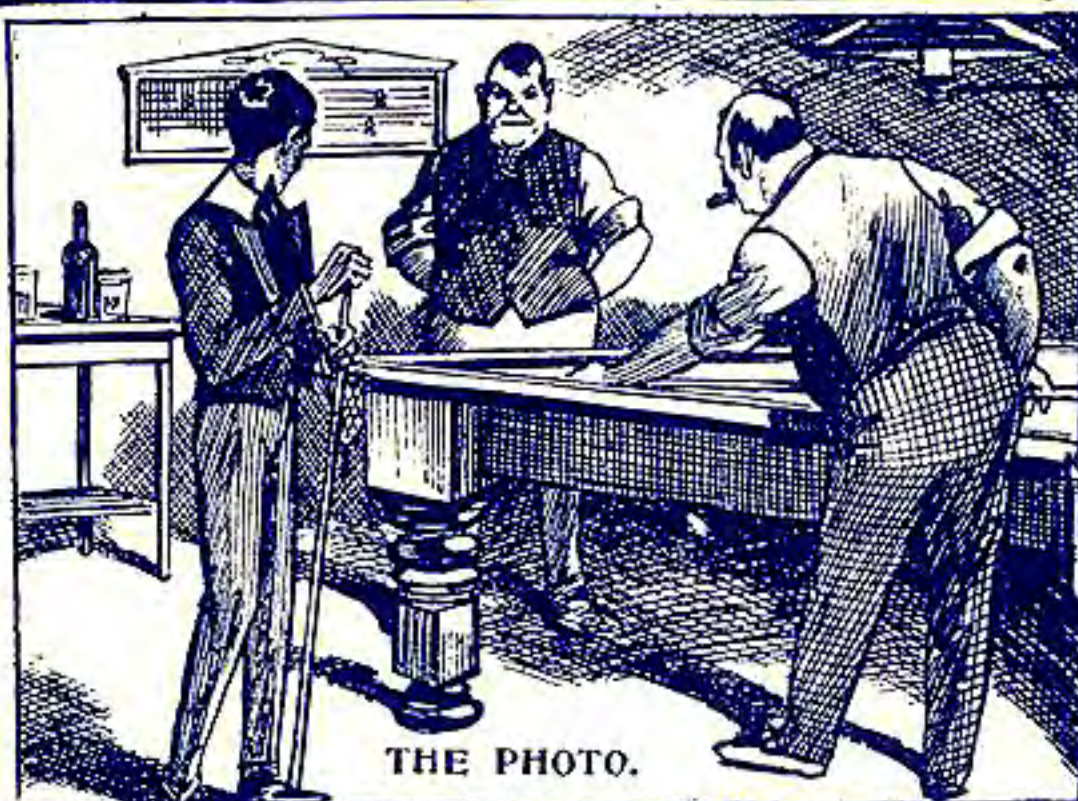


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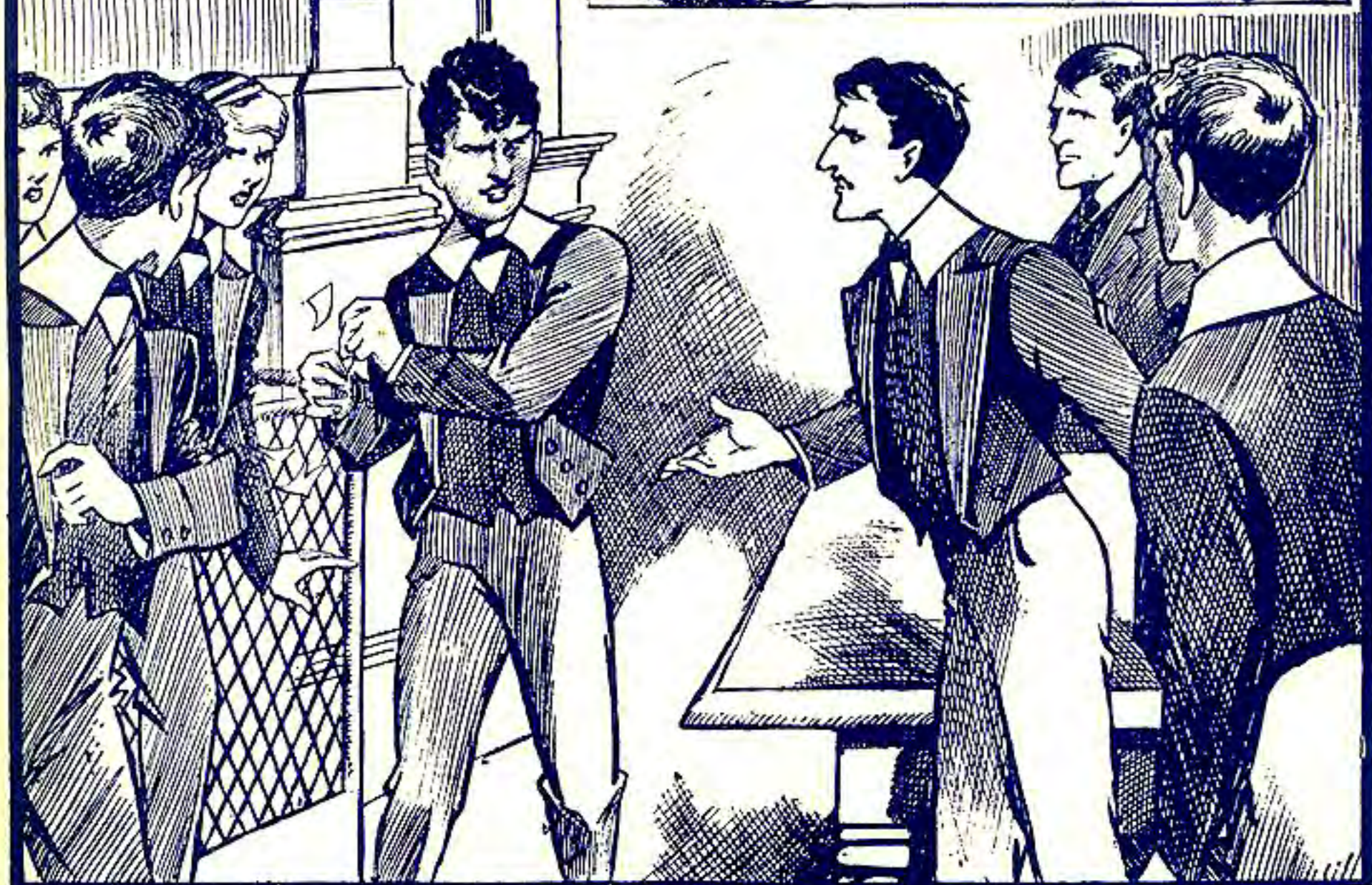


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HURREE SINGH'S SECRET!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Fuzzle for Bunter!

"**A** NYTHING for little us, Boggy?"

Harry Wharton & Co.—the Famous Five of the Remove—were on their way to the junior cricket-ground when they spotted Mr. Boggs coming across the quad.

They bore down on the village postman at once.

There was always a chance of a remittance for somebody when Mr. Boggs came along, although, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had sorrowfully observed, in war-time the remittfulness was not terrific.

"Honky one, young gents!" said Mr. Boggs, fumbling in his bag. "Letter for Master 'Urree Jampot!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh chuckled.

His extensive name presented difficulties which Mr. Boggs did not try to grapple with. So Mr. Boggs made it Hurree Jampot, for short.

"Kindly hand me the esteemed missive, my excellent Boggs," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Billy Bunter came rolling up as the Friardale postman fished out the letter. The Owl of the Remove blinked anxiously through his big glasses at the postman.

"Got my letter, Boggs?" he asked.

"No, Master Bunter."

"Sure there ain't a registered letter for me?"

"Quite sure, sir."

Mr. Boggs tramped on, leaving Hurree Singh with a letter in his hand, and Billy Bunter with a frown on his fat face.

"I say, you fellows, this is getting too thick!" exclaimed Bunter. "My postal-order doesn't seem to be coming this afternoon."

"Too bad!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "The delay can't be due to the war, though. You were expecting that postal-order before the war."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you know! I say, Inky, are you sure that letter isn't for me?" said Bunter anxiously. "Boggs is a silly ass, you know. Perhaps you'd better let me open it and make sure."

"The ratfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!"

"Buck up with it, Inky, if you're going to read it," said Frank Nugent. "They are waiting for us on Little Side!"

"Temple & Co. are on the ground," said Johnny Bull, looking towards the cricket-field.

"The delayfulness will be only momentful, my esteemed chum!"

Hurree Jamset Singh slit the envelope with his penknife, and took out the letter.

His chums waited for him.

As his dark eyes glanced over the letter a startled exclamation left the lips of the dusky nabob.

But he did not exclaim, "My hat!" or "By gum!" He uttered an exclamation in a mysterious language that was worse than Greek to the Greyfriars juniors. Hurree Singh's own language was a hidden mystery to his chums, and they had seldom heard him speak it. It was only when he was startled or excited that the Nabob of Bhanipur broke out in that unknown tongue.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Are you cracking nuts with your teeth, Inky? Or is that your native lingo?"

Hurree Singh did not reply.

His eyes were fixed upon the letter, and there was dismay in his dusky face. He read the letter to the end without looking up.

Billy Bunter blinked at him very inquisitively. It was evident that the letter had had a startling effect upon the nabob. Bunter's curiosity was aroused at once.

"Not bad news, Inky?" asked Harry Wharton, as Hurree Singh looked up from the letter at last.

"Somebody ill?" asked Bob.

Under his dusky complexion a red flush showed in the cheeks of the Indian junior.

"There is no illfulness," he replied.

"Let us proceedfully go to the cricket, or the esteemed Temple will be losing his ludicrous temper."

"Right-ho! Come on!"

It was clear that Hurree Singh did not want to speak of the contents of the letter, and his chums did not think of asking questions as soon as that was clear.

It was a little odd, however, for the Famous Five seldom had anything secret from one another, and certainly Hurree Singh was not at all secretive.

Billy Bunter rolled after the five juniors as they walked down to Little Side. Bunter was burning with curiosity.

He bestowed a dig in the ribs upon the Nabob of Bhanipur, and gave him an affable blink.

"Anything wrong, Inky?" he asked.

Hurree Singh stared at him coldly.

"The wrongfulness is not terrific," he replied.

"I'll tell you what," said Bunter confidentially, "you've had bad news. Tell me all about it, and I'll give you my advice—as an old pal, you know!"

"You may keep your palful advice."

"The best thing you can do," said Bunter, unheeding, "is to hand me the letter, and I'll give you my opinion!"

Bob Cherry looked round.

"Cut off, you inquisitive frog!" he snapped.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

Bob raised his foot, and the Owl of the Remove dodged round Hurree Singh.

"Keep off, you rotter! I'm jolly well going to stand by a pal who's had bad news. Inky's had bad news. You can

see it in his chivvy! Now, Inky, you hand me the letter, and I'll tell you exactly what to do. See?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh frowned for a moment; but suddenly his face cleared, and he took the letter from his pocket.

"The esteemed Bunter is very good," he remarked. "I will listen with terrific respectfulness to his opinion on my excellent letter."

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his glasses. He was devoured by curiosity; but he had hardly expected the nabob to show him the letter.

"You're an ass, Inky!" growled Johnny Bull. "If there's anything private in that letter, Bunter will blab it all over Greyfriars."

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"I do not think the esteemed Bunter will wag his honourable tongue about the letter, my worthy Bull. Here you are, my Bunterful pal!"

Bunter's fat fingers closed eagerly on the letter. He blinked loftily at the chums of the Remove.

"You fellows dry up," he said. "Inky confides in me, as a pal. Naturally, he's not going to show you the letter. You fellows can't be relied on."

"My hat!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked somewhat peculiar as Bunter took the letter. The nabob had not offered to show it to his chums, and he had avoided telling them anything about what was in it. Yet he was handing it to Bunter, the chatterbox of Greyfriars, to read!

But as Bunter unfolded the letter, and blinked at it, a startling change came over his face. He blinked, and blinked again, and then glared at the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"You silly ass!" he roared.

"Does not the esteemed Bunter wish to read?" purred Hurree Singh.

"How can I read pot-hooks and spider-legs?" howled Bunter. "You silly chump, I don't believe you can read it yourself!"

The nabob grinned.

"The readfulness is easy to my esteemed self, my worthy fat Bunter, as it is written in my own honourable language," he said.

"Call that a language!" snorted Bunter. "What does it mean in English?"

"The findoutfulness is the proper caper," remarked Hurree Singh, as he took back the letter.

He held it up for his chums to see, and the Co. chuckled. They understood now why Hurree Singh had shown it to Bunter.

The letter was written in the Deva-Nagari characters used in India, and so was evidently from a correspondent of Inky's own race. So far from being able to decipher the meaning, Bunter could

not even guess what a single one of the letters was meant to represent.

"Ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Go it, Bunter! I'd like to see you translate that letter."

"Look here, Inky, what does it mean?" snorted Bunter. "How can I advise you if I don't know what the letter's about?"

"The advisefulness will have to be postponed with terrific indefiniteness," remarked the nabob. "Let it wait till you have learnfully mastered the language of Bhanipur, my worthy Bunter. With your unusual brainful powers, it will take you perhapsfully two hundred years."

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh slipped the letter into the pocket of his blazer, and walked on with his chums. Bunter shook his fat fist after him.

The Paul Pry of Greyfriars was left with his curiosity ungratified—always a very painful state of affairs for William George Bunter!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Found Wanting!

"WAITIN' for you!"

Cecil Reginald Temple, the captain of the Fourth, turned his eyeglass upon Harry Wharton & Co. as he made that remark. His manner was lofty.

"Sorry!" said Wharton. "Only a few minutes, you know. Ready now!"

The two junior skippers tossed for innings, and the Fourth Form secured the first.

Temple and Fry went to the wickets, and Harry Wharton led his men into the field.

It was a Form match between the Remove and the Upper Fourth. It was not a match to which the heroes of the Remove attached much importance; they were accustomed to walking over Temple & Co.

Mighty men of the Remove Eleven, like Bob Cherry, Squiff, and Johnny Bull, were standing out, to give second-rate players a show. This was not a compliment to Cecil Reginald Temple, and he understood it.

Cecil Reginald was very keen on beating the Remove, if only to show Wharton that he couldn't afford to leave out his best men when playing the Fourth.

The Remove Eleven consisted of Wharton, Hurree Singh, Nugent, Rake, Ogilvy, Micky Desmond, Kipps, Morgan, Tom Dutton, Bolsover major, and Hazeldene.

Only two of them were really among the best Remove players—Wharton and the nabob. Nugent, Rake, and Ogilvy were very good, however.

