttered Potter. "It doesn't weigh enough. Besides, this is a—a—a modern box."

"Might be deeper down," suggested Green. "Somebody may have buried this box on the same spot by a—a coincidence."

"Let's look in it."

"It seems to be nailed up," said Potter.

"I'll soon alter that. Stand clear!"

Coker raised his pick, and smashed open the box with a single crashing blow. The interior was revealed as he dragged the fragments of the broken lid away.

Inside the box several chunks of rock were piled. Lying upon them was a sheet of cardboard, evidently of modern workmanship, and upon the card words were written.

It was too dark for the juniors to see what was written on the card, and Coker picked it up with a trembling hand, and carried it nearer to the mouth of the cave for light.

There the Fifth-Formers read it.

There was a message written there, in handwriting that was quite modern. It ran:

"With Captain Firebrace's compliments!"

The Fifth-Formers looked at it with sickly expressions.

"I—I don't quite understand it," muttered Greene.

"Where are the guineas?"

"Where?" roared Coker. "There ain't any, you silly ass! It's a jape!"

"Eh?"

"Those Remove bounders planted that blessed document on us for a joke!" yelled Coker. "There ain't any treasure, and they wrote the clue themselves!"

"My hat!"

"And they put this here for us to find!" Coker kicked the box into the excavation. "My hat! I'll smash 'em! The whole school will be yelling when we get back!"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Greene. "You are an ass, Coker."

"Eh?"

"I didn't believe in it from the first——"

"What!" roared Coker. "Why, you were more keen than I was—especially after that scoundrel of a palmer stuffed us about it. He must have been put up to it."

"The awful rotter!" gasped Potter. "I—I say, we shall be laughed to death over this!"

"I never thought much of it," said Greene. "I—— Oh!"

Greene's remarks were suddenly cut short, as the infuriated Coker drove out with his right. Greene sat down suddenly on the floor of the cave, and yelled.

"Ow! Yow! You rotter! Ow!"

"I'm off!" said Coker; and he stamped away towards the boat. Greene, holding his nose in his hand, followed him. And the things the three Fifth-Formers said to one another as they pulled back across the bay made up in emphasis what they lacked in politeness.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for Temple & Co.

TEMPLE, Dabney & Co. were lounging in the gateway of Greyfriars, waiting. They smiled as they waited. Harry Wharton and his chums had gone out for a walk, and Temple, Dabney & Co., in the full belief that they had gone in search of the hidden treasure, were waiting to see them come in. They nodded affably to Coker, Potter, and Greene as the three Fifth-Formers, looking very tired and irritable, came up from the direction of Pegg.

"Seen Wharton?" asked Coker vengefully.

Temple smiled.

"No; we're waiting for him," he said.

"Have you seen him?"

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"No!" growled Coker. "We're looking for him."

"He's gone out with the other chaps!" smiled Temple. "If you've been down Pegg way, you ought to have seen him. They're gone there."

Coker grunted.

"Well, we didn't meet them. We may as well wait here, too, you fellows. You see, we want to see those Remove rotters at the earliest possible moment."

"What are you chaps waiting for them for?" asked Potter. Temple, Dabney & Co. chuckled.

"It's the joke of the season," Temple explained.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Up against Wharton?" asked Coker, more amicably. Anybody who was up against Wharton was a friend of Coker's at that moment.

Temple nodded gleefully.

"Yes," he said, "I don't mind telling you; I've told some of the chaps already. I kept it dark till I saw 'em start out."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dabney and Fry.

"What's the joke, then?" asked Potter.

"Ha, ha, ha! You've heard of the smugglers' treasure?"

Coker started.

"Yes," he said slowly.

"Well, we've started those Remove kids on a wild-goose chase after it," grinned Temple.

Coker gave him a very peculiar look. So did Potter and Greene.

"Oh!" said Coker. "You have, have you? How did you do it?"

"Simple as A B C," replied Temple cheerfully. "Bob Cherry had an old book that he picked up at a second-hand stall. I shoved a paper into it for him to find."

"Oh!" said Coker.

"He found it! Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker & Co. exchanged glances. Coker came a little nearer to the unconscious Temple, and took his hands out of his pockets.

"What was on the paper?" he asked.

"A clue to the hiding-place of the smugglers' treasure."

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Dabney and Fry.

"Real, ripping clue, clear as anything," said Temple. "Chap who found it would naturally think he was in for a good thing, you know. Bob Cherry found it."

"Awfully funny!" said Coker, clenching his hands.

"That's not all!" grinned Temple.

"Oh, that isn't all, isn't it? What more is there?" asked Coker.

"Why, when I went to the palmer's yesterday, I saw them there, and I gave the palmer a tip to stuff them up."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co.

"I told him that if anybody came in asking questions about searching for a treasure, what he was to say," Temple explained. "See the joke?"

"Yes, rather!" said Coker. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Joke of the season!" said Temple. "Wait here with us, and—— Oh! What on earth are you up to—ow—yow—gerroooooh!"

"Yah! Oh!" yelled Dabney.

"Help!" shrieked Fry.

To the three Fourth-Formers it seemed as if Coker & Co. had suddenly taken leave of their senses.

Coker, Potter, and Greene had suddenly hurled themselves upon the chuckling heroes of the Fourth, and they were sprawling on the ground now, with the Fifth-Formers sprawling over them.

"Joke of the season, is it?" roared Coker. "I'll show you!"

"Ow, ow!"

"Bump 'em!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Yaroop! Oh! Help! Ah! Yapp!"

Bump, bump, bump!

The unfortunate humorists of the Fourth were bumped, and rolled over, and rolled over again and bumped, in the grasp of the seniors, until they hardly knew whether they were whole or in fragments.

Then Coker & Co., somewhat relieved in their minds, walked into the Close, and left them to sort themselves out.

Temple sat up, gurgling. Fry and Dabney sat up, and leaned against the gates, and gasped for breath.

"Oh!" groaned Temple, caressing his

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"Phir kaho. Agar tum yih kam no karoge, to main ek paisah nahin dungah." "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's remark, translated into English, meant—"Say it again. Unless you do so I won't pay you." But the unhappy palmist might as well have been listening to Chinese. "I work in silence!" he said at last. "It is not necessary to speak. Give me your hand!" Hurree Singh gave him his hand. "Ah!" said the palmist spitefully. "A short life—a very short life! You will be killed by a cricket ball before three weeks have passed." (See Chapter 8.)

nose, which had been rubbed violently against the ground. "Oh! Ow! They're mad!"

"Oh, rather!" gasped Dabney. "Mad as hatters! Ow, ow!"

"Groo!" moaned Fry. "I'm all dust! My jacket's split! Grooh! Oh! What does it matter to those Fifth-Form beasts if we jape Wharton? Ow! They're always japing the Remove themselves! Groo! I thought Coker would be pleased!"

"Oh, oh! The rotters!"

"Groo-oo! The beasts!"

"Yow-ow!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. sat and groaned in chorus, and tried to rub the dust out of their eyes, and noses, and ears. Several lags gathered round to gaze upon them with great interest.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry's cheery voice, as the Famous Four came in from the road, and halted to stare at the Fourth-Formers. "What on earth's happened? Have you been using yourselves to sweep up the road with?"

"Ow!" groaned Temple. "Coker's gone mad! Oh!"

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Bob Cherry roared

"Ha, ha, ha! Has Coker come in?"

"Ow! Yes! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Did he find the treasure?"

Temple sat bolt upright in his amazement.

"Eh! The treasure!" he gasped.

"Yes; he went to dig up the smuggler's treasure this afternoon," said Wharton cheerily. "Did he bring back bags of guineas?"

And the Removites yelled. The Fourth-Formers stared at them in utter bewilderment.

"I—I thought you had the paper!" stuttered Temple.

The juniors shrieked.

"Ha, ha! So we had!" yelled Nugent. "But we saw a water-mark on it, you see—1808, and we thought that Captain Firebrace couldn't have post-dated it like a cheque, you know."

"Oh!" stammered Temple. "I—I never noticed—"

"So we passed it on to Coker," said Harry Wharton serenely. "He's been to hunt for the giddy treasure. Was he waxy when he came in?"

"Oh!" groaned Temple. "You young villains!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Romovites walked on, leaving the Fourth-Formers to dust themselves and gasp. Temple, Dabney, and Fry looked at one another disconsolately.

"Missed fire, this time!" groaned Dabney.

"Well, it was just as funny if Coker found it," said Temple, on reflection.

"Not very funny for us!" moaned Fry. "Ow, ow!"

And the three unfortunate humorists, who had japed the wrong person by mistake, limped painfully away to the School House.

Harry Wharton & Co. went up to the Remove passage, chuckling. They passed Coker on the landing, and he glared at them.

"That paper was a swindle, you fellows," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker jumped.

"Did you know it was?" he yelled.

"Yes, rather! Ha, ha! It was water-marked 1888!"

"You—you—you young scoundrels!"

"Well, you would have it," said Harry. "We didn't want to give it to you, did we? You insisted upon having it."

Coker made a blind rush at the chums of the Remove. They grasped him, and laid him on the linoleum—with a considerable concussion—and went on to No. 1 Study.

They sat down to tea in a very satisfied and peaceful frame of mind. They felt that they had deserved well of Greyfriars and the world generally.

"Beautiful peaceful feeling you get when you've done somebody fairly in the eye," Johnny Bull remarked reflectively.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If we only had some funds, we'd have a big feed to celebrate it," said Frank Nugent regretfully. "It's rotten to celebrate a triumph like that with sardines, and not very many of them."

And the chums of the Remove agreed that it was.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter, having learned that Coker & Co. had returned, repaired to Coker's study for his share of the treasure. He found Coker, Potter, and Greene having tea with clouded faces. They bestowed a glare upon the fat junior as he insinuated himself into the study.

"What do you want?" growled Coker gruffly.

"Oh, really, Coker, I want my share of the treasure."

"There isn't any treasure—it was a jape! Get out!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"I say, you fellows, you're not going to do me out of my whack so easily as all that," he exclaimed. "I want my share, you know, and— Yow! Hands off! Ow!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter descended into the passage with a concussion that made the study doors shake. Then Coker's door slammed upon him. And he did not apply again at Coker's study for his share of the ten thousand golden guineas.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Palmistry Tea.

"WHAT price palmistry?"

Frank Nugent asked that question in No. 1 Study.

A committee of ways and means had met there, composed of Wharton and Nugent, to whom the study belonged, Bob Cherry, from No. 15, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and Johnny Bull.

Funds had been low all the week, and now, on Thursday, the Famous Four found themselves at the lowest ebb.

The other fellows stared at Frank.

"Palmistry!" repeated Wharton.

Nugent nodded.

"Palmistry!" he replied. "That humbug Hindu chap in Friardale must have raised a lot by reading duffers' paws."

"He was a swindler."

"I know he was. But it can be done without swindling—as an entertainment. Suppose we gave a palmistry tea?"

"A palmistry which?"

"Palmistry tea!" said Nugent calmly. "People give 'em, you know. People come to tea, and have their palms told as an entertainment. I was at one in the last vac. When you send out the cards, you shove 'Palmistry' in the corner, or 'Madame Lango Boko will be present,' or something of that sort."

"Blessed if I see how a palmistry tea, or any other tea, will help the funds," said Harry Wharton. "Teas cost money, and the present trouble is that we haven't any money."

"Charge for admission."

"Lyons Unlimited," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Are you The Magnet Library.—No. 235."

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thinking of starting in the cheap refreshment business, like old Fish, with his grocer's shop last term?"

"It's a jolly good idea," said Nugent obstinately. "We can put a notice up on the board—'Good brew in the Rag. Admission sixpence. Tea, cake, and sandwiches. There will be a palmist present for all to consult.'"

"But I suppose the fellows won't let one of us read their palms," said Johnny Bull. "I'm no palmist."

Nugent grinned.

"I am," he said.

"You!"

"Yes. The qualifications of a palmist are simple enough. You simply have to colour your chivvy the colour of an old piece of mahogany, wear funny clothes, and keep solemn while you are making duffers of the people who consult you. I suppose a leading member of the Remove Dramatic Society is up to a simple part like that."

"What leading member?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Your humble!"

"Might work," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "We could keep it a big secret, and announce the visit of the Indian professor, Jamjam Pokerpoker, or some real Hindu name like that."

Hurree Singh grinned.

"That does not soundfully convey to me an Indian name, my worthy chum," he remarked. "But I can give you the needful name if you wishfully require it. In my country, the wise men are called moonshees, and you could announce the Moonshee Mirza Khan."

"Moonshee Mirza Khan!" said Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"That sounds ripping. And if it was necessary to prove that he was a real Hindu, Inky could do it by talking to him in Hindustanee."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!" said Wharton. "It would be a ripping jape, because the Moonshee, being one of us, would be able to tell the fellows lots of things about themselves."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And if the palmistry is simply thrown in as an entertainment, along with the tea, it will be all right and above board," said Nugent. "The tea will be worth the tanner, and by doing big quantities we shall make a profit, and replenish the war chest."

"Hear, hear!"

"It's a jolly good scheme," said Nugent. "I'm willing to play the part of the moonshee. Did you say moonshee or what, Inky?"

"Moonshee, my worthy chum."

"Good. I'll be the moonshee; we've got all the things we want, among our theatrical props, excepting a stain for the face," said Nugent. "We shall want something extra special for that, and I'll get it in Courtfield. I know where I can get it."

"Better have two Hindus," said Wharton. "That chap Bhownanagree had a black attendant. We'll make Tommy Brown play the other chap. He's a pretty good actor."

"Right ho!"

"Go and fetch him, while I draw up the announcement."

Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, was brought in, and he entered into the idea with great zest. The juniors gathered round the study table and started on the announcement which was to be posted up.

"Notice!" wrote Wharton. Then he paused.

