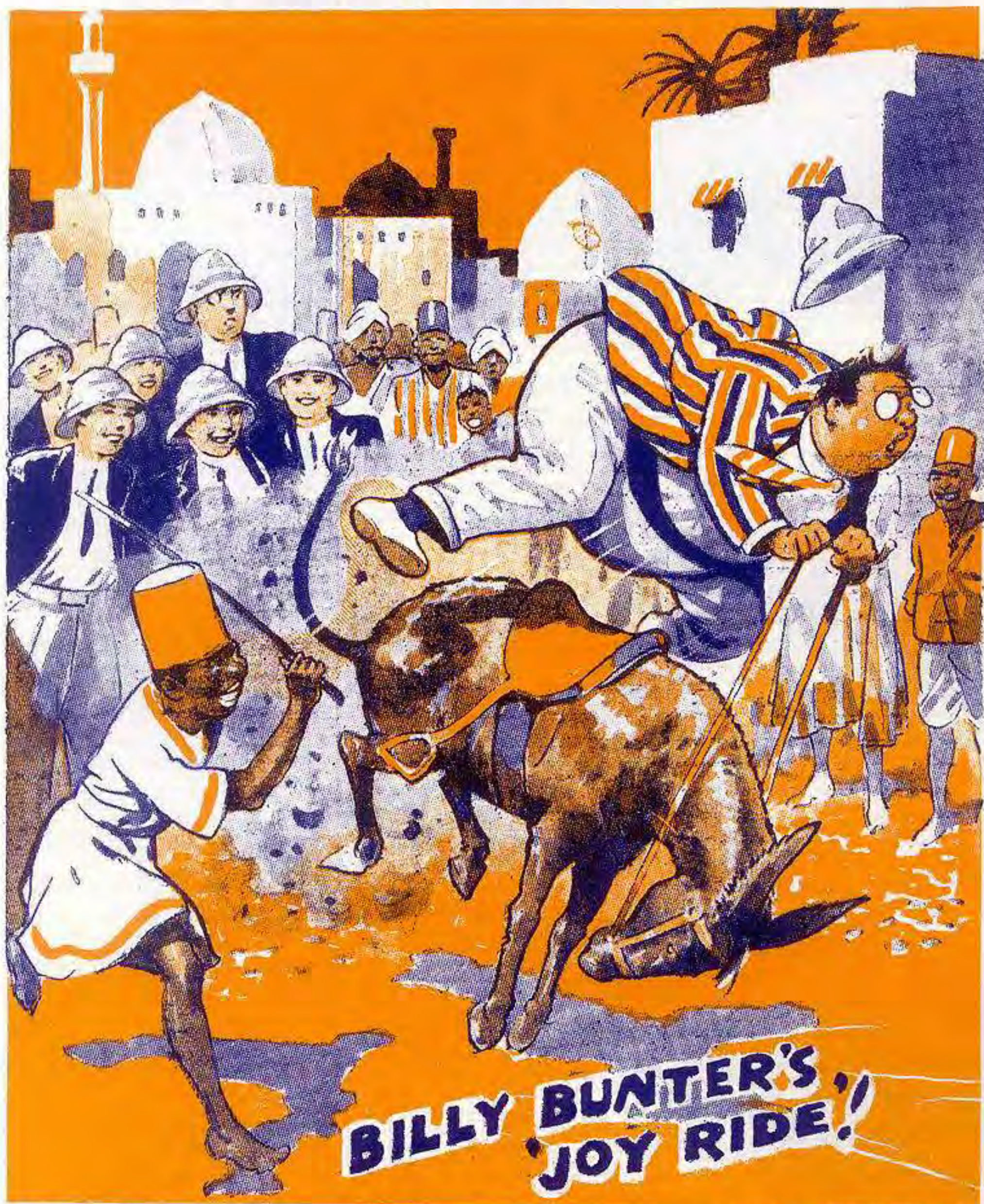


"THE RED FALCON!"

Thrill-packed
Highwayman Story

Starts To-day !

The **MAGNET** 2^D





Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address :
The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

IN this issue appears the first magnificent instalment of Arthur Steffens' new serial: "The Red Falcon," and I am quite anxious to know what you think about it. I believe it is going to be one of the most popular serials I have ever published—for what boy is there who doesn't revel in a stirring yarn of the "good old days"? As this story progresses it will keep you guessing at the mystery which surrounds Hal Lovett; and his adventures, and those of his pal, Jerry McLean, will hold your interest until the very end. Tell your chums about this rattling fine serial—and see that you don't miss a single instalment of it yourself! Take my tip, and tell your newsagent to reserve you a copy of the MAGNET regularly!

Do you know which are

THE LARGEST PASSENGER-CARRYING AEROPLANES IN THE WORLD?

Jack Harford, of Dumfries, asks me to tell him. The "Heracles" and the "Hannibal" types hold this distinction. Both are owned by Imperial Airways, and the following particulars concerning them may be of interest to many readers. Both have a span of 130 feet, a length of 89½ feet, and a height of 27 feet 3 inches. Both, also, carry a crew of three, but the "Heracles" type carry 38 passengers as against the "Hannibal" type's 24. Here are the technical details of both types:

"Hannibal": Four Bristol "Jupiter XIF" engines, 9-cylinder air-cooled radial, each 490 h.p. Maximum speed 127 m.p.h. Cruising speed 100 m.p.h. Normally employed between Cairo and Karachi. Built by Handley Page. There are four machines of this type; Hannibal (G-AAGX); Hanno (G-AAUD); Hadrian (G-AAUE); and Horsa (G-AAUC).

"Heracles": Four Bristol "Jupiter XFBM" engines, 9-cylinder air-cooled radial, with medium ratio supercharger and airscrew reduction gear, each 550 h.p. Maximum and cruising speeds the same as "Hannibal" type. Normally employed between London and Paris. There are also four machines of this type, as follows: Heracles (G-AAXC); Horatius (G-AAXD); Hengist (G-AAXE); and Helena (G-AAXF). These, too, were built by Handley Page.

NOW comes a query concerning MOTOR-CYCLE RACING.

Bernard Barelay, of Nottingham, wants to know if a foreigner has ever won the British Tourist Trophy Race? The answer is "No." Although foreigners have tried their best to do so, none have ever been successful. On the other hand, Great Britain has won every foreign road race of importance this year! The Belgian

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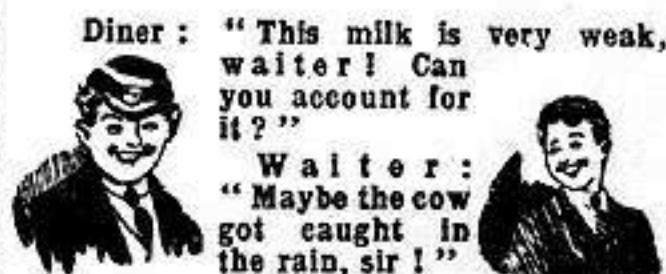
Grand Prix, which was the last of the big Continental Grand Prix races, and was run recently, resulted in Great Britain winning each of the four classes. The Senior Class was won by Stanley Woods, of Dublin, who also won the last Senior Tourist Trophy Race.

This country is certainly

PILING UP THE SPEED RECORDS!

On land, water, and air we hold the records! Here they are, up to date. Air: Flight-Lieut. Stainforth's 408.8 m.p.h.; Land: Sir Malcolm Campbell's 246.09 m.p.h.; and Water: Kaye Don's recent 119.81 m.p.h. In addition to that, four railway records were broken by British trains last month. The natives of the land of Fisher T. Fish will have to "pull up their socks" if they want to beat that bundle!

One of our lucky readers this week is Harry Dean, of 7, Tanybryn Street, Aberdare. I have just had the pleasure of sending a top-notch Sheffield steel pen-knife to him in return for the following rib-tickling joke:



Diner: "This milk is very weak, waiter! Can you account for it?"

Waiter: "Maybe the cow got caught in the rain, sir!"

Pile in with your attempts, chums! You may be one of the lucky ones in a week or two!

HAVE you ever been puzzled as to HOW "ROTTEN ROW" GOT ITS NAME?

George Martin, of Poplar, asks me if I can tell him. Well, years ago, the king used to use this drive, and it became known as the "Route du Roi," or the "way of the king." As the years passed the words became corrupted to "Rotten Row," by which name it is called to-day. Many of the London streets have curious names whose origins go far back in history. Birdcage Walk, for instance, was called that because Charles II used to keep an aviary there. Pall Mall received its name because it was there that the game of Paille-Maille was first played in London. The hunting packs of Old London were kept in Houndsditch, and Hoxton was once called Hogsdon, because it was a famous pig market.

There are many

CURIOUS STREET NAMES

in London. Fancy a place called "Of Alley." Its name was recently changed to York Place. It was originally called after George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham,

whose estate was sold on condition that his name and title must be remembered. Consequently the streets were named: George Street, Villiers Street, Duke Street, Of Alley, and Buckingham Street. "Adelphi" is a Greek word for "brothers," and Adelphi, in London, was so called because it was built by two brothers, Robert and John Adam. There are, therefore "Robert," "John," and "Adam" streets in the Adelphi. Perhaps the most curious street in London is in Hoxton, and is called "The Land of Promise." The "promise" doesn't seem to amount for much, because at the end of the street there is—a workhouse!

HARRY FOREST, of Wivenhoe, tells me he is making a collection of those interesting paragraphs which I have passed on to you on various occasions, and he wants some more of them. So here are a few more

THINGS YOU'D HARDLY BELIEVE!

The Crystal Palace is Longer in Summer than in Winter! It is built of glass and iron, both of which expand in heat. On a hot summer's day, the expansion amounts to as much as ten inches!

A Man Once Swam Four Thousand Miles! He started from the source of the Mississippi River, and swam all the way to its mouth, even swimming the numerous rapids. Needless to say, he came out of the water for periods of rest, and it took him five months to complete the job. As yet, he is the only swimmer to have accomplished this task!

"Portuguese men-o'-war" are NOT Portuguese—Nor are they man-o'-war! The term is one given by sailors to the Nautilus, which is a genus of cuttlefish!

Human Beings With Tongues Like Snakes! Although very rare, human beings have been known to have forked tongues like snakes! One German woman, whose tongue forked out into two at the end was unable to speak a word!

I have just room left to print this Greyfriars limerick, for which H. Harris, of 33, Shere Road, Ilford, Essex, gets a real leather pocket wallet:

Poor Bunter! He generally kicks
When Quelch hands out to him "six."
But this lucky day
He just grinned away—
He'd stuffed his check breeches with bricks!

LOOK out for next week's issue, chums. In the long complete tale—

"THE LURE OF THE GOLDEN SCARAB!"

By Frank Richards,

you will learn more about the amazing adventures which overtake Harry Wharton & Co. during their holiday in Egypt. There's plenty of fun in the yarn, too, and it is certainly one of the best which this most popular author has ever given us. This splendid holiday series gets better and better every week. Now's the time to introduce your chums to the MAGNET.

In addition to a long instalment of our new serial, there will also be another cheery yarn of Doctor Birchmell, entitled: "The Bogus Hero!" and the usual shorter features.

Cheerio until next week, chums!

YOUR EDITOR,

HARRY

WHARTON

AND CO

IN EGYPT!

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bound for Egypt!

BILLY BUNTER removed Lord Mauleverer's best Panama hat from his bullet head, mopped his perspiring, podgy brow with one of Harry Wharton's handkerchiefs, and gasped.

It was hot!

Harry Wharton & Co. had rather expected to find it warm in the Mediterranean Sea in summer. They found it, perhaps, a little too warm for comfort; except Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who basked and revelled in the sun-blaze that reminded him of his native land. But they looked very cheery and bright. Billy Bunter, on the other hand, seemed to regard the heat as a special unkind trick purposely played on him by Nature, and he was annoyed.

"Oooooogh!" said Bunter.

Bob Cherry glanced round at him, with a cheery grin.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old fat bean! Enjoying life?" he inquired. Warm as it was, Bob Cherry, at least, seemed to have lost none of his usual energy. Instead of sitting in a deckchair like the other fellows, on the deck of the steamer, Bob was actively engaged with a "yo-yo," putting in a little practice, rather to the peril of his near neighbours. Bob had a skilled hand with a cricket bat; but he had not yet acquired skill with a "yo-yo," and he seemed rather to use it as a weapon of offence.

"Oooooogh! No!" grunted Bunter. "It's hot! Beastly hot! I wish I was in Margate!"

"I wish you were, old bean," said Bob cordially.

"Hear, hear!" assented Johnny Bull.

"The wishfulness is terrific!" concurred Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"This trip to Egypt," remarked

Frank Nugent thoughtfully, "needs only one thing to make it perfect. If only Bunter was at Margate——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grunt from Billy Bunter.

There was no doubt that it was cooler at Margate, and Bunter wished that he was there. But he did not seem pleased, somehow, to find his wish so heartily echoed by the other fellows.

"I say, Mauly!"

"Yaas?" murmured Lord Mauleverer. Stretched in a long cane chair, with his second best Panama tilted over his eyes, his lordship was dozing away the sunny hours.

Ancient and mysterious Egypt holds many attractions for Harry Wharton & Co.—not the least of them being an exciting hunt for a buried treasure worth a king's ransom!

"This idea of a trip to Egypt was simply fatheaded, Mauly."

"Yaas."

"You're a silly ass, Mauly."

"Yaas."

"And a burbling idiot!" hooted Bunter.

"Yaas."

"We could have had a ripping time at Margate——"

"Yaas."

"I'm simply frying!"

"Yaas."

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter fanned himself with Mauly's best Panama, grunted, and blinked round him morosely through his big spectacles. Hot as it was, the other

fellows found their surroundings pleasant enough. The Greyfriars party had travelled by train to Naples, and taken the steamer for Alexandria there. Now they were half-way on their journey to the Egyptian port, and the mountains of Crete loomed against the blue sky, on the port quarter—the last land they were to see until the shores of Egypt came in sight.

Later in the season when the rush for the Nile began, the steamers would be crowded, but in the hot weather there was no crowd. Round the churning steamer, rolled the Mediterranean, wide and blue, stretching, apparently, to infinity, inland sea as it was. Only the Cretan hill-tops broke the line where the sea met the sky. At a little distance from the schoolboys Sir Reginald Brooke, Mauly's uncle, was pacing the deck slowly, in conversation with an American tourist. Other passengers were leaning on the rail, or sitting in the deckchairs, reading newspapers, or consulting red-covered guide books. Stewards came and went with cooling drinks. There was hardly a breath of air; and the throb of the engines sounded with loud distinctness, and there was rather an oily scent from the engine-room. Billy Bunter's blink landed on the blue hill-tops against the blue sky.

"I say, you fellows! Is that Egypt?" he asked.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Not quite!" he answered. "That's Crete!"

"Are we far from Egypt?"

"Only about three hundred miles."

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

The island of Crete faded away on the port quarter. Out of sight of land, the Naples steamer churned on towards the distant shores of Africa.

"I say, you fellows——"

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bumps for Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. leaped to their feet.

The Egyptian gentleman sat and blinked.

"You fat chump!" roared Harry Wharton.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Nugent.

The Famous Five rushed to render first-aid. Bob Cherry picked up the sun-umbrella. Nugent captured the tarboosh. Wharton and Johnny Bull grasped the dark gentleman by either arm and helped him to his feet. He was a plump gentleman, and a good weight, and Hurree Singh and Lord Mauleverer lent a hand each to get him back to the perpendicular.

He stood gasping.

"Awfully sorry, sir!" gasped Wharton.

"Quite an accident!" said Johnny Bull.

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, esteemed sahib."

"Here's your hat, sir!" Nugent held up the tarboosh.

"Here's your umbrella, sir!"

"Hope you're not hurt, sir!"

The dark gentleman gasped spasmodically. He seemed to be winded. He passed a dark hand over his dark features. Fortunately they were not damaged; the cushion was a soft one, though it had hit rather hard. The juniors were full of apologies. A Greyfriars "rag" was all very well in their own select circle; but it was not the thing to floor an unoffending stranger. Billy Bunter, on the other hand, turned up his fat little nose and curled his podgy lip. Billy Bunter considered this an absurd fuss to make about a "nigger." In Billy Bunter's lofty estimation all coloured gentlemen were "niggers," and Bunter had a lofty and superior contempt for them—though he was not himself, as a matter of fact, a remarkably creditable specimen of the white race.

"I say, you fellows—" grunted Bunter.

"You clumsy ass!" hooted Bob Cherry. "Haven't you manners enough to say you're sorry?"

"Oh, rats!" said Bunter. "Lot of fuss to make about a darkey!"

"Shut up, you fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"All right now, sir?" asked Harry Wharton. "We're awfully sorry, sir. I hope you'll excuse that clumsy owl; he didn't mean it to get you."

The Egyptian gentleman recovered his composure. It was plain that he was annoyed and offended; but he made the juniors a polite bow and moved away to a vacant chair without speaking a word.

He sat down rather heavily in the chair, replaced the tarboosh on his head, and took no further notice of the Greyfriars party. Harry Wharton & Co. resumed their seats, considerably perturbed by the unfortunate accident. Whether the dark gentleman understood English or not, they could not tell, as he had not spoken, but they hoped that he understood, at least, that they had been apologising for the accident. Obviously he was annoyed, which was not surprising in the circumstances.

"What about kicking Bunter?" asked Johnny Bull. "We haven't kicked him since we broke up at Greyfriars, and Bunter can't do without a certain amount of kicking."

"Beast! I say, you fellows, what the dickens does it matter about the darkey?" said Bunter peevishly. "I

don't believe in wasting a lot of politeness on niggers."

Harry Wharton cast a quick, anxious glance at the Egyptian. But the dark brown face gave no sign that he had understood Bunter's words, or, indeed, heard them at all.

"You fat, frowsy frump!" said Harry. "The man may understand you. If you say another word I'll bang your silly head on the deck."

"Yah!"

The Egyptian was dressed in European clothes, with the exception of the red tarboosh. He looked like a wealthy man of good position; though to Bunter's lofty eyes he was only a nigger, and of no more account than one of the darkies in the engine-room. He sat with an expressionless face, as if unconscious of the English schoolboys near him, and they could only hope that he did not understand Bunter.

A dark, slim Arab dressed in a galabyeh of fine white cotton came along the deck with a tray of sherbet. Billy Bunter blinked at him and waved a beckoning fat hand.

"Just what I want!" he said. "Here, steward, this way!"

"You benighted owl!" said Bob Cherry. "That chap isn't a steward. Shut up!"

"Rot!" snapped Bunter. "I'm not asking you to pay for it, Cherry! Mauly's standing the exes on this trip, ain't you, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"Here, steward!" hooted Bunter, still beckoning to the Arab. "This way! Bring it here."

The man did not heed him. He stopped before the plump Egyptian gentleman and bent low as he presented the tray to him. Billy Bunter blinked at that proceeding with great indignation. There were native stewards on the steamer, and the Arab might have been mistaken for one of them; but all the fellows except Bunter could see that this particular Arab was the Egyptian gentleman's servant. He was attending to his master's wants, and probably did not even realise that the fat Owl was speaking to him at all.

"Cheek!" snorted Bunter. "This is what comes of giving them Home Rule, and all that rot! It makes them cheeky! Fancy that cheeky blighter having the nerve to serve a nigger before a white man!"

"Mightn't recognise you as a white man," suggested Johnny Bull. "You haven't washed since we broke up at Greyfriars!"

"The whiteness of the esteemed Bunter is not terrific. But the grubbiness and the greasiness are preposterous!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, Inky! Of course, you'd sympathise with other niggers," said Bunter. "Birds of a feather, you know! I've jolly good mind to kick that cheeky blacky!"

The Arab with the tray gave quite a start, and his black eyes turned on Bunter for a second. It looked as if he understood English, whether his master did or not.

The Greyfriars fellows coloured with vexation.

Billy Bunter's manners were never modelled on those of Lord Chesterfield; but when he was among foreigners Bunter really was the limit.

The Egyptian spoke to the servant in a language totally incomprehensible to the schoolboys. They caught the word "Ali," which they guessed to be the Arab's name; but the rest was impenetrable.

Ali, if his name was Ali, salaamed to his master, and carried away the tray

"Don't say it's hot!" said Bob Cherry.

"We've had that one!"

"It's beastly hot—"

"Wait till you get to Egypt! You're only frying here! You'll bake there!"

"The bakefulness will be terrific!"

chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"The esteemed Bunter will melt away into ridiculous tallow!"

"Beast!"

"Buck up, old fat man," said Bob encouragingly. "Like to take a turn with my 'yo-yo'?"

"Yah!"

"I'll show you how to handle it," said Bob. "You see, you make the spool run down the string like that—and it comes back like that—and you run it down again like that—"

Bang!

"Yarooooooh!"

"Did that hit your nose, Bunter?"

"Ow! Wow! Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter left off fanning himself, and clasped both fat hands to his fat little nose, and roared. The "yo-yo" had established contact there, perhaps by accident, and perhaps not!

"You shouldn't put your nose in the way when I'm showing you how to handle a 'yo-yo'," said Bob Cherry chidingly. "Let's try again! You run it down the string like that—"

"Keep off, you beast!" yelled Bunter, dodging the whizzing spool.

"And like that—"

"Yooooop!"

"And like that—"

"Wow!"

Billy Bunter jumped out of his chair. The "yo-yo" caught him on a fat ear as he jumped. There was another roar from Bunter.

"Will you keep off, you beast?" he yelled.

"But I'm showing you how to handle a 'yo-yo,' old chap! You see, it goes like this—"

Bang!

"Yarooooooh!"

"And like this—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter hopped and jumped like a fat kangaroo. Harry Wharton & Co. chortled, and Lord Mauleverer sat up and grinned. Bob, with undiminished energy, continued to instruct the fat Owl of the Remove in the use of a "yo-yo"—his idea of the use of it, apparently, being to deliver a series of sharp taps all over Bunter.

"Leave off, you beast!" roared Bunter, dodging round the chairs.

"Keep that beastly thing away, you rotter! Whooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fat Owl clutched up a cushion from his chair. He whirled it aloft with both hands, and took aim at Bob, and hurled it with all the force of two fat arms.

Bob Cherry grinned and dodged, and the missile flew over his head and shot along the deck.

But every bullet, it is said, has its billet. The same rule applied to the cushion. It missed Bob Cherry by a foot, whizzed on, and caught a plump Egyptian gentleman who was coming along the deck, landing fairly in his dark-skinned face. There was a howl of astonishment from the plump Egyptian gentleman; a red tarboosh flew in one direction, a sun-umbrella in another, and the plump Egyptian gentleman sat down on the deck, with a bump that almost shook the steamer.

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and disappeared. He shot another glance at the juniors with his sharp black eyes as he went.

Billy Bunter snorted.

"Cheeky lot of niggers!" he grunted. "I say, you fellows, which of you is going to fetch me a lemon-squash?"

"The whichfulness is terrific."

"Are you going, Bob?"

"I don't think!"

"What about you, Nugent?"

"Fathead!"

"Selfishness all round!" said Bunter bitterly. "I've turned down a lot of invitations for the hols to come out to Egypt with you fellows to protect you, and this is my reward! Blessed if it isn't enough to make a fellow chuck up being generous and kind-hearted."

"Oh crumbs!"

"I shouldn't wonder if you fellows

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"Shut up!" hooted Bob Cherry.

"I suppose we mustn't drop him into the sea," said Johnny Bull thoughtfully.

"You'll be jolly glad to have me with you if that Greek blighter Kalizelos turns up again," sneered Bunter. "I shouldn't wonder if he's on this steamer, or some of his gang, after the scarab. He jolly nearly got it at Naples, and I saved you—"

"If you thought Kalizelos was on this steamer, you fat funk, you'd be hiding under your bunk!" growled Johnny Bull.