Harry Wharton had not the slightest doubt of walking over Temple's best men with that team. Otherwise he would not have risked it. For, although anxious to give every member of the club a show in the matches, his business as cricket skipper was, of course, first of all to win matches.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's bowling could always be relied on, and unless the Fourth Form batsmen were very lucky they were not likely to give the nabob much trouble.

Nugent was given the first over, against Temple. Cecil Reginald was a good deal of a dandy, and a little of a slacker, and he generally found cricket practice too much of a fag. But Cecil Reginald had been bucking up of late, and his form was unusually good. He hit Nugent's bowling about, and gloriously took nine runs for the over.

Fourth-Formers round the field cheered Temple.

This was a good beginning. Nugent

tossed the ball to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh when the field crossed over.

The nabob did not catch it. It dropped to his feet.

"Hallo! Wake up, Inky!" exclaimed Nugent, in surprise.

The nabob started, and picked up the ball, colouring. He had been standing with his brows puckered in thought.

Harry Wharton gave him rather an anxious look.

"Not feeling fit, Inky?" he asked.

"The fitfulness is terrific, my esteemed Wharton!"

"Pile in and get Temple's wicket, then!"

"Right-ho!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh went to the bowling-crease.

The odd run had given Temple the bowling again, and he stood up very carefully and watchfully to Hurree Singh. He knew the nabob's powers as a bowler. As a matter of fact, Temple hardly expected to live through the over; but he naturally meant to do his best.

The ball came down, and, to Temple's amazement, it was a very easy one. He drove it for two.

Ball after ball came down, and each Temple played with ease, and the runs mounted up. Remove fellows on the ground stared, and almost rubbed their eyes at the sight of Cecil Reginald Temple making the running from Hurree Singh's bowling. It was only too-evident that the Nabob of Bhanipur was not in his usual form.

Temple was smiling now with great satisfaction. He attributed his success to his own wonderful batting, and he rejoiced.

He ran three, and Fry faced the bowling for the last ball of the over. Fry cut it away for two.

There was a buzz among the Remove fellows outside the pavilion as the field crossed once more.

"Call that bowling!" said Skinner to Snoop, and Snoop chuckled.

Snoop himself could have bowled as well as that! At least, Snoop thought so.

The news that Temple of the Fourth was putting up an unexpected batting display drew juniors to Little Side from all quarters.

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, had come to look on.

The Bounder eyed Hurree Singh very curiously as the nabob took his place in the field again, and Ogilvy went on to bowl. Hurree Singh was red under his dusky skin. He knew that he had not done what his Form-fellows expected of him.

Harry Wharton came up to him and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Look here, Inky! What's wrong?" he demanded.

The nabob looked troubled.

"The wrongfulness is not great," he murmured. "But the bowlfulness has not been goodful. My esteemed thoughts have been gathering wool."

"You were as fit as a fiddle before dinner," said Harry. "If you don't feel well, Inky, you can get off, if you like. We can manage."

Wharton was really anxious about his dusky chum. He could not help connecting Hurree Singh's peculiar change with the letter he had received, which had plainly startled and disturbed him.

It was clear that the nabob's mind was elsewhere, and that he could only keep his thoughts on the cricket by a very great effort.

But the nabob shook his head.

"The sorrowfulness is great," he said. "But the playfulness shall be better. I will stickfully keep on."

"Right-ho, if you feel like it!"

"The likefulness is terrific."

"All serene, then!"

Ogilvy bowled to Temple. The Scottish junior showed great form, and Temple had plenty to do to keep his sticks up. There was a buzz as the captain of the Fourth hit the ball up to cover-point. It was the easiest of easy catches for Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. But he did not make a movement.

"Look out!" shouted the Bounder.

"Catch, you idiot—catch!" roared Bolsover major, from the long field.

Hurree Singh snatched at the ball too late, and it went to grass. A howl came from the pavilion.

"Butterfingers!"

"Boooh!"

The fieldmen stared at Inky. He seldom missed a chance, and this was a catch that Skinner, or Snoop, or even Bunter could have negotiated with ease.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "What's the matter with Inky?"

"He seems to be off his dot!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"It doesn't look like a walk-over for the Remove this time," remarked Vernon-Smith. "Is Inky off colour today?"

"He wasn't this morning," said Bob.

"He was bowling great guns at practice. Blessed if I understand him!"

"He, he, he!"

That unmusical cachinnation came from Billy Bunter.

"What are you exploding like a Chinese cracker for, you fat image?" growled Bob Cherry.

"Call that cricket!" sniggered Bunter. "Fancy Wharton refusing me a place in the eleven and playing that black idiot! He, he, he!"

"I guess I could lay over that!" remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I kinder reckon that I could walk all over that elabided jay at cricket! You hear me?"

"Oh, rats!" snapped Bob.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was looking distressed. His shortcomings were as painfully apparent to himself as to the rest of the field.

Harry Wharton hesitated to give him the ball for the next over, but he caught the nabob's eye, and handed it to him. The dusky junior went on to bowl, and he pulled himself together with an effort that was quite visible. While that effort lasted Hurree Singh was his old self. Temple's wicket went down, and Scott's, and Wilkinson's, one after another, and the Remove fellows roared and cheered the "hat trick."

"That's the tune, Inky!" exclaimed Wharton, in delight. And the nabob grinned and nodded.

But it was only a flash in the pan. From the moment of that success Hurree Singh's form was erratic and poor. After a few overs, which handsomely increased the Fourth Form score, Wharton had to take him off. And in the field Hurree Singh was little more than an ornament to the landscape, as Bolsover major scoffingly remarked.

There was no doubt about it, the nabob was utterly off his game, and, excepting when he roused himself by an effort, his expression was one of deep and gloomy thought—and his thoughts were not of cricket.

Harry Wharton was not the kind of skipper to worry a player, and he simply let the nabob alone for the remainder of the match. Hurree Jamset Singh was a passenger to the end.

The Fourth took a hundred for their first innings—a figure they would never have approached if the Remove's champion bowler had been in form. The Remove knocked up an equal number, though Hurree Singh distinguished himself by acquiring a duck's egg. Temple & Co.'s second innings brought them

seventy. In that innings Hurree Singh did not bowl a single over. When the Remove batted again, the nabob was left last on the list. Harry Wharton played a good innings, and Ogilvy, who had been devoting himself to cricket of late, backed him up in a style that gave the Remove score a handsome lift. The captain of the Remove and Ogilvy made fifty between them, and then the wickets began to go down. But Rake added runs, and the score rose to sixty-nine, with two wickets to fall. Micky Desmond knocked away the ball for two. The Remove fellows cheered the victors, but the result had been much closer than they had anticipated in a match with Temple & Co., and the game had been drawn out to near dusk.

As the cricketers came off Harry Wharton looked curiously at the nabob, who was waiting his turn to bat, his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and a far-away and gloomy expression on his face.

"All serene, Inky!" he said.

Hurree Singh started.

"I am ready, my esteemed chum," he said, catching up his bat.

"Inky, you ass!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment. "Where are you going with that bat?"

"My hat!" roared Boisoever major. "He's been to sleep standing up, like a horse. The match is over, and he doesn't know it!"

"Oh!" ejaculated the nabob.

"We've beaten them by a couple of wickets, Inky," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You won't be wanted. All serene!"

The nabob's dusky face was crimson. Amazing as it seemed, he had been unaware that the game was ended.

"I—I—I did not see," he stammered. "I was not awarfully looking, my esteemed chums. I—I—"

"Come in to tea," said Wharton, and he slipped his arm through the nabob's and led him away. Hurree Singh was followed by a good many curious glances from the Removites.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Very Peculiar Request!

THERE was a war tea in Study No. 1 in the Remove. Harry Wharton & Co., who had good, healthy appetites, missed the days of peace and plenty; only Hurree Jamset Ram Singh took kindly to "war fare." The Nabob of Bhanipur had always subsisted upon quantities that seemed absurdly small to his chums. The other four members of the famous Co. were prepared to welcome the final defeat of the Huns and the declaration of peace with great rejoicing. Still, there were compensations. Billy Bunter, who was wont to look into fellows' studies about tea-time, like a lion seeking what he might devour, had dropped into the habit of giving No. 1 Study the go-by. Much as the chums of the Remove missed the ample fare of other days, they observed strictly all the "grub rules." It was a point of honour with Greyfriars fellows to play the game in that respect.

On the present occasion the dusky nabob was even more frugal than usual with his meal. He ate hardly anything, and he uttered hardly a word, and appeared to be unconscious of the astonishment he was causing among his chums. The Co. were not in the least inquisitive, but they could not help seeing that there was something up with Inky, and they rather expected him to confide in them. But he did not.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh left before the other fellows were finished. When

he had gone, the four juniors looked at one another.

"What's wrong with Inky?" asked Bob.

"Something must be wrong," said Harry Wharton, puzzled. "Blessed if I can make it out! Can't be bad news from the Front, or he'd have told us. Some of his people are with the army in Egypt. But he'd have told us if it was that."

"It was that letter, all the same," said Johnny Bull eagerly.

"Well, it must have been," agreed Harry. "It seemed to knock him over—and he was all right before it came. But if he doesn't want to tell us, I suppose it's not our bizney."

After tea Bob Cherry went along to his own study, No. 13, to get on with his prep. His study-mates were there—Mark Linley and Wun Lung, the Chinese, being already at work. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sat in the armchair, his dusky brows knitted in thought.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob.

"Still got 'em, Inky?"

The nabob looked up.

"Inky seems to have the blues," said Mark. "I thought he was out of sorts, by the way he played cricket this afternoon."

"The playfulness was not good," said the nabob sorrowfully. "I should have stood out of the esteemed match. My esteemed brain was wandering."

"Has it come back?" grinned Bob.

"The thinkfulness in my worthy brain was terrific," explained the nabob, "and I could not fixfully stick my mind upon the game."

"Better stick it fixfully on your prep, anyway," suggested Bob. "Otherwise, Quelch will stick you fixfully in the morning."

Hurree Singh shook his head.

"I do not feel disposefully inclined for work, my worthy chum. I shall chance it with the august Quelch in the morning."

And the nabob left the study, leaving his puzzled friends to work.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh walked slowly down the passage, his brows wrinkled. It was plain enough that trouble of some kind had fallen upon the kindly Indian junior, and that he did not feel disposed to communicate it to his chums. He hesitated some time in the passage, and finally knocked at the door of No. 4, which belonged to Vernon-Smith and Skinner.

"Come in!" sang out the Bounder.

Both the juniors looked curiously at the nabob as he came in. Skinner indulged in a chuckle.

"Your cricketfulness is terrific!" he remarked, with a playful imitation of the nabob's remarkable English.

"Feeling seedy?" asked Smithy.

"Not at allfully."

"You played this afternoon like a fag in the Second Form, and a specially clumsy fag at that," said the Bounder. "I fear that the esteemed Smithy's opinion is correctful. I owe a terrific apologise to the worthy club. Are you busy?"

"Well, I'm doing my prep. Have you looked in for a smoke?" grinned the Bounder.

"No. I wished to have a small talkfulness."

"If you mean a little talk, you can go ahead," said the Bounder with a chuckle. "Pile in, as talkfully as you like."

The nabob hesitated.

"I'm waiting," remarked the Bounder after a pause, with a glance at his book as a hint that his prep was not yet finished.

Hurree Singh glanced at Skinner, and hesitated again. Skinner saw the glance,

but did not take the hint. He did not intend to clear out of his own study. Skinner was not over-burdened with delicacy of feeling.

"The esteemed Smithy sometimes goes to the delectable and disgusting Cross Keys in Friardale," said the nabob at last.

Vernon-Smith stared.

"Sometimes!" he said. "Is this going to be a sermon. If so, you can chuck it at firstly. Good-bye!"

"It is not an esteemed sermon. Will you tell me when you are going to that honourable and disreputable place again?"

"What on earth do you want to know for?"

"I wish to send a letter to the worthy Cobb."

"The landlord of the Cross Keys?" ejaculated Vernon-Smith.

Skinner was staring at the nabob blankly.

"Yes. I—I want him to give a letter to someone else, but I have not the honour of his esteemed acquaintance, so I cannot very well write to him and make the request. But as you are his ludicrous friend, perhaps he would take the letter from you and pass it on when it is called for."

"Are you off your rocker?" exclaimed the astonished Bounder. "Surely you don't know any of Cobb's gang at the Cross Keys?"

"My hat!" murmured Skinner. "We're getting some revelations. I understood that the select and respectable Five never went in for these shady little games. We live and learn!"

The nabob flushed under his dark skin, but he said nothing. The Bounder eyed him with increasing surprise.

"Look here, Inky," he said good-naturedly. "If you're taking up blaggin' as an amusement, take my tip, and don't. You'll be like a lamb among wolves if you get in with that gang."

"The esteemed Smithy is in with them."

"That's different. I've got my eye-teeth cut. Why, you must be off your chump!" said Vernon-Smith. "Your friends will scrag you if they find out that you're playing the ox like that. Keep out of it, like a sensible chap!"

"Satan rebuking sin!" chortled Skinner.

"The esteemed Smithy is mistaken. I am not going infully for blagging in his honourable and revolting way. It is a letter that Mr. Cobb will hand to someone else—"

"A bookie, I suppose?"

"Certainly not!"

"Who, then?"

The nabob did not answer.

"I'm to take a letter to old Cobb, and tell him to hand it to someone who will call for it—is that it?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Exactly."

"Well, my hat! Does Wharton know?"

"The knowfulness is not great."

Vernon-Smith wrinkled his brows.

"I wouldn't mind doing it," he said. "As a matter of fact, I'm giving Cobb a look-in this evening, if the coast is clear. But I don't want your pals slanging me for leading you into naughty ways, Inky. I'll take the letter fast enough, if you want me to; but my advice to you is not to send it, and to keep clear of any chap who knows Cobb!"

"The esteemed Smithy is very kind. I will write the worthy letter, and hand it to you soonfully."

"Oh, all right!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, apparently relieved in his mind, quitted Study No. 4.

The Bounder whistled. Harold Skinner stamped his prep that evening even more hurriedly than usual. He was anxious to get downstairs. He had news—entertaining news—for the fellows in the Common-room.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Wharton!

HARRY WHARTON and Nugent came into the Common-room together after prep. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull followed them in. The nabob was not to be seen.

There was a buzz of voices in the junior Common-room, and the chums heard the name of Inky repeated several times. Some of the fellows were grinning—especially Skinner and Snoop and Stott and Fish and Bunter. Some of them looked grave. But nearly all of them were interested in the discussion that was going on.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's the merry joke? Let a chap into it!"

"You fellows are the joke, I guess," chortled Fisher T. Fish. "I guess you're bowled out, clean as a whistle!"

"I say, you fellows, I knew it all along!" chuckled Bunter.

"You never know fellows till you find 'em out," remarked Stott. "Still, I must say I'm not surprised. Always too much humbug about those chaps, to my thinking!"