"That part's easy enough," grinned Bob Cherry. "Got on!"

"On Friday evening," wrote Wharton, "a palmistry tea will be stood in the Rag!"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"That won't do."

"Why not?" demanded Wharton warmly.

"It looks as if it's a rotten show, if fellows have to stand it!"

"I mean we're going to stand it."

"Oh, I see."

"Put in 'will take place,'" suggested Johnny Bull.

"All serene; will take place in the Rag," said Wharton. "Tea and cake and sandwiches will be provided. A palmistry entertainment will be given free of charge. All fellows who want their palms read are invited to come."

"Admission sixpence! The tea alone is worth the money. The palmistry is over and above. The famous Moonshee Mirza Khan has been specially engaged for the occasion, and will be on tap all the time."

"On tap sounds a bit slangy," said Nugent.

"Present, then!" said Wharton.

"Good!"

"Roll up in your thousands, and have a cheap and first-class tea, and have your palms read by the celebrated Moonshee!"

"Ripping!"

"But I say," exclaimed Bob Cherry, "there's one thing you've missed!"

"What's that?"

"We haven't any cash to stand the tea!"

"By Jove!"

Nugent chuckled.

"I've thought of that," he said. "There's Mauleverer. We can borrow the money of him, as we're certain to be able to pay it back out of the takings. We don't want to sponge on Mauly because he's a giddy millionaire; but a loan to be repaid the next day is all right."

"The allrightfulness is terrific."

"Well, that's so," agreed Wharton. "We can do the whole bizney for a couple of pounds. Mrs. Mimble will give us a reduction on the grub if we take big quantities, and if she won't, we'll go down to Uncle Clegg's in the village for it. We ought to make a handsome profit, and square up with Mauly and have something left. Go and squeeze two quid out of Mauly, one of you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two sovereigns were easily obtained from Lord Mauleverer, the schoolboy millionaire. Lord Mauleverer was generously itself, and there were not wanting fellows at Greyfriars who looked upon the schoolboy millionaire as a horn of plenty, which they did not scruple to draw upon. Harry Wharton & Co., however, never availed themselves of that source of supply, unless in the form of loans which they were quite sure of being able to repay. As Nugent had said, they did not want to sponge on Mauleverer because he had plenty of money.

With two pounds cash in hand, it was easy to deal with Mrs. Mimble at the school tuckshop. And the preparations for the palmistry tea were taken in hand at once.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Entertainment.

COKER, of the Fifth, was the first to see the important announcement on the notice-board. His exclamation of astonishment drew quite a crowd to the spot.

"My only Aunt Matilda!" exclaimed Coker. "Look at that! What do you think of that as a specimen of Remove cheek!"

And fellows gathered round from all sides to read the announcement, which was in the bold handwriting of Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove.

"NOTICE!"

"On Friday evening a Palmistry Tea will be given in the Rag by a committee of the Remove Form. Time, six sharp.

"Tea, Cake, and Sandwiches! A Palmistry Entertainment will be given free of charge. All fellows who want their palms read are invited to come!"

"Admission sixpence!"

"The tea alone is worth the money! The palmistry is an extra, provided for the entertainment of the guests. The famous Moonshee Mirza Kahn has been specially engaged, positively for one occasion only. The Moonshee will show his amazing powers of palmistry by reading the past as well as the future."

"Roll up in your thousands, and have your palms read by the celebrated Moonshee, who has read the palms of all the crowned heads of Europe!"

"Admission sixpence!"

"Fags half-price."

"Roll up! Roll up! Roll up!"

"Well, I think this takes the cake!" said Coker, in amazement. "Fancy the young bounders having the cheek to work off a palmistry entertainment; especially after our experience with that humbug in Friardale! Of course, this Mucky Can, or whatever his name is, is as big a humbug as the other chap."

"You bet!" said Fisher T. Fish of the Remove.

"We'll go, and show him up," said Potter. "You remember how Inky showed up that chap Bhownanagree by talking to him in Hindu. We'll make him talk to Mucky Can in Hindu."

"Good wheeze!" said Greene. "We'll show him up."

"Have to pay for admission, for that," remarked Fitzgerald, of the Fifth.

"Well, it's worth a tanner a time to show up those cheeky young bounders," said Coker. "I'll stand the admission for you chaps, too."

"Good egg!" said the Co. heartily.

All Greyfriars read the announcement, and all were agreed that it was like the cheek of the Remove committee to think of giving an entertainment, and "planning" a spoof palmist on such wide-awake fellows as they were. Nobody believed in the palmist. But it was curious, too, that most of the fellows made up their minds to go. Entertainments were not as thick as blackberries at Greyfriars, as Hobson of the Shell remarked, and the tea would very likely be worth the tanner.

Harry Wharton & Co. were asked many questions on the subject on that evening and the following day.

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"THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOL!"

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ONE
PENNY.

But they kept their own counsel.

All they would say was that they had engaged the celebrated Moonshee Mirza Khan specially for the occasion, and that he would arrive in time.

"But sure, what is a moonshee?" asked Micky Desmond.

Harry Wharton smiled a superior smile. He was not very clear about it himself; hence the smile of superior wisdom.

"Oh, come, you know what a moonshee is," he said.

Micky Desmond shook his head.

"Faith, I don't," he said, "and I don't believe you do, either."

"My dear chap, a moonshee is—is——"

"Well, what?"

"A—a moonshee," said Wharton, "is—in fact, a moonshee, you know."

"It's one of the wise men from the East," said Bob Cherry, coming to the rescue. "Kind of wise man in a flowing beard, and so on."

Micky sniffed.

"All spoof," he remarked.

"Well, you'll see," said Wharton. "I guarantee that the moonshee will be able to tell you something about yourself that will surprise you."

"Oh, rats!" said Micky.

"Well, come and see."

"Sure, and I'll come, if it's only to see a real live moonshee," said Micky.

And indeed the Moonshee was a great attraction. On Friday there was a great deal of talk about the coming entertainment in the Rag. After morning lessons were over, the Remove committee put the big room in readiness for the show. Forms and chairs and tables were borrowed on all sides, and the provisions purchased of Mrs. Mimble were conveyed into the room. At least a hundred fellows of various Forms had made it clear that they intended to come, and the chums looked over the provisions with a doubtful eye. It was quite possible that all Greyfriars would come, and in that case, the supplies were likely to run short. Lord Mauleverer came to the rescue with another two pounds, and the supplies were enlarged.

"It will work out all right," Nugent remarked. "Four pounds is eighty shillings, or a hundred-and-sixty pence. If a hundred-and-sixty fellows come, we shall be just level. But I think we ought to rope in two-hundred-and-fifty."

"Easily!" said Wharton.

"Pretty thick crowd," Tom Brown remarked.

"Well, people are supposed to be crowded at At Homes, you know," said Nugent. "They get a hundred people into a room built for twenty, at an At Home, lots of times. And a palmistry tea is much the same thing. The grub can be put out ready to be taken on the sideboard."

"What sideboard?" asked Bob Cherry, in surprise.

"We shall have to rig one up. We can't go to the expense of hiring waiters, so the guests will have to wait on themselves. All the stuff can be set out, and they can take it as they need it. We can substitute ginger-beer and lemonade for tea, or else we shall have to hire urns, and have somebody to look after them."

"Good egg!"

The Remove Committee were very busy in all their spare time that afternoon. At five o'clock Frank Nugent and Tom Brown departed from Greyfriars, each of them carrying a large bag. Nobody noticed their departure, in the great interest excited by the coming entertainment. Nugent and Brown were to don their make-up in the old barn near the Courtfield Road, and come to Greyfriars in a cab from the town. They had already arranged for the cab to pick them up on the road.

After they were gone, the Remove committee put the final touches to the arrangements in the Rag. At half-past five fellows began to crowd up. At a quarter to six there was a throng in the passage outside the door of the Rag.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Regular Rush.

WALK up, gents!"

"This way for the tea!"

"This way for the palmist!"

"This way for the great entertainment!"

"Sixpence, please!"

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull stood at the door of the Rag to take the admission fees as the guests came in. Bolsover, the biggest fellow in the Remove, had been induced to act as doorkeeper, in case of trouble. Bulstrode, also a big and powerful fellow, was with him to back him up.

But the proceedings, at first, anyway, were very orderly.

Removites came up in twos and threes, and paid their sixpences, and walked into the Rag. Billy Bunter was the first who wanted to go in "on the nod."

"Sixpence, please!" bawled Bob Cherry, grasping the Owl of the Remove by the shoulder as he attempted to push through without paying.

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"Eh!" he ejaculated.

"Sixpence admission!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Pay or buzz off! As a matter of fact, I think you'd better keep out, anyway; you're more likely to want six pounds than sixpence worth of tommy."

"I've left my money in my study," Bunter explained.

"Go and fetch it, then."

"I—I mean, I've mislaid it. But it's all right. I'm expecting a postal order to-morrow morning, and I'll settle up then."

"You'll settle up now, or you won't go in," said Bob Cherry. "Buzz off, and clear out of the way of the others. You're stopping the procession."

"I say, you fellows, I think you might let in an old friend," said Billy Bunter. "I used to be in your study, you know. You remember—"

"I remember you used to make a famine there," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really—"

"Sure, and can't yez let a fellow pass?" demanded Micky Desmond, from the rear.

"Get out of the way, Bunter."

"Go in, or go out."

The Remove entertainers had several forms arranged across the doorway, with a narrow space left for fellows to pass in one at a time. Billy Bunter's ample form filled up the passage, and he showed no inclination to go back. Indeed, there was so numerous a crowd pressing on from behind by this time that retreat would have been difficult, and it looked as if the flimsy barricade was in danger of being rushed away.

"I sincerely hope you fellows won't be mean in this matter," said Bunter. "I want to have my palm read, you know—"

"You want to scoff the ginger-pop and cake, you mean!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really—"

"Oh, let him in," said Wharton. "We sha'n't have any peace till he gets in. Pass the fat boulder in, and have mercy on the cake, Bunter."

And the Owl of the Remove rolled in. He made a direct line for the refreshments, and started operations without stopping to get his breath. The good things had been laid out on boards arranged on chairs along one side of the large room, and this arrangement was certainly labour-saving, and decidedly convenient for Bunter.

More and more fellows came in, but it was surprising what a number of them had forgotten to put any money in their pockets. Snoop and Stott and Trevor, and a good many more, had no cash in hand, and were admitted "on tick" after much heated argument. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, calmly proffered a five-pound note to be changed, and had to be admitted free, as, of course, the juniors could not change the note. Fags galore came up, taking advantage of the offer of half-price, but even half-price was too much for their resources in many instances.

Paget and Tubb and Bolsover minor, of the Third, held a long argument at the door as to whether the three could come in for fivepence-halfpenny, that being the total amount of their united resources. They were admitted. Nugent minor of the Second came along with Gatty and Myers of that Form, and boldly claimed free admission on the score of his relationship with Frank Nugent. Bunter minor claimed to be admitted free because his major had been. And the rush was getting thicker and thicker, and in the growing confusion the doorkeepers let through more and more without paying.

Coker, Greene, Potter, and Fitzgerald, of the Fifth, came along with a swagger, and Coker paid down a two-shilling piece for the four with a princely air. But a good many Fifth Form fellows pushed through by sheer strength, calmly smiling as if it was an excellent joke. The Remove committee did not see the joke, but the seniors did, and they laughed over it very much as they attacked the ginger-beer and cake and tarts.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, glancing into the biscuit-tin, where he was throwing his takings. "I think this will work out at about a penny a head, instead of a tanner. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Sixpence, please, Dutton."

Dutton of the Remove looked at him inquiringly, with his hand to his ear. Dutton had the misfortune of being deaf; or, as Ogilvy had described it, the Remove had the misfortune of Dutton being deaf.

"Did you speak, Cherry?" asked Dutton.

"Sixpence, please!"

"Nonsense!"

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"Eh?"

"I say nonsense," said Dutton testily. "It's impossible in this warm weather."

"What?"

"I may be deaf," said Dutton, "but I'm not a fool. What's the good of telling me it's going to freeze, you ass? What do you take me for?"

"I didn't say it was going to freeze!" shrieked Bob. "I said sixpence, please!"

"Eh?"

"Will you pay up, you chump?"

"Pay up! What do you mean?"

"Pay up—pay up! Sixpence! Pay up, I said!" roared Bob Cherry. "Admission a tanner."

"Eh?"

"Pay sixpence to come in. Do you hear?"

"You insulting beast!" said Dutton, turning red.

"What?"

"What do you mean by saying I'm queer?" demanded Dutton.

"Oh, dear!"

"Queer, am I? I'll jolly soon make you look queer if I have any of your cheek."

"Pay sixpence, and you can come in!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Saw me coming, did you? Well, I suppose you did."

"Will you pay?"

"What did I say? I suppose you're getting deaf?"

Bob Cherry gasped.

"You can go in without paying!" he moaned. "Go in! Quick—quick—quick!"

"Not so thick as yours," said Dutton.

"Eh?"

"My head's jolly well not so thick as yours, and chance it," said Dutton; "and if you say my head's thick, I'll give you a thick ear."

"Will you make room for the other chaps to come in?"

"Eh?"

"Will you get out of the doorway?"

Biff!

Dutton landed out with his right, and Bob Cherry sat down on the floor quite suddenly. He roared.

"You blessed ass! You dangerous lunatic! What do you mean?"

"I'll teach you to say I've been brought up in a poor way!" said Dutton furiously.

"Oh, dear! Kill him, somebody!"

Bolsover seized Dutton, and dragged him into the room, and pushed him in. It was worth untold gold to get him off the spot, let alone sixpence. Bob Cherry rose to his feet, rubbing his nose. Dutton had punched him under a misapprehension, and Bob refrained from dusting the floor with him. While he was on the floor several cheerful Fourth-Formers had pushed in without paying.