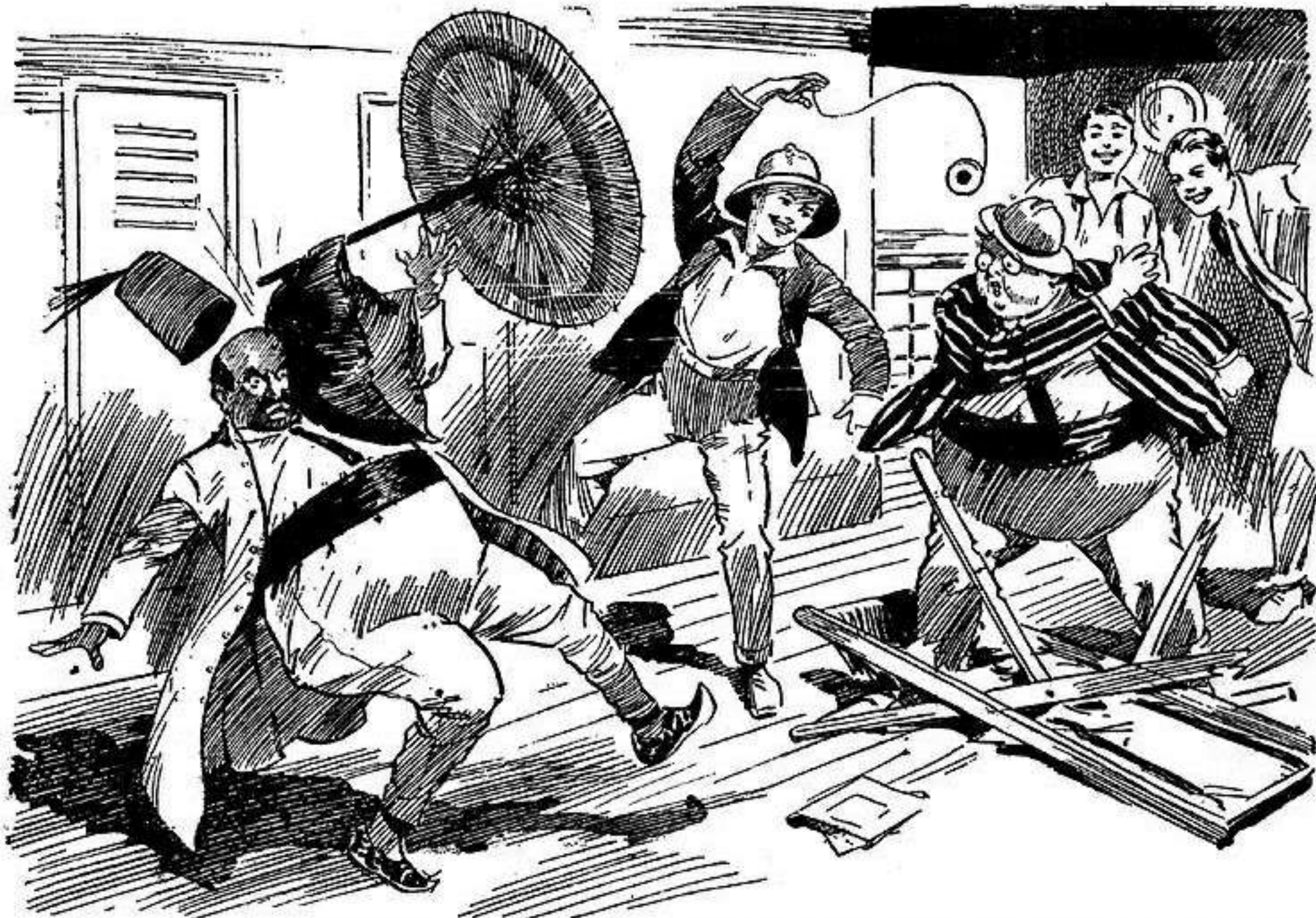
"Yah! I've looked over the passengers, and Kalizelos isn't among them," said Bunter. "But any of these darkies might be in his gang, and you jolly well know he's after Mauly's

compelled to warn you that I speak your language."

With that the plump Egyptian gentleman sat down again and resumed gazing at the sea, his dark face as expressionless as before.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another.

Obviously every word that had been uttered in his hearing had been understood by the Egyptian. He had given no sign until the talk turned on matters which were evidently not for a stranger's ears, when he had felt compelled to "put them wise"—which was certainly a decent and honourable proceeding on his part. Never had the chums of Greyfriars felt so utterly disconcerted and discomfited, and even Billy Bunter was a little abashed.



As Billy Bunter hurled the cushion, Bob Cherry dodged, and the flying missile landed fairly in the dark-skinned face of the plump Egyptian. There was a howl of astonishment from the fat gentleman as he lost his balance and staggered backwards!

make me selfish, like yourselves, in the long run," said Bunter morosely. "Here I am, hot and thirsty, and not one of you will fetch me a lemon-squash!"

"You can't fetch it yourself?" asked Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry!" Apparently that resource had not occurred to Billy Bunter's fat mind. "Where's a beastly steward? They buzz round like flies when they're not wanted. Think that nigger would fetch me a lemon-squash if I asked him?" Bunter jerked a fat and not very clean thumb at the Egyptian gentleman.

"What?" gasped Wharton.

"I can't speak his idiotic lingo, of course, but I dare say I could make him understand," said Bunter. "I'll give him a franc—one of you fellows lend me a franc—"

"If that chap could understand what you are saying, you fat porker, I'd jam your silly head on the deck," said Harry Wharton. "Lucky for you he can't."

scarab—that idiotic golden beetle that Mauly's pater dug up somewhere in Egypt, that belonged to some nigger named Washtub, or something—"

"A-Menah, you fat chump!"

"If Mauly had any sense he would give me the scarab to mind, instead of you, Wharton. It would be safe then. If there's any darkey on this steamer after it, I'm the man to handle him, as you jolly well know. You can cackle. But if you fellows get into danger, who's going to pull you through?" demanded Bunter. "That very darkey sitting there looking like a black gargoyle might be after it, for anything you know."

The Egyptian gentleman rose to his feet. He turned to the schoolboys, made a polite bow, and, to their surprise—and horror—spoke in excellent English.

"Young gentlemen," he said quietly, "as you appear to be discussing affairs of a private nature in my hearing I feel

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Bob Cherry, breaking a painful silence, "that fat idiot, that frowsy frump, that unwashed, benighted tick has been asking for it—begging for it—praying for it! Now let him have it!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hear, hear!"

The Famous Five jumped up. Billy Bunter jumped up, too, in alarm.

"I say, you fellows! Keep off, you beasts! How was I to know that the beastly nigger understood? And what does it matter about a blinking nigger, anyhow? I say—Yaroooh! Whoop!"

Bump!

In the grasp of many hands Billy Bunter smote the deck. His roar woke every echo of the steamer and caused passengers to stare round in astonishment.

Bump!

"Yoooooop!"

"Give him another!"

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"I say, you fellows— Whoooooop!" Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Now kick him off the deck!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "First kick to me! See if I can land him down the stairs with one go! Stand steady, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter did not stand steady. He did not stand at all. He fled for his fat life and vanished from the deck, roaring. And for a second a smile flickered over the face of the plump Egyptian gentleman.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Sudden Blow!

"HOT!" murmured Frank Nugent.

It was evening, and the sun was sinking in a blaze of fire in the west. Eastward the blue had faded out, and a steely grey was spreading up from the rim of the sea. It had been a hot day, but with sunset the heat seemed to increase, instead of the usual coolness coming.

Billy Bunter sat in a deckchair and moaned. Bunter had done well at dinner, as usual—remarkably well—and he seemed to have found some difficulty in crawling on deck afterwards. Once there, he collapsed in his chair and moaned. Even Hurree Jamset Ram Singh admitted that it was hot. To the other fellows it seemed like a furnace with the lid off. Not a breath of wind came across the glassy sea; and the stillness, broken only by the throb of the engines and the faint wash of the water against the ship's sides, seemed somehow ominous. Many of the passengers were below, and Sir

Reginald Brooke, Mauly's uncle and guardian, who was in charge of the Greyfriars party, had retired to the smoke-room. The plump Egyptian gentleman came along and glanced at the Greyfriars fellows, paused a moment, and then addressed Wharton.

"You will excuse me," he said with his elaborate politeness. "No doubt you are new to these waters, my young friend. There is a change in the weather coming, and you boys would be better below."

"Thank you," said Harry; and the Egyptian bowed and passed on.

The warning was evidently kindly meant, but the Greyfriars fellows had no desire to go below. It was hot on deck, but it was hotter in the cabins. They had noticed, however, that most of the passengers had gone down.

"I suppose this is the jolly old oalm before the storm, from what that sportsman says," remarked Bob Cherry. "My hat! I'd be glad to feel the wind, if it blew nineteen to the dozen!"

"Yes, rather!" gasped Nugent.

Storm or no storm, it seemed to the juniors, baking in the heat, that any sort of a wind would have been welcome. And, although the Egyptian had warned the juniors to go below, he was not going down himself. He stood by the rail looking into the leaden east, his tarboosh a red spot against the steely sky. His servant, Ali, came softly on deck, but remained at a little distance from his master, his black eyes every now and then seeking the juniors, though he dropped them at once if the schoolboys happened to glance at him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob suddenly, as the steamer gave a sudden shake. "What—"

There was a far-off murmur of the coming wind. A swell had risen on the

glassy sea, and the steamer, which had been gliding on a perfectly even keel, rolled and pitched. Billy Bunter gave a convulsive jump.

"Oooh!" he gasped.

"It's coming!" said Johnny Bull. The leaden sky in the east was turning black. "Like to go down, Bunter?"

"Shan't!" grunted Bunter.

"There's going to be a blow, fat-head—"

"I'm not afraid of a blow," grunted the fat Owl. "You fellows had better go down if you're funky."

"You fat chump!"

The swell had risen on the sea with startling suddenness. No passengers were to be seen on the deck now, except the Greyfriars juniors and the Egyptian gentleman and Ali. The wind came abruptly and hit the steamer and swept over the deck with a delightfully cold breath.

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "I say, what's the matter with this beastly ship? What's it pitching about for? I say, I—I—I've got a queer feeling inside—"

"That's what comes of packing away six dinners one after another, old bean," said Bob. "When you're at sea you should only scoff three or four."

"Groooh!"

Billy Bunter's complexion had hitherto been like that of a freshly boiled beetroot. Now it changed to a mixture of white and yellow and green. The sudden rolling of the steamer seemed to disturb the immense quantity of foodstuffs that Bunter had parked inside his extensive equator. Not for the first time, William George Bunter had fed not wisely but too well.

"I—I say, you fellows, is—is that the captain on the bridge?" gasped Bunter. "Go and tell him to keep the ship still."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Tell him not to let it wobble about like this!" gurgled Bunter. "Tell him— Oh dear! Look here, you go to him and say— Gur-gur-gug-gug!"

"Oh crumbs! Poor old Bunter's got it!" said Bob. "Well, I must say he asked for it."

"Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Buck up, old chap!"

"Ooooooch! Woooooch! Grooooooch! Wug-gug-g-chug-ug!"

Awful sounds came from Bunter. With a steady ship on a calm sea Bunter could have carried his extensive cargo without disaster. But as soon as the steamer began to pitch, the fat junior's fate was sealed. His fat face was now quite green, and he moaned and groaned and gurgled and gasped in a manner that might have moved a heart of stone. Only that afternoon the chums of the Remove had bumped Bunter for his sins, but now they compassionated him sincerely.

"I—I say, you fellows, help me down to my berth!" groaned Bunter. "Call the steward—call the captain— Oh crikey! I—I'm going to be s-s-sick! Oooooooch! I—I think I'm dud-dud-dying! You beasts, will you help me—gug—down to my—yug-yug—cabin? Woooooch!"

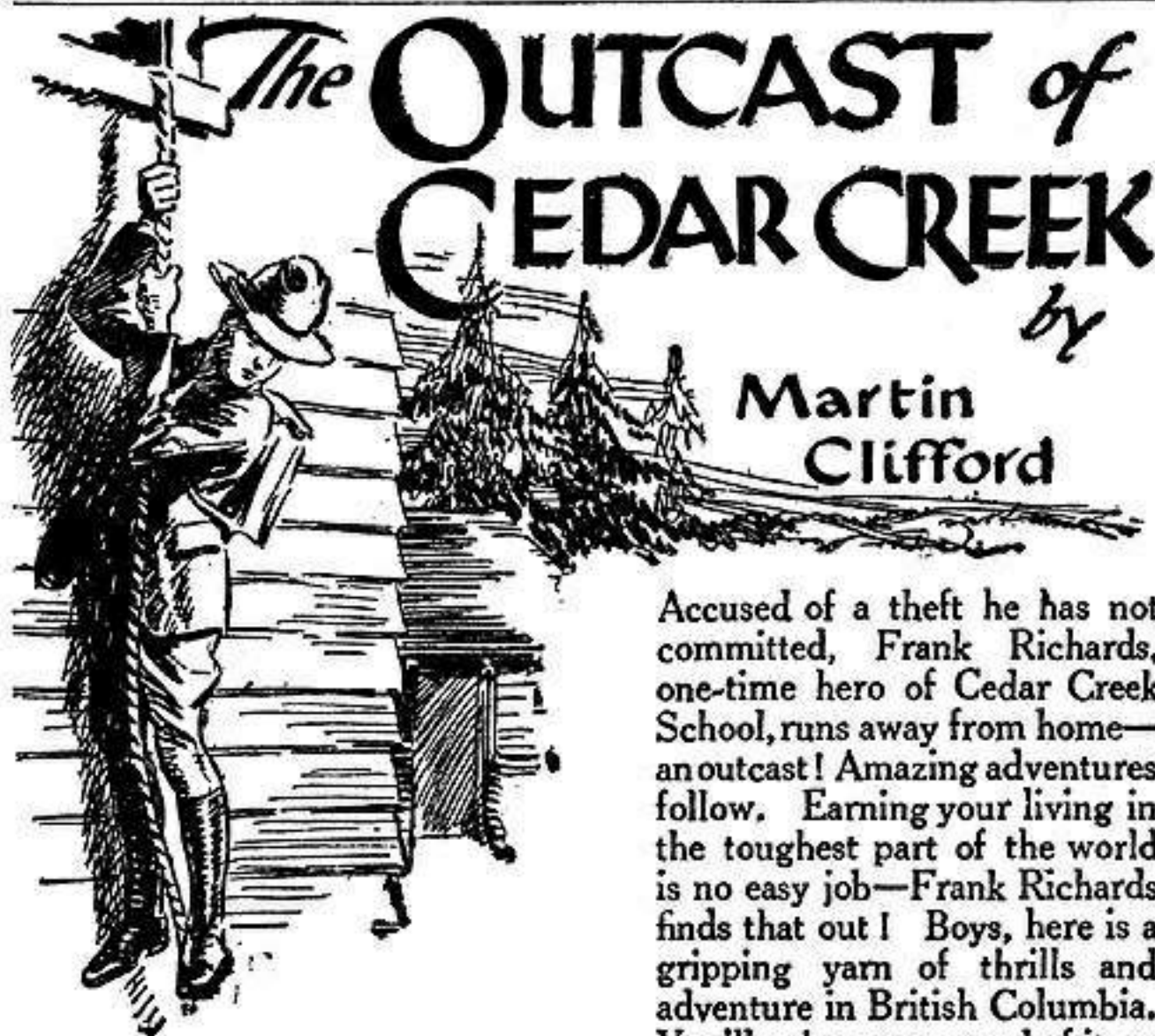
"Lend a hand, you men," said Bob resignedly.

He grasped the fat Owl of the Remove, and Harry Wharton lent a hand, and Bunter was heaved out of his chair.

The steamer gave a wild pitch on the tossing swell, the deck lurched, and Bunter plunged over, spluttering.

There was a gasping howl from Harry Wharton as Bunter's bullet head butted him in the waistcoat, and he sat down with a sudden shock.

"Ow!" gurgled the captain of the



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Remove. "Ow! Ooogh!" He spluttered for breath, winded by the shock.

"Ow! Beasts! Hold me!" shrieked Bunter.

Wharton could only sit and gasp for breath. But Johnny Bull grasped the fat Owl on one side, Bob on the other. Bunter flung one fat arm round Bob's neck, the other round Johnny's, and hung between them, a dead weight. The juniors were strong and sturdy, but they almost crumpled up. William George Bunter was not a lightweight.

"Help!" gasped Bob.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Frank Nugent rushed to help. Four pairs of hands grasped Bunter, and supported him. Harry Wharton, for the moment, was hors de combat; but four members of the Co. heaved Bunter along to the companion.

"Ow! Groooogh! Don't pinch me, you silly idiots; don't pull my hair out, you dummies; don't bang me in the ribs, you blithering cuckoos—Ooogh!"

"Go it!" gasped Bob.

"Heave ahead, my hearties!" stutted Johnny Bull.

"The heavfulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows—Groooogh! Beasts I say—Whooooop!"

With a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together, the juniors got the fat Owl to the head of the stairs. The steamer gave a heavy roll, and Bunter gave another, and, clinging frantically to his helpers, he plunged down the steps. Bump, bump, bump, bump!

Wild yells rose from Billy Bunter and from the four hapless fellows who rolled down with him. They landed together in a sprawling, yelling heap at the bottom.

"Yoooooop!"

Billy Bunter sat up, on Bob Cherry's face, and roared.

"Ow! Beasts! You did that on purpose! Yarooooooh!"

"Urrrgh! Gerroff! Draggimoff! Urrrgh!" gurgled Bob.

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter—" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ow! Wow! Beast! Help!"

A steward rushed to help, and Bunter was dragged up. Spluttering wildly, he was navigated along to his state-room, and plumped into his berth. There he collapsed, moaning and groaning, in the throes of sea-sickness, and wishing that he had not had the fifteenth helping at dinner.

"Ooogh! Ow! Gimme a basin! I say, you fellows, don't leave me! Stay here with me, you beasts! Groooogh! Ooogh! I say, I'm dying! I say—Woogh!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Ow! Beast! I say, I won't be left alone!" howled Billy Bunter. "I say—Gug-gug-gug-gug-gug!"

Lord Mauleverer looked in.

"You men all here?" he asked. "Nunky says we're to keep below; he fancies it's dangerous on deck in this squall. Where's Wharton?"

"He hasn't come down," said Bob.

"Steward says they're goin' to close the hatches; there'll be seas breakin' over the deck now the jolly old Mediterranean's getting up on its hind-legs!"

"I'll go and tell him," said Bob, and, leaving his comrades to the pleasure—or otherwise—of listening to Billy Bunter's moaning and groaning, Bob Cherry clambered back to the deck,

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Struggle in the Storm!

HARRY WHARTON held on to a stanchion, the deck rocking under his feet, the wind howling in his face. Ten minutes ago the Mediterranean had looked like a pond, glowing in the sunset. Now it was a heaving, wildly tossing maelstrom, and the sunset had been blotted out.

Darkness had spread over the sky like a cloak, and from the darkness came tearing wind and lashing rain.

The roar of the squall drowned the throbbing of the ship's engines, and the steamer rocked and rolled, with fierce seas leaping up on either side, looking every moment as if they would overwhelm the slanting deck.

It was one of the sudden squalls of the Mediterranean, brief but fierce; and there was undoubtedly danger on deck for any fellow who did not keep a cool head and a strong hold.

But, after the suffocating heat, the Greyfriars junior was enjoying the hiss of the rain and the lash of the wind, and the thundering seas had no terrors for him. He could see hardly a couple of yards from where he stood holding on, but from the darkness came the gleaming of white, frothing billows, and from moment to moment a zigzag flash of lightning tore through the blackness of the sky.

Something red whizzed past Wharton's face on the wind and disappeared into the sea; it was the tarboosh blown from the head of the Egyptian, whom Wharton could faintly discern in the gloom.

The Egyptian was holding on, too, and, looking round as his fez blew away, he glimpsed the schoolboy, and smiled at him with a flash of white teeth. Then he moved to get shelter from the fierce wind, and disappeared from Wharton's sight.

The steamer rocked and rolled and plunged in a way that might have been terrifying to a landsman; but Wharton was well aware that the ship was in no danger, and that this was all in the day's work to captain and crew.

Rocking and rolling, the steamer churned on her way, while the rain lashed and the wind buffeted, her red and green lights gleaming through the murk ahead. Something unseen brushed past Wharton in the darkness, and he felt a hand grasp at him.

Supposing that it was another passenger losing his footing on the reeling deck, he released one hand, and grasped at the shadowy figure to help. At the same moment there came a flash of lightning, and, only a few inches from his face, he recognised the dark features and black eyes of Ali, the Arab servant of the Egyptian.

What happened next seemed like a nightmare to Harry Wharton. The Arab recognised him at the same moment, grasped him with both brown hands, and dragged him down to the slanting deck. So utterly unexpected was the attack, that Wharton was taken totally by surprise, and he lost his hold and went down helplessly.

In the grasp of the slim and wiry Arab he rolled on the deck, and for one fearful moment he believed that he was shooting overboard in Ali's grasp; but both of them brought up suddenly against the rail, with a bump and crash.

Amazed as he was, Wharton recovered his presence of mind swiftly. He gave grasp for grasp, and struggled with the Arab.

What the meaning of the attack could be he could not imagine. The man was a stranger to him. He had seen him

about the steamer several times, waiting on his master, since the ship had left Naples, but that was all.

Possibly the man had been offended by Bunter's bad manners in the afternoon, but that, of course, could not account for his present actions. It seemed in those terrible moments to the captain of the Greyfriars Remove that he was struggling in the hands of a lunatic. And, worse than that, he was struggling in vain, for, sturdy as he was, the Arab was twice as powerful. It was a grown man against a boy, and the boy had no chance in the struggle.

Wharton was crushed down to the deck, jammed against the rail, seeing nothing of his enemy but the glimmer of the white galabyeh in which he was dressed, and the gleam of his dark eyes. A sinewy knee pinned him to the angle of the deck and rail, and the gasping cries that he uttered were drowned in the roar of the wind.

He was at the Arab's mercy, for the moment, at least; and as the knee pinned him down, thievish fingers groped over him, as if in search of something. And then, in a flash, the junior understood.

It was Wharton who had charge of the sacred scarab of A-Menah—the golden beetle that, according to ancient Egyptian tradition, was a guide to the treasure of Osiris. Again and again Kalizelos, the Greek dealer of Cairo, had sought to obtain possession of Lord Mauleverer's scarab; and this, as Wharton realised now, was one more attempt. Ali, the Arab servant of the plump Egyptian, was in the pay of the Greek, and he had probably been watching for a chance ever since the steamer had left Naples. Now his chance had come, and his thievish fingers were seeking the scarab as he held the schoolboy pinned down under his knee in the darkness and rain and wind on the pitching ship.

Fiercely, desperately, almost madly, the junior struggled. Mauleverer had entrusted the scarab to his keeping. None of the juniors quite believed, as the Cairo Greek evidently did, that it was a guide to the treasure of A-Menah, the ancient Egyptian soldier who had fought under the banners of Rameses the Second three thousand years ago. But whether it was a clue to treasure or merely a curio worth a few pounds, Wharton would not fail in his trust so long as he could struggle.

So fierce was his resistance, that the Arab was forced to leave off groping for the golden beetle, which the junior wore on a silken cord about his neck, and grasp him again with both hands.

For a full minute the desperate struggle went on, and then the junior, exhausted, was crushed down again. There was no help. The struggle was unseen in the darkness, unheard in the roar of the storm.

Breathless, panting, exhausted, Wharton felt the thievish brown hand groping again, and felt the fingers close on the silken cord, felt the golden scarab drawn from him. He could not see, but he knew that the Arab was feeling it, fingering it in the gloom, to make sure that it was the prize he sought; he knew by the man's movement that he had slipped it into a pocket under his loose galabyeh. Through the howl of the wind a voice came to Wharton's ears.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you, old bean?"