"Faith, it's a silly baste ye are!" said Micky Desmond. "There isn't a word of thruth in it!"

"Not a syllable," said Squiff. "I suggest rubbing Skinner's nose in the carpet for making up a yarn like that!"

"It's true!" shouted Skinner. "Ask Smithy!"

"Well, Smithy can speak up for himself," said Tom Brown. "Smithy, has Inky given you a letter to take to a pub for him?"

The Bounder looked up from the book he was reading on the sofa.

"Pub!" he repeated, staring at the New Zealand junior as if he did not understand.

"Yes. Skinner says Inky's given you a letter to take to a pub."

"What's a pub?"

"Eh?"

"I don't know where you were brought up, Brown," said the Bounder calmly; "but I was brought up too carefully to know anything about pubs. You shock me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you ass!" exclaimed Tom Brown warmly. "Can't you say yes or no?"

"My dear chap, I can say both if you like. Yes and no!"

"Is Skinner telling the truth?" shouted Bolsover major.

The Bounder laughed.

"What a question!" he said, with a yawn. "Could Skinner tell the truth? Does it sound probable?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Why, you rotter, you know it's the truth!" yelled Skinner.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders, and returned to his book. Several fellows called out questions to him, but he seemed deaf.

Harry Wharton & Co. had listened in astonishment; but they came towards Skinner now with looks that made him feel rather uneasy.

"I suppose this is one of your little jokes, Skinner?" said the captain of the Remove quietly. "But I don't quite see the joke, and it's time for you to own up that it's a lie about Inky!"

"It isn't!" said Skinner sullenly.

"You say that Inky has given Vernon-

Smith a note to take to a pub for him?"

"Yes; to the Cross Keys."

"That's a lie!" said Johnny Bull directly.

"Ask Smithy!"

"No need to ask Smithy!" said Wharton savagely. "It's a lie, and if you don't own up to it at once I'll jam your head on the wall!"

Skinner drew quickly behind Bolsover major. The bully of the Remove was not slow to chip in.

"Hands off!" he said. "I'm not so sure that Skinner's lying. You're not Tsar of Greyfriars, Wharton. Keep your paws to yourself!"

"Peace, my children—peace!" said Sampson Field soothingly, as Wharton clenched his hands. "Nothing to scrap about. Smithy can say yes or no!"

"Smithy can hold his tongue," remarked the Bounder, without looking up, "and Smithy's going to!"

"He's got the letter in his pocket!" sneered Skinner.

"A letter written by Hurree Singh?" exclaimed Nugent

Lower Fourth studies, and he found the Nabob of Bhanipur in No. 13, getting on with his belated prep in a desultory way.

"Inky!" he exclaimed.

"My esteemed chum, the apologise is terrific!" said the nabob. "I have enormous regretfulness for having played when the fitfulness was not great! I ought to have stood outfully!"

"Never mind that, Inky. That's over and done with, and we beat the Fourth, anyway. I want to ask you something. Skinner says you've given the Bounder a letter to take to the Cross Keys. I know it's not true, but I said I'd ask you before I thumped Skinner!"

A troubled look came over the dusky face.

"The thumpfulness is not necessary," said the nabob at length.

"What?"

"The esteemed Skinner is a silly rotter to chatter babbelfully, but his statement is founded factfully!"

Harry Wharton stared blankly at the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"It's true?" he exclaimed.



China's loan to India! (See Chapter 7.)

"Yes."

"To be taken to the Cross Keys?"

"Yes."

"It's a rotten lie!"

"Shush!" interposed Peter Todd, pushing between Hurree Singh's chums and the sullen Skinner. "You can't settle a yarn like that by punching noses! There's one witness who can settle the matter!"

"Who's that?" snapped Wharton.

"Inky himself! Where's Inky?"

"Yes, let him speak for himself!" sneered Bolsover major. "Where is he? He's missing from the flock!"

Wharton's brows contracted darkly.

"There's no need to ask Inky," he said. "We know it isn't true. But I'll ask him, as a matter of form, before I hammer Skinner. And when I've asked him, I'll come back here and rub Skinner's nose in the hearthrug!"

Harry Wharton left the Common-room with that, and the Remove fellows waited with keen interest for his return. The captain of the Remove hurried up to the

Hurree Singh nodded

There was a long, tense pause. The captain of the Remove was taken utterly aback, and he did not know what to say. He found his voice at last.

"Inky! You—you can't be idiot enough to be getting mixed up in shady rot like the Bounder! It's impossible!"

"Not at allfully!"

"What are you sending a letter to the Cross Keys for?"

No answer.

"You don't want to tell me?" asked Wharton, biting his lip.

"The tellfulness is not possible!"

"Oh, all right!"

Wharton quitted the study, and the nabob, with a troubled brow, bent over his work again. The captain of the Remove returned to the Common-room with a flush in his cheeks. Inky's admission had quite taken the wind out of his sails. All eyes were fixed on him as he came into the Common-room.

"Well?" exclaimed a dozen voices.

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Wharton did not even glance at Skinner's sneering face.

"Time for a game of chess before bed, Franky!" he remarked.

"Chess!" repeated Nugent.

"Yes. Didn't you ask me to show you the Muzio opening?"

"Eh? Yes. But what about Inky?"

"Yes, what about Inky?" jeered Skinner.

"And what about rubbing Skinner's nose in the rug?" asked Peter Todd.

"Never mind, Inky," said Wharton quietly, though his colour deepened.

"Let's get on with the chess, Frank."

The captain of the Remove sat down to the chess-table without another word. Skinner burst into a cackle, and the other fellows looked at one another. There was only one conclusion to be drawn from Wharton's dropping the subject, and the Removites drew it.

When the Remove went to the dormitory that night, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was the recipient of a good many curious glances. He did not appear to notice them. He was deep in thought, and he did not even notice that his chums were somewhat constrained in their manner. He hardly spoke a word before Wingate put the lights out in the dormitory, and he did not speak one word afterwards.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Short of Cash!

WHEN the Remove were dismissed after morning lessons the following day, the Famous Five sauntered out into the quad together as usual.

But they were more silent than their wont.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was most silent of all. He did not appear to have observed the constraint in his comrades' manner, however. He was evidently deep in thought, but upon what subject he kept to himself.

He detached himself from the Co. to join the Bounder, who was strolling under the elms alone. Vernon-Smith greeted him with a sardonic grin. The Bounder was cynically amused by this new development in Hurree Singh, who was about the last fellow at Greyfriars whom anyone would have suspected of wanting to play the giddy goat.

"You were out boundfully last night, my esteemed Smithy," began the nabob.

"I heard you sneakfully depart."

"Quite so."

"You delivered the esteemed letter?"

"Yes. Cobb's got it."

"Good!"

"I did it because you asked me," said Vernon-Smith. "I still think you're a silly fool to get mixed up with that gang, Inky."

"The mixfulness will not be terrific, my worthy Smithy. But the thankfulness is great for the delivery of the letter."

The Bounder nodded, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh rejoined his comrades. They looked at him. The nabob did not make any explanation, however.

"My esteemed chums—" he began, after a pause.

"Well?" said Bob.

"The shortfulness of cash is a terrific trouble. Have you any esteemed tin to lend me borrowfully?"

"Certainly! I've got a tanner."

"I do not wish to raise a loan tannerfully, my worthy Bob. My requirements can only be met quidfully."

"You want to borrow quids?" asked Wharton.

"Exactfully."

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"Well, I've got one, and you can have it," said Harry. "I got it this morning from my uncle."

"The obligefulness is great," said Hurree Singh, as he took the currency note. "I shall payfully settle when a remittance comes for me in a few days. My esteemed Nugent, have you any any cash?"

"Threepence," said Nugent.

"And you, my excellent Bull?"

Johnny Bull drove his hands deeper into his pockets, and planted himself very firmly upon his feet, and looked fixedly at Inky. Wharton gave him a glance, but Johnny did not heed it. Johnny was a determined youth, and when he had anything to say he said it in plain language.

"I've got a quid," said Johnny Bull. "Any pal of mine is welcome to it if he wants it. But I've got a bone to pick with you first."

"My esteemed Johnny—" murmured the nabob.

"You sent a letter to a low pub in Friardale," said Johnny Bull. "What do you mean by it?"

Hurree Singh was silent.

"You needn't blink at me, Harry! We're going to have this out!" said Johnny Bull grimly. "If Inky's following in the Bounder's footsteps, it's time for his pals to look after him, and lick him, if necessary. I want to know what connection Inky has with those rogues at the Cross Keys."

"There is an old English proverb," remarked the nabob. "Smallful persons should not inquirefully ask questions."

"What?"

"I am sorrowful if my excellent chum is infuriated, but I cannot reply to his ludicrous questions."

"Why not?"

No answer.

"Does that mean that you are taking up pub-haunting, like the Bounder and Snoop?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Not at allfully."

"Then what do you want to write to Cobb for?"

"I regret terrifically that I cannot explain," said Hurree Singh quietly. "But I beg my esteemed friend to give me the benefit of the doubtfulness."

"Well, that's not good enough," said Johnny Bull deliberately. "It looks to me as if the Bounder's dragging you into his shady rot, just as he used to do with Hazeldene!"

The nabob shook his head.

"My esteemed and fatheaded chum is labouring under a misapprehension."

"Smithy oughtn't to have taken the letter!" growled Bob. "He could only take it by going out of bounds."

"The worthy Smithy was going out of boundfulness in any case. I asked him favourfully to take the letter."

"Can't you tell why?" demanded Wharton.

"That is not possful."

"You begin with the Cross Keys gang."

and then you're suddenly hard up and want money," said Johnny Bull. "I know you had money yesterday. If you're blueing it on cards and billiards, Inky—"

"That is not so, my esteemed chum."

"What have you done with it, then?" Silence.

"That's Inky's bizney, Johnny," remarked Nugent.

Johnny Bull snorted.

"I don't like a chap who keeps secrets, especially shady ones," he said. And Johnny Bull swung round and walked away, whistling. There was evidently to be no question of the loan of Johnny's quid.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh looked distressed.

He glanced after the incensed Johnny, and then looked at the serious faces of his chums. The same thoughts was in all their minds—that the good-natured, easy-going nabob had fallen under the influence of some cunning and unscrupulous fellow, who was leading him into evil.

There were some moments of silence, and then the nabob spoke.

"If the esteemed Wharton shares the ludicrous opinion of the fatheaded Bull, I will hand him back his quid," he remarked.

Wharton shook his head.

"Keep it, if you want it, Inky."

"Thank you, my esteemed chum!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh walked away by himself. He was heading for Lord Mauleverer, who was strolling in the quadrangle with Jimmy Vivian. Mauleverer was the richest fellow at Greyfriars, and Inky's chums could not help guessing that he was going to tap his lordship for a loan.

"This is dashed queer!" said Bob at last. "I don't like this. Old Inky can't be playing the giddy ox; but it looks like it."

"If so, somebody's led him into it," said Nugent. "I can't understand it!"

"It's not Smithy," said Wharton abruptly. "I'm sure of that. If Inky doesn't choose to explain, it's not our bizney. Inky's all right. Let's get some cricket before dinner."

The chums of the Remove went down to Little Side. Meanwhile, the Nabob of Bhanipur had tackled Lord Mauleverer.

His lordship greeted the nabob with a kind grin. He liked Hurree Singh, as nearly everybody at Greyfriars did.

"I am looking for an esteemed loan," the nabob explained. "Will my elegant and lofty friend oblige me till next week?"

"Anythin' you like," said Mauleverer.

"How much?"

"Five pounds!"

A request for a loan of five pounds would have made any other fellow in the Remove stare. But Lord Mauleverer was one of those lucky individuals to whom fivers are as common as currency notes with other fellows. He nodded.

"Right-ho! Where's my dashed pocket-book? Have you seen my pocket-book, Vivian?" He groped in his pockets. "Oh, here it is!"

"The thankfulness is great!"

"Not at all, dear boy."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh carefully placed the banknote in his pocket, and left the schoolboy nobleman. Billy Bunter had watched the transaction with wide-open eyes, and he rolled up immediately the nabob was gone.

"I say, Mauleverer—"

"Oh, gad!"

"I suppose you've got another fiver, Mauly, old chap?"

"Yass."

"Lend it to me!"

"Rate!"

*Eat less
Bread*

"I'm expecting a postal-order shortly, you know!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Well, make it a pound!" said Bunter generously. "Could you make it a pound, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"Hand it over, then, old chap!"

"But I'm not goin' to," added his lordship.

"Look here, you rotter! You can lend me a pound if you can lend Inky five quid!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly.

"I don't see that it follows, deah boy. Anyway, I'm not goin' to!"

"You silly rotter!"

"Would you mind kickin' Bunter for me, Vivian?" asked Lord Mauleverer plaintively. "I'd do it myself, only it's so warm!"

"Certainly!" grinned Vivian, suiting the action to the word at once.

And Billy Bunter yelled and dodged, and departed minus the pound.

The only satisfaction Bunter had was to detail to every fellow who would listen the startling fact that Inky had borrowed quids and quids of old Mauly to play billiards at the Cross Keys. And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was more than ever an object of curious interest to the Remove fellows after that.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

More Cash Required!

DURING afternoon lessons many glances were cast at Hurree Jamset Ram Singh by his Form-fellows.

It seemed to be the accepted belief in the Remove now that the dusky nabob had joined the ranks of the merry blades.

Some of the fellows were shocked, and some were amused, according to the way they looked at it.

But few had any doubts on the matter.

Inky had sent a letter to Mr. Cobb at the Cross Keys, making use of the Bounder for the purpose. After that, although he was one of the moneyed fellows of the Form, he had been borrowing money right and left.

Any fellow, however well off, might run out of cash, and have to raise a loan among his schoolfellows. But not to the extent of pounds. No schoolboy requirement could call for a loan of a five-pound note.

If there was any explanation to be made, why did not Inky make it? He had never been a secretive fellow—quite the reverse. His nature was open and frank—indeed, expansive and confiding. He was not the kind of duffer to indulge in a mystification without an object.

Skinner and Snoop and their friends were especially amused—all the more so because Harry Wharton & Co. had never concealed their contempt for the black sheep of the Form.

As Skinner put it, one of that very select brigade had fallen from grace, and Skinner found it very entertaining.

Skinner amused himself that afternoon by drawing a caricature of Hurree Singh, depicted as reeling along the High Street of Friardale, with a whisky bottle peeping out of his pocket and a cigarette in his mouth. Skinner was clever with his pencil, and the caricature was really good from an artistic point of view. And when it was passed from hand to hand under the desks it led to a considerable amount of chortling.

Chortling in class did not exactly meet the approval of Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master. He soon detected that something was on, and he took up his pointer and inquired into it.

"You were laughing, Bolsover!" he remarked, in a voice like a knife.