The crowd in the Rag was thickening.

Nearly all the lower Forms were there, and a good sprinkling of seniors, and Loder and Carne and Ionides of the Sixth had come in, without paying. It was a quarter-past six by this time, and the audience were beginning to shout for the palmarist.

There was a sound of wheels in the Close at half-past six.

"Here comes the giddy palmarist!" exclaimed Temple of the Fourth, looking out of the window of the Rag.

"Hurrah!"

All eyes were turned upon the door. The audience were all in now, excepting a few stragglers who intended to come in later when the door was unguarded. Bob Cherry opened the door wide, and admitted the great man.

There was a buzz of interest and excitement from the crowd in the Rag.

It was Mirza Khan at last!

He was not tall, but he was portly. Ample robes trailed round him as he walked. His face was of a dark bronze colour, and the lower half of it was hidden by a flowing white beard, which gave him a very venerable aspect.

His eyebrows were white, but very thick, and there was a turban coiled upon his head, beneath which escaped wisps of white hair.

There was no doubt that Mirza Khan, the moonshee from far-off India, was very imposing. Behind him, bearing the train of his robe, was another bronze-faced Hindu, also bearded, and clad in Oriental garb.

He bore Mirza Khan's train with great solemnity, keeping step with him as he advanced into the room.

On the threshold Mirza Khan paused, and inclined his turbaned head.

"Salaam, sahib!"

Harry Wharton bowed almost to the floor in response.

"Salaam!"

Then he led Mirza Khan to his seat.

MIRZA KHAN sat down in the large armchair, which had been specially placed for him with its back to the light. His attendant stood beside him, with a face of fixed gravity.

The Greyfriars fellows gathered round with a buzz of interest. The sideboard had been swept almost clean by this time, and the fellows were prepared to give their attention to palmistry.

Billy Bunter was still seeking what he might devour, but the rest of the fellows gathered round the great Moonshee.

Harry Wharton raised his hand.

"Gentleman, I present Mirza Khan, the great Moonshee, to you! Gentlemen who wish to have their palms read will kindly walk up in turn."

There was a momentary hesitation on the part of the Greyfriars fellows. Exclamations such as "Go it, Russell!"—"Buck up, Ogilvy!"—"Your turn first, Tubby!" could be heard, but no one came forward for some moments. Then Coker of the Fifth came up with a swagger, and held out his hand.

"I know it's a swindle," he remarked. "I've seen palmists before."

The Khan looked at him steadily under his white eyebrows. "I don't believe he's a Hindu at all," said Coker cheerfully.

"Ko kam lug poke rug!" muttered the Moonshee, in a deep voice.

"Hurree Singh!"

"Inky!"

"Where's Inky?"

"I am here, my worthy chums," purred the Nabob of Bhanipur, softly. "What is the esteemed wantfulness?"

"Talk to this chap in your giddy lingo," said Coker. "Show him up, the same as you did the swindler in Friardale."

"The readyfulness is terrific."

"Well, pitch it to him."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh grinned, and "pitched" it to him as requested.

"Ap kah mizai aj kaisah hai?" he asked. Which in the Urdu tongue of Hindustan is equivalent to "How do you do to-day?"

"Ki ko mum pokeylokey coop!" replied the Khan, in a language which would have amazed anybody in Hindustan more than even it amazed the Greyfriars fellows.

"Kya kahte hoh?" exclaimed the nabob.

"Pokey lum tum tooral-pop!"

"Ap-kah min bahut ihsan mand hoon," said the nabob, with a bow.

And the Khan bowed and said.

"Koko loko wop."

"Is it all right?" demanded Coker, rather crestfallen.

"What did you say to him last, Inky?"

"I remarked that I was muchfully obliged to him."

"Looks genuine, I must say," said Greene.

And, indeed, the Greyfriars fellows were all very much impressed. There was no doubt that the Nabob of Bhanipur had spoken in genuine Hindustanee, and as he was the only fellow there who could speak the language, there was no telling in what kind of Hindustanee the Khan had replied.

"Well, read my fist," said Coker, with an air of incredulity still.

"Tell him the past and convince him, O Moonshee," said Harry Wharton.

Coker grinned.

"If he can tell me the past I will believe in him," he said.

The Moonshee gazed dreamily at the Fifth-Former's large palm.

"Koko loko toko poke, kum andysam jam."

"What does he mean?" said Coker in amazement.

"Translate, Inky."

"Can't the chap talk English himself?" demanded Coker.

"Ask him!"

"Do you speak English, Mucky Khan?"

"Koko stoney pony hop."

"That is not English, my worthy chums," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "But I will urge him to speak in the noble language of the esteemed Chaucer and Shakespeare."

And he rattled on in rapid Hindustanee.

The Khan nodded.

"Be it so!" he said, in English, in a deep voice.

"Well, tell my giddy fortune," said Coker.

"Ah! I see lines—lines—many lines!" murmured the Moonshee. "The past is written here! The young sahib has passed up from a lower Form, without having been able to do the work required."

Coker jumped, and the other fellows stared. It was well known at Greyfriars that Coker had been put up from the Shell into the Fifth because he was really too big to be in the Shell any longer, and couldn't be kept there, especially with his aunt writing to the Head about it every other week. The Fifth-Formers made a common joke of the stock of learn-

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ONE
PENNY.

ing Coker had brought up with him from the Shell. Coker turned very red.

"On the ball, first time," remarked Bland of the Fifth.

"Oh, shut up," said Coker. "Go on, Murky Pan!"

Mirza Khan went on dreamily.

"Ah! I read here—the sahib is somewhat inclined to be a bully. He often attempts to make sport of others, and is made sport of himself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He has much money, and in consequence he has friends who allow him to play cricket with them, and laugh at his jokes, which otherwise are matters to be wept at."

Coker snatched his hand away and a roar of laughter.

"I've had enough of this rot," growled Coker. "I told you it was a swindle."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see any swindle there," said Hobson, of the Shell. "He seems to me to have got you down fine."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Next man in!" said Wharton.

Fisher T. Fish of the Remove submitted a very bony hand. The Moonshee regarded it with his dreamy gaze.

"I see a wide ocean—a ship—and a boy crossing the sea," he murmured. "The young sahib came in a ship from a far-off barbarous country."

The crowd shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish jerked his hand away with a frown.

"It's right about the ship and the sea," he exclaimed.

"But I guess you're off the track with the rest of it. The Yu-nited States is the top mark in civilisation, I guess—right at the top notch, sir! You hear me!"

"Jevver get left, Fishy?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Next man in," said Wharton. "Roll Bunter over here."

Billy Bunter was forcibly dragged away from the last remnant of cake. He put out a jammy hand for the palmist's inspection, and the Moonshee took care not to touch it.

"I say, you fellows, I don't believe in this rot, you know," said Bunter.

"Ah! You are fond of eating and drinking," said the Moonshee. "You will eat anything, careless of whom it belongs to."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You talk much on the subject of remittances which you expect—but the remittances do not come. You boast of titled friends whom you do not possess."

"He's got Bunter all right," remarked Temple of the Fourth.

"Oh, really, it's a swindle——"

Bunter jerked himself away from detaining hands, and rolled back to the sideboard. He did not want to have his character told any further.

"Here, I will try," said Ionides of the Sixth, coming forward in his overbearing way. "Palmist, read my hand!"

"Pay your tanner first!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Bah! Read my hand, Mirza Khan."

The palmist took up the somewhat delicate hand of the Greek, and examined it.

"You come from a far country——"

"Easy to say, since you can see that I am of Greece," said Ionides, with a sneer.

"You had a storm during the voyage over, and were very much frightened!"

Ionides started.

"It is false," he exclaimed, fiercely. "There was a storm, as many of my friends know, since I have told them, but I was not frightened."

"You were dreadfully frightened," said the Moonshee, calmly. "Lately you have consulted another palmist, who was an impostor and cheated you."

"That is true."

"The line of life is very broken. The line of caddishness crosses it in several places."

"What!"

"I read here late hours, card parties, betting and gambling. You gamble, but you are not always ready to pay your losses."

"Jolly true!" murmured Loder.

"You live a life that would cause you to be expelled if your headmaster knew the particulars," said the Moonshee, in the same dreamy way.

Ionides turned pale.

"It is enough!" he said roughly.

And he drew away very quickly. Evidently he had had enough of his biography revealed for the public ear.

"Try me!" said Loder, of the Sixth.

The Khan scanned his hand.

"Ah, you are a bully of smaller boys! You hold an official position in the school——"

"That's right; he's a prefect!" said Carne, grinning.

"You abuse your authority in dealing with younger boys. Once you came very near being expelled from the school; you had a narrow escape!"

"My hat!" said Coker. "There's something in it!"

Loder scowled.

"I don't want my character!" he said roughly. "Tell me the past!"

The Khan looked very dreamy.

"I see an unhappy home," he said. "I see a father troubled by the disobedience and the wilful blackguardism of his son!"

The Greyfriars fellows exchanged wondering glances. Half the school knew that Loder had trouble with his father at home, and knew the reason. Loder turned crimson.

"He's guessing, and those kids have put him up to this!" he growled. "Let's have some of the facts. How old was I when I came to school?"

"That I cannot tell. You may have been in this school for five years."

"True!" said Carne.

"What Form did I enter in?" asked Loder.

"The Third."

"And when shall I leave?"

"That I cannot tell. But unless you change your habits, I see disgrace—deep disgrace—even prison looming ahead for you!"

Loder strode away furiously.

Fellows were coming up eagerly now to have their palms read, convinced by this time that the Moonshee Mirza Khan knew something of his business. And he amazed them more and more by telling them their past.

Micky Desmond heard with astonishment that he lived in County Kerry, that he had three sisters, and a brother in the Army, and a brother at sea. All of which statements were in strict accordance with the facts.

Temple, of the Fourth, was told that he was captain of the Form, that he was ambitious to become a great cricketer, and that his elder sister had recently become a

Suffragette. And Temple retired, looking almost frightened at the uncanny knowledge of the Moonshee.

Fry, indeed, suggested that the Moonshee might have been primed with information before he came. But that hypothesis did not hold water, because the Moonshee was not given their names when they consulted him. And as he was a stranger to all of them, how was he to know which was which, if he had been told things about them beforehand?

Evidently the Moonshee was drawing the knowledge he showed out of his own inner consciousness, or else reading it in the palms of their hands.

Some of the fags looked quite nervous at approaching the Moonshee, but Bolsover minor, of the Third, came up at last, and gave the palmist a somewhat grubby paw.

Mirza Khan examined it.

"Ah, the line of life is very straggling!" he murmured.

"You have changed your residence many times. I see a city street, a railway-station, a slum! You have been very poor, owing to having lost your parents, but—yes—your father is living, and he found you again after many years, and then you were well provided for."

"My 'at!" said Bolsover minor, in amazement.

"Ah, you have run away from school, and returned to your old life in the slum!" said the Moonshee. "But again you have been found and brought back."

"My word!"

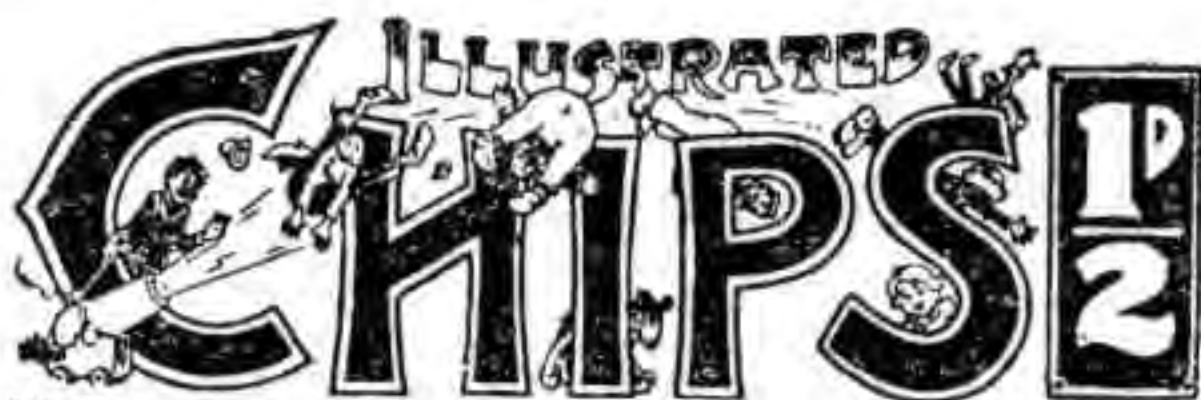
"True enough!" said Paget. "He's got you down all right, Billy!"

"My only 'at!" said Bolsover minor, in amazement.

It was evident that the Moonshee knew what he was talking about. More and more of the fellows came up, and had their palms read, and the amazement grew.

The Moonshee knew something about all of them. His ideas of the future seemed more hazy than his knowledge of the past; but that was really wonderful, since, if he had been inventing, he could easily have invented forecastings for the unknown future, while how was he to guess the past?

And some of the revelations of the past were not compli-



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mentary. As when he told Coker so many plain facts, and when he told Temple that he was in rivalry with a lower Form who always got the better of him, and when he told Hoskins, of the Shell, that he was a producer of fearful noises upon instruments—Hoskins being an amateur musician.

But although the victims did not always agree that the Moonshee had the facts correctly, the fellows listening always agreed that they were all right. And, indeed, there were many things that the fellows themselves did not dispute, as the Moonshee's statements to Lord Mauleverer that he was a millionaire and a titled fellow, and that he had a motor-car of his own, and that he spent his last holiday at Blackpool.

The amazement grew, and the crowd in the Rag looked upon the Moonshee with something like terror, as he continued his uncanny revelations.

Wingate, of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, came in, hearing that something unusual was on, and he frowned a little as he saw what it was.