It was Bob Cherry's shout. Bob was on deck, but Wharton could not see him. Before he could cry out in answer, a hand was on his throat,

and he was choked into silence. A shudder of horror ran through him as he felt himself dragged up, pressed close to the rail, and realised the Arab's murderous intention. It was of little use for Ali to seize the scarab on a ship at sea from which there was no escape, if the schoolboy survived to accuse him and reclaim the plunder. Now that the golden beetle was taken from him, the wretch's intention was clear—it was to toss the boy into the raging sea, and by that murderous act to cover up his tracks.

Once more the schoolboy made an effort, a fierce and furious effort, exerting every ounce of his strength.

It was his life he was fighting for now.

And as he fought he heard again, half-drowned by the wind, the shout of his ohm somewhere in the dark of the deck. Bob might have been only a few yards from him, never dreaming that he was struggling in murderous hands. As a matter of fact, Bob was across the deck, holding on to the saloon skylight as he called to Wharton.

Ali the Arab heard him and redoubled his efforts to pitch Wharton over the rail. Wharton dragged an arm loose, and crashed his fist into the dark Arab face, and there was a grunt of pain from Ali. The junior panted out a cry, but it was drowned in the wind. The steamer gave a heavy roll, and the rail against which Wharton was pinned dipped to the sea, down, down below the frothing tops of the billows, till it seemed that the sea must rush over the ship and flood it fore and aft.

A wave broke over the rail, washing the deck, and the water, for the moment, was up to the necks of Ali and the schoolboy in his grasp. It tore them both away from the rail and flung them on the deck, wrenching them apart, and Ali's brown hand clutched the railed back of a deck-seat, and he held on, his glittering eyes seeking the junior.

From the blackness came a glare of lightning, and it showed Harry Wharton, with outflung arms, washing away helplessly on the wave. The flash died out and blackness followed; and in the darkness the Arab grinned. The schoolboy was gone—gone to death—and the Arab crept and crawled away, nothing doubting that the depths of the sea had swallowed his victim, and that the secret of his crime was for ever buried in the deep waters.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Saved from the Sea!

A HAND in the darkness fastened on Harry Wharton, but he was scarcely conscious of it. The desperate struggle with the Arab had exhausted him, and his hands, as he flung them out, swept only the roaring water that tumbled over the slanting deck. A moment or two more, and the helpless schoolboy would have been washed over the dipping rail, hurled to death in the sea; but in those fearful moments an unseen hand held him back from destruction.

Spent and dizzy, blinded and deafened by the roaring water, the Greyfriars junior hardly knew that he was held, hardly knew that he was still on the ship, and not plunging into the maddened sea. But the grasp on his collar was firm, and as the ship's side heaved up from the sea, he found that he was sprawling half across the rail, his legs over the side in space, but with some-

thing that he could not see holding him back from death.

He was dragged back, and found himself on the deck again. His hands caught the edge of the rail, and held. A shadowy figure was close to him, he had a glimpse of eyes from a dark face. For a second he supposed that it was the Arab who had seized him again, but he realised that it could not be the murderer who was saving him from death, and it was not Bob Cherry. One of the seamen, perhaps—

"Hold on, my young gentleman!" came a voice in the wind, and he knew it was the plump Egyptian who had saved him. He remembered that the Egyptian had been on deck, he remembered the red tarboosh that had blown past him. Ali had sent him to death, and Ali's master had saved his life. The man, evidently, had seen nothing of the struggle, had known nothing of his servant's attack on the schoolboy. The rush of the water had hurled Wharton against him in the darkness, and he had caught him and saved him. The dark brown face was close to him, and Wharton could see it now, and see that there was a smile on it.

"You are safe, young gentleman!" said the Egyptian, his voice hardly audible in the wind. "But you should be below—this is no place for a boy. Did I not warn you?"

Wharton could not speak; he could only gasp. The Egyptian supposed that the wind, or the wash of the wave that had broken over the steamer, had torn him from his hold; he knew nothing more.

The junior, as he held on, still in the plump gentleman's grasp, stared round with dizzy eyes for his enemy. Where was the Arab?

A flash of lightning rived the sky, and for a second, the ship's deck leaped into ghastly illumination. Wharton had a glimpse of a seaman, and of Bob Cherry clinging to the skylight; but he did not see the Arab. Ali was gone—whether overboard, or below, or crouching in some shelter, Wharton could not tell. He was not to be seen. But he had little doubt that the villain, believing him gone to his death, had crept away, the scarab in his possession, safe, as he supposed. Wharton gritted his teeth. He was not sinking in the depths of the storm-tossed Mediterranean as Ali believed, and there was to be a reckoning soon.

Wharton found his voice at last.

"Thank you, sir," he panted. "You've saved my life—I thought I was gone. It's all right now."

"You are safe—you can hold?"

"Yes, yes."

"But you will be safer below, young gentleman."

"Yes, yes; I shall get below at once."

The Egyptian released him, and Wharton lost sight of him the next moment. He knew where Bob was now, and, clambering from one hold to another, he reached Bob Cherry, where he was holding on to the skylight.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" He heard Bob's voice as he bumped into him in the gloom. "That you, Wharton?"

"Yes—let's get below."

"Bit exciting up here, what?" chuckled Bob. "I came up for you—nunky's orders to keep below, but I couldn't spot you. Didn't you hear me calling?"

Wharton did not answer; he hardly heard. It was difficult to move about the pitching deck, but the juniors made

their way to the companion, groping and grasping in the darkness. The door was closed, but they got it open, and a wash of water followed them down the stairs before they got it shut again. Almost every minute a frothing sea broke over the steamer. The electric light was burning below, and the change from the darkness above made the juniors blink. Bob stared at Wharton in the light.

"You're as white as chalk, old man," he said.

"Am I?" Wharton was not surprised to hear it. "Where are the other fellows—I've got something to tell you—"

"I left them with Bunter—he's sick."

"Come on."

Wharton's eyes were alert for the Arab, but he saw nothing of Ali. A deep groan greeted him as he reached Bunter's state-room. Three of the Co. were gathered in the doorway, and Lord Mauleverer was in the room, beside Bunter's bunk. Billy Bunter looked like chalk, and a succession of hair-raising groans came from him, interrupted every now and then by spluttering and gurgling and guggling. The motion of the steamer had relieved Bunter of most of his dinner; but what remained seemed to be still troubling him.

"You men look wet," said Nugent, as Wharton and Bob Cherry arrived.

"The wetfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It's a bit damp on deck," said Bob cheerfully. "Raining like billy-ho, and the sea seems to have a fancy for coming aboard in chunks. I rather think I'll go and change, and you'd better do the same, Wharton."

"Something else to do first," said Harry quietly. "Have you fellows seen anything of Ali—that Arab blighter—you remember him—"

"The jolly old Egyptian gent's factotum?" asked Johnny Bull. "Yes, he came down about ten minutes ago, looking drowned."

"Where is he?"

"He went into a state-room farther up—his governor's quarters, I suppose. What on earth do you want with him?"

"He's got the scarab!"

"Wha-a-t?"

The juniors stared at Wharton in amazement.

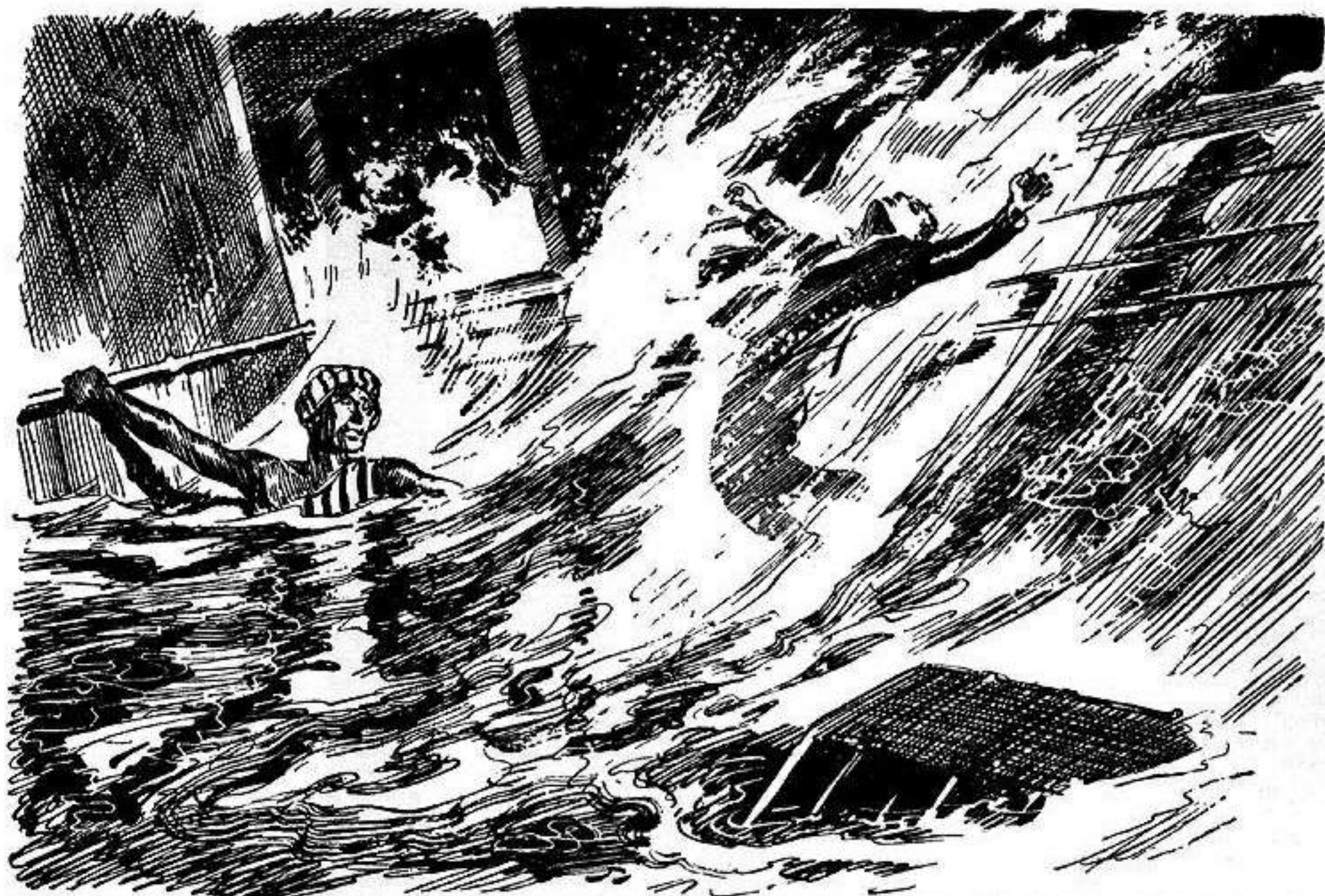
In a low voice, and a few words, Harry Wharton told them what had happened on deck.

"Great pip!" breathed Bob Cherry. "Then while I was looking for you—Great pip!"

"I heard you calling, while that villain was trying to put me overboard," said Harry. "There's no doubt that he believes he succeeded—as he would have, if his master had not been on deck, and caught me as I was going over. I don't know the man's name; but I'm jolly grateful to him. He saved my life. Kalizelos must have hired that Arab scoundrel to get hold of the scarab, of course. He couldn't have known anything about it otherwise, and couldn't have wanted it, if you come to that. But he's got it. The villain must have been watching for a chance!"

"Good gad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "And I dare say Kalizelos is waiting for him at Alexandria to hand it over to—"

"He won't hand it over to Kalizelos," said Wharton grimly. "He's going to hand it over to us. It's no good waiting to speak to the captain. Ali might hide it where it couldn't be found, or even chuck it out of a porthole to save



A wave suddenly broke over the rail, wrenching Harry Wharton and Ali apart. Then from the blackness came a glare of lightning, and it showed Harry Wharton, with outflung arms, washing away helplessly on the wave!

his skin. We've got to collar him before he finds out that I never went overboard, as he fancies."

"Right as rain," agreed Nugent. "He must believe that you went over the side, or he wouldn't have come below."

"I should have gone, but for the Egyptian chap; and the villain never saw him save me. Come on! There's no time to lose!"

"I say, you fellows!" groaned Billy Bunter.

But the juniors gave the fat Owl no heed. He was left to groan and gasp and splutter on his own.

Harry Wharton stopped an Italian steward in the cabin passage. Ali had gone into one of the state-rooms, but the juniors were not sure which. It was easy enough to get information from the steward. The wealthy Egyptian gentleman was a considerable person on the steamer, as the juniors had noticed, though they had not heard his name. They heard it now from the steward.

"Si, si, signore! The Egyptian gentleman—Signore Hilmi Maroudi. He has the best cabin; but I think he is on deck."

"It is his servant we are looking for—an Arab named Ali," said Harry.

"His room is next to his master's," said the steward. "I will show you, if the signore will follow me."

Probably the steward was puzzled to know what the English schoolboys wanted with the Arab servant of Mr. Hilmi Maroudi. But a tip of five francs satisfied him, and he pointed out the door and went his way. Harry Wharton & Co. waited till he was gone.

"Now!" said Harry.

And he threw back the door of Ali's cabin.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

"Hand Over!"

ALI, the Arab, was sitting on the edge of a bunk, swaying to the pitching of the steamer, a grin on his brown face.

In his dusky hand lay a golden beetle, that glimmered and shone in the electric light.

The Arab was grinning with satisfaction, but his eyes were curious as he scanned the golden scarab. It was such a curio as he had seen many times in Cairo and Alexandria, only uncommon from the fact that it was made of gold, and appeared to be of solid gold. Its value, as metal, could hardly have been more than twenty pounds; as a curio and antique, it might have been worth ten times as much. But there was nothing about it to reveal why Kalizelos, the Greek dealer of Cairo, placed a higher value on it. Yet that he did, Ali knew, for the Greek had paid him three hundred pounds at Naples for his rascally services, and promised him five hundred more at Alexandria when he handed the scarab over.

Ali had a good place as servant of the rich Egyptian, Hilmi Maroudi. His pay was good, and probably he robbed his master of three times as much as his pay. But the Greek dealer's bribe dazzled him, and the life of a Faringhee was not much, in Ali's estimation, set in the balance against such a sum as eight hundred pounds of Faringhee money.

Ever since the steamer had churned out of the Bay of Naples, Ali had been watching for an opportunity, though the Greyfriars fellows had hardly noticed his existence, and certainly never dreamed of suspecting that his eyes were upon them. In the sudden squall on the Mediterranean he had found the opportunity for which he had

watched, though no doubt he would have found another before Alexandria was reached had there been no squall. Now he was grinning over his success, gloating over the little golden object that lay in the palm of his dusky hand, and thinking of the shop he would open in the Sok of Cairo with the proceeds of his villainy. And with those happy thoughts in his Oriental mind, he had none to waste on the schoolboy, whose body, as he believed, was washing in the wild waters of the Mediterranean, miles behind the pitching steamer.

It was quite a happy dream for Ali, but unfortunately for him there was to be a rude awakening. As he grinned and gloated over the scarab of A-Menah his door was suddenly thrown open, and a crowd of Greyfriars juniors appeared in the doorway.

Ali's brown hand closed instantly over the scarab, and he started to his feet, his black eyes snapping. Then, with a gasping howl of terror, he staggered back against the bunk, his eyes almost bulging from their sockets as they fell on the schoolboy whom he had believed to be dead and drowned, standing before him, dripping with water, but very much alive. With bulging, unbelieving eyes the Arab stared at Harry Wharton, scarcely able to believe that his sight did not deceive him.

"You scoundrel!" said Harry; and he sprang at the Arab, and dragged him with a crash to the floor. "Collar him!"

"What-ho!"

The startled Arab went down helplessly, and the juniors piled on him. But the next second he was struggling like a wild cat. His eyes blazed, his brown face was distorted with rage, and he fought and tore and bit like a wild animal, but all the time his right hand remained clenched on the scarab.

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But the odds were too heavy, savage and lithe and muscular as he was, Johnny Bull's knee was clamped on his chest, pinning him down; a brown arm was grasped on one side by Nugent, on the other side by Hurreo Singh. And Bob Cherry fastened both hands in the thick hair, and Lord Mauleverer grasped the brown legs that thrashed out under the galabiyeh. Harry Wharton, spotting at once the clenched right hand, had no doubt what was in it, and he grasped the Arab's right wrist with both hands, and twisted it mercilessly till Ali, screaming with pain, opened his fingers.

The next moment Wharton had torn the scarab from him.

"Got it?" gasped Bob.

"Here it is!"

"Oh, good luck!"

"The goodfulness of the luck is terrific," chuckled Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "The scarab is recovered, my esteemed and idiotic Mauly."

"Blow the thing!" growled Lord Mauleverer. "Wharton, old bean, you can chuck it out of a porthole if you like."

"Fathead!" said Harry, laughing.

"Look here, I'd no idea that it was going to bring you fellows into danger, you know," said Lord Mauleverer. "You've had a fearfully narrow escape, old bean, and it's all through that beastly scarab. I've a jolly good mind to chuck it overboard, and have done with it."

"You jolly well won't!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Ain't we going to dig up the jolly old treasure—if any—when we get to Egypt?"

"Well, I'm not lettin' you fellows take the risk of carryin' it any more," said Mauly. "Hand it over, old bean!"

"You'll lose it, you ass," said Nugent. "You lose everything."

"Well, if I lose it, I shan't worry, if I lose that giddy Greek, Kalizelos, at the same time," answered Mauleverer.

Lord Mauleverer took the scarab, and tucked it into his waistcoat pocket. The eyes of the panting Arab followed it as it disappeared. The juniors looked at one another. Lord Mauleverer had too many possessions to be very careful with them, and he slipped the golden scarab into his waistcoat pocket as carelessly as if it had been a sixpence. But it was Mauly's property, and it was for Mauly to decide—and that was that! His lordship had made up his mind that his friends should not be endangered by the scarab. And as for the danger to himself, his noble intellect did not seem to consider that at all.

"Now what about this scoundrel?" asked Bob, with a glare at the Arab, who was writhing like a snake in the many hands that held him.

"I suppose he ought to be handed over to the captain, and charged with the robbery," said Harry doubtfully. "But—"

"But what, fathead?" asked Johnny Bull. "We're jolly well not letting the villain get off!"

"We've got the scarab back, and we've rather taken the law into our own hands in getting it," said the captain of the *Remove*, with a smile. "But I'm thinking of the Egyptian chap—Hilmi Maroudi, the steward said his name was. This rotter is his servant, and he saved my life! He can't have the faintest idea what a villain this man is, of course. He seems a thoroughly decent man himself. I think we'd better tell him how the matter stands, and let him decide what's to be done with this rotter!"

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"Well, he can't get off the ship, anyhow," said Johnny. "He can be found when he's wanted."

"That's so! Let him rip!"

The Arab was released, and left sprawling on the floor, as the juniors crowded out of the room.

Ali sprang to his feet, panting for breath, his black eyes blazing, and his white teeth gleaming in a savage snarl. He looked, for the moment, as if he would spring at the schoolboys; but no doubt he realised the futility of such a proceeding.

He watched them go, muttering to himself in Arabic; and it was perhaps just as well that the juniors did not understand that tongue, for there was no doubt that the words were far from suitable for youthful ears.

Leaving the defeated rascal to curse in the fluent Arabic, the Greyfriars fellows departed, and Wharton and Bob Cherry went to change their wet clothes.

The steamer thumped on through the tossing sea, to an accompaniment of groans and gurgles from Billy Bunter; and the groaning and the gurgling went on, like the unending melody in Wagnerian music, till the squall blew itself out.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Asks for More!

HILMI MAROUDI sat silent in the deckchair, his dark, grave face almost expressionless, only his dark eyes searching Wharton's face as the junior talked to him.

It was late in the evening, and the Mediterranean shone like a sheet of silver in the light of a soaring moon. The storm had vanished, leaving hardly a trace; only a swell on the sea followed the steamer swiftly churning onward. A sky of blue velvet, dotted with fleecy white clouds, that looked like fine lace in the moonlight, stretched over the shining sea.

It was difficult for the Greyfriars fellows to realise that, only a few hours since, the *Naples* steamer had been pitching in the midst of a pandemonium of wild waters. Now the vessel glided on an even keel, and even Billy Bunter was not troubled by inward qualms.

Under the gleaming moon the chums of the *Remove* strolled on deck, where they sighted the Egyptian gentleman; and Wharton had dropped into a vacant chair by his side, while his comrades continued their promenade.

Mr. Maroudi had to be told what had happened, and the sooner the better, and the captain of the Greyfriars *Remove* took this opportunity.

The Egyptian gave him a smile of polite welcome as he sat down in the vacant chair; and though the smile disappeared, his dark, impassive face expressed little or nothing, as he listened to what the junior had to tell him. His eyes were keenly on Wharton's face all the time, but he did not speak till the Greyfriars junior had finished.

"This is a very strange tale, my young friend," said the Egyptian at last. "Why do you tell me, instead of asking the captain of the steamer to place my servant Ali under arrest?"

"Only because the man is your servant, sir," said Harry. "You saved my life, Mr. Maroudi."

"That is true, I think," smiled the Egyptian. "But I little fancied that it was my servant's hand that had placed you in danger. I saw nothing of all this—and others, I think, saw nothing."

"Nothing," agreed Harry.

"And if Ali should deny your tale, how will you prove it?"

Wharton crimsoned.

"It never occurred to me that you might not believe me," he said quietly. "I suppose it would be my word against his; but my friends, at least, can prove that the scarab was taken from him, after he had robbed me of it."

"Do not be offended, little friend," said Maroudi, smiling. "I do not doubt a single word you have told me. But it would be difficult for you to prove this against Ali in an Egyptian court. If you are content to leave the matter in my hands, I will see that the rascal does not escape punishment; and it will save me much disagreeable unpleasantness—for Ali is my servant, and his shame reflects on me, his master."

"I thought of that," said Harry, "and we are more than willing to leave it to you, sir. I have asked Sir Reginald Brooke, and he says the same. I had to tell you, especially to warn you that the man is a murderous villain. So far as we are concerned, it is at an end, if you wish."

"On my head be it!" said Hilmi Maroudi gravely. "Ali, the son of Abdullah, is an unworthy follower of the Prophet; and in my house in Cairo he shall receive many strokes of the kourbash, and then be cast forth. And you need fear him no more, for my eye will be upon him."

The Egyptian was silent for a few moments. Wharton made a movement to go; but Maroudi signed to him to remain, and he sat down again. His friends passed and repassed, chatting as they sauntered up and down the deck in the bright moonlight. There was a thoughtful shade on the brow of the plump Egyptian gentleman.

"You have spoken of a scarab, little friend, which you call the scarab of A-Menah," he said at length.

"Yes," said Harry. "Perhaps you had heard of it?"

Hilmi Maroudi smiled.

"Many have heard of it," he said. "It is said that it tells a secret—the secret of the Eye of Osiris, the great diamond that is mentioned in writings of the time of Rameses the Second, a king of the nineteenth dynasty of the kings of Egypt."

"I have many old papyri in my house at Cairo, and I have often read, in the picture-writing of my forefathers of this great and precious stone, which A-Menah is said to have brought back from Syria, after the great battle of Kadesh, in which Rameses defeated the Hittites."

"I have seen paintings of the scarab of A-Menah, and read what is inscribed thereon, but it tells nothing but the name and title of that soldier of King Rameses. To me it seems impossible that it can give guidance to the lost stone."

"To me also," said Harry, with a smile. "But Kalizelos told Lord Mauleverer that he had learned the secret from some old document—a papyrus of ancient Egypt."

"It is possible," said Maroudi musingly. "I know this man Kalizelos well, and have often bought curios in his shop in Cairo. He is a keen man, and clear-headed—he has made a fortune in business. He is not the man to believe a fable. Yet the story of the scarab must be a fable. But if it should be a true tale—"

Maroudi paused.

"The Eye of Osiris was worth more than a king's ransom," he said slowly. "It is a great fortune if it is found. My little friend, you will do well to

keep on your guard when you reach my country. Kalizelos is an unscrupulous man—but, bismillah, you have already learned that! And in the East life is cheap!"

"We shall be careful," said Harry.