"Nunno, sir! I—I mean, yes, sir!"

"Kindly acquaint me with the subject of your untimely mirth, Bolsover!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"Ahem!"

"You were showing Bolsover something, Treluce?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Treluce, wondering whether the Remove-master had eyes in the back of his head. It really appeared sometimes that Mr. Quelch was so gifted.

"What was it, Treluce?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

"Bring it to me immediately, whatever it was!"

Treluce sat in dismay. He had Skinner's artistic effort in his hand, concealed under the desk.

"Do you hear me, Treluce?"

The Cornish junior had to obey. He came out before the class with the sheet in his hand. Mr. Quelch took it, and started as he looked at it. A picture of a Remove fellow, easily recognisable, in a state of advanced intoxication, was startling enough to the Form-master.

"This is Skinner's work, I presume," said Mr. Quelch quietly. He knew the peculiar gifts of Skinner as an artist. "You may go to your place, Treluce. Stand up, Skinner!"

Skinner stood up, somewhat uneasy.

"For what reason, Skinner, have you depicted your Form-fellow in this degrading and revolting state?" asked Mr. Quelch, in a voice like the rumble of thunder.

"Only—only a joke, sir!"

"Is that your idea of humour, Skinner?"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"Hurree Singh, stand up!"

The nabob arose

"Do you know of any reason, Hurree Singh, why Skinner should depict you in this condition?"

"The knowfulness is not great, honoured sahib. The esteemed Skinner is perhaps off his excellent rocker!"

There was a chuckle in the Remove, instantly suppressed as Mr. Quelch's glare swept over the class.

"Have you been guilty, Hurree Singh, of any foolish and reckless conduct which would afford grounds for what is, in fact, an accusation against you?"

"Not at allfully. I have alwaysfully conducted my esteemed self as an excellent model for the imitation of thoughtless youth, honoured sahib!"

Mr. Quelch coughed. The matter was serious, but Hurree Singh's extraordinary flow of language was detracting from its seriousness. The Remove were on the point of a burst of laughter, and were only restrained by Mr. Quelch's thunderous frown.

"You do not smoke, Hurree Singh?"

"I should regard such a proceedfulness, sahib, as unworthy of the dignity of a Nabob of Bhanipur, and as opposed to the esteemed commands of my venerable and ridiculous headmaster."

"You may sit down, Hurree Singh. Skinner, this drawing conveys a very unpleasant insinuation against your Form-fellow. Unless you can tell me that it is justified by his conduct, I have no resource but to punish you severely."

Skinner was silent.

He dared not sneak, for, whatever the Remove might have thought of the nabob's conduct, there is no doubt that they would have come down in a terrific manner on any fellow who betrayed him to his Form-master.

"Very well, Skinner! It appears, as I expected, that you have nothing to say. You will come here!"

Swish, swish, swish!

That reward of his artistic efforts kept Skinner squirming for the remainder of the afternoon. Mr. Quelch applied a match to the caricature and threw it into the grate.

But more than once during lessons his eyes rested keenly upon the dusky face of the Nabob of Bhanipur.

There is an old saying that there is no smoke without fire; and it would have been exceedingly odd if Skinner had caricatured the nabob as a roysterer without any grounds whatever for so doing. Mr. Quelch mentally determined to keep an eye on Hurree Singh, as was his duty now that the matter had been brought to his notice.

The nabob, however, did not seem disturbed by the incident. He was very thoughtful during lessons, and still looking thoughtful when the Remove came out of the class-room. But Skinner's little joke, and the Form-master's suspicions, did not form the subject of his thoughts. He joined Vernon-Smith in the passage.

"My esteemed Smithy!" he murmured.

"Any more letters to be delivered?" grinned the Bounder. "You'll have to wait till Saturday."

Hurree Singh shook his head.

"I believe you are well supplied cashfully, my esteemed chum," he said. "You can trust my honourable self to repay a loan!"

"My hat! More loans?"

"I am in need of assistance financially," explained the nabob.

The Bounder looked very grave.

"Bunter says you had a siver from Mauly to-day," he said.

"I am going to pay the esteemed Mauly next weekfully."

"I could let you have two or three pounds," said Vernon-Smith, in wonder. "But if you're playing the giddy ox—Anyway, here you are!"

"Thank you immensely!"

Four or five fellows saw the nabob take the three currency notes from the Bounder. Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders and walked away. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh looked round, and ran after Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, who was going out.

"My esteemed Fish—"

"Nothing doing!" said Fisher T. Fish promptly. "I guess I'm not lending my spondulics, Inky."

"I know the esteemed Fishy too well to think of borrowing his excellent spondulics," said Hurree Singh. "But you may offer me an esteemed price for my excellent bicycle."

"You're selling your bike?" ejaculated Fish.

Hurree Singh nodded.

"Two quid."

"The cost of the esteemed jigger was seventeen pounds, my worthy Fishy."

"Well, as you're a pal, I'll make it two-pound-ten," said Fisher T. Fish, in a burst of generosity. "Is it a trade?"

"The tradefulness is not great, my worthy and skinflinty Fishy."

And the nabob walked away. He was evidently in need of money; but Fishy's generous offer was not quite good enough. Fish darted after him.

"Hold on, Inky! I'll make it two-fifteen!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Ten minutes later a number of fellows were staring at a notice on the board in the hall. It was in Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's hand, and it ran:

"Most excellent and esteemed bike for sale!

"Very handsome jigger, of which the costfulness was seventeen pounds.

"For sale, cheapfully!

"All offers to be made to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, Nabob of Bhanipur, in Study No. 13, Remove passage. Bestful offer accepted."

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THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Skinner's Little Game!

BOB CHERRY strode into his study with a wrathful frown upon his brow.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was there alone, Mark Linley and Wun Lung being out of doors.

"You fathead, Inky!" shouted Bob.

"My worthy chum—"

"What are you selling your bike for?"

"Cash!"

"I don't mean that, you ass! What do you want to sell it for? Look here, this won't do. You've been borrowing money right and left, and now you're offering to sell your bike. What do you want money for so badly?"

"The wantfulness is terrific."

"Look here, Inky, I tell you it won't do!" exclaimed Bob, anxious as well as angry. "You've got pounds and pounds in your pocket now that you've been borrowing."

"That is correctful."

"Then what do you want more for?"

No answer.

"Skinner's saying that you're raising the wind to go on what he calls a razzle," said Bob.

"The esteemed Skinner is offside!"

"Well, I've punched his head for saying so," said Bob. "But it does look, Inky—" He paused. "I can tell you that Quelchy is suspicious, too. He knows there was something behind that picture of Skinner's. Do you want all the fellows to think you've taken up rot like the Bounder?"

"Not at allfully."

"Then chuck up playing the giddy ox," said Bob. "You can't want all that money for anything above-board, and you know it!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"The bow-wowfulness is terrific!"

"Look here, Inky—"

"Rats!"

Bob Cherry stared helplessly at his dusky chum. Hurree Singh, whose temper was always placable, was getting angry. There was a flush in his dusky cheeks, and a glitter in his eyes.

"The talkfulness of the esteemed Bob is too much," said the nabob. "I repel his insinuations with terrific scornfulness!"

Bob grinned.

"Never mind the terrific scornfulness, you funny ass!" he said. "I want you to understand what you are doing. You seem to want to advertise to all Greyfriars that you're playing the giddy ox."

"The jawfulness is too great."

"Look here, Inky—"

"And the ratfulness is terrific!"

"Oh, go and eat coke, then!" said Bob.

And he left the study, and slammed the door after him, with a slam that rang along the Remove passage.

The door was opened a few minutes later, and Fisher T. Fish's keen, sharp face looked in.

"Bike for sale—what?" he said.

"Yes, my excellent Fishy."

"Three quids, spot cash."

"Rats!"

"Now, look here, you jay—"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh picked up a ruler, and the Yankee junior retired. The seventeen-pound bike was not going for three pounds, it appeared. Wun Lung, the little Chinnee, came in a few minutes later.

"Hullee Singh sellee bikee?" he said.

The nabob nodded.

"Hard-uppee?" asked Wun Lung sympathetically.

"Not exactfully; but the wantfulness of the ready cash is great," explained the nabob.

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"Me buyee."

Hurree Singh looked at him, and hesitated. Wun Lung, who was nearly as well supplied with money as Mau-leverer himself, took out a pocket-book from some recess of his loose garments.

"What you wantee?" he asked.

"The offerfulness will be accepted thankfully."

"Me givee seventeen poundee," said Wun Lung; "but no have seventeen poundee. Givee allee have. What you tinkee?"

"The requirefulness is five pounds," said Hurree Singh.

"Allee light."

"But the ridefulness of the esteemed Wun Lung is not great," said the nabob. "You do not ride jiggerfully, my worthy chum."

"No wantee ridee."

"Then why the buyfulness?"

"Buyee bikee because Hullee Singh wantee sellee," said Wun Lung simply. "Givee bikee backee when wantee. Savvy?"

Hurree Singh grinned. He understood that his Oriental pal only wanted to help him, and was not looking for a bargain, like the enterprising Fish.

"All sereneful, my worthy chum," he remarked. "The rebuyfulness next week will be the caper."

Wun Lung sorted out five currency notes, and the nabob added them to the stock he had already collected. The little Chinnee's sleepy almond eyes dwelt on him curiously.

"Wun Lung comee," he said suddenly.

"Hullee Singh goee out?"

"The gofulness is immediate."

"Me comee. Me likee playee billiard at Closs Keyee."

Hurree Singh started.

"You young rascal!" he exclaimed.

"Skinner sayee Hullee Singh goee playee cardee at Closs Keyee."

"The esteemed Skinner is a terrific Prussian!"

"No goee?" asked Wun Lung. "Allee light."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh left the study. Fisher T. Fish met him in the passage.

"I guess I could go to three-pound-five for that jigger," said Fish persuasively. "Now, is it a trade?"

Hurree Singh bestowed a shove upon the business-like Fish, which caused him to sit down suddenly in the Remove passage, and went downstairs, leaving Fishy gasping. Harry Wharton & Co. were in the lower passage, and they joined Hurree Singh at once. Skinner was there, with a savage scowl on his face. Bob Cherry had damaged Skinner's nose a little. Bob had his own troublesome doubts about his dusky chum now; but he did not allow Harold Skinner to express any—in his hearing, at least. Skinner was too openly pleased at Hurree Singh's supposed fall from grace.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!" exclaimed Bob. "Come on, Inky!"

"Better get some cricket, Inky," said Harry Wharton, with a somewhat uneasy glance at the nabob.

Wharton simply did not know what to make of Hurree Singh of late; but he was determined to let no doubt of his chum creep into his mind. The Famous Five had resolved to act as if nothing whatever was the matter—a somewhat difficult task.

"Yes, come on!" growled Johnny Bull, with something of the manner of a surly mastiff trying to be good-tempered.

Hurree Singh coloured under his dusky skin.

"The cricketfulness is not possible," he said. "I have to go outfully."

"Oh!" said his chums, taken aback.

"The sorrowfulness is great," added the nabob.

"Well, we're not specially keen on cricket practice," said Frank Nugent. "Are you going for a spin?"

"No, my worthy Franky."

"Well, if it's a walk—" Nugent paused and coloured. "Perhaps I'd better ask you whether you want company, though," he added drily.

"On the present occasion, my dear Franky, I prefer to ambulate alonefully," said the nabob.

And, leaving the chums of the Remove dumbfounded, the Nabob of Bhanipur nodded to them and went out into the quad. Without another word, they watched him walk down to the gates and disappear into the road.

Then they looked at one another.

Skinner broke into an unpleasant chuckle.

"What do you say now?" he jeered.

"I say I'll bump your head on the wall if you cackle at me!" said Bob Cherry.

"I fancy I could tell you where Inky's gone," grinned Skinner. "With his pockets full of money, too. He's been borrowing from Mauly and Smithy, and he's sold his bike, and now he's gone to the Cross Keys to blow the tin. Ha, ha, ha! Yaroooooh!"

Bang!

Skinner wriggled in Bob Cherry's strong grasp, and his head was knocked on the wall. He wriggled away and fled, and Bob strode out into the quad with a gloomy brow. Skinner was not to be allowed to gloat over the matter, but the Co. could not help feeling that Skinner had stated no more than the facts. What other possible explanation was there of Hurree Singh's strange conduct? Yet, if he was really playing a shady game, surely the commonest prudence should have withheld him from playing it right in the public eye in this way. Harry Wharton & Co. were puzzled—and decidedly glum. Their resolution to hold firm to their faith in their chum was put to a very severe strain now.

The chums of the Remove did not enjoy their cricket practice that afternoon. While they were at the nets Harold Skinner was not idle, though it was not cricket that occupied the thoughts of the slacker.

Skinner scouted in the Fourth-Form passage, ascertained that Scott of the Fourth was out of doors, and then slipped into Scott's study and borrowed his pocket-camera. With the little camera under his jacket Skinner sauntered out of the gates of Greyfriars.