"It's only an entertainment, Wingate, old man," said Harry Wharton. "We're not charging for the palmistry, and captains of the school are admitted free of charge."

Wingate laughed.

"Let the Moonshee tell your hand, Wingate," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, nonsense!" said the Greyfriars captain.

But there was a chorus at once that confirmed the wondrous powers of the Moonshee.

"Try him, Wingate!"

"Oh, all right!" said the captain of Greyfriars good-humouredly.

And he gave the grave-featured Moonshee a big, tanned hand. Mirza Khan took it in his bronzed fingers, and scanned the lines upon it.

"Well, what sort of a chap am I?" asked Wingate, smiling.

"Great sportsman," said the Khan, bowing. "The young sahib excels at the cricket game, and—yes, I see it—last week one day the young sahib made a century at the wicket!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Wingate, in surprise.

"There you are, Wingate!"

"He can read the past, as sure as a gun!"

"Yesterday you caned a junior in your study!" said the Moonshee dreamily. "Now you are in doubt about making changes in the First Eleven!"

"Great Scott!"

"You have given lines to several members of the Remove Form, but these lines you will not ask for; you will pardon them instead!"

"Oh, shall I?" said Wingate, as he walked away smiling.

"Any more hands?" asked Harry Wharton, looking round. Several more fellows came up.

Vernon-Smith heard some most unpleasant truths about himself, and retired scowling; and Snoop received a character that everybody but Snoop said was exact.

Snoop had just retired, gritting his teeth, when a figure in cap and gown appeared in the doorway, and the deep voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was heard:

"What is going on here?"

"Oh!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Just our luck!"

And the Form-master strode into the Rag.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Too Sharp!

MR. QUELCH surveyed the scene with amazement.

He stared hard at Mirza Khan and his brown-faced assistant, both of whom showed signs of uneasiness under his piercing gaze.

Mr. Quelch's eyes were popularly supposed to resemble gimlets, from their piercing qualities, and never had they seemed so like gimlets as now.

"What is this?" asked Mr. Quelch.

Wharton hesitated. He had intended to "spook" the whole school with the Moonshee Mirza Khan, and he had done it. But he had not thought of spoofing the masters, but now it looked as if that would have to be done, too, or else the whole show given away at once.

"If—if you please, sir, it's an entertainment!" he stammered.

"What sort of an entertainment?"

"Palmistry, sir!" said Snoop quickly.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Who is this man?"

The Moonshee looked at him.

"Kam ram loko koko pip!" he said.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Loko koko pop anypandy wop!"

"What does he say?"

"The respect of the teacher sahib is due to the wise man of the East!" said the Moonshee, with dignity. "I am the Moonshee Mirza Khan!"

"If you are a palmist, you cannot expect me to treat you

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ONE
PENNY.

with respect, and you should not have come here imposing upon the credulity of these boys!" said Mr. Quelch bluntly.

"But he's genuine, sir!" came an eager chorus.

"Nonsense!" said the Remove-master brusquely.

"He is, and he's proved it, sir!"

"He can tell the past, sir!"

"The tellfulness of the honourable past is terrific!"

"Try him, sir!"

"Nonsense, I say!" said Mr. Quelch sharply.

"Give me your hand, sahib!" said Mirza Khan, with dignity. "Kam ko loko pap—Let me see the hand of the august teacher sahib!"

"Do, sir!" said Loder, who was not averse to learning any little secrets there might be in Mr. Quelch's past. "Let him try, sir; it's only fair before condemning him!"

"He certainly could not tell me the past, as he is unacquainted with me," said the Remove-master. "To prove it to you, boys, I will let him try. There is my hand, sir!"

Mr. Quelch held his hand out.

The Khan scanned the lines upon it with great gravity.

"Ah! A learned sahib—a very learned sahib!" he murmured.

Mr. Quelch's lip curled.

"I do not want any flattery!" he said.

"But it's true, sir!" ventured Wharton.

"A very learned sahib!" murmured the Khan. "I see the quiet stream, I see the green banks, I see the old college buildings."

"It is hardly difficult to guess that a Form-master at a public school is probably a University man," said Mr. Quelch.

"That is not all. Ah! What do I see here? The sahib has once had a narrow escape from drowning."

Mr. Quelch started.

All Greyfriars knew that he had been upset in a holiday trip once, in the Channel Islands; but how did Mirza Khan know it?

"Have I told the sahib true?"

"Yes, that is true," said Mr. Quelch slowly. "Can you tell me when it happened?"

"Two years since—nearly two years."

"It is correct!"

"The sahib was laid up with a cold afterwards."

"True."

"Water—more water!" murmured the Khan, scanning the lined palm. "The sahib crossed the sea once more very lately."

Mr. Quelch looked bewildered.

"It is true that I spent the last vacation in Holland," he said.

"The sahib arrived home late for his duties, and for the first day of the term his class was taken by another master."

"Dear me!"

"All true, sir!" chorused the delighted juniors.

Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes upon the Khan.

"Quite true," he said. "So true, that there must be something in palmistry, or—"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Or else this gentleman knows the affairs of the school," said Mr. Quelch calmly, his keen eyes still fixed upon the bronze face of Mirza Khan. "And the next time he sets up as a Hindu and a palmist, I should recommend him to fix his eyebrows on more firmly, so that the left one does not come partly off and betray him."

The Moonshee's hand went up instantly to his left eyebrow, before he had time to think.

Mr. Quelch smiled grimly.

There was a buzz of amazement from the crowd in the Rag. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances of dismay.

"Game's up!" murmured Bob Cherry, sotto voce.

"The upfulness of the honourable game is terrific!"

"I—I say—" stammered the Khan. "I mean, the noble sahib—"

"Is he in disguise?" shouted Loder.

"Certainly he is!"

"My hat!"

"The fraud!"

"It's a jape!"

Loder and Ionides strode forward. Before a hand could be raised to stop them, they had jerked at the Moonshee's beard and eyebrows and turban.

All of them came off together.

A curly head was revealed, and features destitute of any hirsute adornment.

There was a roar!

In spite of the make-up, the features and the curly flaxen hair were enough to give the unfortunate Moonshee away.

"Nugent!"

"Nugent of the Remove!"

"You fraud!"

"You awful spoofer!"

"My hat!" gasped Nugent. "I mean—ki ko kam loko pokko—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Toko pokko socks clocks mangy wangy pang pop—"

"Shut up, you ass!" roared Vernon-Smith. "Do you think we believe that's Hindustanee now, now that we know you're Nugent?"

"Faith, and it's a fraud intirely!"

"Gimme my money back!" said Bunter.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Wharton, if this is an absurd joke, I have nothing more to say about the matter. But if it is worse than that, I shall take a very serious view of it. Have you been charging money for this palmistry?"

Harry Wharton turned very red.

"No, sir—we charged sixpence each for the feed, but as a matter of fact what we've had works out at about a penny a time, and we are losing money on it. But even if the fellows had all paid up as we expected, the palmistry was over and above."

"I want my services free, sir!" said Mirza Khan.

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"Well, I am glad of that," he said. "However—"

"Money back!" howled Snoop.

"To prevent any kind of unpleasantness, you had better give the money back to all the boys who demand it," said Mr. Quelch. "If you are then out of pocket, it will be a punishment for having played an absurd joke upon your schoolfellows!"

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

And Mr. Quelch stalked out of the Rag. Nugent and Tom Brown exchanged glances, and followed him. A roar of derision followed the two unfortunate Hindu gentlemen. Nugent turned in the doorway and glared.

"Ki ko kam jam!" he roared. "Go and eat coke! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get out!"

"Fraud!"

"Yah!"

And the great Moonsthee Mirza Khan disappeared.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Pay Up!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. were surrounded by an excited crowd.

There was a roar of voices in the Rag.

Loder and Ionides, and other fellows who had heard unpleasant truths about themselves, were on the warpath now. And Coker & Co. were simply wild at being taken in. In fact, all the fellows were decidedly "wrathy."

There was a roar.

"Give us our money back!"

Many of the fellows took the matter as a joke. But quite a crowd surged round Harry Wharton & Co., demanding the return of the admission fees.

Wharton raised his voice above the din. Study No. 1's scheme of raising money had proved expensive already, and it seemed likely to involve them in further losses.

"Look here, you fellows!" shouted Wharton. "You've had your tea, and you can't say it wasn't worth a tanner! Could you get as much at Mrs. Nimble's for sixpence?"

"That ain't the point!" said Snoop. "I want my money back!"

"You didn't pay to come in, Snoop!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yes, I did!"

"You didn't!"

"I did!"

"So did I!" said Bunter. "You remember changing a shilling for me, Bob Cherry."

Bob Cherry gasped.

"Why, you—you— A dozen fellows saw you come in on the nod!" he yelled.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Pay up!"

"Money back!"

"Hand it out!"

Harry Wharton brought out the cashbox. At least half the fellows in the room were demanding their money back; but certainly not more than a third of them had paid for admission, and very few had paid the full sixpence. But Snoop & Co. saw an easy way of making sixpence a-piece, and the other fellows regarded it as a ripping joke to make the Famous Four shell out. The excitement and the din were terrific, and it looked as if the chums of the Remove were in danger of being mobbed.

"Money back!"

"Pay up!"

"Bump them!"

"Money back! Pay up! Money back!"

"Come one at a time, and have your money back!" said Wharton desperately. "It's rotten! You know you've had more than a tanner's worth each. The grub cost us four pounds!"

"That's not my business," said Loder. "Give me my sixpence!"

"You came in without paying!"

"Give me my sixpence!" roared the bully of the Sixth.

"You'll have to pay everybody in the room, and serve you jolly well right!" said Coker. "Like your cheek spoofing the school in this way!"

"Lend us a few golden guineas, then, Coker!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Coker turned very red.

Harry Wharton began to pay out. Whether they had paid for admission or not, and whatever amount they had paid, quite a crowd of fellows insisted upon the return of full money, and the tide was against the hapless entertainers. Wharton paid out sixpences and coppers from the cashbox till it was empty. Indeed, Bunter and Snoop mingled in the crowd, and came twice, and in the hurry and confusion were paid double.

Wharton showed the empty cashbox, while a score or more of fellows were still waiting for their money back.

"All gone!" he said. "You've done in the lot, and we shall have to pay four pounds for the grub out of our own pockets."

"Money back!" roared Coker.

"Pay up!"

"We're waiting!"

"But there's no more money!" yelled Wharton.

"Yah! Pay up!"

"Money back!"

Lord Mauleverer came to the rescue. He pressed a handful of small silver into Harry Wharton's hand.

"Pile in, my dear fellow," he said. "It's all right, begad."

"Thanks, old man."

And with the aid of that contribution from Lord Mauleverer, Harry Wharton succeeded in paying off the last claimants.

Then the crowd, hooting and yelling, departed from the Rag, most of them making their way to the tuckshop to celebrate the discomfiture of the Famous Four with ginger-beer.

The chums of the Remove gazed at one another dolefully. Frank Nugent came in, washed and clean, and in his ordinary clothes. His indignation knew no bounds when he learned what had happened.

"The rotters!" he exclaimed. "They had a good tea! What did they want for their tanner, I wonder?"

"It isn't what they wanted, but what they didn't want," grinned Bob Cherry. "They didn't want to be spoofed."

(Continued on page 26.)

THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOL!

NEXT TUESDAY.

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TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE!THE STORY OF THE
GREAT MAN-HUNT
BY **SIDNEY DREW**Ferrers Lord, millionaire, and owner
of the Lord of the Deep.Prince Ching-Lung, adventurer, conjurer and
Ventriloquist.Nathan Gore, jewel collector,
and multi-millionaire,
Ferrers Lord's terrible rival.**THE FIRST CHAPTERS.****"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN!"**

Nathan Gore, millionaire and jewel-collector, clenched his hands furiously and raved like a madman on the deck of the liner Coronation. He had started specially from America in order to be present at the sale-room in London where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," was to be put up for auction. "A telegram for Mr. Gore," a voice rang out through the darkness. The American was told the message, and as he listened his face came over deathly pale, and he gave vent to a terrible oath. The message was: "Ferrers Lord purchased 'The World's Wonder' privately. No bidders. Price unknown." "I'll win yet," shrieked the man. "By foul means or fair, I'll win!"

"THE WORLD'S WONDER."

In the magnificent drawing-room of Ferrers Lord's house in Park Lane was assembled a varied collection of individuals. First of all there was the celebrated millionaire himself, and close to him sat Ching-Lung, a Chinaman, busily engaged in making paper butterflies. Hal Honour, the great engineer, was sipping tea, and Rupert Thurston yawned in a chair. "How much did you pay for that great diamond?" presently asked the latter. The millionaire smiled. "Money and fair words, Rupert," he replied. "By the way, you have not seen it yet."

The priceless gem passed from hand to hand. A thousand fires burned in its crystal heart; a thousand colours, ever changing, leaped from every facet. "I guess it would have been more money and less fair words if old Gore had turned up," remarked Ching-Lung sagely.

"I'LL TAKE THE CHALLENGE!"

The millionaire's house was wrapped in silence. A faint light shone from the drawing-room. Ching-Lung pushed open the door, then a cry broke from him. A man lay face downwards on the floor. There was a ghastly crimson stain on his collar. The man was Ferrers Lord. "Ching—the diamond!" came in a hoarse voice. Ching opened the drawer which Lord indicated, but there was no diamond there. But a message had been left behind: "To Ferrers Lord,—Knowing that you would not sell 'The World's Wonder,' I have taken it. Do your worst. I defy you. The stone is mine.—Nathan Gore." The millionaire rose to his feet. "I take the challenge, Ching," he said. "I'll hunt him down and win back my diamond." He travels down to the cave where the Lord of the Deep is hidden, only to find that this wonderful submarine vessel has been destroyed by Nathan Gore. He begins the chase after the diamond thief, and rushes across Germany into Russia in a special train, taking with him a number of the crew of the Lord of the Deep. They nearly overhaul Nathan Gore, when, once more, their rival gains time by employing a number of men to act as Russian police, and to delay the pursuing party. This ruse is only partly successful, however, and Ferrers Lord travels by water to overtake Gore. After travelling half way through the night, they land, and the millionaire asks a band of gipsies, camping near, for food and clothing for himself and his men.