"You have been in great peril already," said Maroudi gravely, "and this is on my head, for it was my servant's hand that was raised against your life. In me you have made a friend, for it was the will of Allah that I should save your life, and perhaps I may save it again, my little friend. You will see me again in Cairo."

"You live in Cairo?" asked Harry.

"I have a poor dwelling there," said Maroudi. "But much time I spend up the Nile—sometimes in my dahabiyeh, and sometimes on my sugar and orange plantations. You shall come to my poor house in Cairo, and bring your friends, even the little fat one whose manners are so bad."

He smiled.

"There are many Egyptians who do not love the English—but I am not one of them. The days of the great Rameses are gone for ever; and to those of us who are intelligent, it is known that the dervishes of the Sudan would have over-run Egypt, even to the mouths of the Nile, had not the English stood in the way, even as the Hyksos over-ran us—the shepherd kings in the time of the fourteenth dynasty. Of whom," added Maroudi, with a smile, "you have never heard, my little friend."

Wharton smiled, too.

The long, almost endless history of ancient Egypt was fascinating to his imagination; but he had to admit that he knew very little about it.

"The history of your country is so much longer than ours," he said. "You count almost as many dynasties as we count kings. Thirty dynasties, isn't it, up to the time of Alexander the Great—and that was more than two thousand years ago. A fellow would have to swot pretty hard to mug it all up."

Maroudi laughed.

"I say, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter rolled into view. He blinked round him through his big spectacles, which flashed back the light of the moon, and spotted the Greyfriars fellows.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Is that you, Bunter? What the thump do you mean by being alive?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You told us you were dying!" said Bob, accusingly. "Do you call it playing the game to come to life again like this?"

"Look here—"

"I call it letting us down! Raising a fellow's hopes for nothing!" said Bob, with great indignation.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lot you care for a fellow lying in his berth—lying at death's door—"

"Dash it all, Bunter, if you were at death's door, you ought to have chuckled lying," said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I was frightfully hungry. You never thought of bringing me anything to eat. I just managed to stagger along and get some supper. Did you fellows give me a single thought?" asked Bunter bitterly.

"We guessed that you'd snaffled some supper," chuckled Bob. "That was an easy one to guess."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've a jolly good mind to take the first steamer back at Alexandria and leave you fellows on your own," said Bunter, "and I jolly well would, only

you're in danger, and I feel bound to look after you. I say, you fellows, I've asked the steward about that nigger, and he says his name is Hilly Moody, or something—he says he's frightfully rich, and has a palace in Cairo. Well, I'll tell you what I think about that nigger. My belief is that he's after the scarab, see?"

"Shut up, you silly owl!" hissed Bob. Bunter had not observed that he was standing within six feet of the Egyptian.

"Shan't!" answered the fat Owl. "I heard Wharton telling you about the nigger's nigger getting hold of him. Well, my opinion is that the nigger put the other nigger up to it, see, and—yaroooooop!"

Harry Wharton rose from his chair, reached out with his foot, and landed it on Billy Bunter's tight trousers. There was a roar from the fat Owl as he scudded along the deck.

"Whooop!"

A LAUGH A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY!

Herewith a sample for which Leslie Creed, of 42, Blenheim Road, Stratford, E.15, has been awarded a USEFUL POCKET KNIFE.



Old Lady (rummaging over second-hand stall): "What's that?"

Stallkeeper: "An air-gun, madam. It shoots slugs."

Old Lady: "Oh, I'll take it, then; my garden's full of slugs!"

You turn in the laugh, and I'll supply the prize!—Ed.

Bunter brought up against the rail and sat down with a bump.

"Goal!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hilmi Maroudi rose to his feet. With a grave salaam to the juniors, he went below. Billy Bunter sat and roared.

"Look here—ow! Look here, you rotters—wow—"

"You fat idiot!" hissed Wharton.

"Mr. Maroudi heard your silly cackle—"

"I didn't see the beast! Anyhow, what does it matter? He's only a nigger, isn't he? Yaroooooh! You kick me again, you beast, and I'll jolly well chuck the lot of you when we get to Alexandria!" roared Bunter.

"Mean that?" asked Bob.

"Yes, you beast!"

"Then here goes! Too good a chance to lose!"

"Yaroooooh! Keep off! Yoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—I say, old beasts

—I mean, old chaps—leave off kicking me, you rotters—oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter fled below in indignant wrath. But there was still balm in Gilead, so to speak. He found comfort in another supper!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Egypt at Last!

"ALEXANDRIA!"

"Here we are!" "Founded, my dear boys, by Alexander the Great," said Bob Cherry, assuming the manner of Mr. Quelch, the Remove master at Greyfriars, imparting instruction to his pupils, "in the year—blessed if I haven't forgotten the year—but it was a jolly long time ago."

"Three, three, two B.C.," said Nugent.

"That sounds like Alexander's telephone number," said Bob. "My dear boys, in the year 332 B.C. Alexander of Macedon extended his conquests to the ancient kingdom of the Pharaohs, and founded the city of Alexandria, which was named after himself, and—and—and here it is!"

"The herefulness is terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter, old fat man, that's Alexandria—founded by Alexander the Great in the year—"

"Three, three two B.C.," chuckled Nugent.

"Blow Alexander the Great!" grunted Bunter.

"Well, you ought to have a fellow feeling for jolly old Alexander," said Bob. "He lived in Greece—and you live in grease now that there's nobody to make you wash of a morning—"

"Beast!"

"Alexandria is rather a modern city, for Egypt," continued Bob. "Not much more than two thousand years old. But it's full of antiquities for tourists—most of them made in Germany! Those spiky things sticking up into the sky are minnows—was it minnows, you fellows? I asked that man Maroudi, and he told me, but I don't think it was minnows—"

"Minarets, fathead," said Harry.

"That's it," said Bob. "Minarets! Bunter, old bean, those spiky things sticking up into the sky are minarets."

"Blow 'em!" said Bunter.

"From the minarets," went on Bob, "the jolly old what-do-you-call-him calls the faithful to prayer—what do you call him, Wharton?"

"The muezzin!" said Wharton, laughing.

"That's it—the muezzin! Listen to me, Bunter, and improve your knowledge. You are the most backward boy in the Remove, Bunter," said Bob, in the severe manner of Mr. Quelch. "Your objection to the acquisition of knowledge is almost beyond belief! Remember, Bunter, that in a Mahomedan country, the what-do-you-call-him goes up the thingummy to call the followers of the prophet—"

"For goodness' sake, shut up!" said Bunter peevishly.

"This is for your own good, Bunter! Lend me your ears—or one of them will do, as it's as big as any two I've ever seen—"

"Shut up!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, where's that old ass Brooke? They have to go through the passports before you can get away from the silly niggers. Where's that old dummy—"

"Are you speaking of me, Bunter?" THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,279.

asked the icy voice of Sir Reginald Brooke behind the fat Owl.

Bunter spun round.

"Oh, I—I didn't see you, sir! I—I wasn't calling you an old ass, sir! I—I was speaking of another old ass—"

"Keep with me, my boys," said Sir Reginald, after a glare at the fat Owl. "There is a very great crowd. One of you take hold of Bunter's arm—that foolish boy will get lost if he is not taken care of—"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"That will do, Bunter!"

"Baggage, sar! Carry a baggage! Speak English, sar! Carry you a baggage!" A brown hand plucked a bag from Bunter, and the fat junior gave a yell.

"Here, stop him! He's got my bag—that black thief in a nightshirt!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry jerked the bag from the Arab porter. Porters innumerable had already invaded the steamer as soon as she came to her berth in the Inner Harbour of Alexandria. There was a babel of voices, speaking in innumerable languages. Round the steamer rocked boats of all sorts and sizes, bearing more porters, and the numberless hangers-on, touts, and officious meddlers of an eastern port—with eager, greedy eyes, extended hands and screaming voices. Billy Bunter dropped his bag, and before he could pick it up again, five or six energetic natives pounced on it, and one, luckier than the rest, grabbed it and presented it to the fat junior, with a grin that displayed a splendid set of teeth, flashing white from a brown face.

"Backsheesh, sar!"

"Go and eat coke!" said Bunter, grabbing the bag.

"Come on, Bunter!" Bob Cherry dragged the fat Owl on.

The Arab followed, gesticulating.

"Backsheesh!" he howled.

It was the juniors' first acquaintance with a word they were to hear many times in Egypt. Billy Bunter did not know that "backsheesh" meant a tip or gratuity; he fancied that the man was insulting him. He snorted, and turned his back, and rolled on; and the Arab's brown face appeared first over one shoulder and then over the other, and he fairly howled into Bunter's ears:

"Backsheesh!"

"Go away!" yelled Bunter. "Shut up! Look here, if you use such language to me, I'll call a policeman."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," howled Bunter. "I'm not going to have a nigger insulting me."

"Ha, ha, ha! You fat ass," roared Bob. "Backsheesh means a tip—it's the principal word in all Oriental languages, and the one they use most. Give him a tip and get shot of him."

"Backsheesh, sar!" wailed the Arab. "Backsheesh!"

"I'm not going to waste money on niggers," said Bunter. "Look here, you black beast, you sheer off, see?"

"Backsheesh!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Backsheesh!"

"Kick him, Bob!"

"Backsheesh!" The Arab porter's voice rose to an indignant shriek. He picked up a bag, and if he was not tipped, it was time for the skies to fall, in the opinion of an Arab porter of Alexandria. He clutched at Bunter's fat arm, shoved his brown face into Bunter's, till his long, aquiline nose almost collided with Bunter's little fat one, and screamed: "Backsheesh!"

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"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Ger-away!"

"Give him a piastre, and let him rip," said Bob.

"You give him one, blow you!"

Bob Cherry groped for Egyptian money in his pocket, and found a piastre, and dropped it into the brown hand. A piastre is worth twopence-halfpenny, and Bob considered twopence-halfpenny enough for a troublesome person who had done nothing but butt in where he was not wanted. But the Arab did not seem to think it enough.

"Ten piastre!" he exclaimed. "Ten! Yes! Ten! Backsheesh!"

"Oh, hook it, you sweep!" said Bob indignantly. "Get out!"

"Backsheesh! Ten piastre! Yes!"

The man clung to Bunter's fat arm. Bunter wriggled. Several more porters gathered round, adding their voices. A tall man, in a red tarboosh, with a gold tassel, blue loose trousers, gold-braided jacket, and crimson sash, interposed. He tapped the Arab porter on the shoulder, spoke to him in Arabic, and the man slunk away. Then the tall man, who, in his many colours looked rather like a tropical butterfly, bowed and grinned to the schoolboys, and addressed them in English.

"You want a dragoman, gentlemen lords! Yes! Hassan is your dragoman! All English gentlemen lords like Hassan! He know everything. He show you Pyramids, tombs, ruins, museums, mummies, all things he show! Yes! Hassan is your dragoman!"

The juniors were aware that a dragoman was a guide, and that the most difficult thing to accomplish in Egypt is not to have a guide.

Hassan bowed and smiled and showed all his teeth.

"Hassan is your dragoman!" he said, with conviction.

"I say, you fellows, let's get out of this!" wailed Bunter. "I'm being squashed!"

"Come this way, my boys!" called out Sir Reginald Brooke.

"You want a dragoman, gentlemen lords—"

"No, thanks!" grinned Bob. "Much obliged, but try next door!"

And the juniors followed Sir Reginald, and Hassan followed the juniors. He had relieved them of the importunate porter, and evidently he intended that his further services were not to be dispensed with. From that moment onward, no member of the Greyfriars party could glance round without meeting the amiable grin of Hassan and the flash of his white teeth. He haunted them like a highly coloured ghost, and it was evidently a settled thing in his mind that they were going to have a dragoman, and that Hassan was going to be the dragoman.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Dragoman!

"BABEL must have been a bit like this!" remarked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!"

"Anteck, sar—genooine noo antique!" A tray was shoved almost under the chins of the Greyfriars fellows, displaying "antiques" of Egypt that had obviously been manufactured in Europe at a recent date. "You buy, sar—genooine scarab of Tutankhamen, sar!"

"You want a guide, sar—"

"You want a carriage, sar—best first-class arabeyeh, sar—drive you some—anywhere, sar—"

"You buy a hairbrush, sar—"

"Genooine anteck—"

Harry Wharton & Co. might, had they liked, have expended all the cash they

had brought from England, and accumulated a vast collection of worthless articles, before they had been five minutes off the steamer. At the first glance, Alexandria seemed to be chiefly populated by importunate persons in shabby nightgowns, with something to sell. They all talked at once, and pushed their wares almost on the noses of the travellers, and so far from taking "no" for an answer, a hundred "noes" one after another had not the slightest effect on them.

A merchant with a tray full of strings of amber beads—which might have been made of anything but amber—planted himself fairly in the path of the smiling juniors, and refused to be waved off. As they tried to pass him, he backed like a horse, still keeping in front of them, talking in a mixture of Arabic, French, and English, with an incessant stream of words of which few were comprehensible.

A red tarboosh with a gold tassel danced above the crowd, and the tall figure of Hassan, the dragoman, pushed through, and he hurled a volley of Arabic at the amber merchant. What he said, the juniors did not know, Arabic being a sealed book to them, but it had the effect of withering the amber merchant, and he backed away and sought fresh victims.

Hassan grinned at the juniors.

"No such trouble for my gentlemen lords," he said. "I, Hassan, manage all things! These peoples are troublesome peoples! All that you want you ask Hassan! Hassan is your dragoman."

After which, Hassan walked beside the Greyfriars fellows, and "shooed" off the innumerable merchants. Hassan, apparently, was a well-known and respected dragoman, for the porters and itinerant merchants treated him with great respect, and fell back at the wave of his brown hand.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly, as a face he knew appeared in the crowd—an olive-skinned face with jetty black eyes, that glittered searchingly at the juniors. "There he is!"

"He—who?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Kalizelos!" answered Bob.

"The Greek?"

The juniors looked round quickly. Their eyes fixed on the handsome, olive face of the Greek of Cairo.

But the next moment Kalizelos disappeared in the crowd.

"That was the rascal!" said Harry, setting his lips. "I suppose he's hanging about to see Ali come off the steamer."

"With the jolly old scarab?" grinned Bob. "Well, he won't get it from Ali. Still got it safe, Mauly?"

"Eh? Yaas! I believe so!" answered Lord Mauleverer.

"I say, you fellows, there's that nigger!" said Billy Bunter. "Look at his car! Whacking car for a blinking nigger, isn't it?"

Hilmi Maroudi was stepping into a magnificent car at a little distance. The juniors had said good-bye to their Egyptian friend on the steamer, and promised to see him again in Cairo. Maroudi glanced round as he sat down in the car, sighted the juniors, and waved a plump hand to them, with a friendly smile, and the Greyfriars fellows politely raised their hats. The car rolled away with the Egyptian, and Hassan stared after it, and then at the juniors with a new respect in his manner.

"My gentlemen lords are friends of the great Maroudi?" he asked.

"Oh, you know Mr. Maroudi, do you?" said Bob.

"Hassan know everybody and everything in Egypt," answered the dragoman modestly. "Hassan know all things!"



Savage and lithe and muscular as he was, Ali was pinned down by the Greyfriars juniors. Grasping the Arab's right wrist, Wharton twisted it mercilessly, till Ali, screaming with pain, opened his fingers. The next moment Wharton had torn the scarab from him. "Got it?" gasped Bob Cherry. "Good!"

Maroudi, he is a great man—very rich—so rich—" Hassan spread out both brown hands, to indicate how enormously rich Maroudi was. "He have palace in Cairo, in Luxor, plantations on the Nile, in the Fayyum—everything! If my gentlemen lords are friends of the rich Maroudi, they are fortunate ones."

"Here is the car from the hotel," said Sir Reginald Brooke. "Are you all here? Who is this man?" The old baronet stared at Hassan through his eyeglass.

Hassan salaamed.

"Hassan, the son of Suleiman, is your dragoman, gentleman lord!" he answered. "He tell you everything."

"Have you engaged this man, Herbert?"

"I don't remember engagin' him, nunky," answered Lord Maleverer. "Did I engage him, you men?"

"I think he's engaged himself!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Please go away," said Sir Reginald. "We do not require a guide." He waved the multi-coloured dragoman aside.

"Gentleman lord, I show you everything in Alexandria, in Cairo, in Luxor, in all Egypt. I read you the picture-writing in the tombs. I hook you up the Pyramids! All the English say Hassan he one splendid rascally guide, sar. All these young gentlemen lords say they want Hassan. I take you to first-class hotel—"

"Please go away!"

"I take you to see Pompey Pillar and see huge catacombs chock-full of dead persons—"

"Go away!"

Sir Reginald waved the dragoman off, and Hassan salaamed and retreated a few paces. The juniors packed into a big car that came from the Hotel Magnifique for them, and Hassan jumped forward and closed the door.

He stood salaaming, as if worked by a spring, as the car started, the gold tassel on his tarboosh dancing in the air. The juniors could not help grinning, and Hassan grinned, too, showing all his teeth. He vanished from sight as the car rolled off. But a few minutes later Harry Wharton, glancing back, saw a gold tassel fluttering over the crowd in the street. He laughed.

"He's after us!" he said.

"These Egyptian guides are extremely pertinacious!" said Sir Reginald.

"They're stickers!" grinned Bob.

"He won't let us off, especially now that he knows we know Mr. Maroudi," said Harry, laughing. "Maroudi seems to be a great gun here."

"A very eminent man," said Sir Reginald. "He has an estate in the Fayyum, adjoining my own property. I have had some very interesting talks with him on the steamer. It is his desire to show us some courteous attention while we are in his country. A very agreeable gentleman."

Mr. Maroudi seemed to have made a very good impression on the rather stiff and formal old baronet.

"I say, you fellows, I believe that nigger was after the scarab—"

"Shut up, you fat idiot!"

"Well, you mark my words," snorted Bunter.

"I'll mark your nose if you don't dry up!" said Bob.

"Yah!"

The car drew up in the courtyard of the hotel. When the juniors alighted, one of the first things they saw was a gold tassel fluttering over the heads of the crowd in the court. Hassan grinned at them with a flash of white teeth.

"Tracked down!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I follow my gentlemen lords," said Hassan, grinning. "To-morrow you

see Alexandria. I show you everything. You shall rejoice to see catacombs chock-full of dead persons!"

"Must be a jolly sight," said Bob.

"Go away!" said Sir Reginald severely.

"Hassan is your dragoman, sar. All these troublesome people are liars, and desire only backsheesh. But Hassan is truth-speaking. Hassan is the only dragoman speaking the truth—"

"Go away!"

Sir Reginald marched his flock into the Hotel Magnifique. Hassan was left in the courtyard. Later, when the juniors came out on the balcony in the cool of the evening to watch the endless, ever-moving, ever-changing crowd, a red tarboosh and a gold tassel danced under the railing as Hassan salaamed like clockwork.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is again!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors could not help laughing. Hassan grinned up at them.

"Gentlemen lords come to see Alexandria by night?" he asked. "Hassan show you everything."

Sir Reginald leaned over the railing and waved his cigar at the dragoman.

"Go away!" he said.

"Sar, Hassan is your dragoman."

"Go away!"

"To-morrow, at sunrise, Hassan will be here, sar, to show you everything."

"Go away!"

"Hassan awaits your commands, my gentleman."

Hassan was still there when the Greyfriars fellows went to bed. They might have fancied that he camped for the night before the hotel in the open air; for when they looked out in the morning, the gold tassel on his tarboosh was

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(Continued from page 13.)

gleaming in the sun. He was waiting for them with a grinning, brown face, and it was evident that there was no escape for them. Hassan had constituted himself their dragoman.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Cocktail for Mauly!

ALEXANDRIA shimmered in a blaze of sun. Harry Wharton & Co. looked from the hotel balcony, in the brilliant morning, at the ever-varying crowds and the strange buildings, and their faces were merry and bright. They were in Egypt at last, though Alexandria was not the real Egypt. They were on the threshold of the land of the Pharaohs—the dim, mysterious, immemorial land of the Nile. Only a couple of days were to be spent in the ancient city of the conquering Alexander; then they were going on to Cairo, to the Sphinx and the Pyramids, the Nile and the desert, Luxor and the tombs, perhaps even a glimpse of the Sudan. It was a glorious prospect, and they were going to enjoy every minute of it, in spite of the heat and the flies and the dragomans.

Even Billy Bunter forgot to grouse that brilliant morning, possibly because he had found the provender good at the Hotel Magnifique and had parked away enormous quantities of the same. He was ready to go forth and see Alexandria, and his spectacles gleamed cheerily under the brim of Lord Mauleverer's best Panama hat.

Mauly had sat down in a long cane chair on the balcony, with one elegant leg crossed over the other, and his hands clasped behind his noble head. His lordship was apparently content to see Alexandria sitting down and without moving.

"Buck up, Mauly, old man!" said Bunter. "Don't slack, old chap! Can't possibly leave you behind."

"It's rather restful here," murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"Don't you want to see the sights?" "I'm seein' lots of them through the railin'."

"There's a lot of things to see, fat-head. The Sphinx. Is the Sphinx at Alexandria, you fellows?"

"That's at Cairo, fathead!" said Nugent.

"Well, there's the great Pyramid of Chops," said Bunter.

"The whatter?"

"The Pyramid of Chops. Chops was a king, or something."

"Oh, Cheops!" said Harry. "The Pyramid of Cheops is on the other side of Cairo."

"I dare say it is. But I'm talking about Chops."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. I'm not going to miss seeing the Pyramid of Chops, I can tell you. I say, Mauly, get a move on! Ain't you interested in Chops?"

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Lord Mauleverer grinned.

"You've simply got to come, Mauly," said Bunter. "We shouldn't think of going out and leaving Mauly behind, should we, you fellows?"

"No fear!"

"You see, old chap, we want you to pay for admission to all the places," explained Bunter.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. He had rather wondered why Billy Bunter was so keen on his company. Now he knew!

Sir Reginald Brooke came along the balcony. What looked like a tropical butterfly fluttered behind him. It was Hassan, the son of Suleiman, salaaming as he came, as if he had a steel spring in his back. How a man could keep on folding himself up like a pocket-knife was rather a mystery to the juniors. But no doubt Hassan had had a lot of practice.

The old baronet had met some acquaintances at the Hotel Magnifique, also he had been in Egypt many times, and was past the age for active and strenuous sight-seeing in a hot climate. Perhaps that was why he had yielded to the blandishments of the son of Suleiman. Evidently Hassan had succeeded in hooking on. Sir Reginald was going to take a rest, in the company of his elderly friends, while the juniors saw the sights.

"I have engaged this guide, my boys," said the baronet. "The hotel manager recommends him, and you will be safe under his guidance."

"All hotel managers in Alexandria and in Cairo please to give personal recommend," said Hassan, salaaming. "They know Hassan, the only one Arab in Egypt who speaks the truth."

"I have given this man his instructions," said Sir Reginald, "and you will be careful not to wander away from him, and he will bring you back to the hotel for lunch."

"Hassan is your dragoman, gentlemen, lords," said the guide, his flexible back going again like clockwork. "You trust Hassan! All other guides are liars and thieves!"

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, as the old baronet left them with the dragoman, "mind you keep together, and don't get out of my sight. That blighter Kalizelos is in Alexandria, you know, and goodness knows what may happen to you if you get wandering away from me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Got the scarab safe, Mauly?" asked Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer's hand went to his waistcoat pocket.

"Yaas," he answered.

"Are you going to tell all Egypt about it, Bunter?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically. There were at least a dozen people within hearing of Bunter's voice.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Hadn't you better leave it with your uncle, Mauly, for safety?" asked Harry Wharton.

Mauly shook his head.

"Somebody might get after it, and worry nunky," he said. "It's all right."

"Well, let's have a cocktail, and start," said Bunter. "Where's that waiter? Here, waiter!"

Lord Mauleverer sat up.

"Let's have a which?" he ejaculated.

"A cocktail," said Bunter breezily. "Lots of the people here are drinking cocktails. It's all right here, Mauly—no masters or prefects about—he, he, he! And old Brooke has cleared off!"