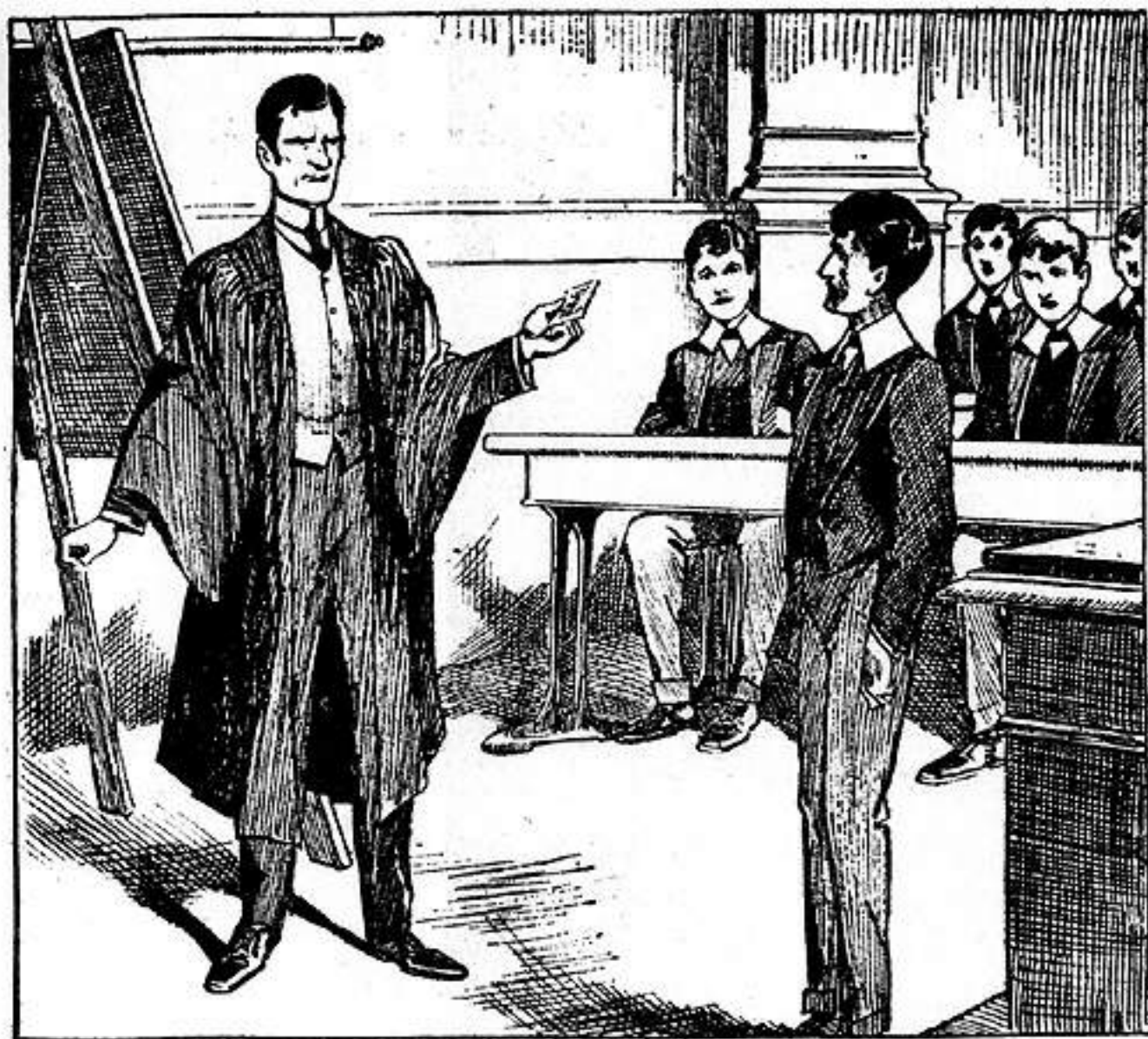
He was heading for that delectable establishment, the Cross Keys.

Skinner was in a mood of virtuous indignation, mixed with savage animosity. Skinner was pretty thorough-going in blackguardism himself, but of late he had tried a new tack, and he was feeling very virtuous over his reform, such as it was.

Now one of the Famous Five had taken to shady ways—Skinner had no doubt of it. Skinner never had any hesitation in attributing bad motives to anybody. Skinner had a righteous desire to show the delinquent up. Skinner's word was not worth much in evidence, but if Hurree Singh visited the public-house that afternoon, Skinner meant to obtain indubitable proof of it, if he had a chance.

In the face of proof like that, the chums of the Remove would be dumb and covered with confusion. The damage done to Skinner's nose would be fully avenged.

It is probable that if Bob Cherry had suspected Skinner's little game the



On his honour! (See Chapter 8.)

damaged nose would have been still further damaged. But Bob did not suspect, and Skinner went on his way with great anticipations of triumph.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Proof!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! There's something on!"

It was plain enough that there was something on when Harry Wharton & Co. came into the junior Common-room that evening.

Hurree Jamset Singh was not with his friends. The nabob had returned from his afternoon's excursion just in time for calling-over, and he had not given a word of explanation as to where he had been. In spite of their resolutions, the Co. could not act as if nothing had happened, and there was an unusual constraint upon the five, and Hurree Singh had stayed in his study to play chess with Wun Lung.

When the four entered the Common-room, most of the fellows there were gathered round the big table, looking at something that lay upon it. There was a buzz of discussion.

Some of the juniors looked round quickly.

"All serene!" said Bolsover major. "Better get that out of sight if a prefect should come in, Skinner."

"Something there a prefect mustn't see?" said Bob Cherry.

There was a laugh.

"It would be pretty serious for Inky if it was seen," remarked Hazeldene.

"Inky?" exclaimed Wharton.

"It's a fair bowl-out!" chuckled Snoop. "Let's see what his pals have to say about it. They can't crawl out of this, anyway."

"What have you got there?" asked Wharton quietly.

"You'd better see it, and then burn it," said Squiff; "and then you'd better take Inky into the gym and knock some sense into his silly head!"

The juniors made room for Wharton and his friends.

The object of interest that lay upon the table was a photograph.

It was a small one, but very clear.

Wharton's face set as he saw what it represented. It was an interior taken from outside. The scene was a billiard-room, lighted by large windows. There were three figures in the room.

One of them was Mr. Hawke, the seedy bookmaker, who lodged at the Cross Keys, another was a fat, greasy-looking man, evidently the marker. The third was a boy—with a dusky complexion.

The third figure was the one upon which Harry Wharton & Co. fixed their eyes with painful attention.

The dusky schoolboy was standing beside the billiard-table, with a cue in his hand, chalking the tip. His face was turned a little away, and barely the profile could be seen, and it was a little in shadow. But the dark Indian complexion was very prominent, in contrast with the faces of Mr. Hawke and the marker.

"Inky!" muttered Bob, aghast.

"My hat! Hurree Singh!"

Wharton scanned the photograph carefully, and then raised his eyes and met the grinning glance of Harold Skinner.

"Did you take this photograph, Skinner?"

Skinner nodded.

"When?" asked Harry, very quietly.

"This afternoon; an hour after lessons."

"And where?"

"Can't you guess?" grinned Skinner.

"I suppose that is the billiard-room at the Cross Keys?"

"Exactly. I took it from the garden at the back," said Skinner coolly. "The French windows were open, and it was as easy as falling off a form. Fairly caught in the act—what?"

"Is that Hurree Singh?"

"Or his twin brother!" chuckled Skinner.

"It's Inky right enough," said Tom Brown. "Playing billiards with that awful outsider Hawke, by Jove!"

"What did you take the photograph for, Skinner?" asked Harry.

"Ha, ha! To show up a dashed hypocrite and his friends," chortled Skinner. "I've had sermons enough

for smoking a fag or two occasionally. I don't believe in humbug. If a chap wants to go the pace a bit, let him; but don't let him tell lies about it."

"Quite right!" said Bolsover major aggressively. "If a fellow's a rotten spoofer, show him up."

"I'm not going to show this to Quelchy, of course," grinned Skinner. "I'm not going to give the chap away. That's for my own satisfaction. The Highly Moral and Impeccable Five can step down off their lofty perch after this, that's all!"

Harry Wharton turned contemptuously away. After all, there was something in what Skinner said. If Hurree Singh was no better than Skinner, it was time the fellows knew him as he really was. To indulge in the same pursuits as Skinner, while affecting to despise the shady junior, savoured a little too much of hypocrisy.

Skinner's unpleasant cackle went on unchecked. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's chums had nothing to say. Against evidence so clear there was nothing to be said.

It had to be admitted that Hurree Singh had deceived them.

But Vernon-Smith, who had quietly joined the crowd round the photograph, took it up and scanned it very intently. Skinner watched him with a sneer.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

The Bounder shook his head.

"No; I thought it might be a fake. But that's genuine enough," he said. "I know that room."

"You ought to!" grinned Snoop. And there was a laugh. The Bounder's visits to the Cross Keys were a very open secret, so far as the Removites were concerned.

"It's jolly queer, though!" added the Bounder.

"I don't see it!" grunted Bolsover major. "We know Inky writes letters to that merry show! We know he was borrowing money all over the Form today! That's the way he's spent it!"

"It must be Hurree Singh!" said the Bounder thoughtfully.

"Who else could it be?" sneered Skinner. "Are there any other Indians in Friardale?"

"Not that I know of. If there were, I should think this wasn't Inky. It might be any chap with a dusky chivvy!"

"It's a schoolboy of Inky's age," said Squiff. "He's in Etons. But I suppose it's just barely possible there's another Indian schoolboy in the neighbourhood that we've never heard of?"

The Australian junior spoke very dubiously. The suggestion was followed by a mocking laugh from Skinner & Co.

"Ask Inky where he's been!" said Tom Brown. "If he denies having been there—"

"He doesn't seem keen on showing up!" sneered Skinner. "Where's Inky hiding himself, Wharton?"

"Find out!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

"He's in his study," said Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'll fetch him!"

The Owl of the Remove bustled away. He came back in a few minutes, alone.

"He won't come!" he announced.

"What did he say?" demanded Bolsover major.

"He told me to go and eat coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh did not put in an appearance for some time. It was nearly an hour later when his dusky face was seen in the doorway.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Hazeldene.

"Here's the black bounder!"

Hurree Singh raised his eyebrows, apparently surprised by the general interest his arrival had caused.

"The herefulness is terrific, my esteemed ludicrous friends!" he remarked. "What is the matterfulness?"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Hurree Singh Insists!

BOLSOVER MAJOR held up the photograph under the nabob's nose.

"Look at that!" he commanded.

The Indian junior looked at it.

All eyes were fixed upon his dusky face. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh gave a violent start, and stretched out his hand as if to snatch the photograph. Bolsover major held it back, however.

"No, you don't!" he said.

Harry Wharton came forward, his face set, and his brows knitted.

"You see what's in that photograph, Inky," he said. "Will you tell the fellows where you went after lessons to-day?"

"I went outfully!"

"But what did you do?"

"I prefer not to mention the ludicrous circumstances of my esteemed walk, my worthy chum!"

"Did you go to the Cross Keys?" demanded Squiff.

"No."

"Then that nigger in the photo isn't you?" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess you will have to prove that, Inky!"

"I shall not trouble to do anything of the kind, my esteemed American Fish!" The Nabob of Bhanipur looked calmly at the interested crowd of Removites. "I have nothing to say. As your English proverb remarks, the still tongue in the wise head saves a stitch in time!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Inky!" said Johnny Bull, in his slow, deliberate way. "Either you're a spoofing, shady rotter, and you've been taking us in, or else you're going out of your way to look like it! There's no reason why you can't tell your own pals what you've done out of gates this afternoon. We're ready to take your word!"

"The tellfulness would not be the proper caper, under the esteemed circumstances!"

"So you're keeping it a secret?"

"Exactly."

"That's enough!" growled Johnny Bull; and he turned his back on the nabob.

It was clear enough what Johnny's opinion was.

"May I requestfully ask who took this esteemed photograph?" asked the nabob quietly.

"I did!" said Skinner.

"Then I will trouble you to give it to me, and also the negative, so that no further copies can be taken printfully!"

"No fear!" grinned Skinner. "I'm going to keep that photo as a curiosity!"

Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh did not reply, but he pushed back his cuffs, and stepped towards Skinner. That youth backed away behind Bolsover major.

"What are you at, you confounded nigger?" he exclaimed.

"I am going to thrash you lickfully, my esteemed and ridiculous friend, until you give up the negative!" said Hurree Singh calmly.

Wharton caught the nabob by the arm.

"If it isn't you in the picture, Inky, it's no business of yours," he said. "Do you understand what you're admitting?"

"I understand that I am going to destroy the negative, my worthy Wharton, and if Skinner does not hand it out I shall lick him hammerfully!"

Harry Wharton stepped back, with a shrug of the shoulders. He had clung to the bare possibility that somehow

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there might have been another Indian schoolboy who had been at the Cross Keys that afternoon. But that theory was knocked on the head by Hurree Singh's conduct. If the pictured Indian was not the nabob, it was clearly no business of his to interfere with Skinner's possession of the photograph.

"Well, as the cad admits it, you may as well give up the photo, Skinner," said Bolsover major. "You don't want to give him away!"

"It's mine," said Skinner sullenly, "and I'm going to keep it. I'll give it up if Hurree Singh admits in plain English that he was at the Cross Keys this afternoon with Jerry Hawke!"

"The admitfulness is not great, my esteemed, caddish, spyful Skinner!"

"If it's not a photo of you, what business is it of yours, then?" sneered Skinner. "Can't I take a photograph if I like, and keep it?"

"The keepfulness will not be permitted in this case, Skinner! Where is the negative?"

"In my pocket, and it's going to stay there!" snapped Skinner.

Bolsover major threw the photograph on the table, and Hurree Singh picked it up before Skinner could reach it, and tore it into fragments—a proceeding that Skinner watched sullenly, but without interfering. Then the dusky junior turned to Skinner again. The destroying of the print was of little use, without that of the negative, from which, of course, Skinner could take as many prints as he liked.

"Will you hand me the esteemed negative?" asked the nabob quietly.

"No, I won't!"

"Then you will put your hands up-fully!"

Skinner looked at Bolsover major, who shrugged his shoulders. The bully of the Remove was not disposed to interfere. It was man to man, and Skinner was the bigger of the two, if it came to that.

Skinner put up his hands very unwillingly.

"Time!" grinned Bob Cherry.

The Nabob of Bhanipur attacked with grim determination, his eyes gleaming from his dusky face. The usually good-tempered and smiling nabob was hardly recognisable at this moment.

Finding that he was fairly in for it, Skinner did his best; but the nabob drove him across the room under a shower of swift blows, and when Skinner reached the wall, and could go no further, he went down with a crash.

Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh stood over him, his eyes flashing.

"Will you give me the negative?"

"No!" howled Skinner.

"Then you will get up and take your thrashfulness!"

"I'm done, hang you!" growled Skinner, staying on the floor.

The nabob set his teeth.

"You will give me the negative, you spyful cad! I shall bangfully knock your ludicrous head on the floor until you do!"

"Look here—Gerroff! Yah! Oh! Help!"

Bang, bang, bang!

"Yaroo! Chuck it! I'll give you the negative!" shrieked Skinner.

He dragged the negative from his pocket, and hurled it at the nabob. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh picked it up quietly, held it to the light, and scanned it. Then he opened his penknife, and cut it into shreds.

"The thankfulness is terrific, my esteemed, sneakful Skinner!" he remarked. "You should not play this disgusting trickfulness!"

"Hang you!" growled Skinner, rubbing his head.

The nabob turned his back on him.

He glanced at his friends, but their looks were averted. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh compressed his lips a little, and walked out of the Common-room.

Skinner went to his study with a face like a demon. Sidney James Snoop dropped in to see him before bed-time to sympathise, though his sympathy took a somewhat jeering turn.

"How's your napper, Skinner?" he inquired, with a grin.

Skinner scowled savagely.

"Not so bad as Inky will be feeling to-morrow!" he said, between his teeth.

"You're going to lick him?" asked Snoop, closing one eye at the ceiling.

"Oh, shut up!"

"You ought to have taken a second print from the negative," grinned Snoop.

"You might have guessed Inky or his friends would be after the negative."

"I did!" said Skinner.

"Oh!"

"And I'll make that black hound sorry he laid his black paws on me!" said Skinner, between his teeth.

Snoop whistled softly.

"Better keep it dark, old chap."

"I'm going to, fathead! The photograph will be seen by accident, of course. I'll show that nigger whether he can lay paws on me!" Skinner gritted his teeth.

"It will be a bit of a come-down for Mr. Magnificent Wharton, too, when one of his pals is flogged for pub-haunting!"