(Now go on with the story.)

In the Gipsie's Encampment.

Ferrers Lord made a queer gesture. For a moment the black eyes stared at him in surprise. Then a gipsy sprang up.

"The sign is enough," he cried. "You are welcome to our camp. I command here."

"Thanks," said the millionaire. "I have comrades with me."

"Bring them, then."

The millionaire whistled. In a few seconds his followers were warming their chilled limbs before the welcome fire. Ferrers Lord's mysterious sign, and his knowledge of Romany, had acted like magic. True to the rules of the race, the gipsies skinned more rabbits, threw down piles of dry straw, boiled gruel, and made tea. They placed sticks round another fire to dry their guests' clothes, and gave out sacks and blankets. The blankets were not amazingly clean, but any port is welcome in a storm. The rabbits were delicious, the gruel was good, the tea was beyond reproach, for it is perfect in Russia, being brought by land direct from China. And then came the best of all—a hearty smoke.

"Bedad," said Barry, as the blue clouds billowed round his

head, "Oi'll become a gipsy. This is the loife I'd luv to lade. Let me live in a tint, and Oi'd ax no more. This is pace—this is joy! Sure the swatest thing on airth afther a full male is a poipe and—and a glass. Arrah, yez bhoy wid the earrings and the sparrklin' oies and durthy face, isn't ut a dhrop of mountain jew yez have about yez?"

Barry raised his hand as if drinking, and winked at the gentleman with the beady eyes. The gipsy answered the wink, and brought out a stone bottle.

"Sure, yez are a broth of a bhoy intoirely!" grinned Barry, drawing the cork. "Be Joelius Sneczer, ut's rum! Oi know Joe and Tom and frind Benjamin hates rum loike pizen."

"None of yer fibs, Irish!" growled Ben. "We all likes it. It's gin we don't like."

"Oi was mistook," said Barry. "This is gin, and gin I luvs! Here's good hilt!"

Joe snatched the bottle from him to make sure. It was rum, and excellent rum. The millionaire was talking in soft Romany to the leader of the wandering tribe. The man had seen nothing of Nathan Gore.

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"It is strange," he said, "for my lads snared these rabbits on the hills, and they would have seen a stranger. I will send them out now towards the town, if you wish. No, I will take no reward. You know the sign of brotherhood, and there is a place for you beside every Romany fire. All who come with that sign we are sworn to aid and help—ay, even to die for!"

"I will send out my lads, and you may sleep in peace. Were the Tsar your foe we would guard you with our last drop of blood. Wherever you travel use the sign. There are many of us in Russia. Here is a talisman for you. If you need aid, and you are near any of our tents, blow this. You will not blow it in vain."

It was a small brass horn. The hand of the gipsy met the millionaire's, and Ferrers Lord put the horn in his pocket. At a word from the chief several men rose, and vanished noiselessly into the wood. It was too late, and the men were too tired to push on into the town. The train had gone.

Their clothes were dried, and the gipsies found them some coarse stockings. These only reached the knee, and Ching-Lung had cut the trousers short. They looked like foot-ballers ready for a match.

"Troth," said Barry, "Oi niver knowed kickshies to shrink in the wash loike these. Whin Oi foind the man who sould him to me, Oi'll git the money back. Alas, the bottle is empty, and me poipe is out. Till me valet to bring me a cup of tay at eight, and iron me lavender frock-suit. Oi'll have the brougham at tin, for Oi intend to call on Lady Montgomery and take her to see the waxworks at Madame Tussaud's. Good-noight, and gentle dhramas, Goo-oo-ni'!"

Barry slept. Lord lay awake looking at the stars shimmering through the branches.

"Excellency."

The gipsy was bending over him.

"Yes."

"The man you seek did not travel by the train. He has gone by road towards the Forest of Matrinsk."

"Where is Matrinsk?"

"Forty miles north," answered the gipsy. "It is the home of the oppressor of the poor, of the favourite of the accursed Russian despots—the home of Prince Miguel Ollenorff."

"Good!" said Ferrers Lord calmly. "You have my thanks!"

His hands had clenched, his face had grown hard, and there was a grim light in his eyes as he watched the fire.

The Conspiracy—£100,000 for Ferrers Lord's Life— The Ambush.

Prince Miguel Ollenorff had made a big catch of pike. The boat pulled across the lake loaded with monsters that had fallen victims to his clever rod. He wore a jay's wing in his hat, and he stood rod in hand while the fish were weighed and placed in a cart. Then he mounted his pony and galloped along the forest path.

He was barely forty, but he wielded tremendous power in Russia. Still, he was poor, for he was wildly extravagant. His tenants were almost slaves, and he treated them like dogs. Every rouble was forced from them that he might live in luxury. Money was extorted right and left at the whispered threat of Siberia. For the prince had only to accuse a man of sedition to have him dragged away to the mines.

His hirelings were ready to swear anything, and there is no justice in Russia for the poor and weak when the rich and great are the accusers. He commanded the military of the district, bullied the magistrates and judges, and was practically emperor of eighty square miles of country.

As he rode up the long avenue of oaks he saw a drosky standing on the terrace. A tall, white-haired scarecrow of a man darted forward to meet him. The Russian went forward incredulously.

"Gore!" he gasped—"Nathan Gore, or I am mad!"

"You are sane enough, prince!" gasped the Yankee. "I am Nathan Gore!"

"But here, in those rags! In the name of wonder, what are you doing in Russia—at Matrinsk? Why did you not tell me?"

"Come in, and I will tell you all! Make haste, for he is behind me!"

"Who is behind you?"

"Ferrers Lord!" hissed Nathan Gore. "The man who hounded your uncle, Michael Scaroff,* to the grave!"

The Russian paled, and sprang from his pony.

"You are jesting, Gore!" he said. "What folly are you talking?"

"None, prince. Do not forget your uncle's fate, and the great secret he robbed you of. Do not forget that Ferrers Lord has helped to make you a poor man. Do not forget that when he robbed your uncle of his submarine boat he robbed you of a secret that would have made you ten times richer than I am. I come to warn you. He is not satisfied with his vengeance. He hates Russia and Russians."

"I have stolen his big diamond. You bear him a legacy of hate. Now is your time for vengeance. Here you are king. He has only a few men with him. Your chance has come. Remove him now, and I will pay you well. The forest will tell no tales. Vengeance and wealth! Do you hear? A hundred thousand pounds for his body. Do you hear what I say? Gold, gold, gold! And vengeance, Ollenorff! The money! Look at it—look at it!"

His bony hands trembled and shook as he extended the fat case of English banknotes.

"Come in!" panted the Russian—"come in!"

The servants stared at the tall, wild-eyed figure that shambled after their master. Ollenorff sank into a chair when they reached his study, and rang for wine. Like a beast at bay, the panting millionaire crouched opposite to him.

"Bah," said the Russian, "you look queer, Gore! You have not improved since I stayed with you in Boston some years since. So you stole his diamond?"

"I stole his diamond! Hang him! I would have bought it fairly. I would have matched my wealth dollar for dollar against his! I was too late for the sale. There was a fog. He took the diamond that should have been mine. I stole it, and now the hound is behind me!"

"When dealing with Ferrers Lord," said Ollenorff drily, "a sane man would have expected that."

"Hang you!" cried the American. "Do you call me mad?"

"There is a mirror behind you; look at yourself."

The American rose. He laughed.

"I certainly look wild, prince. So would you if Ferrers Lord were on your trail. I have moved heaven and earth to slay him. Bribe, cheated, spilt money like water, but I cannot shake him off."

"Hush!" muttered the Russian.

A servant came in with wine and brandy. Gore chose the brandy, and gulped down a glass.

"You are a bit of a fool, Gore," said the Russian. "I do not know the full facts of my uncle's death, but I know enough to make me hate Ferrers Lord. He wrote to me—a miserable, hypocritical letter. He admired my uncle as a brave man, he regretted his death—the lying murderer!"

"To be plain with you, I did not love my uncle. He spent too much on his inventions, and left me too little. To be plainer still with you, I was what you Yankees would call 'a nice boy.' I was short of money, and this atrocious villain of yours, Ferrers Lord, made me a present of twenty thousand pounds."

"You lie!" screamed Nathan Gore. "Heavens, I am trapped!"

The Russian laughed.

"Do not be so hasty. It is quite true. I was at Oxford then, and I worked hard. I suppose I promised to become a good and kind landlord, and a broad-minded man. He either gave me the money because he was sorry he had killed my uncle, as a peace-offering, or else he thought I would set the other Russian nobles an example of how to treat their tenants. I may have disappointed him. He has not sent another cheque. I wrote to him a year ago. Here is the cheerful answer."

He took a letter from a desk, and handed it to the American. It read:

"To Prince Miguel Ollenorff,

"The Palace, St. Petersburg, Russia.

"Your Highness,—I am requested to reply to your letter of the 22nd ult. Mr. Ferrers Lord has had you watched for the last two years, and, in plain terms, he is disgusted with your conduct. The promise you showed at Oxford made him hope for better things. He refuses to lend or give you money."

"Your uncle, a man worthy of respect in many ways—he had at least some honour, and great bravery—lost his life accidentally. Had he lived, he would have been fairly tried for his life. Mr. Ferrers Lord instructs me to warn you to steer clear of any intrigue affecting British concerns, or take the consequences. His arm is long enough to reach you, even at Matrinsk.—Faithfully yours,

"Your Highness's most obedient servant,

"RUPERT THURSTON.

"Park Lane, London, W."

Nathan Gore stared fixedly at the letter written in Rupert's bold hand.

* Readers of "Wolves of the Deep" will remember Ferrers Lord's terrible vendetta, which ended in the death of Michael Scaroff, the arch-plotter and adventurer.—Ed.

"To such a man as you," he snarled, "this is a flagrant insult!"

"I thought the same, Gore!"

"And do you not wish for revenge?"

It was the cautious Russian's turn to laugh as he sipped the creaming wine.

"I must think more than once," he answered. "I am a strong man, but my uncle was stronger. Ferrers Lord is stronger still. Frankly, I do not hate him. I have never seen him. It was good of him to give me the money. Still, for an equivalent, I would kill my own brother. He is not my brother, but you want a big price for killing such a giant. When you fancy I am poor, you are mistaken. I am as rich as I wish to be."

"Liar!" thought the millionaire, but he was wisely silent.

"Come to the point," went on the prince. "You want him out of the way. As you said, the forest will tell no tales. Your price?"

"A hundred thousand English pounds—five hundred thousand dollars!"

"Money down?"

"Ten thousand down, and the rest when I see him lying dead."

Prince Miguel stroked his moustache.

"Let me see your notes," he answered.

The bony hands fumbled with the crinkling paper. Ollendorff held each crinkling note up to the light.

"Thanks!" he said. "How many men has he with him?"

"Eight or nine at the most."

"Oh!" said the prince. "How far are they behind you?"

"An hour or so."

"Good! I shall go wild-boar shooting at once."

Again he rang the bell, and a servant entered.

"Call out all the beaters, and arm them," said the prince.

"I am going to kill the big boar."

Nathan Gore's eyes gleamed ferociously. He understood the prince's plan. Many a wild boar rooted and grunted in the great forest of Matrinsk. Would Ferrers Lord dare track him to the castle? The prince meant to lay an ambush. A gun would explode in a dim glade—of course, by accident. The prince was a brilliant rifle-shot. He would shoot at a fancied boar, and kill a man. One of his hirelings would take the blame. It would be a lamentable accident, a nine days' wonder. But it would be the luckless Englishman's own fault. Strangers had no right to roam the forest when his Highness of Matrinsk was indulging in the pleasure of the chase.

"You will come with us, Gore?" asked the Russian. "You would like to see one of the great wild pigs brought down?"

"Better not—wiser not," muttered Nathan Gore. "I am not here, I am thousands of miles away. You understand?"

"Ah, yes! Stay then, and do not show yourself. How do I know you will not cheat me?"

"You have the money."

"So I have," said the prince carelessly. "Ho, Makri—my rifle!"

Gore shivered as he saw the Russian coolly open the breech of the silver-mounted weapon and glance through the barrel to make sure that it was clean. Then he dropped on one knee, and took aim at a calf standing beside its mother in the park three hundred yards away. The calf fell, kicked feebly, and lay still, while the cow sniffed at it and lowed piteously.

"My hand feels pretty steady!" laughed Prince Miguel. "Makri, give the calf to my butcher, and rope the cow, or she will be doing some damage. Put her in the little paddock. She will be mad before morning, and woe betide that fat Jew Czernizi when he comes to dun me for money! By my word, he will break his little fat legs to reach the fence! A cow which has lost a young calf is a rough enemy, Gore."

The prince chuckled as he thought of the terror of his unhappy creditor.

The bearded, hard-faced beaters, keepers, and game-watchers were gathering outside. A groom held his master's hunting-pony, and a cart was ready to bring in the game. Several men carried boar-spears, but only two held rifles.

"Good fortune!" said Nathan Gore hoarsely.

The prince turned back to light a cigar.

"Who accompanies Ferrers Lord? If you told me, I have forgotten."

"His usual pack of curs—Thurston, the Chinese lad, and several sailors."

"Oh, we cannot get rid of them all, Gore!"

"Kill him!" hissed the millionaire. "Kill the old wolf, and a child can steal the whelps! Wreck the locomotive, and the trucks that follow it are helpless!"

Miguel smoked thoughtfully, and sat down again, after making a signal to the men outside.

