

Wonderful Free Gift Inside!

No. 860. Vol. XXX.

Week Ending July 10th, 1926.

The Magnet 2^d Library

EVERY MONDAY.



THIS GRAND
STAND-UP
FIGURE *of*
G.G. Macaulay
FREE
*in this
Issue!*

“THE JAPER OF GREYFRIARS!” This week’s grand school yarn.

**TO AND FROM
YOUR EDITOR!**

I EXPECT you fellows will be more interested in the gorgeous Free Gift enclosed with this week's issue of your favourite paper than with any words of mine, and yet it would be a pity if I let this opportunity go by without saying something. But frankly, isn't the photo of Macaulay top-hole? Isn't it the goods! Rather! I can hear your reply in advance. But don't forget, you chaps, there's another Free Gift with next week's issue, just as good if not better than the one you have received this week. It shows W. A. Oldfield, the Australian wicket-keeper, in action, and is a strong and pleasing likeness. By the way, in case you have missed my previous announcements, there's a remarkably fine cut-out stand-up photo of J. S. Ryder in this week's Popular. To the photo of Macaulay then you will be able to add that of Ryder and, as the weeks go by you will be able to build as fine a representative set of English and Australian cricketers as you could buy anywhere; and these, remember, will cost you nothing. That's the joy of it! Below this par you will see a miniature reproduction of next week's Free Gift. That will give you an idea of what to expect, although, of course, the real thing will be larger, will stand up anywhere on its own base and, moreover, is printed in two colours. I can see you chaps making a bee-line for the newsagent's straight away. That's the idea! Safety first is a good maxim in this case, for an order to your newsagent will mean that you are certain of getting our second Free Gift. It would be a pity to spoil the set through being a trifle casual, so step along with that order toot sweet, boys.

WHAT TO DO!

There's just one thing I would like to talk about in connection with this photo of Macaulay which is rather necessary. Hold it in your hand, now, and we'll go over it together. You will observe at each end of the green

**W. A. OLDFIELD.**

(A reproduction in miniature of next week's grand Free Gift.)

base a black vertical line and the words "Cut." Well, take the "cut" nearest to Macaulay's upraised foot first. All you do is to cut upwards along the line with a pair of scissors until you reach about an eighth of an inch from the top edge of the green base. That's enough for that side. Now we'll go to the other—the side nearest to Macaulay's right hand. Take the scissors again and, starting from the top edge of the green base cut down the line indicated until you reach about an eighth of an inch from the bottom edge of the base. Good! Now fold each side of the green base backwards where shown on the dotted lines. Then, lock the base together by slotting the ends where the incisions have been made. You will now find that the photo stands upright firmly and secure. Got that! Good!

THE SUMMER SERIES!

I expect you fellows are as pleased as Punch that the Summer series is now under way. Well, you can take it from me, Mr. Richards has excelled himself. You will admit that I've read "just a few" of his school yarns, but honestly, boys, I've never had the pleasure of reading such a fine series as he is giving us now. You liked the opening story, that goes without saying. The second yarn of the series entitled:

"THE NABOB'S DOUBLE!"**By Frank Richards,**

deals, of course, with the adventures that fall to the lot of William Wibley, the japer, in the guise of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Doubtless old Wib wishes that he hadn't developed his powers of impersonation to such an extent, for he finds himself booked for a hot time. But of that you'll read next week.

"CURLEW ISLAND!"

And the new serial: Well, when it's a question of good quality, a David Goodwin story is one of the few certainties of life. Already you chaps, I am confident, are gasping for next week's continuation of his latest story. Young Tommy has made friends with you straight away, I'll warrant, even as Chuffer has gone into your character store as a rotter of the first water. He is a rotter, right to the core, and poor old Tommy goes through the mill on that account.

"BOUNDARIES!"

You fellows will find the new Weekly Limerick competition simple and fascinating enough to fill in a blank half hour of an evening. And don't forget the prizes offered are quite useful. The caricatures of the cricketers who form the subject of this competition will be well worth collecting, too, as they are ably executed. Pile in, and go after those money prizes. Cheerio, chums,

YOUR EDITOR.**"BOUNDARIES"****FIRST PRIZE £2-2-0****AND 6 HANDSOME PRIZES OF 10/6**

This is a simple, fascinating competition in which every one can join. All you've got to do is to round off the unfinished verse shown below. A point to remember is that your last line must scan with the first two. Don't try and be too clever—a simple but forceful line is what is wanted. An example line is given to help you.

To the sender of the "last line" which, in the Editor's opinion, is the best, will be awarded the useful money prize of £2 2s. To each of the six next best, prizes of 10s. 6d. will be awarded.

DIRECTIONS.