And that cheerful thought consoled Harold Skinner as he rubbed his head.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Called Over the Coals!

"**M**IND your eye!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The Remove were in their places in the Form-room on the following morning.

Mr. Quelch was two minutes late—an unusual circumstance. When he came in the juniors noted at once that his brow was dark and thunderous.

Mr. Quelch was sometimes subject to what his respectful pupils called his tantrums; and, to judge by appearances, he was in a tantrum of unusual magnitude that morning. It was very necessary for the Remove to mind their eye.

The Remove-master halted before the class, his glance sweeping over them. It was evident that something portentous was coming.

"Hurree Singh!"

The Nabob of Bhanipur rose.

"Yes, honoured sahib?"

"Stand out here!"

Hurree Singh stood out, watched in dismay by his friends.

Harry Wharton & Co. guessed that something had come to the Form-master's ears concerning the dusky junior's late proceedings. The nabob, however, seemed calm enough.

Mr. Quelch held up a small sheet, which all the class could see was a photographic print. They could not make out what was on it, but they knew well enough. It was a copy of Skinner's snapshot, taken at the Cross Keys the previous day.

"Look at that, Hurree Singh!"

"The lookfulness is terrific, sir!"

"It is a photograph of a billiard-room in a public-house," said Mr. Quelch. "You are represented there, Hurree Singh. I picked up this print on the floor of my study. How it came there I do not know. It may have been placed there for me to find."

"Not much doubt about that!" murmured Bob Cherry, with a furious glare at Skinner.

That youth sat tight, with an expressionless face.

"Did you speak, Cherry?"

"Ahem! I—I—"

"Silence! Hurree Singh, I do not know who took this photograph, but there is no doubt what it represents. The evidence is conclusive that you have been guilty of conduct unworthy of a self-respecting boy, and have flagrantly broken the rules of the school. You have visited a place strictly forbidden to anyone belonging to this school, and you are shown here in company with a character known as a sharper and blackguard. What have you to say?"

"There is a considerable mistakefulness, sir," said the nabob calmly. "My tastefulness does not lie in the direction of esteemed pubs, and I have not the honour of the acquaintance of that fat and excellent rascal in the photograph."

"Do you deny, Hurree Singh, that this is your photograph?"

"The denyfulness is terrific!"

Mr. Quelch paused.

"This is a photograph of an Indian schoolboy in Etons, Hurree Singh. That is unmistakable, though the features cannot be clearly seen. You deny that it is your photograph?"

"Yes, sahib."

There was another pause. The Form-master was evidently taken aback by Hurree Singh's denial.

Very peculiar looks were cast at the nabob by his Form-fellows. It was a lie direct, in the opinion of the Remove.

"Then you assert, Hurree Singh, that there is in this neighbourhood another schoolboy of your own race, and of about the same age and general appearance?"

"The appearance would be so, honoured sahib. Certainly I have never enterfully stepped into that honourable and esteemed pub."

"It is extraordinary, if such is the case!" said Mr. Quelch, with a very sharp look at the nabob. "There is no Indian boy at Highcliffe—the only school near here. I have not forgotten, Hurree Singh, the picture drawn of you by Skinner, hinting at something of this kind, which seems to indicate that your conduct is notorious among your school-fellows." He paused. "I cannot aver, however, that this photograph is actually of you, but only of an Indian boy of your age. You deny that it is you?"

"Yee, sir!"

"You give me your word of honour to that effect?"

"Upon the honour of a Nabob of Bhanipur and a prince of India!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with dignity.

Mr. Quelch hesitated.

"Very well, Hurree Singh. I am bound to accept your word, but the matter will not close here. For the present I shall say no more."

"Thank you, sahib!"

Hurree Singh returned to his place.

He met Wharton's glance—full of surprise, dismay, almost consternation. A steely look came into the nabob's eyes, but he sat down quietly. Morning lessons passed off as usual in the Remove Form-room.

But the affair was in all minds; and as soon as the Remove were dismissed there was a buzz of comment upon it, as the juniors went out into the sunny quadrangle.

"Did you ever hear such an awful Prussian?" exclaimed Bolsover major, in disgust. "Why, Bunter isn't in it with him!"

"Puts the merry old Kaiser to the blush, and no mistake!" said Hazeldene.

Bob Cherry strode up to Skinner in the quad.

"You put that print in Quelch's study for him to find, you cad!" he said, between his teeth.

Skinner shook his head.

"Not at all. I might have dropped it, of course."

"You never said that you had a second print," said Bob.

"Why should I?"

Bob clenched his hands hard.

"I might have dropped it, or left it about," said Skinner calmly. "Some chap may have taken it and chucked it into Quelch's study. You, perhaps!"

"What?" ejaculated Bob.

"Well, as the pink of perfection in the moral line, you're naturally more shocked at Inky than I am," said Skinner cheerfully. "I don't say you did it—it might have been anybody."

Bob Cherry turned away from the cad of the Remove, controlling his feelings with difficulty. He joined his chums, who were all looking worried.

Hurree Singh's point-blank denial in the Form-room had been a shock to them. The nabob, as they had known him, had always been the soul of honour. Yet if that photograph was not Inky's, whose was it?

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh joined the four, with a cold, set look on his dusky face.

"I have a fewful words to remark, my esteemed and ridiculous friends," he said quietly.

Johnny Bull grunted. The rest were silent.

"I have given the esteemed Quelch my word of honour that the ludicrous photograph is not of my esteemed self. Lieffulness is not possible to a Nabob of Bhanipur. If my esteemed friends are to remain my friends, they must take my word without doubtfulness."

"Oh!" murmured Bob.

"Whose was the photo, then?" growled Johnny Bull.

"That is not the esteemed point, my excellent Bull. The pointfulness is this—that my esteemed chums will be a thing of the past, and the ancient and respectable friendship will fall into the sere and yellow leaf."

Hurree Singh's language was curious enough, but his meaning was very clear. Unless his word was taken, the friendship of the Famous Five was broken—for ever! The Indian prince did not intend to remain on speaking terms with fellows who doubted his word.

There was a long pause, the nabob waiting with grim quietness for the juniors to reply. He was putting their faith in him to a very severe test. There was hardly a fellow in the Form who did not believe that he had lied point-blank to the Form-master, and despise him accordingly.

Harry Wharton broke the silence.

"You give us your word, Inky?"

"The word of a nabob!"

"Well, I believe you," said Harry. "I know you couldn't put it like that if it wasn't straight!"

"Same here!" said Bob.

"All serene, Inky!" said Frank Nugent.

Johnny Bull did not speak. Hurree Singh fixed his eyes upon Bull's stolid, dogged countenance questioningly.

"Does the esteemed Bull say the samefulness?" he queried.

"No!" said Johnny Bull grimly.

"You do not put faithfulness in my word?"

"Not unless you explain. If you're telling the truth, there's no need for mystification. I don't like mysteries!"

Hurree Singh's face hardened.

"That is enough!" he said. "I shall cease from this moment to enjoy the honour of your esteemed acquaintance, Bull Sahib."

"You would, anyway," said Johnny Bull coolly. "I don't intend to chum with fellows who haunt pubs and gamble with boozy blackguards like old Hawke. You can go and eat coke, and be hanged to you!"

"Oh, dash it all!" exclaimed Wharton, alarmed and angry. "If we can take Inky's word, you can take it, Johnny!"

"I think you're an ass to take it, when all the evidence is the other way. Let him explain if he can!"

"Look here—"

"Enough said!" interrupted Johnny Bull, driving his hands deep into his pockets. "I don't speak to Inky again, unless he gives up playing the giddy ox, and plays the game. I don't like smoky, gambling cads, and I don't like liars!"

Hurree Singh made a step forward.

"I am sorrowful, but I must respectfully ask the esteemed rotter to step into the gym with me," he said quietly. "A Nabob of Bhanipur cannot be given the lie!"

Johnny Bull snorted.

"Oh, you needn't come that with me!" he said. "If you want to fight every fellow who thinks you a liar, you'll have to fight the whole Remove from end to end. You can leave me till the last."

"I shall commence with you beginfully!" said the nabob, his eyes gleaming. "You are a slanderful rotter!"

"Inky!" exclaimed Wharton and Nugent and Bob Cherry together, alarmed at the turn the affair was taking. Hurree Singh on the war-path was a new experience.

"I repeatedly remark that the esteemed and disgusting Bull is a slanderful rotter, and I regard him with contemptible scornfulness!" shouted the nabob.

Johnny Bull, with quiet sedateness, pushed back his cuffs.

"Well, if you will have it; you will!" he said stolidly. "Come on!"

Harry Wharton dragged him back, and Nugent and Bob Cherry grasped the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Shut up, the pair of you!" exclaimed Wharton. "Mind, you're not going to scrap, you silly asses! That's settled!"

"My esteemed Wharton—"

"Look here!"

"Oh, rats! Take him away, Bob!"

Bob Cherry and Nugent marched the nabob off, and Wharton remained with Bull, to see that he did not follow. The scrap did not come off. But the friendship that united the Famous Five had received a shattering blow. When Johnny Bull and the nabob met at dinner-time they gave one another a glare, and then assumed an elaborate unconsciousness of one another's existence. Which was awkward enough for the other three members of the Co., who remained on chummy terms with both the incensed juniors.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Takes a Hand!

VERNON-SMITH eyed the Famous Five when they came out after lessons that day. Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh ignored one another, and their friends were in a difficult position. Finally, Bob Cherry went out into the quad with Bull, Wharton and Nugent remaining with the nabob.

Skinner looked at the divided Co. with a grin. The finding of the photograph had not led to a flogging for the nabob, as Skinner had expected; but the actual result was even more satisfactory to the charitable Skinner. The inseparable five were parted, and the rest of the Co. could hardly avoid, in the long run, taking one side or the other; which meant the breaking-up of a friendship which had seemed founded on a rock.

Skinner regarded that outcome with satisfaction. The licking in the Common-room was more than paid for now, he considered.

But the Bounder of Greyfriars did not derive any satisfaction from it. It was odd enough that the cool and cynical Bounder should care about the matter one way or the other; but it appeared that he did. After dinner he joined Wharton, finding the captain of the Remove alone.

"Excuse my chipping in," he remarked. "There seems to be trouble in the merry family."

Wharton nodded without speaking. He did not want to discuss that matter, especially with the Bounder. Vernon-Smith laughed lightly as he caught his expression.

"You'd rather I minded my own bizney?" he remarked.

"I don't want to talk about it!" said Harry bluntly.

"Right! But I wanted to tell you that I had nothing to do with Inky playing the giddy ox in this way. I took his letter to Cobb after he asked me, that's all. I advised him to keep clear of the place. I fancy some of you were putting it all down to me, as evil genius." The Bounder sneered. "I've sins enough on my shoulders, without Inky's being added."

"I didn't suspect you," said Harry. "But it's odd. But—but I believe what Inky said to Mr. Quelch. There's some mistake somewhere."

"And Bull doesn't?"

"Well, no."

"I thought so. As a matter of fact, I agree with you, and I'm going to see into the matter."

"How can you see into it?" asked Harry, in surprise.

The Bounder laughed.

"You forget that I'm a welcome visitor at the Cross Keys. I'm having an afternoon there to-morrow with some choice spirits."

Wharton involuntarily made a gesture of repulsion, and the Bounder laughed again. But a new thought came into Harry's mind.

"You must know, Smithy, whether Inky has ever been there before," he said.

"He never has. I'm certain of that. It beats me what he wanted to write to Cobb for. I may be able to clear it up."

"Well, I'd be glad if you did. Though it might be better for you to keep away from that den. Look here, Smithy. If you'd care for a cricket-match to-morrow afternoon, I could find a place for you in the team."

"Thanks! I'm booked already!"

The Bounder strolled away, leaving the captain of the Remove frowning. At tea-time Hurree Singh and Bob Cherry came into Study No. 1 with Wharton and Nugent. Johnny Bull looked in, saw Hurree Singh, and walked on up the passage to his own study.

The next day matters were in the same state. On Saturday afternoon the Remove were playing a fag match with the heroes of the Third. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh was down to play, but the nabob had been so uncertain of late that Wharton would not have been surprised to hear that he had a mysterious engagement out of doors. To his relief, he found that the nabob was ready for the match.

"The playfulness will be terrific, my esteemed chum!" Hurree Singh assured him. "And the fitfulness is great!"

"Good!" said Wharton. "You don't happen to be going out?"

"Not at allfully."

Johnny Bull, as it happened, was not

playing in the match, which was fortunate under the circumstances. Tubb & Co. of the Third were comfortably beaten by an innings and 20 runs. Vernon-Smith had watched the first over or two, and then sauntered away, and Wharton frowned as he saw him go. He knew how the Bounder was to be engaged that afternoon. Yet for once he could not be wholly sorry that Smithy was going to visit Mr. Cobb; for he nourished a hope that the Bounder might learn something that would shed light upon the mystery of Hurree Singh and the photograph.

After the cricket-match the chums of the Remove refreshed themselves with ginger-beer under the old elms in the quad. Johnny Bull came along, and frowned at the sight of Hurree Singh sitting with his friends, and made as if to move away. But Cherry caught him by the shoulder and dragged him down on the oaken bench.

"Have some ginger-pop, my son!" he said cheerily. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the Bounder! Come and booze with us, Smithy! Fill up before they appoint a Ginger-Pop Controller!"

Vernon-Smith joined the crowd of juniors under the elms. Harry Wharton gave him a questioning look, along with a glass of ginger-beer.

"Thanks!" said the Bounder. "By the way, I've some news for you chaps!"

"Go ahead!"

Vernon-Smith glanced round, to make sure that no master or prefect was within hearing.

"I've been out of bounds!" he said coolly. "Some very choice spirits at the Cross Keys. You'd have enjoyed it, Bull."

Johnny Bull snorted contemptuously.

"And I've had a jaw with cheery old Jerry Hawke," resumed the Bounder. "I learned about his merry young friend from St. Jude's."

Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh started.

"My esteemed Smithy—"

"No need to keep it dark," said the Bounder coolly. "I'm not going to, anyway. I told Wharton I'd find out the facts if I could. I've done it!"

"What have you found out?" exclaimed Bob. "Get it off your chest, Smithy!"

"The still tongue saves a stitch in time, my esteemed Smithy," said Hurree Singh. "Speech is silvery, but silence is a gilded rose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Inky! Go ahead, Smithy—get it out!"

Vernon-Smith nodded, and finished his ginger-beer.

"It wasn't Inky in the photograph!" he said.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Divided Friends!

"NOT Inky!"

"How do you know?"

"Gammon!" sneered Skinner, who was looking on.

"Who was it, if it wasn't Inky?" demanded Johnny Bull sceptically.

"Chap named Kuri Din."

"Great pip! What a name!"