I'll stand the cocktails all round. You lend me some money——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, waiter!" called out Bunter.

"Cocktails!"

"Yessar!"

"You frabjous owl!" roared Bob Cherry. "If the waiter brings you a cocktail, I'll pour it down the back of your neck."

"Now, look here, Bob Cherry," said the fat Owl, blinking severely at Bob through his big spectacles, "I want it understood, once and for all, that I don't want any of your Remove passage tricks here. Remember, you're travelling now in decent company, and try to do me credit."

"Oh crikey!"

"If you namby-pamby fatheads prefer lemonade, have lemonade, and be blowed," said Bunter. "I'm having a cocktail! Here, waiter—six lemonades, and one cocktail. And mix it strong."

"Yessar!"

"We can shake a loose leg here, you know," said the fatuous Owl. "What's the good of being on a holiday in a foreign country if we can't shake a loose leg? What?"

"You howling ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "If you mopped up a cocktail we should have to roll you along, or wheel you on a barrow."

"Yah!"

"The esteemed cocktail is not the proper caper, my idiotic Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Rats!"

Billy Bunter evidently meant business. He had ordered a cocktail, and he was going to drink a cocktail; if only to show the other fellows that he could do what he liked—which was a rather important consideration with the Owl of the Remove. The opinion of the other fellows was that Billy Bunter couldn't do as he liked—not, at all events, to the extent of absorbing cocktails.

The waiter came back with a well-laden tray. Six lemonades were placed on the table, and one cocktail. Billy Bunter, with a defiant blink at the Co., reached out a fat hand to his glass. Bunter, certainly, had no knowledge of the probable effects of a cocktail taken internally. Taken externally, it was not agreeable; but, undoubtedly, ever so much better than taken internally. And the chums of the Remove were quite determined that if Bunter took that cocktail at all he was going to take it externally.

"Here's how!" said Bunter recklessly, as he lifted the glass. Bunter had no doubt that he looked quite a man of the world.

Bob Cherry grabbed his fat wrist.

"Ow! Leggo, you beast!" howled Bunter.

"Sure you want this cocktail?" asked Bob.

"Yes; blow you!"

"It will be jolly bad for you if it goes down the inside of your neck!"

"Leggo!"

"So it's going down outside——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter struggled as Bob twisted his fat paw, with the glass in it, round to the back of his neck. The contents of the glass shot out in a stream, and landed just under Lord Mauleverer's chin, and streamed down him. Lord Mauleverer bounded to his feet. For once, he forgot the calm repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. He roared.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

"You clumsy ass, Bunter!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Leggo! I say, you fellows—whoooop!" roared Bunter, as he sat down on the balcony, with a bump that almost shook the Hotel Magnifique.

"Oh gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer. "I'm soaked! I'm drenched! I shall have to go and change! Kick Bunter while I'm gone."

"Certainly, old chap!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Lord Mauleverer disappeared into the hotel, dripping with Bunter's cocktail. The fat junior squirmed away from several lunging feet. After about a quarter of an hour his lordship emerged again, and the Greyfriars fellows followed Hassan, the son of Suleiman, down the steps from the balcony, and started to see Alexandria.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Pickpocket!

"THE Kom-el-Chogafa—"

"Oh, my hat! The which?"

"The Kom-el-Chogafa!"

said Hassan beaming. "Magnificent catacombs chock-full of dead persons—yes!"

"Oh! The jolly old catacombs!" said Bob Cherry.

"Hassan tell you everything. Here you pay for admission—it is only five piastres for every gentleman lord. Nothing! To see catacombs chock-full of dead persons is worth many piastres. Yes! Hassan tell you the truth."

The juniors had seen the busy Place Mohammed Ali; and the shops in the Rue Cherif Pasha; and had stared up Pompey's Pillar, once supposed to be the burial-place of the great Pompey. Hassan, indeed, had assured them that Pompey was there; a statement the juniors took the liberty of doubting, as they did many other statements of the only truth-speaking Arab in Egypt. They had had Pompey in history-class with Mr. Quelch at Greyfriars, so they knew all about the hapless Roman general whose head was cut off when he landed in Egypt long ago. So they only smiled when Hassan told them that he was a great sheikh of ancient times, and the very King of Egypt who had oppressed the Children of Israel. After which, they arrived at the catacombs, and followed their guide down the modern steps which led to the ancient entrance, glad to get out of the glare of the sun.

"I say, you fellows, I think they might put in a lift here!" grunted Billy Bunter, as the explorers descended a long winding staircase. "Look here, I'm going to sit down and rest. Wait for me."

"Oh, buck up, fatty!" said Bob.

"Shan't!"

Billy Bunter sat down, half-way down the winding staircase. His fat little legs were fatigued.

The rest of the party followed Hassan down.

"I say, you fellows, wait here for me!" yelled Bunter. "I won't keep you half an hour!"

"That's all right, old fat bean—you won't keep us half a minute!" said Bob Cherry, over his shoulder.

"Beast!"

The Greyfriars party and the dragon man disappeared below.

Bunter sat and grunted, and fanned himself with Lord Mauleverer's Panama.

He sat in the middle of the winding staircase, fanning himself, oblivious of

the fact that he was in the way of anyone else who happened to be coming down to the catacombs.

There was a sound of running feet on the stair above him, as if someone was coming down in a hurry.

Bump!

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter, as the man running down from above, landed on him, and sprawled over him.

The fat junior roared. He was rather hurt. But the man, who had lost his footing and tumbled down the steps, was more hurt than Bunter. He sat up, several steps below the fat Owl, and glared up at him with black eyes from a brown face, and poured out a stream of infuriated Arabic.

Bunter rubbed the back of his head, and glared at the native through his big spectacles.

"You clumsy nigger!" he roared.

The Arab scrambled up, clutched up the tarboosh that had fallen from his head, and clamped it down on his thick dark hair, glaring savagely at Billy Bunter.

"Fat fool!" he panted, breaking into English. "Why you sit on a stair?"

"Clumsy ass!" retorted Bunter. "Can't you look where you're going?"

OUR 10,000-GIFT PLAN RESULT.

Our recent huge coupon-collecting scheme, in which many thousands of Fine Gift Books were offered, proved a tremendous success, and as a result readers all over the country are now enjoying the topping books they have won.

We congratulate them on the many magnificent totals of points scored—prizes were awarded for totals ranging from 32,700, sent by H. Legetter, of Luton, down to 3,000—and we only regret that it is not possible to give all their names in the paper. All prizes for Home readers were, however, sent off promptly, and also personal letters from the Editor to all unsuccessful entrants.

The remaining 500 of the Prize Books offered are, of course, being reserved for Overseas readers—for whom there is a later closing date—and these will be awarded and sent as soon as possible after that date.

The dark-brown face stared up at him evilly.

The Arab was a short, thick-set muscular man, with the scar of an old knife-cut across one brown cheek. As Bunter blinked at him it dawned on his fat brain that he had seen the man before—hanging about the balcony of the hotel that morning.

Brown faces, red tarbooshes, and dingy galabyehs girdled round the waist, were too numerous to be noticed, but he had noticed the livid knife-scar that ran across the brown cheek from nose to ear. The scarred man had approached the Greyfriars party several times with picture postcards for sale. His tray of picture postcards, however, was not with him now.

"Faringhee fool!" said the Arab, between his teeth, and he made a motion to come up the steps again, apparently to deal with the fat junior.

But if that was his intention, he changed it. With a black look at Bunter, he turned away and ran down the lower stair.

Billy Bunter was glad to see him go. The look on the scarred face had been rather alarming.

"Beast!" grunted Bunter.

The running footsteps died away below.

Why the man was in haste was a mystery to Bunter. There was nothing but the catacombs at the bottom of the

stair, in which natives were not interested like foreigners who came to see the sights. Anyhow, the place was open all day to visitors.

Billy Bunter grunted, rubbed his head again, set Lord Mauleverer's Panama on it, and resumed his way down—at a much slower pace than the scarred Arab's.

Tourists and guides were moving about the chambers cut in the rock, and Bunter blinked round for the Greyfriars party. It was the voice of Hassan that guided him to them at last.

"Here is bier in shape of lion," came the sing-song voice of Hassan, "the three gods which stick around are Horus, Thoth, and Anubis—great famous gods of ancient times! Here is priest of Isis, who made the sacrifice, carved in rock, which is very wonderful. Here in sarcophagus is dead person of—"

The Greyfriars fellows were standing round Hassan, as he expounded.

At a little distance from them a thick-set figure in tarboosh and galabyeh stood half hidden in a niche in the rock wall, the black eyes fixed on the Greyfriars party.

As they moved on the thick-set figure moved after them, at a distance, still watching, and behind him rolled Billy Bunter—with a grin on his fat face now.

It was the scarred Arab who had fallen over him on the stair who was following the juniors and keeping them under observation, and, as he did not look back, he did not observe Bunter coming on behind.

Billy Bunter's fat brain was not quick on the uptake; but he could guess that the scarred man had followed the party on their excursion that morning, and he could guess the reason.

Kalizelos, the Greek, had not ventured to let himself be seen; but it was easy enough for him to set a spy on the party, and Bunter had no doubt that the scarred man was the spy. That was why he had been running down the winding stair—having momentarily lost sight of the party when they went down into the catacombs.

Bunter grinned a fat grin.

Bunter wondered whether he was looking for a chance to pick Mauleverer's pocket of the scarab. If he did, Billy Bunter was prepared to butt in, and to demonstrate once more to the Famous Five how helpless they were without him.

Hassan, with an incessant stream of talk, led the way down a lower staircase, into a lower story of the catacombs. After them went the scarred man, keeping well behind, and after the scarred man went Bunter, grinning. The juniors, keenly interested in the strange relics of ancient times, had no suspicion that they were being shadowed.

"Here it is more dark!" chanted Hassan, at the corner of a passage cut in the solid rock. "But my gentlemen lords will be able to see wonderful sarcophagus, from which mummy removed, now in museum. Beyond there is gallery chock-full of dead persons!" added Hassan, by way of consolation, in case his charges were disappointed at finding one of the sarcophagi empty.

The Greyfriars fellows went into the corridor, which was dusky and dim, getting only a glimmer from the light-shafts of the larger apartments. They gathered before the sarcophagus, which lay in a deep niche in the rock wall.

The huge stone coffin was empty, and the lid, which was also of solid rock, stood back on its edge.

The juniors peered into the dim interior, in which a mummified Egyptian had lain for, perhaps, two thousand years, his name and age being painted, in red paint, on the rock tomb—still visible, and readable, if the juniors could have understood it.

The mummy, as Hassan told them, had been removed to the museum. Although the lid stood up on edge and the sarcophagus was kept open, a musty smell lingered in it, and one glance was enough for the juniors.

Hassan was telling them that it was the tomb of some early Alexandrian citizen, whose name was Psah, when there was a bustle in the dusky corridor, and the scarred Arab pushed rudely through the group of schoolboys. He shoved against Bob Cherry, who promptly pushed him back, and he staggered on Lord Mauleverer, pressing that youth to the wall, and falling against him.

"Here, you bad-mannered person, what you do?" exclaimed Hassan, loudly and indignantly. "You push one gentleman lord, son of five hundred pigs?"

"Oh gad! Gerroff!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

Harry Wharton caught the man by his galabyeh, and pulled him away from Mauleverer.

The scarred man tore himself loose, and hurried on, without speaking a word, and disappeared into the gallery at the end of the rock passage. He was gone almost in a moment.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter rolled up behind the juniors. "I say, stop that man! He's got it!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You turned up again?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"I tell you he's got it!" exclaimed Bunter, in great excitement. "He's been following you, and I've been watching him. I jolly well knew what he was after. He's picked your pocket, Mauly!"

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Mauleverer.

"I'll bet you he's got the scarab!" said Bunter. "That silly ass Mauly had it in his waistcoat pocket; and I tell you that darkey has been following and watching you—"

"Is that why he bumped into us?" exclaimed Wharton. "Look if the scarab's safe, Mauly—quick!"

"Yaas, old bean!"

Lord Mauleverer slid his slim fingers into his waistcoat pocket. They came out empty.

"Gone?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Oh gad! Yaas!"

"I say, you fellows, I told you so!" grinned Bunter. "Look here, you can stop him before he can get out of the catacombs. I say—"

"My gentleman lord he has been robbed!" exclaimed Hassan, in dismay.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get after that Arab scoundrel!" exclaimed Wharton hastily.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer. "It's all right!"

"Have you got the scarab?"

"No; but—"

"Fathead! Then we haven't a moment to lose—"

"It's all right!" gasped his lordship.

"You see—"

"I say, you fellows, that nigger was watching us at the hotel, and he knew Mauly had the scarab in his waistcoat pocket all right," said Bunter. "He's been after us all the time, and I spotted him—"

"Yaas, I fancy he knew where the scarab was," assented Lord Mauleverer cheerfully. "I felt him poke me in the ribs when he shoved me at the wall, and

I've no doubt he was fishing for the jolly old scarab in my waistcoat pocket. But, you see, I changed my waistcoat before we left the hotel—"

"What?"

"You remember Bunter's cocktail was spilled over me," chuckled his lordship. "Well, I had to change my waistcoat, you know—and the scarab's in the other waistcoat."

"You left it in the other pocket?" yelled Bob Cherry. "Left it in your room at the hotel?"

"Yaas! Forgot all about it, you know."

"You silly ass!"

"Well, a fellow can't remember everythin'," said his lordship. "I forgot all about the dashed scarab when I changed my waistcoat. Lucky I did, as it turns out! That sportsman would have had it!"

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Lord Mauleverer chuckled.

"What a sell for the jolly old pick-pocket!" he said. "Trackin' us all over Alexandria—to shove his paw into an empty pocket, what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The pickpocket had vanished—probably the most disappointed rascal in Alexandria. Evidently he had been following the juniors and watching for a chance to pick Lord Mauleverer's pocket of the scarab—and his chance had come when the party were in the dim underground corridor. But for the fact that Mauly had changed his waistcoat before leaving the hotel—and forgotten to transfer the scarab—there was no doubt that the rascal would have secured it. Bunter's cocktail, and his lordship's forgetfulness, had saved the scarab once more from the hands of Kalizelos.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

In a Living Tomb!

LORD MAULEVERER sat on the edge of the empty stone sarcophagus and leaned back against the rock wall of the niche. Hassan, the son of Suleiman, was saying his piece, so to speak, reciting the history of Psah and his tomb, and translating—or, more probably, pretending to translate—the strange inscription painted in red on the rock. Mauly's eyes closed under the brim of his hat, and he nodded drowsily while Hassan's sing-song voice ran on, seemingly like the little brook in the poem, which went on for ever. But the Famous Five soon had enough of the stuffy corridor and the history of Psah, and they made a move onward.

"Wake up, Mauly, old bean!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Eh?" Lord Mauleverer opened his eyes. "I wasn't asleep; I heard all you fellows were saying. Anythin' more to see?"

"Lots and lots!"

"The lotfulness is terrific, my esteemed Mauly."

"Innumerable dead persons, my gentleman lord," said Hassan. "We next proceed to great gallery newly excavated, chock-full of dead persons."

"Right-ho!" yawned Lord Mauleverer. "I'm comin'."

The juniors followed the dragoman and turned out of the corridor into the wide, open gallery lined with rock shelves, on which the tombs were laid with the mummies in ancient days. Lord Mauleverer made a movement to rise and follow, and then sat down again.

His lordship was tired. He had put

in an unusual amount of exercise that morning, and he was getting a welcome rest. And his interest was not deep in the "innumerable dead persons" which Hassan considered so attractive.

Harry Wharton stopped at the corner of the corridor and looked back.

"Come on, Mauly!" he called.

"Yaas," yawned Mauly.

And the Greyfriars fellows followed the dragoman along the gallery, Hassan's sing-song voice going on like the little brook.

Lord Mauleverer remained sitting on the sarcophagus in the dim passage enjoying a rest. But at the sound of footsteps he made an effort and rose, supposing that one of his comrades was coming back for him.

"All right, old bean, I'm comin'!" yawned Mauly, as he slipped from the stone rim of the sarcophagus. "I—Oh!"

It was not one of the juniors coming along the corridor from the gallery, as he had supposed.

It was a man dressed in European clothes, with a tarboosh, whose dark face was almost hidden from sight by a large beard and a pair of blue-tinted sun-glasses.

Mauleverer glanced at him, and would have passed him; but the man stopped directly in his way, his black eyes gleaming through the tinted glasses.

What happened next took Mauleverer completely by surprise.

The man in the tinted glasses glanced swiftly over his shoulder to make sure that there was no one in the corridor behind him, and the next instant grasped at the schoolboy earl.

Before Mauleverer could resist, or even think of resisting the sudden attack, he was swept off his feet in the grasp of two powerful hands and whirled into the deep niche in the rock wall where the sarcophagus lay.

Bump!

"Oh!" gasped Mauleverer in utter amazement, as he was bumped down into the empty sarcophagus.

He landed on his back, and his assailant plunged in after him, pinning him down.

A hand grasped his throat, choking back the cry he would have uttered.

Mauleverer stared upward in sheer stupefaction at the face bending over him.

"Silence, my lord!" said a soft, musical voice.

Mauleverer started violently.

He did not know the face disguised by the beard and the big, coloured glasses, but he knew the voice.

It was the voice of Kalizelos, the Greek, of Cairo.

It was hardly needed for the Greek to bid him be silent; the grip on his throat silenced him. Mauleverer's heart throbbed. He had lingered behind his comrades only for a few minutes, but those few minutes had been enough for his watchful enemy. Now he was out of sight of his friends, even if they looked back along the passage, for the sarcophagus was deep in the niche cut in the rock wall, and could only be seen close at hand.

The Greek grinned down at him.

"I have found you again, my lord!" he said. "Did I not tell you at Mauleverer Towers that you would meet me again in Africa?"

Mauleverer could only stare up at him.

"The scarab!" whispered the Greek. "Give it to me and save your life, my lord! Hamza failed to pick it from your pocket. But you have it about



In the combined grasp of Harry Wharton & Co. the heavy stone lid of the sarcophagus swung up and back, and the juniors stared into the dim interior. "Mauly!" panted Wharton, assisting the schoolboy earl to rise.

you, I am sure of that! In which pocket, my lord?"

He relaxed the grip on Mauleverer's throat.

"Speak—in a whisper!" he hissed.

"You scoundrel!" panted Mauleverer.

"Where is the scarab?"

"You won't get it! I've not got it on me, as it happens!" gasped Mauleverer. "Your thieving pickpocket would have got it if I had!"

The Greek's eyes blazed.

His grip tightened on the schoolboy earl's throat again, silencing him. There was a sound of footsteps.

But they passed in the rock gallery at the end of the passage. The Greek listened intently.

At any moment tourists and guides might come along the corridor to look at the tomb of Psah. But for the moment the corridor was deserted, and Mauleverer was at his enemy's mercy. He was sturdy, but his strength was as nothing in the muscular grip of the Greek.

Kalizelos bent lower over the junior sprawling on his back in the hollow tomb.

"Waste no time, my lord!" he hissed in Mauleverer's ear. "There may be interruption any moment. I cannot afford the time to search you. Give me the scarab! Quick—quick—or I will close the tomb on you, and return to take it from your dead body!"

Again he relaxed his grip on Mauleverer's throat for the schoolboy to speak. But as Mauleverer attempted to shout he tightened it again, his eyes blazing.

"Fool! Die, then!" he breathed. "Die in the tomb of Psah, and I will take the scarab from your body when death keeps you silent!"

He sprang up and leaped from the

tomb. A crashing blow felled the junior as he scrambled up, and he sprawled in the sarcophagus. The next moment the Greek's sinewy hands had dragged over the stone lid, and it fell into its place with a thud.

Instantly the dim light was blotted from Mauleverer's eyes. He stretched his hands upwards, and they touched the cold stone above him.

A shudder ran through him from head to foot.

He shouted, filling his narrow prison with booming sound; but he knew only too well that no sound could penetrate beyond the thick, heavy stone.

"Oh gad!" gasped Mauleverer.

He braced himself against the floor of the sarcophagus and pushed upward with his whole strength. It seemed to him for a moment that the stone above him stirred a little; but if so, it was only a little. His strength—or twice his strength—would not have lifted it.

Panting with his effort, his head spinning, Mauleverer sank back again. No sound reached him. Whether the murderous Greek was gone he could not tell. There might have been tourists gathered round the tomb of Psah, and a dragoman expounding the history of the mummy to them, and he would have heard no sound. Silence as of the grave lay heavy upon him—silence and overpowering darkness. And, with a shudder, he realised that the air in that narrow space would not last long.

Again he made a terrible effort to lift the stone lid; again he failed and sank back exhausted.

He was lost!

How long he might live, in that living tomb, till the air failed, and he was suffocated, he could not tell. But not long—not long! If the stone lid of the sarcophagus was not lifted, he was

doomed—and it would not be lifted till the Greek came to search him for the scarab—not till all was sure!

He was lost—in the blackness of the tomb where a mummy once had lain! Where, long centuries ago, Psah, the Egyptian of Alexandria, had been laid in death, he was laid in life—till life flickered out like a candle! And his friends, wandering among the rock-galleries, deep in the dusky catacombs, never dreamed that the sands of his life were running swiftly out!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Startling!

"I SAY, you fellows!" "In every which tomb, when recently of late times excavated, were found three mummies—"

Hassan was going strong in the rock-gallery.

"I say, you fellows—" hooted Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"What about lunch?"

"Three bootiful specimens of mummies were found in every one of all these wonderful tombs, my gentlemen lords!" said Hassan. "And, further on, there are still more enormous numbers of dead persons—"

"I'm hungry!"

"My esteemed, idiotic Bunter—"

"Old Brooke told us to get back to the hotel for lunch," said Bunter. "He's rather an old ass, and I can't say I like his manners. Still, he's in chargo of us, and we're bound to respect him, see?"

"At meal-times, anyhow!" grinned Bob. "Perhaps it's time we got a

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move on, you men! It's a good step back to the hotel."

"Oh, my gentlemen lords, do not be in pressed hurry!" exclaimed Hassan. "There is much more to see—huge numbers of dead persons. To return to hotel we take arabeyah, which, in English, is called 'cabby.' Yes, there is plentiful time to take leisurely look at wonders of catacombs."

"It's a jolly interesting place, and we shan't be here again," said Harry. "If you're hungry, Bunter—"

"I jolly well am!" said Bunter, with emphasis.

"Then you can go and eat coke!"

"Why, you cheeky beast—"

"Where's Mauly?" asked Nugent, glancing round. "Have we left him behind? I suppose he won't lose the scarab, as we left it at the hotel; but he will lose himself."

"Sitting down somewhere for a rest, I suppose," said Johnny Bull. "We'll pick him up as we go back."

"I say, you fellows, let's go back now! I'm hungry. Never mind Mauly—if he's lost himself, he can follow us—anybody will tell him the way out. Look here, if you jolly well don't come, I'll jolly well go without you!" declared Bunter. "I'm not going to die of hunger in these beastly catacombs to please you, see?"

Harry Wharton looked back along the rock-gallery. A good many people were in sight, tourists and guides and touts, but he could not see Lord Mauleverer among them.

"The old duffer must be still sitting where we left him, in that corridor between the galleries," he said. "I thought he was coming after us. Gone to sleep, as likely as not. We'd better go back and fetch him—Nunky told us not to get separated."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

The Famous Five retraced their steps along the rock-gallery to the corner of the corridor where the tomb of Psah lay in the excavated niche. Dim as the corridor was, they could see through it, to the lighted rock-chamber at the other end, and there was no one to be seen.

"Not there," said Bob, "unless he's sitting on the jolly old tomb in the wall. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Mauly!"

Bob's powerful voice boomed along the corridor. But there came no answer, save a thousand echoes from the rock walls.

"I say you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I dare say Mauly's got hungry, and gone back for lunch—"

"Fathead!"

Harry Wharton ran back along the rock-corridor, as far as the tomb of Psah.