"There is no hurry," he said. "We shall have news in good time. They will drive the boar towards the beeches on the edge of the road. Why not take a rifle yourself? There is a hollow oak there—a natural fort. Take a gun, Gore. Makri, another pony and another rifle!"

"No, no!" panted the Yankee. "I do not understand fire-arms."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 235.

A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday:

"THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOL!"

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

"Did I not see you bring down a deer a year or so ago on your Colorado estate, or am I mistaken?"

A sudden dread of the handsome, smiling Russian seized Nathan Gore.

"It is true," he answered. "But my eyes have grown weaker, prince."

"Absurd—a silly fancy! You look younger than ever. I insist upon it. You made a little king of me when I was your guest, and I never forget favours. You shall shoot one of my boars, and taste him afterwards. I will take no refusal. Drink some more wine. There will be no danger. The tree is a fortress in itself. You can barely see the road for the bracken. Boars come stealthily, unless hard driven. If you see the bracken wave, or sight something hazily through it, well——"

A laugh full of deadly meaning ended the sentence.

The servant had brought the rifle, and the pony was saddled. The two plotters went out together—Miguel, erect, handsome, smiling, well-dressed; Nathan Gore old and bent, scowling, trembling, and pale to the lips.

They mounted the ponies. The prince whistled an air from a new opera as he trotted away. Gore set his teeth, and his courage came back. His heart swelled with hate, and his eyes began to glow and burn at the thought of revenge.

Beaters, game-watchers, woodmen, and keepers were out of sight. They passed the cart, that was lumbering through the ruts. Birds trilled in the soft green light of the forest glades, and woodpeckers tapped musically. A herd of deer rushed across the path, and vanished amongst the thick trunks.

Then like a ghost a man's figure rose. He held up his hand and disappeared.

"They are coming! Faster, Gore!" cried Prince Miguel.

"Are you afraid now?"

"No! Hang him!"

"Is your eyesight improving in our forest air?" asked the nobleman tauntingly.

"Ride on!" hissed Nathan Gore.

They galloped side by side. Again a figure sprang from the undergrowth, and signalled.

"On the main road," said the prince. "They will pass your shooting-box within sixty yards. You will never have such a chance again. Don't miss, Gore."

Nathan Gore reined in, and seized the prince's bridle with such strength that he brought the brute upon its haunches. Quick as thought Ollendorff's finger was on the trigger of his weapon, and their eyes met.

"So I must do it? You are tricking me!" panted the mad millionaire. "Be careful, prince!"

"Don't be so hasty!" said the Russian, smiling. "Is not the chance I am giving you well worth the money you have paid? You must succeed, and detection is impossible. A thousand men would not discover your hiding-place. The moment the shot is fired we will rush out and tear our hair over the sad event. You will not be here at all. We have never heard your name. If you miss, rely upon me. And, my friend," he added threateningly, "kindly alter your expression. My rifle is loaded. Yours is empty. I have my men within call. Play any games with me, and I'll knout you out of the forest and keep your money in my pocket. You must understand, little father, that when I make a bargain it is a good one. I win whatever way the cards fall."

Gore freed the bridle. He had been outwitted. He must play the winning stroke, or lose all. He had paid heavily for a deed which he was compelled to perform himself. But he was silent. He rode on doggedly, and loaded the rifle.

"Gently!" whispered the Russian. "This is the place!"

He pointed to the trunk of a huge, ivy-grown oak. The upper limbs had been blasted by lightning.

"The opening is above," he went on, "and there are two loopholes about five feet from the ground. It is easy enough to descend inside. I have shot many a stag from it. Shoot straight, Gore. I do not want to take your bribe for nothing."

Nathan Gore walked round the tree, snarling and muttering. The Russian watched him as he climbed.

"Do you see the cavity?"

"Yes."

The gaunt legs vanished, followed by body, shoulders, and head. A scraping sound came from within. The prince led the ponies down a bridle-path, and all was silent, save for the melody of the birds, and the distant tap, tap, tap of a woodpecker searching the bark for insects.

The men were in good spirits. They were warm, dry, well fed, and they had pipes and tobacco. The long swim had left a certain amount of stiffness behind, but the kindly gipsies had rubbed their joints with some kind of embrocation that

worked wonders. The Romanies had taken a great fancy to Barry O'Rooney. They were fond of dancing, and when Barry gave them an Irish reel to the pipe of Ching-Lung's whistle their admiration was unbounded.

"Oi be-lave," said Barry, "there's some Oirish blud in thim. Shure, they luk woid althar a fashion; but yez must never judge a man boy the colour av his whiskers. Now, me uncle, Dennis O'Rorke—"

"Oh, stow it!" said Prout. "By hokey, I'm sick of yer relations!"

Ferrers Lord was already saying farewell to his rough host. "Do you know the path, Excellency?" asked the Romany chief.

"I shall find it."

"Let me send one of my lads. Do not reward him, I beg, Mazurki!"

The millionaire accepted the offer gratefully. A bare-legged, bright-eyed, intelligent-looking boy of fourteen sprang up.

"Lead our friends to the edge of the forest, and put them on the left path," said the Romany. "And, Excellency," he added, "you will not forget the bugle!"

"No, I will remember that," answered the millionaire, stalling. "I cannot give payment, but I can give gift for gift, as a friend. If ever you are sick, oppressed, or in want, send that to the English Romanies, and I will not fail you."

He drew a plain gold ring from his finger. The ragged man took it, and bowed. The men were shaking hands with the other Romanies. The order to advance was given, and they tramped after their chief and the youthful guide. Barry commenced singing to the tune of the "Lost Chord":

"Oi was grinding wan day at an organ,
Beery, and full of fleas;
Oi turned the handle painfully,
Wid me trousers out at the knees.
Oi know not what Oi was playin',
Or what Oi was dhravin' thin;
But I got a bash on the brain-box,
That made me yell 'Amen!'
O-oh, Oi got a swoipe on the topknot
Wid a boot that was number tin!"

"You'll get a bash with a number twenty, unless you chuck it!" said Maddock fiercely. "Do ye want to wither the trees up?"

"Have mercy!" said Ching-Lung. "As you are strong, be merciful, Barry. We'll all be good! Spare us, old chap!"

Prout took out his knife.

"Barry O'Rooney," he growled, "as I live by food—"

"And drink. Don't forget the drink, Tom," interrupted Joe. "You gets yer full share when it's knockin' about."

"As I live by food and drink, by hokey," began Prout, "if you starts—"

"Ho, ho, ho!" chuckled Gan. "I nebber taste hokey? What him likes to lib on Tommy?"

"Go and choke yerself with it!" said the disgusted steersman grumpily.

He strode away ahead, and Barry winked after him. With pipes alight they tramped on. The path was fairly dry. The young Romany, like a dog on the scent of game, darted into every thicket. He had a ferret on his shoulder, and once he returned with a couple of rabbits.

"He's a smart little poaching savage!" said Ching-Lung. "I'll bet he could give us some wrinkles in the natural history line!"

"I expect he could, Ching," answered Ferrers Lord.

"Hallo, what has he seen?"

The boy was on all-fours, peering down at the path.

"What have you found?" asked the millionaire in Romany.

"A wild boar, Excellency. Look to your pistols, for he is savage, and may charge. Stand still, and I will find him. I fear him not."

He sped away, and was lost.

In the hands of the would-be assassin, Nathan Gore, the rifle trembled. He could hear voices—one voice that he knew and hated.

"Keep back, lads! There's a pig in here—an old rogue boar that has already killed a woman. I may get a chance to put a bullet in it."

A red mist danced before Nathan Gore's eyes as he crouched in the hollow of the oak. A shadow flitted behind the screen of bracken.

At last!

Crack! He had fired at the shadow. Had he missed? There was a chorus of shouts, a crackling of branches, and a clatter of footsteps. The next moment a dozen beaters sprang forward, and came face to face with Ferrers Lord's men.

(Another grand, long and thrilling instalment of this serial story next week. Order a copy of Tuesday's "Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Penny.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 235.

Don't miss the Splendid New School Story, entitled

"TOM MERRY'S CONCERT PARTY!" in the **"GEM" LIBRARY.** Out on Thursday. Price One Penny.

SPOOFING THE SCHOOL.

(Continued from page 22.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And some of 'em had the money back over twice, and lots had it who didn't pay to come in," said Johnny Bull dismally. "It's the biggest frost I ever heard of. We've been done in the eye all along the line."

"The donefulness was terrific."

"Bunter was paid twice or three times," said Bob Cherry. "He— Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he is again!"

The Owl of the Remove came in.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get out!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I want my money back!"

The Remove entertainers glared.

"You want what?" gasped Bob.

"Money back!" said Bunter, blinking at him. "My sixpence, you know. In the hurry you missed me, you know, owing to my delicacy in not pushing forward—"

"You fat fraud!" roared Bob Cherry. "You were paid twice over, if not three times!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Bob Cherry made a rush at the fat junior. Billy Bunter whirled round and fled for the door. Just as he reached it, Bob Cherry reached him, and Bunter rose gracefully in the air on Bob Cherry's boot. There was the sound of a crash in the passage outside, and a wild yell.

"Ow! Beast! Yow!"

Bob Cherry slammed the door.

"Now, what about profits and losses?" said Johnny Bull.

"How much have we made out of Nugent's gorgeous idea?" "More like, how much have the Remove fellows made out of us?" growled Wharton. "There's none of the takings left, and I've borrowed a pound extra of Mauleverer to pay up the chaps who wanted their money back."

"Phew!"

"The grub, in the first place, cost four pounds—"

"My hat!"

"So we can work it out all right," said Nugent. "Expenses, four pounds for grub, and one pound for refunding expenses, and five shillings for the cab for Minze Khan. Five pounds five shillings. Profits, nil."

"Grooh!"

"Total loss, five pounds five shillings, of which five quid is owing to old Mauly, and goodness knows when he'll get it—I don't."

Harry Wharton laughed ruefully.

"Well, he'll have to have it," he said. "We'll write to our paters, and uncles and aunts, and things, and raise all we can, and make up the rest out of our pocket-money, so much a week. It's got to be paid up, and at once. And—and if you suggest any more ripping ways of making money, Frank, we'll take you out and drown you."

To which the rest of the Co. heartily assented.

The Famous Four, with rueful countenances, left the Rag, to get those urgent letters home written. A yell from the other fellows greeted them as they emerged into public view.

"Yah!"

"When's the next entertainment?"

"I say, you fellows, you really ought to let me have my tanner back, you know," said Billy Bunter pathetically.

"I'm hungry, and I can't afford to lose the money. I—"

"Give him his money back!" roared Snoop.

"He's had it twice!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"Pay up!"

"Oh, come up to the study!" growled Nugent. "We shall never hear the end of it. I know that! If you start any more entertainment wheezes, Wharton, you can leave me out of them."

"I!" exclaimed Wharton wrathfully. "Why, you—"

"Oh, don't argue, for goodness' sake!"

Wharton burst into a laugh.

"Well, it's been a frost, and no mistake!" he said. "But no need to rag about it. The fellows will drop the subject when they find something else to jaw about. Let's go up to the study and write home."

And they did. The evening post took away from Greyfriars more than a dozen letters all urgently impressing upon parents and guardians and relations of all sorts, the necessity for immediate remittances. Which was not the result the Famous Four had anticipated from their little jape in Spoofing the School.

THE END

(Next week's grand, long, complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled "THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOL," by Frank Richards. Order your copy of "The Magnet" Library well in advance. Price 1d.)

My Readers' Page.



**OUR GRAND NEW
WEEKLY FEATURE
ON PAGE 28 AND
PAGES III. AND IV.
OF THE COVER.
SHOW YOUR FRIENDS
THIS COPY.**

FOR NEXT WEEK.

Next Tuesday's splendid, long, complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars is entitled:

"THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOL,"

by Frank Richards, and it tells of the most amazing event in the whole history of the famous old school. Every scholar, from the head of the Sixth to the inkiest fag, is spirited away as if by magic. The startling sequence of events, by which this astounding affair is brought about, and how the prisoners subsequently fared, is revealed in

"THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOL,"

the most sensational, exciting, and amusing school tale ever published.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION RE-OPENED.

The letter published below, which comes from Wolverhampton, and is signed "A Girl Reader"—a very much hackneyed signature, I am afraid—touches upon the subject which has been discussed in these columns before, and which I know interests a large number of "Magnet" readers very much indeed. The proposal which was made some months ago, that the earlier numbers of "The Magnet" and its sister paper, "The Gem" Library, should be re-published to enable many thousands of ardent Magnetites to read them for the first time, and many thousands more to enjoy them over again, was received with enthusiasm, even acclamation. I immediately took steps to look into the matter to see whether it would not be possible to bring out these old favourites again in conjunction with other good stories and interesting reading matter, in the form of another little companion journal to "The Gem" and "The Magnet" Libraries. Just at present I can hardly see my way clear to launch this new enterprise, but the matter is constantly in my thoughts, and I have every hope of being able to give my eager reader-friends a definite assurance on the subject before very long.

This is the letter which led me to refer this week to this interesting proposal. After expressing her appreciation of the illustrations appearing in "The Magnet" Library, my fair correspondent goes on to say:

"I have been a reader of 'The Magnet' for eighteen months, and I think they get more interesting each week. 'The Gem' also is a very interesting library, and I take it in weekly. I think the new serial of Gordon Gay & Co. is ripping. With regard to the suggestion of a few weeks ago, republishing the far back stories of Harry Wharton & Co. is a very good idea, and I shall be very pleased to hear how this matter stands, as we are very anxious. I can promise you my support, and the support of all my chums if it is carried out.—Yours sincerely,
A GIRL READER."