"My esteemed Smithy, the openness of the mouth is terrific. The silverfulness of speech does not equal to goldfulness of the discreet silence."

"Rats!" said Vernon-Smith. "Nobody here will go to St. Jude's and tell tales about Kuri Din, I suppose. Even Skinner would draw the line at that. The best thing you can do, Inky, is to give that precious young merchant a wide berth. He's a bad egg!"

Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh was silent.

"The chap's a new fellow at St. Jude's," continued the Bounder. "He's

been there only a few weeks, but he's already made acquaintances like old Hawke and Cobb. I got out of Hawke that the young ass ran into debt there, and paid it up this week—on Thursday. I fancy I can guess where he got fifteen pounds from in a lump."

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton.

Johnny Bull's face was a study.

"Skinner photographed him in the billiard-room with Hawke and the marker," grinned the Bounder. "Skinney didn't know there was another nigger in the wood-pile. I dare say Skinner thought it was Inky, seen from the garden—from a distance—"

"It was Inky!" growled Skinner.

"Not at all. It was Inky's friend at St. Jude's. I've had it from Hawke," said Vernon-Smith. "Inky wasn't there at all. But as Kuri Din left the place shortly after that game of billiards, and came back later and settled up a whole set of sporting debts, I fancy he met Inky somewhere, and relieved him of his money. Isn't that so, Inky?"

The nabob did not answer.

Vernon-Smith smiled, and walked on to the House. All the eyes of the juniors under the elms were fixed upon the clouded face of the Nabob of Bhanipur.

No one entertained any doubt of the Bounder's statement. It was easy enough to ascertain whether there was an Indian junior at St. Jude's, for that matter. Even Skinner did not really feel the doubt he chose to express.

"Well, Inky?" said Bob Cherry at last.

"Well, my esteemed chum!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Wharton suddenly. "That letter—the one Bunter couldn't read. That must have been from that chap at St. Jude's. Was it Inky?"

"It was, my esteemed Wharton."

"Oh!" said Johnny Bull. "You never mentioned that it was from a fellow at a school. I thought it was from some relation or something. Look here! Why couldn't you explain?"

Hurree Singh did not speak. He did not even seem to hear Johnny Bull's voice.

"Yes; why couldn't you tell us, Inky?" demanded Bob.

Hurree Singh knitted his brows.

"Now that the esteemed Bounder has noselessly found it out, it does not matter if I talkfully proceed," he said crossly.

"Kuri Din wrote to me as an old and esteemed acquaintance, and explained that he had got into terrible debtfulness soon after getting to his new school. He askfully requested my helpfulness; but as he said that he owed the cashfulness to sportful persons such as Mr. Hawke, I could not mention the matter to anyone. The regretfulness is great that the esteemed Bounder has nosed it out."

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry emphatically.

"And why did you send that letter to Cobb?" asked Harry quietly. "I suppose that had something to do with it?"

"Since the talkful Bounder has blabfully revealed that Kuri Din is known at the esteemed pub, there is no reason for secretfulness. Kuri Din asked me to lend him the money loanfully, and to meet him at the Cross Keys to give it to him. He was to be there after lessons on Thursday. I could not go, the place being out boundfully. Therefore, I sent the letter by the esteemed Bounder, for the honourable and disgusting Cobb to give to Kuri Din when he arrived."

"Oh!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"I told my esteemed and reckless idiotic friend that I would raise the money windfully, and give it to him the next day; but he must come to the bridge on the Sark to meet me, becausefully I would not go to the ludicrous pub."

The esteemed spyful Skinner thought I was gone to the Cross Keys, and he was ass enough to photograph Kuri Din there. That is why I destroyed the rascally negative, because it was dangerous for my idiotic friend. Kuri Din met me on the bridge, and he promised to break off with the sportful rascals on condition that I provided the cashfulness. That is all, my esteemed chums, and if the esteemed story should be told at St. Jude's it will mean the boot for Kuri Din. He is not a badful egg, but a silly and howling ass! I knew him wellfully in Bhanipur in childish youth."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's explanation was received in silence. It was simple enough, and the nabob's reason for keeping silence was clear. The folly of the new junior at St. Jude's was not a matter to be talked of—from the point of view of one who wished him well. And undoubtedly Kuri Din had written to the nabob in confidence, and thus made it impossible for him to acquaint his chums with the circumstances.

"Well," said Bolsover major, "you're a silly ass, Inky! You ought to have punched his head instead of lending him a pot of money. I would have."

"Same here!" growled Johnny Bull. "The punchfulness of his head would not have saved him from the orderfulness of the boot, my worthy Bolsover."

"Well, no! That photograph would get him into a row if Quelchy ever finds out there's a darkey at St. Jude's," said Bolsover. "It's up to Skinner to get it back from Quelchy somehow. We'll all agree that Skinner's to be bumped every day till he does it."

"You silly ass!" ejaculated Skinner.

"You shouldn't have gone spying," said Bolsover. "What did you want to spy on a St. Jude's chap for?"

"I thought it was Inky."

"You should make sure before you yell out accusations, then. You'll get that photo back somehow, or you'll be sorry for yourself!"

The ginger-beer having been disposed of, the juniors dispersed, leaving the Famous Five together under the trees. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was quite cleared in the eyes of his Form-fellows, and the Co. were looking very cheery. Johnny Bull, after thinking the matter over in his slow, deliberate way, decided that an apology was due.

"I'm sorry, Inky," he said at last. "I must say you made things look as bad as possible for yourself. You ought to have given that cad at St. Jude's a dot in the eye, instead of helping him out and getting yourself suspected. Still, I'm sorry I didn't take your word."

Hurree Singh did not move or speak. He seemed deaf.

"Do you hear me?" demanded Johnny Bull, getting red in the face.

No answer.

"Inky!" exclaimed Wharton anxiously. It seemed that the clouds had not rolled by, after all.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh looked quietly at his chums, carefully avoiding allowing his eyes to rest upon Johnny Bull.

"My esteemed friends, I cannot speak to an honourable and disgusting rotter who refused to accept the word of honour of the Nabob of Bhanipur!" he said. "The insult is terrific, and the apologise is not to be accepted!"

"Look here, Inky—" began Bob.

"The decidefulness is final, my worthy Bob!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The juniors stood in dismay. Johnny Bull's want of faith had evidently wounded the sensitive Indian deeply, and he could not forget it. And, quiet and easy-going as Inky was, there was a strain of determination in his nature which his chums knew well. He meant every word he said.

"Johnny says he's sorry," said Wharton at last. "Can't do more than that, you know. Let bygones be bygones."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's dusky

face set grimly, out he did not answer. Johnny Bull was growing crimson with angry vexation.

"Do you mean that, Inky?" he asked at length.

No answer.

"Can't you speak, you image?" roared Johnny Bull, his temper rising.

"Inky!"

The nabob's lips set more firmly, and that was all. Johnny Bull drew a deep breath.

"That's enough!" he said abruptly. "I've told you I'm sorry—though I think you were to blame for getting mixed up with a shady rotter. But that's enough. Go and eat coke!"

And Johnny Bull strode away in great dudgeon.

"Inky, you ass—" began the dismayed Bob.

"The weatherfulness is excellent, is it not?"

"Eh? Look here! You've got to make it up with Johnny!"

"But the rainfulness after the sunshine will be good for the cropfulness," remarked Hurree Singh.

Bob Cherry gave it up.

A day or two later the tell-tale photograph was missing from Mr. Quelch's study, and it was not seen again. Kuri Din of St. Jude's was safe from betrayal. It was to be hoped that he had learned his lesson, and that his promise to Hurree Singh would be kept. But with the Famous Five of Greyfriars it could not be said that all was calm and bright. There was division in the camp—a rift in the lute—that showed no sign of healing. Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull had let the sun go down upon their wrath, and it seemed very doubtful whether the famous Co. would ever be reunited.

(Don't miss "PARTED PALS!"—next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., by Frank Richards.)

Extracts from "The Greyfriars Herald."

BUNTER.

Py Peter Todd.

(With apologies to R. K.)

I have met with many chaps at different schools,
And some were swells, and some of them were not.

The rotters, and the blackguards, and the fools;

But Bunter simply swipes the blooming lot!
This bounding, blinking, bouncing porpoise Bunter

Sniffs out your food, though it's a mile away.

Like Nimrod, he's a very mighty hunter;
He'll hunt it down, although it takes all day!

Then here's to you, Billy Bunter, in your den at Greyfriars School!

I'm not so sure as others are that you're a blessed fool!

With a cricket-stump and bumpings I am hoping, by-and-by,

To knock a little decency into you ere I die!

You may thump him, you may bump him till he's lame;

You may whack him till he vents a mighty roar;

But be sure he'll scoff your grub up just the same.

And be sure he'll listen just outside your door,

For he loves to poke and sneak, and pry and peer,

Though you smite him till he has to seek the san.

And with the bloated porpoise prancing near,
You had better keep your secrets—if you can!

Then here's to you, Billy Bunter, in your den at Greyfriars School!

I'm not so sure as others are that you're a blessed fool!

With a cricket-stump and bumpings I am hoping, by-and-by,

To knock a little decency into you ere I die!

—:o:—

LESS PAPER—LESS ROOM!

(A prophetic vision of what the "Greyfriars Herald" may come to if the paper shortage continues.)

By Squiff.

SERIAL STORY.

Chapter 9.—The boys fell down the precipice, picked themselves up, dodged a crowd of natives, and encountered thirty more. Some of these they shot, others ran. Then the boys dashed for the shore and captured two boats.

Swiftly they paddled away across the water, landed on an island, and found it full of cannibals, and pushed off. After that they had five days in an open boat.

Chapter 10.—Boys were nearly starving when picked up. They were soon brought to by the kind skipper of the schooner Swan, which, however, was wrecked five days later. The boys swam ashore, but the majority of the crew were drowned.

(This exciting story will be continued next month.)

LITTLE VIEWS ON LIFE.

To Bunter: Lose your nose, lose your wife; lose your toes, lose your life. Lose respect for "honour bright," but do not lose your appetite.

To Fisher T. Fish: Swindles come and swindles go, but this fact I'd have you know: Things in time must have an end. You'll be left without a friend.

To A. N. Other: There are chaps who'll never tire playing with the poker; but it's rash to fool with fire. Note that! Horace C—r!

BRIEF (VERY) REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

XYZ.—D'n't wr'te. P'p'r's sc'ce.

H. Ckr.—Yr grl hs chkd U. What shll U do? Cngrlte hr. She's lcky.

H. Singh.—Qte undrstd estmd war's prlngdflly trflic, nd wd rply in yr language bt tks too mch spce.

WAR RECIPES (By Bunter's Request).

A satisfying dinner:—Duck and green peas, plenty of potatoes, sweet raisin pudding, plenty of sugar, sweet sauce, jelly, pineapple, blancmange, strawberry ice.

Directions:—Buy the things.

P.S.—You'll probably have to wait till the war is over to get them, so send a note to General Bunter to hurry things up!

THE PEACE CRANKS' CONFERENCE.

Mr. Dutton has been selected as our representative, because he wouldn't be able to hear a word, would therefore not lose his temper, would not cause a free fight, and might make them tired of foolish talking.

(Note.—N't so s're abt D't'n's n't leg tmpr. Does smtmes.—H. W.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 496.

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 32.—THE HEAD.

LAST week's portrait and character-sketch were those of a person of no importance—the absurd and greedy Sammy Bunter. This week, by way of a complete change, the Head of Greyfriars, the Reverend Herbert Henry Locke, D.D., is dealt with.

The only master who has thus far appeared in the series is Mr. Quelch. Perhaps the Head should have come before him. But, on the whole, one thinks not.

Mr. Quelch is of more importance in the stories than the Head. In many ways he might be said to be of more importance to the school. Greyfriars would not suffer if Mr. Quelch were its head.

This is no disparagement to Dr. Locke. And there is no unfairness to him in saying that he is not as strong or as decided a character, as the old friend upon whom he is apt to lean pretty heavily in times of trouble—the master of the Remove Form.

Dr. Locke is a most lovable man. When he errs in judgment it is generally on the side of mercy. But not always; and that is due to his lack of strength. The weak man, however keen he may be on justice, seldom administers it thoroughly. Greyfriars' Head has been more merciful than they deserved at times to fellows whom the school could easily afford to lose—more severe to those whose reputation for keeping the straight path might have made him incline to, one would have thought. One of the instances that occur to mind in this connection is the expulsion of Bob Cherry. It is true that the evidence seemed overwhelming, yet, in spite of it, Dr. Locke should not have believed Bob a thief.

But it must be remembered that the masters do not know all that the boys know of the doings of such fellows as Skinner and Snoop. How many times have those two—and others—escaped anything worse than the punishment of the Form? In all such cases their sins have been screened from the eyes of authority, of course.

Dr. Locke's life has been no easy one. He has had more than his share of troubles. There was the loss of his daughter Rosie, abducted as a child by an enemy, and found with a circus, after years had passed, through Wingate. Even after she had been restored to her parents—Lasalle, the rascal who had kidnapped her, was not done with; and it fell to the lot of Harry Wharton & Co. to rescue her from captivity in the old Priory.

There was the heavy debt incurred by borrowing from Vernon-Smith, father—a debt which tied the Head's hands in dealing with the Bounder, and caused him to overlook in the son of his creditor many misdeeds which would have led to the instant expulsion of any other fellow.

But though the Head was weak here, there was excuse for him. On the one side ruin, on the other the chance that the boy might improve when away from the influence of his father. He appealed as strongly as he knew how to the better nature of Vernon-Smith; but that better nature was swamped by vanity and vice then, and the appeal had no immediate result. Mr. Quelch was taken into the Head's confidence, and, for his old friend's sake, bore much.

In the long run it was the pluck of Bob Cherry which removed the almost intolerable burden from the Head's shoulders. In return for Bob's saving his life Mr. Vernon-Smith offered him any reward he liked to ask. And the reward Bob named was the remission of the Head's debt, which had really been paid over and over again in the guise of interest.

It is not difficult to take in Dr. Locke. The convict Lagden, posing as the father of a boy whom he desired to send to Greyfriars, took him in most completely. Vernon-Smith took him in, and got Harry Wharton expelled; and here there was less excuse for being deceived, for nothing Wharton had ever done justified belief in his guilt, and



nothing the Bounder had ever done up to then justified belief in his word.

Dr. Locke did not show up altogether at his best in the matter of the tyrannous Sir Hilton Popper and his pet, Sergeant Sharp, either. Sir Hilton was a member of the governing body of Greyfriars. Now, the governors of a public school have considerable powers, but there would be an end to the proper authority of any headmaster if any individual could exercise those powers in the spirit of meddlesome tyranny by which Sir Hilton was swayed.