As he came to the deep niche cut in the wall, he saw that a man was leaning on the tomb, of which the stone lid was now closed. He was dressed in European clothes, save for the tarboosh, and his face could hardly be seen, under a large beard and a pair of large, blue-tinted glasses. As he leaned on the stone top of the sarcophagus, he was lighting a cigarette, and he did not even glance at Wharton as he came up.

There was nothing to be seen of Lord Mauleverer. Wharton noticed that the stone lid of the sarcophagus was closed; but certainly it did not occur to him for a moment that it had closed over the junior he was looking for. He supposed, without thinking about it, that some custodian of the place had closed the tomb.

"Not here," said Harry, as his friends came up. "He must have followed us, I suppose, and we shall find him somewhere in the gallery."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"Look here, you beasts, we're not going to root all over these putrid catacombs, looking for Mauly, when I'm hungry!" hooted Bunter. "He will find his way back all right!"

"Shut up!"

"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "I tell you I want my lunch! Look here, ask that nigger if he's seen him—it's not five minutes since we left him here, and he can't be far away."

The bearded, spectacled man leaning on the sarcophagus was taking no notice of the schoolboys—openly, at least. But from under the cover of the

big, blue-tinted glasses, he watched them as he smoked the cigarette.

Harry Wharton turned to him.

"Excuse me, sir," he said politely. "We are looking for a friend. Perhaps you have seen him?"

The spectacled man shook his head, to indicate that he did not understand English. Hassan came along the corridor after the juniors, his gorgeous raiment making a bright splash of colour in the gloomy place.

"Let Hassan ask him," said Bob. "Hassan, old bean, ask this chap if he's seen Mauleverer."

The dragoman addressed the spectacled man in Arabic. In what seemed to the juniors a surly way, the man shook his head, still without speaking, and, turning his back, proceeded to light a second cigarette from the stump of the first.

"This person has not seen the gentleman lord," said Hassan. "Without doubt he has walked along to gallery, and my lordly gentleman will find him gazing at mummified dead persons—"

"Well, we'd better find him at once," said Harry. "I suppose there can't be any danger in a place like this, except from pickpockets; but we can't be too careful. That pickpocket may not be the only man that that rotter Kalizelos set to watch us."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I tell you I jolly well won't go round rooting after that silly idiot Mauly!" yelled Bunter. "I'm going back to lunch, see? Mauly can go and eat coke! I warned you that you'd get lost if you got out of my sight—you can't say I didn't! Well, Mauly's got lost, and he can stay lost, and be blowed to him! Now let's get back to lunch!"

"Kick him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

The juniors started up the corridor again. They were not alarmed for Lord Mauleverer; but they had made up their minds to look for him and find him at once. They little dreamed, as they started, that they were turning their backs on the hapless junior, and they did not see the mocking glitter in the eyes under the blue-tinted glasses of the man leaning on the tomb.

"Look here, I'm not coming!" roared Bunter.

"Come on, you silly owl!" snapped Bob, over his shoulder.

"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "I'm jolly well going, and you can root about after that silly idiot Mauly as long as you jolly well like! I'm jolly well going back to lunch!"

"Come with us, you fat idiot!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You will lose yourself in two ticks, and we shall have to hunt for you as well as Mauly."

"Yah!"

"Oh, yank him along by his ears!" exclaimed Nugent. "We can't leave the fat dummy on his own."

Bob Cherry strode back towards Bunter. It was more likely than not that the fat Owl, left on his own, would have lost himself in the catacombs, and the chums of the Remove certainly did not want two lost fellows to hunt for, up and down the passages and galleries and rock-chambers. Bob Cherry grabbed at the fat Owl's collar.

"Come on, you silly chump!" he grunted.

Bunter squirmed.

"Leggo!" he yelled. "Beast! I'm not coming!"

"This way, idiot!"

"You cheeky rotter—"

"Get a move on, fathead!"

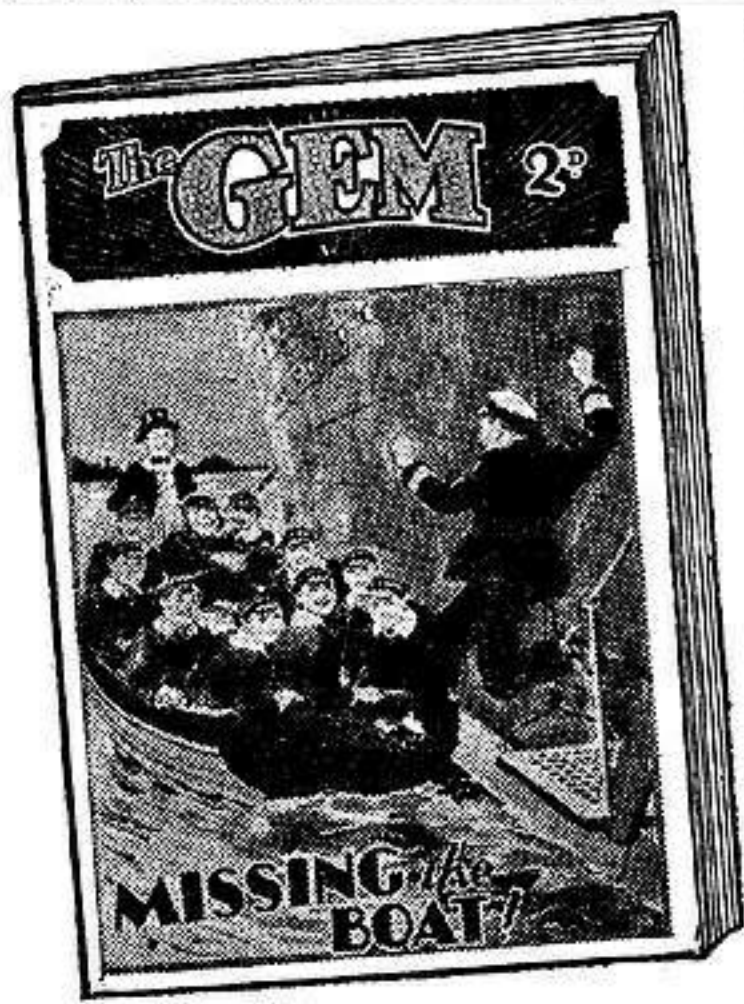
Billy Bunter made a terrific effort to

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wrench himself loose. Bob's grasp did not yield; but Bunter's collar did. It flew off in Bob's hand, and he staggered against the rock wall. Billy Bunter spun away like a fat humming-top, crashed into the spectacled man leaning on the tomb, and clutched at him wildly for support.

The man, taken utterly by surprise by that sudden and unexpected crash, staggered and stumbled over, Billy Bunter sprawling on the floor with him, clutching frantically. One of his fat hands caught the stranger's beard—which came off in his grasp. Bunter, hardly noticing in the excitement of the moment what had happened, rolled spluttering with the false beard clutched in his fat fingers.

Bob Cherry jumped forward to help the stranger up, and the other fellows ran back to the spot. The next moment there was a yell of astonishment from the Famous Five—almost of stupefaction, as their eyes fixed on the face of the man breathlessly scrambling up. The blue-tinted glasses lay smashed on the rock-floor; the false beard was in Bunter's clutch—and now that the beard and the glasses were gone, a clear-cut olive-skinned face was revealed—a face they knew.

"Kalizelos!" yelled Bob.

"Oh, my hat! Kalizelos!" panted Wharton.

"I say, you fellows—yaroo! I say—Whoop!" spluttered Bunter. "I say, I've banged my head—yaroo!"

The Greek was on his feet, agile as a cat, his black eyes burning, his olive face convulsed with rage.

For a second he glared at the Greyfriars fellows; then as they made a movement towards him, he turned and ran.

Almost in a twinkling of an eye he vanished out of the rock corridor, leaving the juniors staring blankly, and Billy Bunter sitting up, spluttering, and blinking at the beard clutched in his fat hand.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Saved from the Tomb!

HASSAN, the dragoman, stood staring after the vanished Greek, more astonished than the Greyfriars fellows. He knew the dealer of Cairo; though he had not recognised him in his disguise. Hassan's eyes almost bulged from his brown face in his astonishment.

"That is Kalizelos, the rich dealer of Cairo!" he ejaculated. "Why does he wear a beard that does not belong? Why does he run? My gentlemen lords, this is one astonishment—a knock into a cock-hat, as you say in your magnificent language. Yes."

"I say, you fellows—"

"It was Kalizelos," said Harry Wharton. "He has been spying on us, of course—got up like that so that we should not know him."

"Well he's gone," said Bob. "We'd better look for Mauly! The sooner we find him the better, with that Greek scoundrel knocking about."

"Come on," said Johnny Bull. "Mauly can't be far away; but we'd better find him at once."

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton.

He stood quite still, his eyes fixed on the tomb on which the disguised Greek had been leaning.

An almost scared look was on his face, and the colour wavered in his cheeks.

But for the discovery that the man at the tomb was Kalizelos, the juniors would have left the spot unsuspecting.

But now a strange and terrible suspicion was in Wharton's mind. Mauleverer had been left at this spot, sitting on the sarcophagus, and they had found the Greek there! And the sarcophagus, which had been standing open when they left it, was closed. Wharton had attached no importance to that circumstance—till now! But now—

"What—" began Bob, startled by the look on the face of the captain of the Remove.

Wharton caught his breath.

"Mauly!" he breathed. "If that villain found him here—"

"Mauly's not here—"

"Hassan!" Wharton pointed to the tomb of Psah. "Is that tomb ever closed—or—"

"No, sar, I have not seen this tomb closed before this time," said the dragoman. "Wonderful mummy being removed to museum, tomb is left open for honourable inspection by inquisitive tourists."

"But what—" began Nugent.

"If Kalizelos closed it—" muttered Wharton.

"But why—"

"Mauleverer—"

"Good heavens!" gasped Nugent, as

WRITE A GREYFRIARS LIMERICK AND WIN A WALLET!

One afternoon, round about three,
Monsieur Charpentier said:

"Now, Cheri,
I don't think that you
Could construe 'Ces yeux,'"
So Bob promptly shouted: "Sez
me!"

The above winning effort was
sent in by T. Beard, of 17, Boyer
Street, Derby.

POST YOUR LIMERICK TO.
DAY, CHUM!

he read Wharton's thought. "Harry—it's impossible—even that villain—"

"Get it open!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Thank goodness that Bunter played the fool, and we found Kalizelos out," panted Wharton. "But for that we should have gone—Lend a hand. Get the thing open! Hassan, help us!"

"Yes, sar! Lid of sarcophagus being very heavy indeed, but Hassan is strong as King Rameses," said the dragoman, and he added his muscular grasp, and helped the juniors to lift the heavy stone lid of the sarcophagus.

The same thought was in the minds of all the juniors now—though it seemed almost too terrible to believe. The great mass of stone swung up, and back, in their combined grasp, and they stared into the interior.

"Mauly!" panted Wharton.

A white face glimmered from the shadow within the stone tomb.

"Mauly!"

Many hands seized the schoolboy earl and lifted him out of the sarcophagus. He was conscious, but his face was white as chalk. He leaned heavily on Harry Wharton's shoulder, as the juniors set him on his feet, and his breath came in gasps.

"Mauly, old man—" breathed Wharton.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Billy Bunter, his eyes almost popping through his big spectacles. "It—it—it's Mauly! What the thump did you get into that beastly hole for, Mauly?"

Lord Mauleverer stared at him, and a faint smile came over his colourless face.

"Oh gad!" he murmured. "I—I'm glad to see you fellows! I—I thought I was a goner! Oh gad!"

"But what did you get into the tomb for?" asked Bunter. "You must have been a silly ass, Mauly."

"I was chucked in, fathead!" said Mauleverer.

"Kalizelos—" said Bob.

"Yaas! You've seen him?"

"He was here—disguised; but that idiot Bunter butted into him, and—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"How long have I been in there?" asked Mauleverer, in a low voice. "I—I thought the air wouldn't last; but it must have lasted all the hours I've been shut up in that horrible place—"

"Hours!" repeated Bob Cherry. "My dear old chap, it's not a quarter of an hour since we left you here."

"Good gad! Sure of that?" ejaculated Mauleverer. "My hat! It's the longest quarter of an hour I've ever known then!" He glanced at his wrist-watch. "Great Scott! You're right! But it seemed—" His voice shook, and he broke off.

"And—and we never guessed—never imagined—" muttered Nugent. "If we hadn't found Kalizelos here, we should never have guessed—"

"If I hadn't found him here, you mean," interrupted Billy Bunter. "I don't want to rub it in, but I'd like to know what would have happened if I hadn't been with you? I ask you."

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"And now," continued Bunter, "as I've saved Mauly's life the least you can do, I think, is to come back to lunch at once. I've told you I'm hungry."

"Let's get out of this," said Bob. "Come on, Mauly!"

"My gentlemen lords, there are still large numbers of dead persons—" said Hassan.

Lord Mauleverer grinned.

"There'd have been one more dead person, if you fellows hadn't hooked me out of that jolly old tomb," he said. "I'm rather fed-up on tombs and things. If you fellows don't mind, I'd rather chuck these jolly old catacombs."

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton.

Mauleverer leaned on Wharton's arm as they made their way back to the staircase out of the catacombs. His face was still pale; but he was recovering now. The juniors were glad to find themselves above the earth and in the brilliant sunshine again. Hassan followed them with rather a sorrowful expression on his face. They had not seen half the sights of the Alexandria catacombs; and Hassan was quite pained by their loss of interest in the innumerable dead persons. But after what had happened, the juniors had had more than enough of the catacombs.

"My gentlemen lords return to hotel?" asked Hassan.

"Yes—get us an arabeyeh," said Harry.

"Yes, sar! But if my gentlemen lords walk, there is an enormous Arab cemetery for my gentlemen to see—" said Hassan persuasively. "It is on the way to hotel—one great tremendous cemetery—all visitors come to see this enormous cemetery—"

"Call an arabeyeh!"

Hassan sadly obeyed. Wharton helped Mauleverer into the arabeyeh and got in with him. Two more arabeyehs were called for the rest of the party, and they started on their homeward way, Hassan trotting after the carriages, his gold tassel dancing in the sun. As the

carriages rolled along the Rue de la Colonne Pompee, Hassan called out to his gentlemen lords, and pointed with his stick.

"Here is great cemetery, my fine gentlemen—you look out of an arabeyeh and see tremendous cemetery—"

But the chums of Greyfriars had lost their interest in sight-seeing, for the present, and they did not even glance at the celebrated Arab cemetery. The arabeyehs rolled on through the busy streets of Alexandria, the juniors thinking, not of the sights of the city of Alexander, but of what had happened in the catacombs—excepting, of course, Bunter. Bunter was thinking of his lunch. To his immense relief, they arrived at the Hotel Magnifique in good time for lunch—and, so far as Billy Bunter was concerned, at least—all was calm and bright!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Off to Cairo!

"Go away!"
"But, my fine gentlemen—"
"Go away!"
"Noble and magnificent lord—"

"Go away!"
Harry Wharton & Co. looked from the train window and grinned.

There was a tone of mingled sorrow and affectionate persuasion in the voice of Hassan, the son of Suleiman, as he stood by the train in the station of Alexandria. But Sir Reginald Brooke was inflexible. The Greyfriars party were leaving Alexandria for Cairo; and Hassan had been dismissed, with a liberal backsheesh for his services—such as they were. But Hassan, though he was dismissed, seemed to consider that he was still attached to the party. Perhaps the liberality of the backsheesh strengthened his attachment. The dismissed dragoman was rather like the gentleman in the old story, who was dead but would not lie down. Dismissed or not dismissed, Hassan had made up his mind that the Greyfriars party could not possibly dispense with his valuable services.

Sir Reginald entered his carriage. A Coptic porter closed the door. Hassan looked in at the window, while from the adjoining carriage the Famous Five watched him, with amused faces.

"Fine and splendid gentleman!" urged Hassan almost tearfully. "Hassan is your dragoman."

"Go away!"
"At Cairo you will want Hassan—at Luxor—everywhere! Hassan knows all things."

"Go away!"
"Yaas, get off, old bean," said Lord Mauleverer, who was in the carriage with his uncle. "Good-bye! Here, shove this in your pocket and clear."

Hassan's black eyes almost popped out of his brown face as the schoolboy earl dropped a banknote into his brown hand. Lord Mauleverer sat down, supposing that he was done with the dragoman. But giving an Egyptian dragoman a banknote was not the way to have done with him. If Hassan had been attached to the party before, he was doubly and trebly attached now. Visions of unlimited backsheesh danced before the eyes of Hassan, the son of Suleiman. He salaamed, and salaamed, till the juniors, watching him, wondered that his backbone did not go.

"Noble gentleman, Hassan is your dragoman! He will serve you for ever! At Cairo, at Luxor, everywhere—"

"Go away!" said Sir Reginald.

He snapped the window shut.

"That jolly old dragoman is a sticker!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The stickfulness is terrific!" chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, we're off!"

Hassan's crimson tarboosh, with its gold tassel, disappeared in the crowd. The train rumbled out of Alexandria on its journey southward to Cairo. Billy Bunter, in a corner of the carriage with the Famous Five, grunted.

"Beastly hot!" he remarked.

"It's not chilly!" agreed Bob.

"And it's dusty—" grunted Bunter. "Blessed if I ever saw so much dust anywhere."

"That's the jolly old desert," said Bob.

"And the flies—look at the flies—" said Bunter. "There's a beastly fly keeps settling on my nose."

"I expect he takes it for a strawberry."

"Beast!"

There was no doubt that it was hot; and there was a great deal of dust from the desert. And there were plenty of flies—all sorts of flies—and the flies seemed to like Billy Bunter very much. Perhaps his fat perspiring face attracted them—though, generally speaking, it would not have been called attractive. Or perhaps the traces of his last meal had a fascination for them. Since breakfast, Bunter had disposed of a large supply of Turkish Delight, and he was sticky. The flies seemed to like Turkish Delight as much as Bunter did.

It seemed to William George Bunter that one, at least, of the ancient plagues of Egypt was still on—the plague of flies. He dabbed, and smacked, and smacked, and dabbed, but quite a large party of the flies of Alexandria seemed to have made up their minds to accompany him to Cairo. Like the dragoman, they were stickers.

"Did you fellows bring a mosquito net?" asked Bunter. "I think you might have brought a mosquito net for me—you jolly well knew that I should want a nap in the train! Selfishness all round! Do you fellows ever think of anybody but yourselves?" added Bunter sarcastically.

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter—"

"Well, shut up, anyhow," said Bunter. "The train makes enough noise, without you fellows jawing when a fellow wants to go to sleep. Wake me up when we get to Cairo."

Billy Bunter settled back in his corner and closed his eyes behind his big spectacles.

"Don't you want to look at Egypt, fathead?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Blow Egypt!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked from the window with tireless interest while Bunter settled down to snore. Alexandria was only the gateway of Egypt; but the real Egypt was unrolling before their eyes as the train ran on to the south. Alexandria and the great Lake Mareotis disappeared behind. Wide fields of barley and rice began to appear, and groups of date-palms—and they stared at the sight of a camel and a donkey yoked together to a plough. The new and the old jostled one another on all sides. On the road that ran beside the railway a man in a tarboosh and a djubbah was driving an Austin Seven. A brown-faced Copt navigated a bicycle, winding among camel-riders and donkey-boys. Brown children, catching sight of the foreign faces in the train, held out brown hands and shrieked "Backsheesh!"

"Urrrrrrgh!"

It was a sudden snort from Billy Bunter.

The juniors looked round at him. He

was awake again, and coughing and spluttering wildly. It was Bunter's elegant custom, when he shut his eyes, to open his mouth. One of the flies had started investigating the spacious interior.

"Oooogh! Oooop! Grooogh!" spluttered Bunter. He got rid of the fly, who was probably sorry he had entered by the time he left. "Ow! I say, you fellows, if you're not going to sleep, I think you might fan the flies off a fellow while he has a nap! I really think that!"

"Anybody feel inclined to sit by Bunter and fan the flies off him?" asked Bob Cherry. "Don't all speak at once."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! After all I've done for you—"

Bob Cherry chuckled, and picked up a little feather brush from the floor of the carriage. It had been left there by the man whose duty it was to flick the dust from the seats.

"All serene, old fat man—I'll fan you!" he said. "Go to sleep—you're nicer when you're asleep."

"Well, keep those beastly flies off me!" grunted Bunter; and he closed his eyes again behind his spectacles.

The flies were not long in settling. The smears of Turkish Delight on Bunter's fat countenance seemed to have an irresistible attraction for them. A dozen flies, large and small, buzzed over the fat face of the Owl of the Remove as he began to snore, and Bob lifted the feather brush. As it had been used for dusting the carriage it was well charged with the fine, almost impalpable dust that blew from the desert. That, however, could not be helped. Perhaps Bob did not notice it, or perhaps he did. Anyhow, he fanned Bunter with the feather brush.

The flies fled. There was a gurgling roar from Billy Bunter, and he woke up again quite suddenly.

"Ooogh! Groogh! Oooch! Wooch! Ow! I'm chook-chook-choking! Yurrrgh! Wharrer you doing, you beast, smothering a fellow with—oooogh!—dust? Yurrrrrgh!"

"Fanning you, old fat bean—"

"Yurrrrrgh! Keep off!" shrieked Bunter. "Keep that thing away! Oooooch! My nose is full of—woooogh—dust! My mouth's full of—gerrrrgh—beastly dust! I say—groooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's another fly," said Bob cheerily, "just settling on your nose. There—got him!"

"Yurrrrrgggh!" spluttered Bunter, as the dust-brush whopped on his fat little nose. "Atchoo—chooop—choooooop! Atchew—woop! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Beast! Stop it!" yelled Bunter. "Keep that thing away, I tell you! Ow! Groogh! Atchoo—whoop!"

"Don't you want me to fan the flies off?" asked Bob.

"Ow! Beast! No!" roared Bunter. "Leave them alone! Mind your own business! Oh crikey! Atchoo—chooop! Billy Bunter sneezed frantically. Ow! Groogh! Leave a fellow alone, you beast! Oooooch!"

"If that's the way you thank a chap for fanning the flies off—"

"Ow! Beast! Yurrrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Some fellows never seem to know what they want," remarked Bob Cherry. "First he wants to be fanned, and then he doesn't want to be fanned! There's no pleasing some people. I shan't fan you any more, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

The plague of flies continued to give



The more tightly Billy Bunter clung to William Shakespeare's neck, the faster the donkey careered. At the sight of the gleaming water, however, the animal stopped—suddenly lowering its head. The next moment Bunter was shooting through the air like a bullet!

Billy Bunter their best attention as the train hummed on southward. But Billy Bunter did not ask to be fanned any more. He had had enough fanning.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter on a Donkey!

CAIRO!
"Wake up, Bunter!"
The train clanged into Cairo. From the windows Harry Wharton & Co. had their first view of the Pyramids of Ghizeh, towering over the desert in the distance, blue-grey against the burning sky of Egypt. The train clanged on into the station and stopped, and Harry Wharton shook Bunter by a fat shoulder.

"Lemme alone, you beast!" mumbled Bunter. "Tain't rising-bell!"

"Fathead! It's Cairo!"
Billy Bunter rubbed his eyes, set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and grunted. The carriage door flew open, a swarm of porters appearing, clamouring for baggage.

The juniors descended, brown hands fairly clutching at bags, sticks, everything they could clutch at. They joined Sir Reginald and Mauleverer, surrounded by jostling, gesticulating, babbling porters, black and brown. Over the crowd appeared a crimson tarboosh with a dancing gold tassel, and a familiar voice was heard. A volley of Arabic, which sounded remarkably like fuming to English ears, drove back the porters, aided by sharp raps from the stick carried by Hassan, the son of Suleiman, and the grinning dragoman salaamed to the Greyfriars party, looking more than ever as if he had a spring in his backbone.

"Here, sar! Hassan is your dragoman. You leave all things to Hassan. He keep away these very troublesome peoples."