Many thanks to you and your chums, "Girl Reader." As I have already hinted above, I hope to be able to make an announcement which will give you all a pleasant surprise one of these fine days soon.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Molly and Lucilla C.—Thank you for your letter, and for the excellent photograph you sent me. The idea you mention has not been seriously considered by me as yet. When you order your copy of THE MAGNET Library, you must insist upon it being saved for you, and if it is not reserved for you, the best thing to do is to change your newsagent. By paying in advance you can always make sure of getting your paper every week.

J. E. Webb (Southampton).—Your stamp marked Papua THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 235.

A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday:

"THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOL"

Please order your copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance.

should be placed in your album under the heading of British New Guinea.

W. L. M. (Cardiff).—Thank you for your letter. A cure for knock-knees was published in No. 228 of THE MAGNET Library.

F. Eccles (Blackpool).—An article entitled "How to Make Grease Paints" appeared in No. 227 of this paper.

Zena.—I am afraid your first letter must have been unfortunately overlooked. If you will repeat your question, I will answer it to the best of my ability.

J. C. Wiland (Co. Down).—Thanks for your postcard. Your best course would be to see a doctor, and ask his advice upon the subject.

HOW TO MAKE A HAMMOCK.

Of the many different styles of hammocks that are now made by the amateur workman, probably the kind which is most attempted, and which is certainly the easiest and cheapest, is that made from canvas. For the camping holiday, although it is not the very best, it is quite serviceable, strong, and comfortable, and, if it is intended to make it take the place of a bed, the reader cannot do better than to make a good wide canvas hammock, especially if he happens to be at all a restless sleeper.

The articles that are needed are the canvas, some good, stout string or twine, a packing needle, and some rope. Instead of buying canvas, a fairly decent substitute will be found in a closely-woven sack, such as is used for holding flour and other such things. If, however, the reader cannot procure this sack, he must buy a piece of strong canvas, of the kind that is used for making tents, about six feet long by three in width. It will probably cost a few shillings, but this will, of course, depend entirely upon the quality of the material. Twenty feet of rope is next wanted, and might cost anything up to a shilling, but should certainly cost no more. This can be obtained at the local oil and colour merchant's.

Now to make the hammock, lay the canvas on to some flat surface, a long table, for instance, and turn down about three inches each end, thus forming a hem. Thread the packing needle with twine or string of a suitable strength and durability, and sew down securely the two hems. This practically constitutes the making of the hammock. The only remaining thing to be finished is the threading of the rope. There are many ways of accomplishing this, and one is quite as good as any other, yet perhaps the maker's ingenuity might suggest some other fresh method. The best method is perhaps to cut the rope in two, and thread each end separately.

If the reader happens to be at all a restless sleeper, and is nervous of falling out, the hammock can be made to lace up. Make another hem down each of the sides, sewing it very securely, and at intervals of about a foot, make holes sufficiently large enough to allow a rope to pass through. The hammock can then be safely laced up at night. This is, of course, merely to prevent any likely accidents, and is not at necessary.

Another method of stringing the hammock might be mentioned here, which entirely does away with this extra precaution of lacing. Instead of making the first hem at the two ends, it must be made at the sides. The rope must then be divided in two, and one piece threaded down each side. At each end join the ropes to a metal—or rope—ring, making it doubly secure by binding the knots with twine, and then, on the opposite side of the ring, fix another long piece of rope. This latter is to tie on to the books, or trees, or whatever the hammock is to be suspended from. If the stringing is done in this style, it will be found absolutely impossible for anyone to fall out, and, what is more, the hammock will be as comfortable and restful as any feather bed.

THE EDITOR.

OUR SPLENDID NEW 3-PAGE FEATURE!

SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

THE BUNSEY BOYS FIND IT HARD TO SCORE OFF MA!



1. D'you know, dear Mr. Editor, we sawed right through the drawing-room floor with our little pet saws.



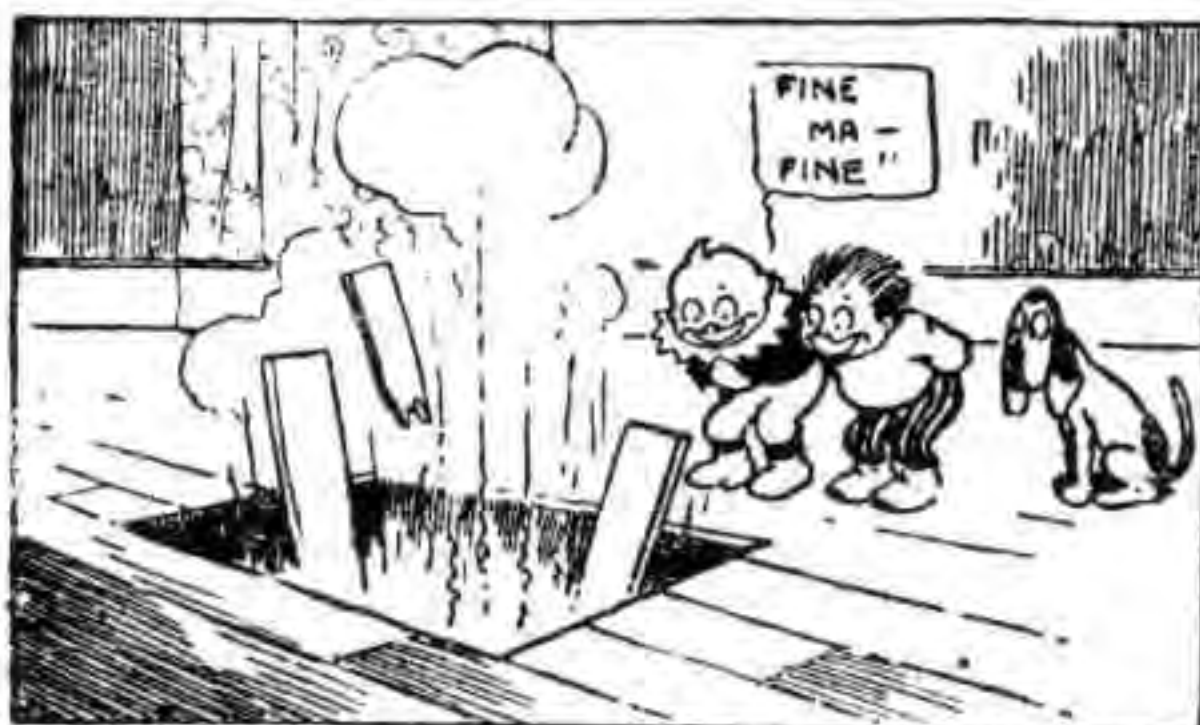
2. And then we perched on t'other side of the sawed through part, and skipped away like a couple of little froglets.



3. And we asked dear old ma to show us how she skipped when she was a little boy like us.



4. But the boards weren't standing ma as well as us.

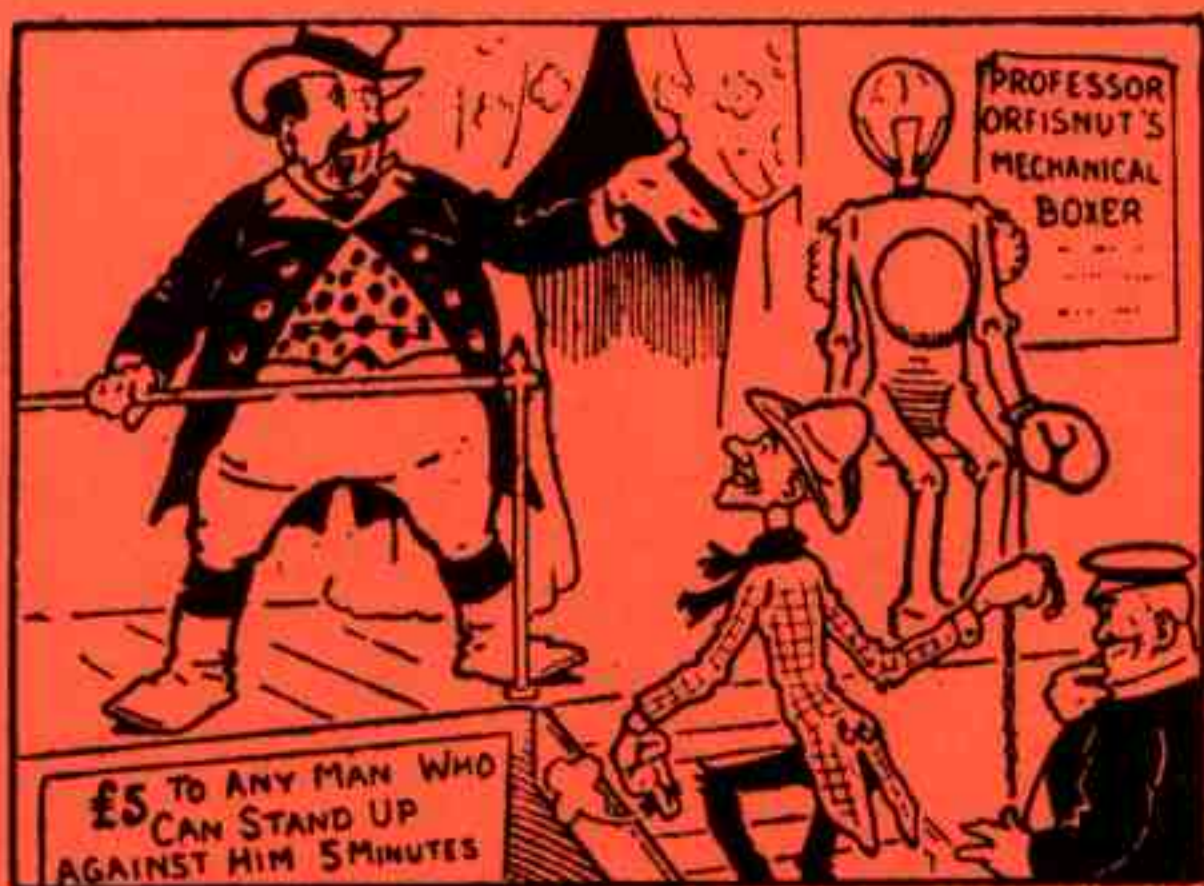


5. How is ma? Well, we ain't seen her the last few minutes.



6. But we know she's all right now, and we know we're not all right.

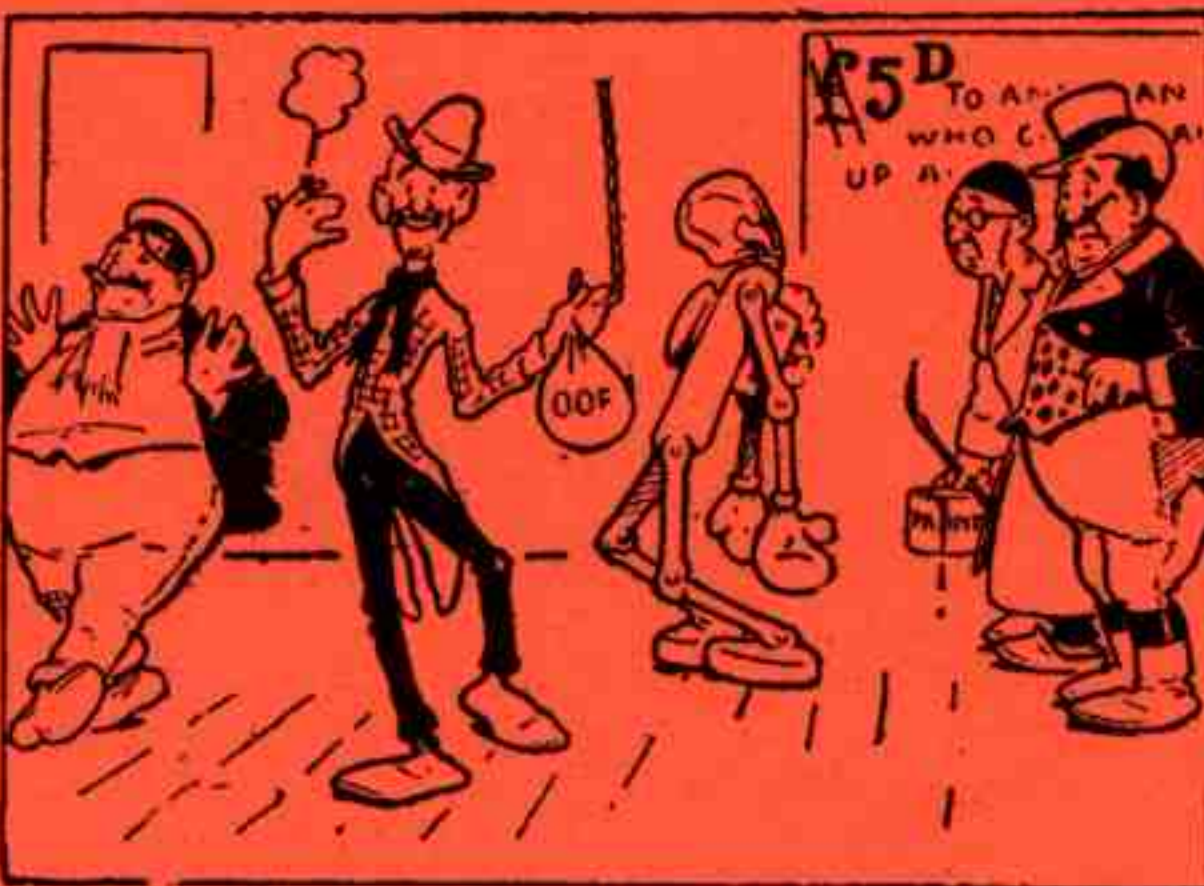
VERY SLIM OF JIM!



1. "Here you are, gentlemen! Five pounds to any man who can stand up against our mechanical boxer for five minutes!" yelled the showman. "I'm on that fiver," said Slim Jim, to his pal. "You watch me!"



2. And in less than seven-sixths of a jiffey they were at it hammer and tongs. But twig that artful Jim! Being so thin, he got between the mechanical arms, and gently leaned upon its chest until the time was up.