It was the great Popper who put in Sergeant Sharp. Dr. Locke did not want the sergeant, and had no use for his methods. When the Hunnish drill-master had driven the school to the verge of open revolt, the Head threatened to resign. He meant it, too; but he weakened when he found that Sir Hilton had secured a majority among the governors readily available, and he withheld his resignation in the hope of a change when the full board met.

Meanwhile, things went from bad to worse. Dr. Locke had to submit to the expulsion of Horace Coker and Harry Wharton for refusing to do what he could not have held they ought to do. He saw almost the whole school in mutiny, and when the end came, and Sir Hilton was thwarted, and Sharp was shown up and had to go, with an excellent prospect of finding himself in prison, the Head really had not much to congratulate himself upon in his handling of the affair.

And if he had not "lost face" with the boys it was because they knew from of old his sterling goodness of heart, his very real affection for them. Dr. Locke is capable of putting aside resentment for an affront to himself, of sacrificing ease for the sake of the school. His state of health made a holiday absolutely necessary to him at the time when the governors appointed the overbearing and brutal Mr. Lothrop his locum tenens. But when he learned how things were going at Greyfriars he came back at once, ill as he was, and resumed charge.

Small things count, and by small things one knows a man. In this way the Head has come to be known and loved by Greyfriars. He is never rough on a fellow for an unintentional offence against his person or dignity.

His garden is one of the things for which he cares most, yet he has forgiven damage done to that. When Alonzo treated him to the contents of a siphon of soda-water, and explained why it was done, Dr. Locke was large-minded enough to walk away, merely

remarking that Alonzo was a most extraordinary boy.

When the same innocent specimen started to dig up the lawn, believing the story he was told about the Head's design to grow vegetables there, Lonzy got off with a reprimand, and the damage was charged to the bills of the spoofers. And Lonzy only got one hundred lines when he was discovered in pyjamas under the Head's breakfast-table. And the Head apologised to Fisher T. Fish for doubting his story of being shot over the wall into the garden from the saddle of a bike when he learned that the story was true. It sounded impossible, but the bike was one of the almost prehistoric high type. The heart of a true gentleman was needed to apologise to Fishy for doubting him, for Fishy deserves to be doubted on general principles.

Yet the Head can be severe enough on occasion. He caned the whole Upper Fourth once. He had Bob Cherry put outside the gates when, having been sentenced to expulsion, he refused to go. He dealt very sternly with Johnny Bull. Again Bob came under the ban, for thrashing Vernon-Smith; and again Bob refused to clear out, and in the end he had the better of it. When Skinner wanted to come back, after being sacked, the Head said "No!" quite firmly; but Skinner tricked him into consent at last by playing upon his sympathies—nothing to Skinner's credit, and not too greatly to the Head's!

But, weighing his faults against his good qualities, one sees that the good tips down the scale heavily. When he goes wrong it is often from an excess of kindness; and if he errs in the other direction at times, it is certain that he repents bitterly of his mistakes.

If he were more perfect, calmer in judgment, he might be a better headmaster; but he could hardly be a better-loved one!

NOTICES.

Correspondence Wanted By:

E. G. Reeve, 296, Upper Richmond Road, Putney, S.W. 15—with readers running amateur magazines and editors needing articles.

Miss Florence Russouw, care of Mrs. Spencer, 43, Edward Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa—with girl readers, 18-20, anywhere.

K. Brown, Park House, Westbourne Park, Urmston—with readers in South Africa who will exchange S.A. stamps for Norwegian.

Clive Jensen, 40, Magnolia Terrace, North Szechuen Road, Shanghai, China—with boy readers anywhere.

Henry Smith, Thomas Hanbury School for Boys, 63, Haskell Road, Shanghai, China—with boy readers about 15.

Jack Lewis, Etheline, Crown Street, Wollongong, N.S.W., Australia—with boy readers about 14 interested in boxing.

H. A. Dunkerton, 4, Wakefield Gardens, Glenferrie, Melbourne, Australia—with boy readers, 17, any part of world.

Miss Shirley Wood, 1842, Retallack Street, Regina, Sask., Canada—with girl readers in other parts of the Empire; hobbies, stamps, coins.

Bugle-Instructor Alan G. Hawson, 323, Liverpool Road, Ashfield, Sydney, Australia—with Scout readers in England, especially buglers.

Herbert Pardoe, 152, Avondale Avenue, Hamilton, Ont., Canada—with boy readers anywhere.

E. Nesbitt, 24, Castleton Gardens, Belfast—with boy readers, 17-20, in North America, British West Indies, and England.

G. S. Day, jun., Box 182, Christchurch, New Zealand—with boy reader about 18 in England or Canada.

Reg. Gairns, care of British Imperial Oil Co., Clarence Street, Sydney, Australia—with boy readers in England or South Africa.



ROY HARRIS,
Edmonton, Canada.



A LOYAL SOMERSET
READER.



WILLIE CRYER,
Burnley.



WALTER CLARKE,
Blackburn.



FRANK KIRK,
Rawmarsh.



ROSS THOMPSON,
Australia.



A LOYAL JEWISH
READER.



A KEEN READER.



W. J. TYRRELL.



SIDNEY HARMSTON,
Great Grimsby.



TWO KEEN READERS AND A CHUM.



E. H. D., Cardiff.



W. BAXTER,
Hockley.



A DEVOTED READER.



JIM GREEN,
Woolwich.



H. BROOKS,
Bethnal Green.



ARTHUR KING,
Blackburn.

EDITORIAL CHAT.

For Next Monday:

"PARTED PALS!"

By Frank Richards.

The story which is due to appear next week is quite one of the best. Johnny Bull's candour and obstinacy and Hurree Singh's high pride have brought about between them a quarrel that looks like lasting. Yet at heart they are still fond of one another, and the rest of the Famous Five know that, and do their best to bring them together. Bob Cherry has a great scheme, the narration of which ought to please you all, for it made me chuckle greatly. But it is not Bob, or Harry Wharton, or Frank Nugent who prevails at last. It is the Bounder, working in his own queer way, with a plan that seems on the face of it almost as absurd as Bob's, but has more knowledge of human nature in it.

POMPOUS RUBBISH!

I have received the letter hereunder, which I print exactly as it reaches me.

"Sir,—Further to my remarks of a few days ago, upon which you comment in your current issue of your usual 'rot' in an exceedingly vague and quasi-elusive manner, I beg to observe first of all that the 'Daily Express' has nothing at all to do with the matter, and your reason for mentioning that paper seems quite unknown. However, having some time to waste, I will add a few more criticisms of your illiterate 'bosh'; I trust you will read, mark and fully digest them.

"You will admit, if not in print in yourself, that, that which you are pleased to call the MAGNET, and which I have re-christened several times, is nothing more than a few pages of idiotic nonsense, and a means of making a little money. Does it not occur to you that it is not patriotic to print these 'bloods'? It does to me.

"Disregarding the indisputable fact that it is waste of paper, labour, etc., look at it from the educational point of view. It was, or is, a well-known fact that our Enemies, the Huns, are the best-educated race of people inside, and perhaps outside, Europe (with this, I think you will agree). Well, what the coming generation want is more education, in order to be able to compete with the Germans, for, regardless of the result of this War, it will always be a case of English versus the Germans in commerce, etc., and education, I think, will be the deciding factor. In spite of this, and other reasons for the contrary, you still continue to print, or cause to be printed, your 'rot.' Of course, your MAGNET is not a very serious obstacle, but it ought to be sat on.

"If a boy has always got his nose in one of your 'bloods' (which is the case with a lot), is he or will he improve his knowledge as far as education is concerned? Not at all—he is, in fact, lessening it by filling his mind with 'cheap romance.'

"When I was at school (two years ago) there were several boys in my form who were great book-readers, but unfortunately they did not read the right sort of books—they read your 'rot.' They used to read them under the desk, instead of learning their lessons, which you must admit, was very detrimental to them. Several times our Headmaster had occasion to lecture the whole form on the utter foolishness of buying and reading such 'tommy-rot,' as he called the substance of your 'greenbacks.' He used to point out that there was a library in the school for the use of the boys, which library consisted of several hundreds of volumes of decent literature, which literature, he said, was far more interesting, and would do them more good. Certainly I agreed with him, but unfortunately some of my fellows students could not see this, and even now I am surprised to meet these friends and find them still reading the same rotten 'rot'—they will, no doubt, find their mistake out later on.

"In most cases I find that the boys (excluded girls) who read your 'bloods' have

no ambition whatever, are dull and stolid, and almost devoid of common-sense. There are, of course, a few exceptions. You see 'rot' does not appeal to those who have some sense.

"Many times have judges remarked upon the bad influence of your papers when cases of boys committing misdeeds, etc., are brought before them.

"Bien entendu, (sic) your 'bosh' appears quite harmless on the surface, but, frontally, nullifies.

"I regret that I have no more time to waste now, and in conclusion I would defy you to insert these few observations in your 'columns of bosh,' and then you will be able to say that the said columns do contain some common sense, eh? N'oubliez pas!

"Yours,

"DISGUSTED" (A. E. Coleman).

"P.S.—Of course, you are not alone in my 'cold estimation' it includes—the 'Gem' (absolute rot like the MAGNET you know), 'Union Jack' (what is next week's issue on? The trial of the blood-stained kipper bone?), 'Penny Popular' (ought to be called 'The Silly Boys' Weekly'), 'Nelson Lee Library' (one of the pillars of the monument of rot, eh?), and sundry other penny 'dreadfuls' (sorry I made a mistake, and said 2d. before—I suppose you will be charging this price to your 'potty readers' soon?).

"Be patriotic and chuck it.—A. E. C.

"I hope I have not bored you, dear boy? A. E. C."

MY REPLY.

I really don't know anything about Mr. "Disgusted" Coleman's letter of "a few days ago." If it reached me, it went straight into the w.p.b. without making the slightest impression on my mind.

Perhaps this one should have followed it. But Mr. Coleman asks to be shown up, and he may as well have his wish.

The quotation from the "Daily Express" was given because it seemed to me interesting. It was in no sense given as a reply—"vague and quasi-elusive" or otherwise—to this correspondent.

His present letter is simply pompous and pretentious rubbish. He accuses me—or Mr. Richards—I really am not sure which—of being "illiterate," but evidently does not know the meaning of the word. Even he himself is not "illiterate." He has, I should judge, some small part of the average elementary school education. He uses French—and Latin phrases—grossly misspelling in one case—without apprehending their meaning, which makes it obvious that he knows neither French nor Latin. He sneers at the boys who read stories under their desks at school. Certainly, they should not have done that; but, after all, judging from my correspondence generally, most of them managed to keep up with Mr. "Disgusted" Coleman educationally in spite of this lapse.

A good school library is a capital thing. But all school libraries are not well selected. And, though a boy may have Henty and Manville Fenn, Strang and Brereton, Baines Reed and Jules Verne, Ballantyne and Gordon Stables to draw upon, that is no reason why he should read nothing else.

My papers need no defence against a critic of Mr. Coleman's calibre. When he has learned that education means something more than the German schoolboy gets—with all their faults, our British schools do produce decent men, not scientific criminals—that vulgar abuse is not argument, and that a critic should at least be able to set down clearly in the English language what he has to say—why, then, I shall be pleased to hear from him again! Meanwhile, I can trust my readers to discern the sheer pompous puerility of his letter.

CORRESPONDENCE WANTED BY:

F. Mason, 297, Wellington Street, Great Grimsby, with readers at Barking, Essex.

Mrs. Craven, 12, Back Cross Lane, Primrose Hill, Huddersfield, any information con-

cerning Private John Longbottom, missing since September last.

G. H. Eade, 230, St. John Street, London, E.C., wants instructions for "Off to Kiondyke."

W. O'Sullivan, 5, Lanark Street, Hull, with a boy reader over 15 in Leicester.

Frank Lambert, 67, Whitefield Terrace, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, with boy readers in India, Australia, Canada, and United States.

Thomas C. Allen, 19, Ardoch Road, Catford, London, S.E., with readers interested in engineering, with a view to exchanging ideas and models.

Frederick W. Park, 46, Cranborne Road, Barking, Essex, with any Colonial boy reader over 14.

Miss Doris Cole, 126, Nelson Road, South Melbourne, Australia, with a girl reader of about 13.

Miss Alice MacCallum, Musgrave Street, Gympie, Queensland, Australia, with girl readers in United Kingdom.

W. J. Turner, 125, Bendigo Street, Prahran, Melbourne, Australia, with boy readers 17-18 in United Kingdom, or other Colonies.

James Calder, 13, Calton Hill, Edinburgh, would like to hear from his chum, "Boy Messenger William Wood, G.P.O., Glasgow."

Jack Desmond, 63, St. Dunstan's Road, Hanwell, Middlesex, with boy readers all over the world, especially in Japan and China.

R. Bowerman, 26, Harman Road, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, London, N., with Colonial readers interested in stamp collecting.

Cyril Ackerley, 73, Church Street, Runcorn, with boy readers about 17 at home and abroad.

Sidney Wear, Westfields, Hereford, would like to hear from J. Hyland, London, N., whose photo appeared in this paper late in December.

A Leeds reader is badly in need of a chum—boy of quiet and thoughtful disposition. Will any such reader write to E. A., care of the Editor of the MAGNET?

W. J. Morgan, Louvain House, Felinfoel, Llanelly, would be glad of any news of Pioneer N. Sydney Nicholls, who left for France in August, 1916.

Miss Edna McGrath, Brightling, Parks Street, Katoomba, N.S.W., Australia, with English girls.

Miss F. and Miss H. Penstone, 203, Archway Road, Highgate, London, N., with readers, in Pitman's shorthand.

Sea Scout S. Grove, H.M. Coastguard Station, Hope Cove, Kingsbridge, N. Devon, would like to hear from his friend, Stanley Holcroft, who used to live at Walthamstow.

G. McCarthy, 129, Bathurst Street, Toronto, Canada, with boy readers in United Kingdom.

Miss Margaret Raymond, 26, Bishopsgate Street, Wickham, Newcastle, N.S.W., Australia, with girl readers in United Kingdom.

Signal Boy S. A. Grant, Mess 15, H.M.S. Amphitrite, Portsmouth, with boy readers.

W. W. and J. C. Grayland, 34, Isabella Street, Geelong West, Victoria, Australia, with boy readers.

K. Hawkins, care of Master Builders' Association, 12, Castlereagh Street, Sydney, Australia, with boy readers, especially those interested in boxing.

J. J. MacCallum, Musgrave Road, Gympie, Queensland, Australia, with boy reader in England or Scotland.

E. F. Evans, 8, Park Street, London, W., with boy reader about 16.

W. Helliwell, Skircoat Green, Halifax, with boy readers of 12-13.

A. Gratrix, 19, Princess Street, Lincoln, with any boy reader.

W. Summerell, 38, Bellevue Road, Bell Hill, St. George, Bristol, with a French reader.

Your Editor