"Oh, my hat! We haven't lost Hassan, after all!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Hassan is your dragoman, sar."
"Go away!" rapped Sir Reginald.
"Come, my boys. The hotel porter will see to the baggage."

"Hassan take care of everything!" protested the dragoman.

"Go away!" roared Sir Reginald.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But, sar, very fine gentleman, Hassan is your dragoman!"

"Go away!" hooted the baronet. "Go away!"

Evidently the dragoman had travelled on the train from Alexandria, determined not to be shaken off by his gentlemen lords. The juniors chuckled, rather entertained by the pertinacity of the son of Suleiman. But Sir Reginald glared at him and stalked off, shepherding his flock out of the station. But the juniors, glancing back, saw the gold tassel in pursuit. The dragoman was following on.

Whether they liked it or not, Hassan gave them his services, driving off importunate porters with volleys of Arabic or waves of his stick, shoving back the crowds of black and brown boys with things to sell—things of every imaginable kind—roses, newspapers, amber combs and beads, strings of sweetmeats, writing-paper and post-cards, even live pigeons, tooth-brushes, and hairpins. Hassan drove them back ruthlessly, escorting the party out of the swarming station like a very brown and very decorative guardian angel.

"Donkey, sar? Very fine donkey!"

A black donkey-boy shouted and gestured imploringly, leading a donkey up to the party so suddenly that there was nearly a collision. "You ride a donkey, sar! His name William Shakespeare, sar. A very fine old donkey, sar!"

Arabic volleyed from Hassan, and the donkey-boy volleyed back and receded. But Billy Bunter turned his spectacles on the sturdy donkey, and signed to the black boy.

"You fellows can get in the taxi," said Bunter. "I'll ride. Haven't ridden since the last time I backed a hunter at Bunter Court, your know."

"Oh, my hat!"
"Fine old donkey, sar!" said the donkey-boy eagerly. "Me Mustapha, sar. Best donkey-boy in Cairo, sar. William Shakespeare best donkey, sar. You ride um, sar. Handsome gentleman ride a donkey!"

"You troublesome peoples, you go 'way!" exclaimed Hassan, waving his stick. "My noble gentlemen no want donkey."

"This handsome gentleman, this great lord, he say he ride a donkey!" yelled Mustapha angrily; and he volleyed in Arabic, with a sound like nuts in a nut-cracker.

Billy Bunter nodded. He rather fancied riding while the other fellows packed in a taxicab. But if he had been undecided, Mustapha's description of him as a handsome gentleman and a great lord would have settled the point. A donkey-boy who saw at a glance that Billy Bunter was a handsome gentleman and a great lord was a donkey-boy to be encouraged.

"That's all right," said Bunter. "I'm riding the donkey. You go and eat

(Continued on page 28.)

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OPENING CHAPTERS OF A THRILLING OLD-TIME ROMANCE!

The Red Falcon!



BY
Arthur Steffens.

Introducing HAL LOVETT and JERRY McLEAN, Knights of the Road.

CHAPTER I.

The Mysterious Stranger!

A YOUNG and strongly built boy pumped water from a well, and when his bucket was full he carried it into the scullery and set it on a stool. Ragged though his clothes were, they were cared for and free from stains. The frayed ends of his knickerbockers had been neatly sewn up.

The youngster's legs were bare, and his arms naked to above the elbow. Divesting himself of his coat and drawing off his shirt, he plunged his head into the water and splashed his naked body and then rubbed it until it glowed. He dried his hair, his face, and his body, rubbing until his skin was red, and then, straightening his hair with a broken comb, he eyed himself in a square of cracked looking-glass.

Tumbling reddish curls, a straight nose, two bright intelligent blue eyes, and shapely lips, which, parted, showed two rows of even teeth—this is what he saw.

And below, upon his glowing skin, a tattooed mark, a red falcon which stood with one foot raised, marvellously depicted.

For some time the youngster studied the bird as he had so often done before, then he slipped into shirt and tattered coat, emptied out the dirty water, and brought back the bucket—just as the street door bell rang.

Hal Lovett, for such was the youngster's name, hastened out into the shop.

There, blocking out the sunshine which filtered into Wych Street, he saw a broad-shouldered, big-limbed man.

"Samuel Lovett in?" demanded the intruder.

"No," answered the boy.

The man strode farther into the shop. His keen, brown eyes swept the counter littered with a piled disarray of second-

hand clothes, roamed the shelves packed with articles of all kinds, hats and boots and shoes, canes and swords and odds and ends of discoloured finery—everything second-hand; studied the cheap and faded furniture.

His three-cornered hat was pushed back on his head, his scarlet waistcoat showed a brilliant patch of colour against the sombre hue of his coat. Riding-breeches, brown-topped boots with spurs, and a newly-starched cravat completed his attire.

Hal looked at the celebrated Bow Street Runner in awe.

"Anything I can do for you, Mr. Cosgrave?" he asked.

"No, my lad," answered the Runner, as he pulled out one drawer after another behind the counter and studied carefully the contents. "I wanted a word with him; that's all, just a word."

Mr. Cosgrave's keen eyes still wandered. He peeped into the scullery, walked up three stairs into the parlour and looked around, then came down again, fumbling his staff with the royal crown on top as he completed his survey. Then back to the door he went, and pulled it open to a brazen clang.

His eyes held Hal's.

"Just you tell your father that Martin Cosgrave called, will you, me lad?" he said. "Martin Cosgrave the Runner."

"That all, sir?" asked the boy.

"No! Add this. A little bird has whispered. Warn him to be careful, or one of these fine days I'll be nabbin' him for thieving and receivin'. And you know what that'd mean, boy."

"No," answered Hal.

"Transportation," said the Bow Street Runner. "Transportation; or else a ride to Tyburn Tree." Then Mr. Cosgrave's hard face relaxed into a smile. "You're a bright boy, Hal," he added. "I've allus liked you. And bust me if I know how you came to be like you are with sech a father as Sam Lovett."

With that, he pulled the door to with

a slam and went off with slow and measured strides beneath the overhanging gables of the houses in Wych Street, followed by a hundred furtive eyes.

Martin Cosgrave had visited Samuel Lovett's shop in Wych Street before, and Hal had never been afraid of him. But he was uneasy now. He delivered the warning, and cleverly ducked the smashing blow his father hurled at him for giving it. But he could not get it out of his mind.

Hal was a clever boy. He noticed things. His father did very little trade in his rag shop, but there were times when he had plenty of gold to squander in drink.

Hal almost knew that his father was a receiver and a thief.

The boy scarcely slept a wink the night after the Runner had called. Cosgrave's visit worried him.

The very next day Hal experienced another shock.

His father was upstairs in the parlour, recovering from a drinking bout. His mother had gone out, and the boy was glad, because her constant nagging fretted him more than his father's blows.

Hal had been told to look after the shop.

He was sitting on the counter swinging his bare legs when a shadow darkened the glass panes of the shop door, and a hand lifted the latch.

The man who entered the shop was a beggar. There was nothing remarkable in that. Such men had often called before.

But the thing that did strike Hal as strange was the way in which the beggar peered at him out of eyes that seemed all a-fire.

Slowly the man came towards him with his head bent as if to see the better.

Hal stopped breathing. He was not afraid, only there was something uncanny about the man.

"So," said the stranger, "you are Sam Lovett's boy?"

"Yes," said Hal.

For a minute they looked at each other. And as the boy studied the beggar he noticed many things; for instance, that the features of the man's dirty face were not those of a gutter rascal, that the begrimed hand which held the weather-stained rag of a cloak close about him was smooth, and the nails carefully trimmed. The boy's eyes travelled to the man's feet. His shoes were filthy. They had not been cleaned for a long time, Hal judged, but they were expensive shoes and soundly soled and heeled.

"Ah!" said the stranger, breaking the silence. "Take me to your father, boy."

Hal slipped off the counter and dodged away.

"What name?" he asked.

"The name doesn't matter," answered the stranger, as he pulled the brim of his battered felt hat down farther to shield his eyes. "Tell him Mr. Who."

Hal held his breath. His eyes had caught the flash of a diamond as the man raised his right hand. Mr. Who's voice was smooth and cultured, too, in spite of his attempts to coarsen its tone.

The boy turned to deliver the message—and saw his father standing at the head of the three steps leading to the parlour.

Gaunt and ugly, his hair tumbled, his clothes stained and unbrushed, Samuel Lovett towered over Hal as he took a pinch of snuff.

"If you're not livelier delivering a message next time, I'll whip you till you bleed, you young villain," said Lovett, glaring through bloodshot eyes at his son. "Look after the shop. Come in, Mr. Who."

The murmur of voices from the parlour where the door stood ajar worried Hal as he remained in the shop whilst the shadows deepened.

A droning murmur of lowered voices talking about whom and what?

After a while, the boy crept up the three stairs and drew as near to the open door as he dare.

Hal was growing up. Only a few days back the thought of fleeing from home had entered his mind for the first time. He thought of it again now. After all, why should he stay with a father whom he hated and who hated him, and a mother who was forever scolding him and depriving him of food—a favourite form of punishment, and always undeserved?

The words that came to him made him shiver and his heart beat fast.

"And so—that's the boy." It was the stranger speaking.

"That's the boy."

"I shall want to make sure of it. You say he bears the mark?"

"He does. You shall see it before you go."

"I would like to see it now."

Hal scuttled like a startled rabbit, noiselessly and on tiptoe, back into the shop, and he was bunched lazily on the counter top when his father came to fetch him.

Samuel Lovett's clutching hand hurt as he dragged Hal into the dingy parlour.

The boy almost fell as his father hurled him towards Mr. Who.

"Look and see!" growled Lovett, glaring savagely at his son.

Mr. Who seized Hal by the collar of his coat and drew him with surprising ease—such was his strength—into the dim light that streamed through dirty window-panes.

There, as he held the lad tightly with his left hand, he tore Hal's shirt back

with the right, and the boy saw again the flash of the diamond ring.

A beggar with a diamond ring!

As the man bent Hal backward his eyes greedily devoured every detail of the tattooed falcon, which showed up vividly on the boy's bare chest.

"So!" he muttered, and Hal knew that an active brain was busy behind the mask of that grimey face. "So! H'm! It was nice of you to ask me to come and see your boy, Lovett, but I'm afraid he will not do—no, assuredly, he will not do."

Some boys would have been frightened, but not so Hal Lovett, he had never been afraid. He kept on wondering what had brought Mr. Who to his father's shop, and why he should figure in the pretended beggar's calculations at all.

Once again their eyes met and held their gaze. Then the stranger released Hal, and Samuel Lovett, grasping him savagely by the collar, spun him through the door and cuffed him into the shop.

"You stay there and watch the door," Hal's father growled. "And let me know the moment anyone calls."

He strode back into the parlour again, closing the door behind him.

Hal did not stay in the darkening shop. Instead, he crept back to the parlour door. After all, he felt safer with the door closed.

The boy had never listened before. There was something mean about eaves-dropping; but the visit of the mysterious stranger intrigued him, and he set his ear to the keyhole.

Hadn't he the right to listen, since he knew they were discussing him?

Mr. Who was talking in a low voice, but his tone was so rich Hal could hear almost every word.

"It is the boy, right enough, Lovett; which is as well for you, for if you'd lied I'd have sent you to the hulks. Since it is he, can you contrive anything?"

The listening boy held his breath.

"No doubt. If you could tell me your movements, why—"

"I shall attend Drury Lane Theatre to-night. Kemble is appearing in 'Hamlet.'" Mr. Who's voice was cultured now.

"And shall you be carrying anything



JERRY McLEAN Hal's bosom pal.

on your person worth the priggins'?" It was Samuel Lovett speaking.

"Assuredly. Even a diamond—"

Hal lost the last word as Mr. Who lowered his voice, but it sounded like "star."

"I'll see the boy is there. I'll be there myself. But—"

"You want your pay before you've earned it—eh?" Hal heard the stranger's voice shrill. "Well, I don't mind. But this time see that you properly earn it!"

The listening boy heard the dull chink of money, and, peeping in at the keyhole, saw Samuel Lovett snatch a bag purse up from the table and pour out of it into his palm a rain of golden guineas.

In his excitement Hal had held his breath. He let it go now with a sobbing gasp, and both men wheeled and faced the door.

"What was that?"

Hal tore like the wind along the passage, turned into a darkened room, snatched a rushlight from a greasy candlestick, and raced with this up the steep stairs, up and up to his garret above.

— — —

The Boy Becomes a Man!

IT was a poverty-stricken garret. Plaster had fallen from the ceiling, exposing the laths, and through the holes water dripped. A damp, musty den, lit only by a small recessed window.

Hal sat on the end of a shaky bed with a book upon his knees. The rushlight burned upon a broken chair, and he bent double in order to read the close print.

The boy had borrowed the mouldy volume from a pile in the shop, for he had taught himself to read. The tinging of the street door bell sounded clearly, but he did not move or run to the window to watch Mr. Who going home. His reading absorbed him. For the same reason he did not hear his father's heavy tread upon the creaking stairs.

The door whined open on rusty hinges, and Samuel Lovett came in. He held a stout whip in his hand, and smiled evilly as he felt its wicked interlaced thong.

Hate smouldered in his eyes as he studied the boy. Why should Hal read and write when he and Mrs. Lovett could not even scratch their names?

For a moment Samuel Lovett was silent. Then his rough voice boomed through the tiny room.

"Didn't I tell you to mind the shop?"

With a start Hal set the book down, then, when he saw the whip and read his father's intention in the gleam of cruel eyes, he backed away.

"I couldn't stay in the shop," said Hal. "I did not like that man. I had to come up here and read."

"Had to—eh? And you didn't like that man?"

Samuel Lovett cracked the whip.

"I didn't like him. You were plotting something about me. He didn't come to find me employment." Hal crouched back against the wall, watching nervously the stealthy approach of the powerfully-built man. "You shan't use that whip on me!"

"Shan't I?" said Samuel Lovett. "We'll see, then!"

The whiplash leapt from the driving hand; but, with a lightning-like leap, Hal sprang aside, and the swishing thong struck against the wall.

The next moment the boy had dodged the cumbersome bully, and was close to the window.

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But Samuel Lovett was agile—quick. He cleared the truckle bed and barred the way to the door. Then leaping in, he swung the biting thong about Hal's middle.

Hal did not cry out—did not wince. Long years of endurance had hardened him to Samuel Lovett's cruelty. He scarcely felt the cutting bite of the lash.

Something had happened to Hal today. He had risen from his poverty-stricken bed a boy. But now he felt that he had suddenly become a man.

Back he sprang, his eyes flaming with hate, for love and respect for this man had died in him long ago.

"Don't strike me again!" he cried fiercely. "You'll be sorry if you do—"

Lovett laughed. Not strike—eh? Why, he loved to whip this boy of his! It would be sweet to keep on lashing until he made him cry. And so the thong flashed out again, biting deep into the boy's shoulder.

This time Hal felt pain. Springing aside, he stooped, and, picking up the broken chair, hurled it at the man's head.

His aim was true and the chair hard. Lovett dropped as if he had been pole-axed and lay half stunned upon the dirty boards.

The boy snatched the whip out of his hand, and, standing within distance, lashed the bully as fast as he could ply the thong.

"You are not my father," he told the writhing, squirming villain. "I couldn't have such a father as you. I'm not like you! I don't think like you! I don't look like you! I hate you! You're a thief, a receiver, a drunken loafer! I'm—not—going—to—stay—here—any—more! I'm—going—away!"

Every word was punctuated by a blow, and, as the thong bit deep in the man's soft flesh, Samuel Lovett rolled over on his hands and knees and unsteadily regained his feet.

"You beggar's brat!" he screamed. "I'll make you pay for this!"

With arms raised to protect his face Lovett plunged in, but Hal sprang to the door and beat him off with the lashing whip.

Tripping over a knot in the boards, Lovett tumbled heavily, and lay, panting, leering up at the boy out of blood-shot eyes. The blow from the chair had weakened him.

"I'm leaving the house. I shall not come back any more," said Hal, as he hurled the whip into a darkened corner of the garret. "I'm going away!"

"You'll come back to-night, d'ye hear?" mumbled the dazed man.

"I'm your father. You'll be at Drury Lane Theatre to-night when the playgoers turn out. I want you there!"

Setting his arms akimbo, Hal stared down with a smile at the man he had whipped.

"Because of what you plotted with Mr. Who?" he asked jeeringly.

"You listened, you thieving pup!" said the bully, as he rose unsteadily. "Why, yes, because of that. It means money—"

"Perhaps," mocked the boy, "I'll be there!" And then, as Lovett made a sudden spring, he crashed the door to so that the man fell against it, and pelted down the steep, winding stairs and through the shop, out into the narrow, cobbled street.

Day had gone. A moon hung up above the overhanging eaves of the gabled houses.

Hal hurried on past dimly illuminated windows, whistling.

He was no longer a boy, he reckoned, for he had beaten Samuel Lovett; he was a man, and he was free!

The Diamond Star!

HAL wandered about the streets adjoining Clare Market, until it began to rain. Then, his naked feet growing numbed, he wandered under the piazza of Covent Garden for shelter. It was there that he met Jerry McLean.

McLean was leaning against one of the columns, hands in pockets, staring out at the drizzle.

His fine clothes were shabby, only his cravat being clean. His weatherworn hat was set sidewise on his curly head, and his hands were thrust deep into his pockets.

McLean's young and handsome face was marked and lined from the effects of dissipation, but his hard expression relaxed and softened as he recognised the ragged, bare-footed boy.

"Whither away, Hal?" he asked. "How's your bully father?"

Hal told his tale breathlessly.

"Funds are low, lad," said McLean, as soon as the boy had finished, "but we must have a cup of coffee and talk over this."

In the shelter of a cosy pew in a common coffee-house frequented by Covent Garden porters McLean asked a hundred questions, and pondered over the boy's tale.

"Strap me, but it's deuced odd," he said, his blue eyes sparkling. "You talk of a beggar with a diamond ring, a bag of gold and an appointment at Drury Lane Theatre to-night. H'm! Let's look at that falcon, lad!"

Hal bared his body, and McLean stared long at the tattooed sign.

"Queer!" he muttered. "Now, lad, there are two courses to pursue. The first and safest is to get right away from these parts. You could come and share rooms with me—only, like you, I'm homeless and penniless. I haven't any rooms. My last coppers have gone to pay for the coffee."

"I'm sorry," said Hal impulsively.

"Never be sorry, boy. It gets you nowhere. A year ago I was rich. But I ran through a fortune, and now I'm—poor. But I had a good time, and I'm not sorry."

McLean sprawled back in his pew, handsome, smartly dressed in stained and dirty clothes that were slightly out of fashion, the wreck of a dandy who once had been.

"Since we have no home, and money can be made among the dandies when the theatre turns out, boy," he went on, "we come to course number two. That is we can go to the theatre as your father urged and see what game he means to play. There, boy, we can have another look at the mysterious Mr. Who."

The coffee had warmed Hal. His bright eyes danced as he leaned upon the table between them.

"That's what I want," he said breathlessly. "I want to know who this Mr. Who is."

McLean drummed his fingers on the table.

"A beggar with a diamond ring, who gives your father a bag of gold, and attends a theatre wearing a diamond—

star, didn't you say, my boy? Why, yes, I think I'd like to know him, too!"

It was nearly midnight when Hal and Jerry McLean left the cheap coffee-house and hurried to near-by Drury Lane. Rain was dripping down and the cobbled roads were full of puddles.

No stranger association than that between McLean, the broken man about town, and Hal, the bare-legged, ragged boy could ever be imagined.

Their friendship had begun three weeks ago when a gusty wind had blown McLean's hat from his head. Hal had run in chase of it, had saved it from going into an open gutter, and had brought it back to its owner. McLean, having nothing to do, had stayed to gossip with the boy, liking his intelligence, his good looks, and his happy, bright eyes. They had met many times since.

Now, as they came in sight of the theatre, hackney carriages and coaches moved onward to the portico. Chairmen bore their heavy Sedans—a fast dying fashion—with braced shoulders and straining arms, shouting "by your leave!" as they went by.

Loafers hung about watching the well-dressed audience with envious eyes.

As McLean and Hal pushed their way to the front, the boy could see men and women of fashion crowding the theatre foyer. Diamonds flashed. Rich silks and fine laces and radiant beauty made a glowing picture, mellowed by the soft light of countless tapers.

"We're here, boy," laughed McLean. "But we must be wary. There's danger in the trap this Mr. Who and your rascally father have set for you. Have you thought of that?"

"I don't care!"

Hal's keen eyes searched the crowd, and, in the background, he saw the burly figure of Martin Cosgrave, the Bow Street Runner, propped against the theatre wall. Then his eyes, wandering on, picked up the figure of Samuel Lovett as his father came lurching along, fuddled with liquor, and his feet unsteady.

"My father's coming," whispered the boy.

"Ay," answered McLean, with a nod; "but if he's wise, he'll keep his hands off you."

Lovett came closer and caught sight of Hal. But the boy had no eyes for him now, for he had caught sight of a tall and elegant man, who pushed his way courteously among the theatre throng until he passed the yawning doors.

There he stood, dressed in the height of fashion, diamonds flashing on his fingers, his powdered head thrown haughtily back, a gold-mounted cane in his right hand, a small sword dangling by his side, the mysterious Mr. Who!

Hal stared at him in wonder.

Upon the man's left breast blazed a diamond star, the Star of the Garter, and across his silk waistcoat swept the Garter ribbon.

Very handsome indeed looked Mr. Who, very graceful, his shapely legs, clad in silk stockings, ending with elegant buckled shoes.

McLean bent forward seeing Hal so absorbed.

"What's the matter, boy?" he asked. Hal turned his curly head and lifted up his startled eyes.

"It's him—it's Mr. Who—"

A heavy hand suddenly dropped on Hal's shoulder and urged him forward. Samuel Lovett had found his boy!

"So, I've got 'ee at last, have I?" he stormed. "I'll teach 'ee, you gallows brat!"

Hal was urged forward in the direction of Mr. Who, who stepped down to meet a splendid carriage, at whose open door stood a funkey bowing low.

Hal broke away from Lovett, but was instantly seized again.

A moment later Hal found himself struggling among the well-dressed men and women of the theatre. He looked up into the devilishly handsome face of Mr. Who, whose eyes smouldered evilly as he looked down.

It seemed to Hal that a sign flashed between the swell and Samuel Lovett. Then Hal found himself hurled right against the elegant Mr. Who, who had played the role of beggar in the afternoon, and rich lord at night.

Mr. Who staggered, recovered himself and seized Hal in an iron grip.

In one brief second the diamond star had been torn from his silk coat by the dirty, greedy, grasping hand of Samuel Lovett and thrust into the gaping pocket of the boy's ragged jacket.

Just as swiftly as he had ripped the diamond star from tearing silk, Samuel Lovett backed away.

Hal tried to free himself, but Mr. Who's hands were like iron.

"Call the watch!" cried Mr. Who. "This boy has robbed me!"

"The watch! Police!" yelled the crowd. "Fetch the Runners!"

"By gad, no!" bawled McLean, who had seen everything, and now came bursting through the excited crowd.

He found himself close to Sam Lovett, and smashed a heavy punch into the rascal's evil face as it bobbed near him, dropping him heavily to the ground.

Hal, with a desperate effort, broke away from Mr. Who.

"I've done nothing!" he cried.

With a lightning spring, the dandy closed with him and gripped him again, twisting his coat collar so tightly round his throat as to almost choke him.

"You robbed me of my diamond star!" hissed Mr. Who.

"It's not true—it's not true—"

Hal fought desperately, but the crowd closed in.

Then, with heaving shoulders, half a dozen Runners from up the street shouldered the crowd aside and seized Hal and held him fast.

"What's the trouble, my lord?" asked Martin Cosgrave, as he confronted Mr. Who.

"This gutter boy robbed me of my diamond star. You will find it in his pocket," answered Mr. Who, wiping his lips with a dainty lace handkerchief.