3. And wasn't the showman waxey, when he had to weigh out that wager while the professor made a little reduction on the bills. Then did Slim Jim and his pal saunter gracefully off and have a tripe supper at the Carlton Inn.

A REGULAR FIX.



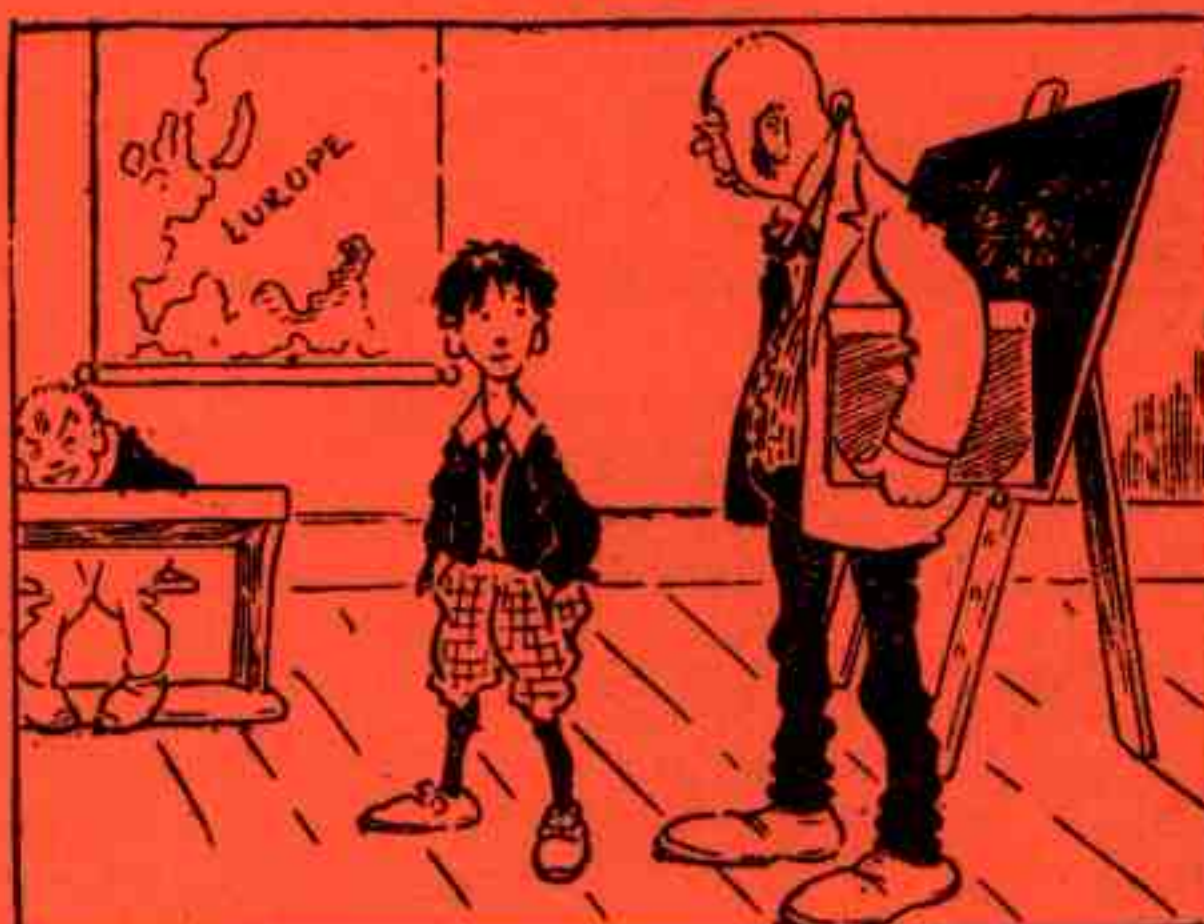
Old Soldier (relating thrilling experience): "It was an awful moment. I was glued to the spot!"
Recruit: "By gum!"

QUITE READY AND WILLING.



Lady: "Why don't you start to do some work, my man?"
Languid Lawrence: "I'm awaiting for the tools, mum!"
Lady: "What tools do you want, then?"
Languid Lawrence: "A knife and fork, mum."

A PUZZLER.

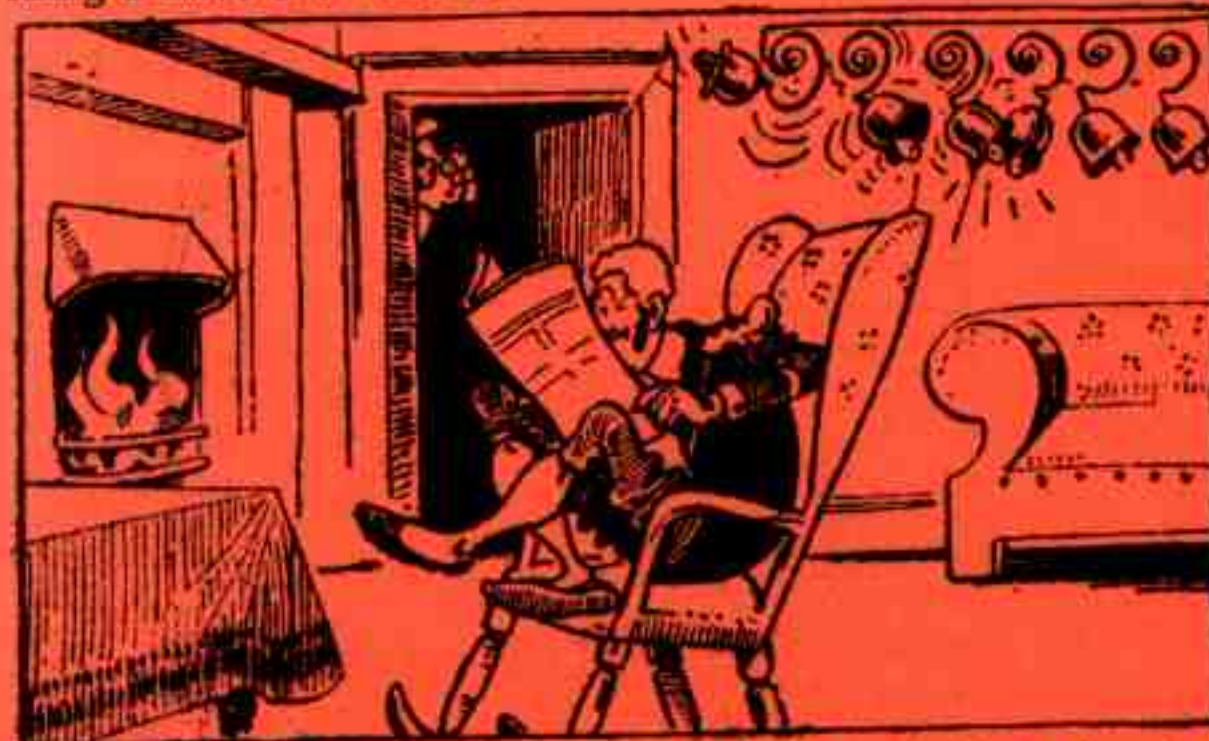


Master: "You want to ask me a great question. Well, what is it?"
Johnny: "What did the Dead Sea die of?"

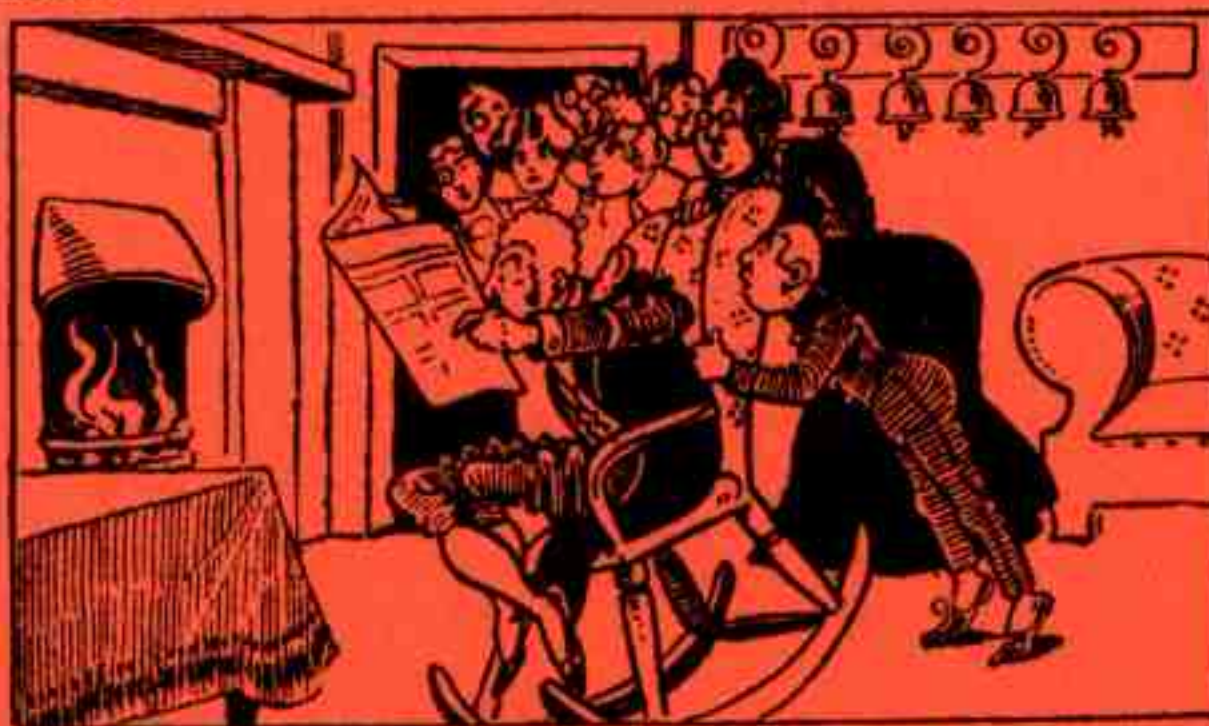
THE STORY WAS STIRRING—BUT NOT JEAMES!



1. Jeames of Mayfair was reading "Tom Merry's Concert Party," and became so interested that he heard not the tinkling of the bell. "My word," quoth he, "this is the best thing I have ever struck!"



2. Clang! Bang! went the bells. Jingle! jangle! And the lady of the house, coming down to see why Jeames did not answer the bell, couldn't help reading the story herself.



3. And in five minutes the whole outfit—daughters, sons, maid, and page-boy—were all eagerly devouring the story. Read it for yourself and you'll see why.

DUE WARNING.



Visitor: "Say, I'm from United States, America."
Waiter: "All right, sir. I'll warn the other visitors."

NOT A WORD.



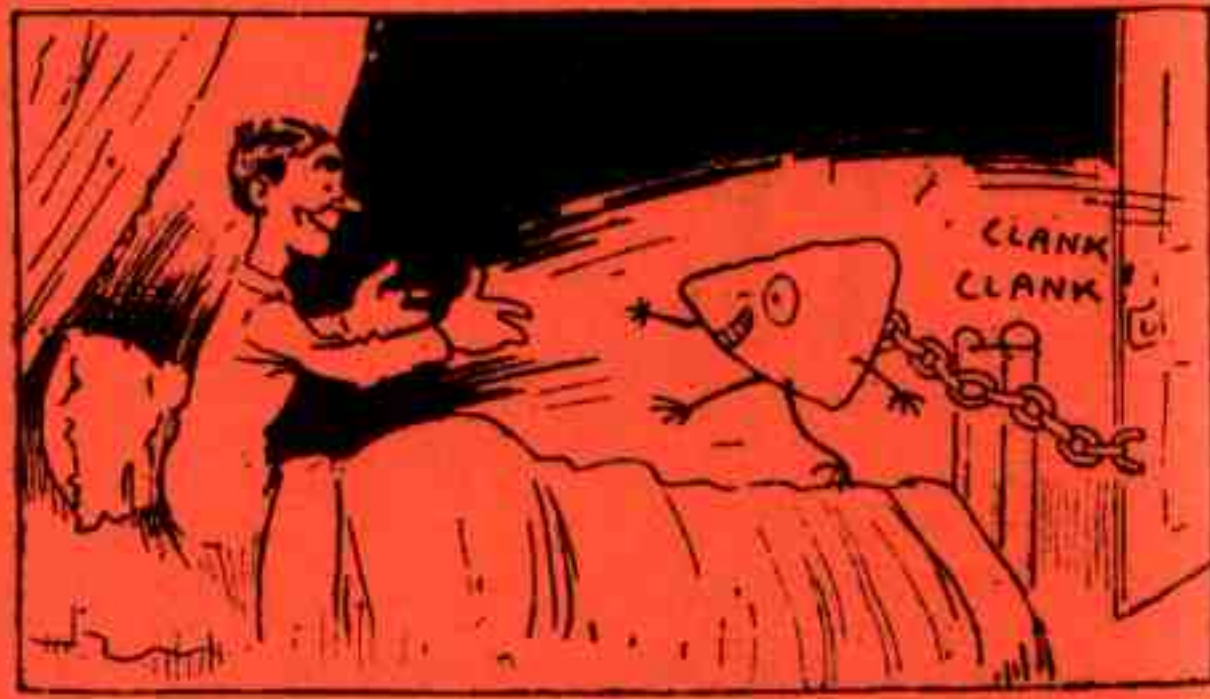
First Tommy: "I heard you got a bull at the targets yesterday?"

Second Tommy: "Hush! You fool, it was Farmer Giles's old cow!"

CHEESE IT!



1. "Ah-h-h! What's that! Whatever can it be!" cried the guest at the Manor House, as the clank of chains was heard coming from the haunted chamber.



2. But it was only the Stilton cheese that had broken its chain, and was doing a stroll round to see how things were looking.