Martin Cosgrave's big, fat hand went into Hal's pocket, and came out again holding fast the diamond star.

"And I called to warn your father," said the Runner, with a twisted grin. "I allus liked you, boy. But I might have known you were brought up wrong, and would end on the gallows. This will mean the hulks or transportation, as sure as I'm a Runner!"

"But I didn't steal the star! It was—"

"He came right up to me and snatched it from my coat!" said Mr. Who. "I have never known such daring! Take him away!"

"No, by thunder, no!"

McLean came again, fighting his way to Hal's side. With a hefty punch, he knocked a Runner down, then tore Cosgrave's hand from Hal's coat.

An instant later, as the Runners closed in, with head down, shoulders heaving, and fists flying, he was fighting like a madman to try to rescue Hal.



Hal Lovett crouched back against the window, watching nervously the stealthy approach of the powerfully built man. "You shan't use that whip on me!" he cried. "Shan't I?" said the bully. "We'll see, then!"

Hal did his best to help, but was dragged aside. Handcuffs snapped upon his wrists, and he was half-stunned by a savage blow.

Then McLean, still fighting hand and foot, with a handcuff dangling from his left wrist, legs spread wide, and head butting, made his last game stand.

Six Runners bore him down, using him brutally because of his desperate resistance, and a few minutes later he was hurried to Bow Street Police Station and charged.

Hal, dazed, and with handcuffs on his wrists, looked wonderingly at McLean, whose handsome face was cut and bruised and bleeding.

"Courage, boy!" said McLean, licking dry lips.

And then the stranger, known to Hal as "Mr. Who," looking remarkably distinguished in a sinister way, drawled out his story.

"The boy had brushed into him and stolen his diamond star. He hoped and trusted the young villain would be hanged!"

"It's a plot!" shouted Hal, scarcely able to speak in his excitement. "That man is Mr. Who! He came to my father's shop to-day disguised as a beggar. They planned to do this to me!"

"The boy is dangerous!" drawled the splendidly dressed gentleman. "I am the Earl of Huntford. See to it that your prisoners are properly ironed, for, should they escape, some of you would pay dearly for it!"

"Yes, my lord," said Cosgrave, the Runner, nodding his head and casting a surprised glance at Hal Lovett.

McLean tried to speak, but he was seized and borne away. His voice rang in defiant protest, and Hal heard him call out, but the gruff voices of the Runners drowned his words.

Two burly men hurried Hal to a prison cell, into which they hurled him.

The boy dropped on one knee, regained his balance, and rose.

As he turned, the heavy door swung to with a clang, and Hal found himself in utter darkness. He heard iron bolts shot home and a key turn, then the sound of retreating footsteps.

The cell measured about twelve feet by six, and Hal found a coarse mat thrown against an angle of the walls. On this mat he threw himself, lying as comfortably as his handcuffed wrists would allow.

As he lay there, he pondered upon the amazing double identity of the Earl of Huntford and the mysterious Mr. Who, and wondered what had brought an earl to Samuel Lovett's rag shop that day, and why the earl should have plotted with his father to lay this trap for him. For that the earl and Mr. Who were one and the same person Hal had not the slightest doubt.

He had found no solution of the puzzle when, towards the morning, he ceased his restless turning and tossing, and mercifully fell fast asleep.

(Here's an intriguing start to one of the most thrilling highwayman stories ever written. Mind you read next week's sensational chapters. Meanwhile, introduce Hal Lovett and Jerry McLean to your pals—they'd just love to read of their exciting adventures.)

HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN EGYPT!

(Continued from page 23.)

coke, Hassan! I say, you fellows, I'll follow you in that taxi."

With the eager help of Mustapha, Billy Bunter mounted the donkey. Sir Reginald Brooke glanced round to see that all the party was there.

"Where is Bunter?" he exclaimed.

"Oh gad! There he is, nunky," said Lord Mauleverer, "on that donkey!"

Sir Reginald's eyeglass fixed on Bunter in astonishment. He frowned.

"Bunter!" he rapped out. "Get off that donkey, you absurd boy! Get into the cab! Bunter—"

"Here, hold him!" roared Bunter, in alarm.

Bunter had settled down quite comfortably into the red saddle while Mustapha held the donkey. But William Shakespeare, the donkey, did not seem so comfortable. Probably he had never borne a weight like Bunter's before. He was a strong and sturdy donkey, and looked quite fresh and frisky. But Bunter's weight was more than a joke, and William Shakespeare did not seem to like it.

He turned his head round inquiringly at Bunter and stared at him, and then jumped and threw up his heels.

There was a roar from Bunter as he began to play up-and-down in the saddle. Up went Bunter and down again, up again and down again, and he dropped the reins and clung to the donkey's neck.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter. "Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroo! Stoppim! Lemme gerroff! Help!" roared Bunter. "Catch hold of his legs! Catch hold of his tail! Yaroo!"

Mustapha crashed his stick on the donkey to reduce him to order. But William Shakespeare seemed only to get more excited. He flung out his heels wildly, and Mustapha dodged away. Another crash of the stick started William Shakespeare off at a gallop.

"I say, you fellows!" howled Bunter, clinging frantically to the donkey's neck. "I say! Help! Yaroo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Howls of laughter followed Billy Bunter, as he disappeared on the donkey into the crowds of Cairo. Sir Reginald snorted—and the juniors chortled. Bunter vanished, clinging to the neck of his mettlesome charger, and they started for the hotel, hoping that the Owl of the Remove would arrive there in one piece.

It seemed like some fearful nightmare to Billy Bunter. There are many strange sights in the streets of Cairo—but the streets of Cairo had never seen a stranger sight than that of William Shakespeare, the donkey, careering along with the fat Owl clinging frantically to his hairy neck.

That desperate clutch on his neck seemed to add the last straw to William Shakespeare's excitement. He dashed among motor-cars, taxi-cabs, camels, water-carriers, sherbet-sellers, donkeys and donkey-boys, with Bunter clinging to his neck like a limpet to a rock. Mustapha was lost in the crowd. But behind the runaway donkey gleamed a red tarboosh, and a gold tassel danced—Hassan, the dragoman was in pursuit. But Hassan could not overtake the donkey. William Shakespeare was on his mettle, and he gave an exhibition of speed seldom equalled by a Cairo donkey.

"Ow! Wow! Ow! Help! Rescue! Yooop!" gurgled Bunter. "I say, you fellows—Oh crikey! Stoppim! Shoot him! I say, help! Yaroo!"

William Shakespeare careered onward.

The streets of Cairo passed Bunter like a kaleidoscope. He whisked past motor-cars and trams, camels and bicycles! The faster the donkey careered the more tightly Bunter clung to his neck, and the more tightly he clung to the donkey's neck, the faster William Shakespeare careered.

There was a gleam of water in front of Bunter. It was the Nile! And William Shakespeare, at long last, halted. Had not the Nile been there the donkey might really have carried Bunter onward, past the Sphinx and the Pyramids, into the Libyan Desert. Fortunately the Nile was there! William Shakespeare stopped—suddenly, lowering his head.

Bunter shot off over his head like a bullet.

Splash!

"Oooooooch!"

William Shakespeare trotted away, no doubt relieved to be rid of his extraordinary burden. Billy Bunter sat in mud and shallow water and roared.

A brown hand dragged him out.

"My fine gentleman, you trust Hassan. Hassan is your dragoman!"

"Grooogh! Ooooh! Wooogh!"

"Where's Bunter?"

"Lost!"

"No such luck!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had lunched and come out on the balcony of Shepheard's Hotel, in Cairo. Bunter had not turned up yet. But as they looked down from the balcony at the motley crowd below, they sighted him—turning up at last. He was muddy, he was dusty, he looked tired, and he looked cross. It was evident that his donkey-ride had not agreed with him. Hassan, with a grinning brown face, was bringing him in, and he helped Bunter up the steps to the balcony, where innumerable eyes were fixed on him, and innumerable faces were wreathed in smiles.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoyed your ride?" roared Bob Cherry

"Beast!"

"Had a good time?" chuckled Lord Mauleverer.

"Yah!"

Bunter rolled into the hotel. Hassan salaamed to the Greyfriars fellows. He salaamed to Sir Reginald.

"Hassan is your dragoman, my gentlemen lords!" he said. "When you want Hassan, he always here!"

Sir Reginald opened his lips to say "Go away!" but he closed them again. Hassan had established his claim. So long as Harry Wharton & Co. remained in Egypt, Hassan was going to be their dragoman. And that was that!

THE END.

(The next yarn in this grand holiday series is better than ever chums. Make a note of the title: "THE LURE OF THE GOLDEN SCARAB!" It's full of fun and amazing adventures.)

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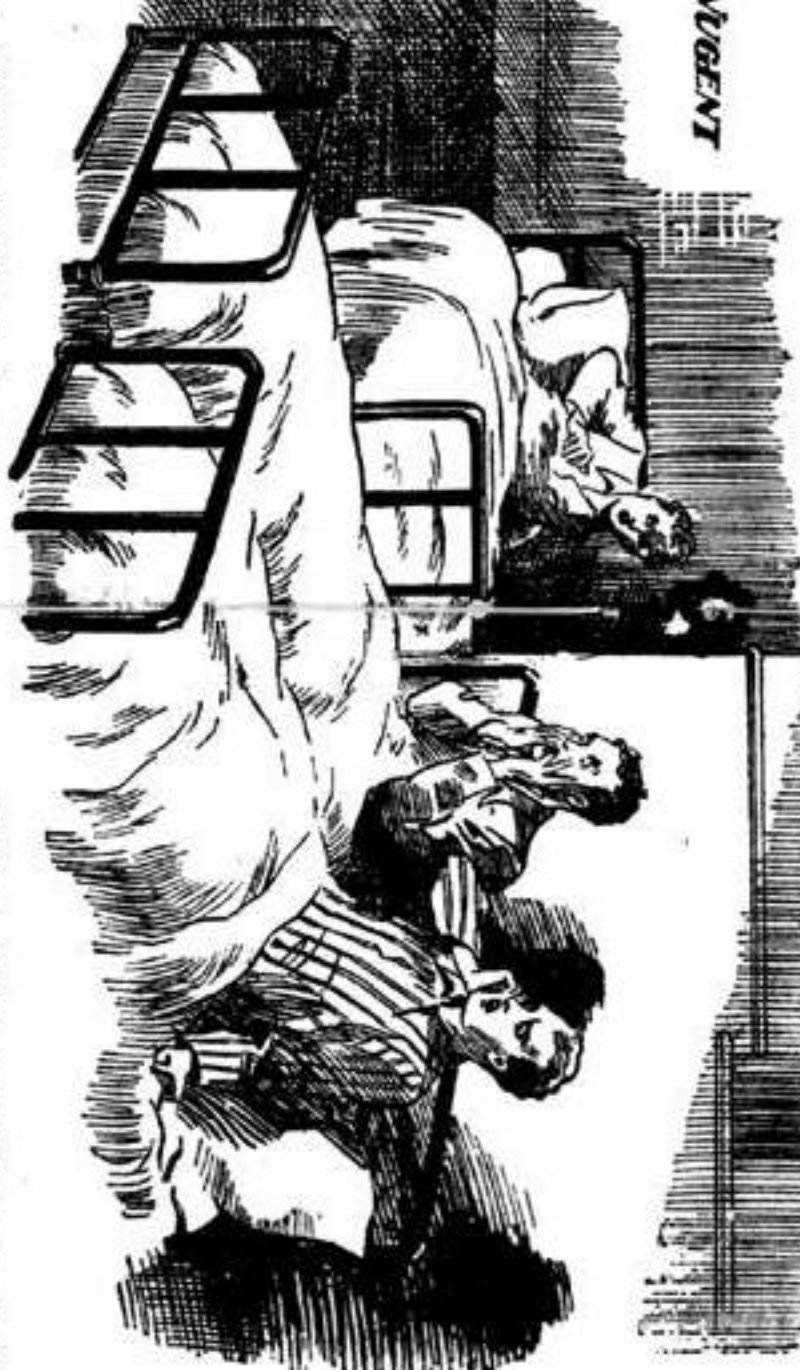
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THE INN of MYSTERY!

DICKY NEAGENT



"Hay-ho, here we go!
Sing Ho for the life of a hiker!"

I.

JACK JOLLY & CO. of the Fourth at St. Sam's, sang that little ditty out of sheer joy of spirits as they tramped along the moonlit highway. They were on a hiking tour round some of the bewilderment of England, and, since feeling rid of Dr. Birchmell the day before, they had been having a rattling good time. At present they were looking for an inn where they could spend the night.

"Who wouldn't be a hiker?" sighed Frank Fearless contentedly. "I reckon it's a grand life myself!"

"Same here, old chap!" cooed Merry and Bright, while Jolly nodded in full approval.

Everybody would not have agreed with the St. Sam's juniors just at that moment, however. There was something rather sinister and weird about the moonlit lane down which they were tramping. The trees rustled mysteriously, owls blinked down with green, shining eyes from the branches, bats flew about with many an eerie squeal, rats scuttled across the road, and, now and again, the juniors thought they heard distant peels of fiendish laughter.

Under such circumstances, most hikers would have felt their nerves knock together and their hair stand upright on their heads. But Jack Jolly & Co. knew not the meaning of fear, and their weird, uncanny surroundings only made them all the merrier.

"Here's an inn!" cried Jack Jolly suddenly, pointing to a dark building standing back from the road. "We'll see if they can take us in the inn!"

"Suppose they're all asleep in the inn?" asked Frank Fearless.

Jack Jolly laughed.

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"In that case, as we're feeling knocked up ourselves, we'll knock them up!"

"The place seems silent and deserted," said Bright. "What happens if they're all out at the inn?"

"If that's the case," responded Jack Jolly, "we'll all go in the inn without being asked in, in the hope that we shan't be found out. Here goes, anyway!"

With that, Jack Jolly gave the old oak door a series of sharp raps.

Bang! Crash! Wallop! Boom!

For a minute, silence was the only answer. Then there was a rattling of chains and a crashing of bolts being drawn, and the door swung slowly open. An evil-looking old man, wearing a black skull-cap, peered out from the inn. The flickering light of the candle he carried showed that he had a hawk-like nose, eagle eyes, crow's feet, a swallow-tail coat, and pigeon toes. He looked a very mysterious old bird.

"What do you want at the Hawnted Inn?" he snarled, making horrible grimaces at the hikers of St. Sam's.

The juniors nudged each other meaningfully. "So it's haunted, is it?"

"Well, never mind; I like a few ghosts to liven up the night myself. What's your name, landlord?"

"Coyning Lucker!" snarled the evil-looking gentleman. "What business brings you to this ghost-ridden spot, where spooks and spirits make the night hideous with their spectral sport?"

"Well, Mr. Lucker, we've knocked you up because we want a night's lodging!" grinned Jack Jolly. "Can you put us up?"

To the surprise of the St. Sam's juniors, the mysterious Coyning Lucker immediately broke into a howl of fiendish laughter.

"Har, har, har!"

"Grate pip!" Has he knocked his funny-bone against the door?" asked Frank Fearless wonderingly.

"Har, har, har!" The Hawnted Inn has guests!" roared the landlord, rubbing his bony hands together.

"Welcome, gentlemen! You want to stay here, and so you shall—in the Hawnted Room, from which no guest has ever emerged alive!" Har, har, har!"

"I'm dashed if I quite like this chap's sense of humor!" remarked Merry, as they all went into the inn. "Do you think it's altogether safe to stay here?"

"Safe as houses!" replied Jack Jolly

confidently. "Who's afraid of ghosts, anyway? This way!"

The St. Sam's juniors followed the landlord up the creaking old stairs, across a narrow landing, and through several gloomy passages, till at last they reached the Hawnted Room.

"Har, har, har! Here you will sleep for the night!" chuckled Coyning Lucker, leaning at his guests. "I trusted you will enjoy your rest! Har, har, har!"

With that, he left them and walked away, laughing hideously as he went.

"Well, chap, I'm tired," said Jack Jolly. "I suggest we turn in now."

"Good wheeze!"

They turned into their respective beds and were soon in the Land of Nod. It must have been some time after midnight when they were awakened by a mysterious muffled scratching sound.

"What's that?" whispered Jack Jolly, sitting up in bed.

"D-d-do you think it's the g-g-ghost?" asked Merry, somewhat nervously.

Despite their bravery, Jack Jolly & Co. felt the blood freeze in their veins at the thought.

All of a sudden, Bright pointed a trembling forefinger at the wall.

"Look!" he cried hoarsely.

They looked. As they did so, a panel in the wall slid back slowly, and, by the eerie light of the moon, a tall, bearded figure stepped in to the Hawnted Room—a figure which was somehow familiar to them all.

"The Head!" cried Frank Fearless. "It's the ghost of Dr. Birchmell!"

"We're bewitched!"

II.

PRISONER at the bar! You are charged with exceeding the speed limit in a sedan chair supported by two donkeys! Have you anything to say in your defence?"

Thus, the magistrate in the periscope court, the morning after Jack Jolly & Co. had watched their sleeping head-master galloping away in his spokes of Dr. Birchmell clutched the spikes of the dock in which he stood and licked his dry lips.

"Your honour, all I can say is this here!" he cried, with his usual faultless grammar. "In the first place—"

"Fined half-a-crown!" snapped the magistrate. "Next case!"

"But I haven't got half-a-crown!" gasped the Head of St. Sam's. "Owing to thoughtlessly leaving my wad of ten-pound notes at home, your honour—"

"Make it ten years' hard labor, then!" snorted the magistrate. "Remove the prisoner!"

"M-m-my riddy aunt!" stammered Dr. Birchmell, as bulky policemen seized him and dragged him below. "Ten years' hard! I can't possibly do it just now. I've got a lot of business appointments next week, and besides I—"

"Got the manacles ready, Jim?" asked one of the policemen, as they reached the cells.

The Head let out a yelp as his eyes lighted on the manacles and handcuffs that were waiting for him.

"Help! Lemme go!" he cried. "It was a cry of despair on the part of Dr. Birchmell. But, strangely enough, it was answered. A refined-looking gentleman, who was grinning all over his dial, pushed his way through the policemen—and the Head of St. Sam's uttered a shout of joy.

"Yes, sir, it's me!" said Mr. Lickerham, in his best English. "I happened to be passing through this town on my way to the coast when I noticed them taking you out of the Black Maria. I came into the Court to listen to the case—and it seems I came just in time. Shall I lend you half-a-crown?"

"Thanks, awfully!" exclaimed the Head, full of gratitude.

A silver coin changed hands, then Dr. Birchmell passed it on to the periscope-sergeant who was in charge.

"Here's your money, officer!" he cried. "I trusted that you will now let me go in peace!"

"Certainly, sir!" said the sergeant, saluting. "Good-day, sir!"

And so it came about that Dr. Birchmell walked out with the master of the Fourth a free man once again.

Mr. Lickerham then buzzed off rather hurriedly, and the Head, muttering to himself, turned his footprints in the direction he fancied Jack Jolly & Co. had taken in their hiking tour.

It was a long and tiring journey for Dr. Birchmell after that, with never a sign of the St. Sam's hikers to cheer him up.

Nine came on, and the Head began to feel awfully fed-up—which was just as well, in a way, for he had had nothing to eat since his frogal breakfast at the periscope station.

Evenhally, Dr. Birchmell reached an inn standing back from the road. Feeling desperate for food and shelter, he knocked on the front door.

There was no reply, and after waiting for a few minutes, the Head, with the aid of a jemmy he always carried for emergencies, opened the door and walked in. In pitch darkness he groped his way up the stairs till, without knowing it, he reached a secret recess behind the Hawnted Room.

Finding he couldn't get out, Dr. Birchmell began to kick and knock violently on the wall. Then suddenly he found a panel opening before him. Walking through the apercher, he found himself in a moonlit bedroom occupied by the very fellows he was seeking—Jack Jolly & Co. of St. Sam's!

"My giddy aunt!"

It was an exclamation of surprise and pleasure from the Head, as he reckoned Jack Jolly & Co.

The St. Sam's hikers' yells died away as they heard it.

"Grate pip!" exclaimed Bright. "It's the Head himself! How ever did you get here, sir?"

Dr. Birchmell scowled at the relection of his trials and tribbles.

"Only by a series of very painful experiences," Bright!" he answered sternly. "You juniors treated me shamefully; I can only describe your behaviour as an infernal-machine in an ox—that is to say, a bomb in a bull!"

When we got back to St. Sam's I'll birch you all black and blue, but me if I—

Hallo, hallo! What's happening?"

"Yarcoo! The floor's moving!" yelled Merry.

Merry had not exaggerated. Not only was the floor moving—the entire room was descending through the house as though it was nothing but a grate lift—which, in point of fact, it was! Right down into the bowels of the earth went the hikers of St. Sam's. As they drew near the bottom they heard peels of fiendish laughter wringing out. "The landlord!" gasped Jack Jolly. "That villain Coyning Lucker is waiting at the bottom with some fowl serpentine for us!"

And so it proved. When the lift stopped the St. Sam's juniors found themselves staring with horror at an underground coiner's den, in which Coyning Lucker was standing with an automatic in one hand, a shot-gun in the other, and a crool, glittering dagger in the other!

Fearless fearlessly. "Let's show this skoundrell we can die like men!"

Coyning Lucker, do your worst! Fire!"

"Yarcoo!" yelled Dr. Birchmell, who was hanging behind and misunderstanding Frank's meaning. "If it's a fire, call the fire brigade at once and get some water!"

"Who's that?" asked Lucker, at the sound of Dr. Birchmell's voice. "I thought there were only four of you."

At that moment the Head of St. Sam's advanced to the four, making the fifth. And then Jack Jolly & Co. saw an amazing thing happen.

Coyning Lucker and the Head eyed each other for a moment. Then they uttered a simultaneous cry of recklessness.

"Lucker!"

"Birchmell!"

"Bust me!" exclaimed the Head, beginning to grin all over his dial.

"It's my old college pal, Coyning Lucker! Do you remember our happy days at Borel when we were boys together, old chap?"

Coyning Lucker dropped the weapons he was carrying and began to smile quite a pleasant smile.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he cried. "This is a surprise, and no mistake! Are these boys friends of yours, then, Birchy?"

"Friends and pupils, Coyning!" answered the Head, eyeing them with something like pride. "But what's all this business about shooting them?"

Coyning Lucker grinned.

"Well, Birchy, this is a coiner's den where I mint counterfeit coin of the realm—bogus pennies and imitation half-pennies, you know. Naturally, like all coiners, I make a sideline of luring people to their death. But in this case, as they're friends of yours, I shall, of course, let them off. Please accept my sincere apologies, gentlemen!"

"Right-ho!" said Jack Jolly, after a pause. "We still think you're a hard-les villan, but we'll say no more about it for the present!"

"Good! And now, gentlemen, you must come upstairs and have supper with me," said Coyning Lucker briskly.

"Follow me!"

Dr. Birchmell rubbed his hands. "Now, that's what I call a really brilliant suggestion!" he said. "A swacking grate feed, followed by a long sleep, is just what I am most in need of! Lead on, Meaduff!"

It took a lot to put Dr. Birchmell off his grub. The amount he managed to eat when they got upstairs surprised even Jack Jolly & Co. Supper being over, Coyning Lucker showed the Head to his room, then led Jack Jolly & Co. to their apartment—which was not the Hawnted Room on this occasion! But the hikers of St. Sam's had had about enough of the Hawnted Inn by this time, and as soon as they heard the snores of Coyning Lucker and Dr. Birchmell echoing through the house they tiptoed downstairs and shook the dust of the inn from their feet.

In the interests of other hikers who might call there, Jack Jolly & Co. thought it advisable to inform the periscope of their experiences at the first town they entered; and they had the satisfaction of seeing a periscope-car set off, carrying officers armed to the teeth!

Thanks to Jack Jolly & Co., there was likely to be an early end to the evil happenings at the Inn of Mystery!

THE END.

(The next story in this novel "Hiking" series, "THE BOGUS HERO!" is furnished then ever. Watch out for it, chums, in next week's MAGNET.)