When you have thought out a really good last line, fill in the coupon below IN INK, taking care to write your name and address clearly, and post it to:

Magnet "Boundaries" No. 1,
Gough House, Gough Square,
London, E.C.4 (Comp.),

so as to reach that address not later than Thursday, July 15th, 1926.

You may send in as many attempts as you like, but all efforts must be written on an entrance form as provided here. It is a distinct condition of entry that the Editor's decision must be regarded as final.

Employees of the proprietors of the MAGNET may not compete.

**HERBERT SUTCLIFFE (of Yorkshire).**

Of Sutcliffe all Yorkshire is proud,
His batting is loved by the crowd;
When Herbert goes in,
People say with a grin,

Example last line:—
Young Herbert with "grace" is endowed.

MAGNET "BOUNDARIES" COMPETITION No. 1.**COUPON.****1**

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

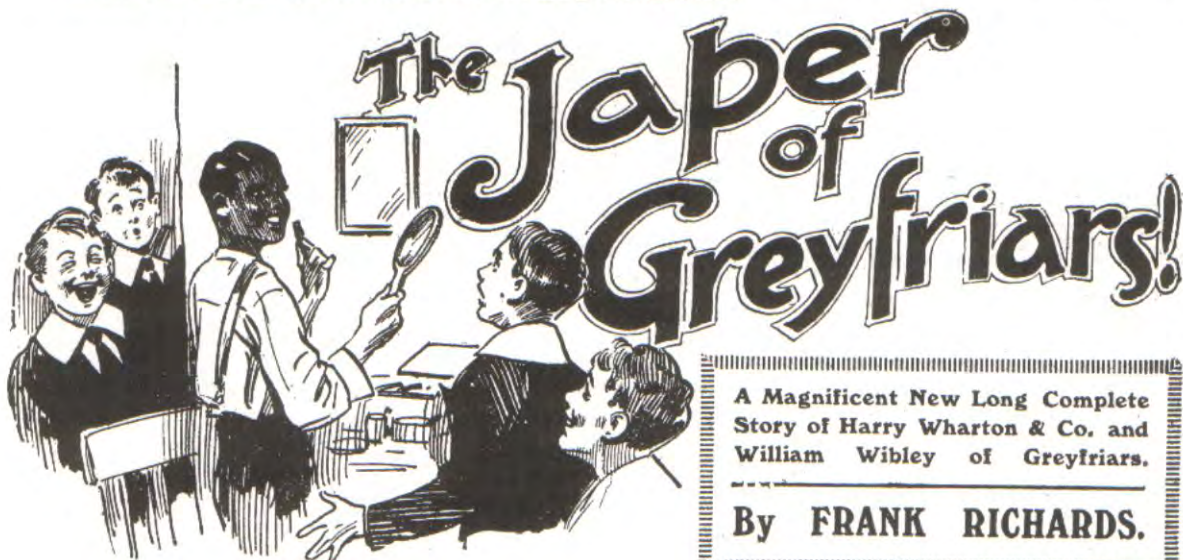
Name

Address

Last Line

Closing Date, Thursday, July 15th.

THE SCHOOLBOY ACTOR! It is admitted by everyone at Greyfriars that William Wibley is a born actor. At impersonations he has few equals, even on the professional stage. His latest impersonation, however, although it is a success up to a point, involves him in some amazing consequences!



A Magnificent New Long Complete
Story of Harry Wharton & Co. and
William Wibley of Greyfriars.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Wibley Loses His Temper!

"**S**ORRY, old man!" Harry Wharton spoke politely, regretfully, but firmly. Wibley, of the Remove, grunted.

Politeness and regret were all very well; perhaps grateful and comforting in their way. But William Wibley wanted an answer in the affirmative; and it was an answer in the negative that he had received from the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

"But—" he said. "Sorry! But there's nothing doing, you see."

"I don't see at all!" said Wibley tartly.

"My dear chap—" "Oh, cut that out!" said Wibley crossly. "I suppose I can play cricket?"

"Certainly!" "I'm not a duffer, like Bunter, or a slacker, like Skinner, I suppose?"

"Not at all!" said the captain of the Remove amicably. "But—"

"Well, then," said Wibley, "I don't see why I shouldn't have a chance in a School game."

"You see—" "I'm not asking to play a match with St. Jim's or Rookwood," said Wibley irritably. "The Redclyffe match isn't above my weight."

"Hem!" "Is it?" demanded Wibley warmly.

"Well, yes." "Rot!"

Harry Wharton smiled. He rather liked Wibley of the Remove, and he would have been glad to gratify him, if it had been possible. But in the circumstances it was not possible. Personal predilections could not be allowed to count with a cricket captain.

Wibley could not see that.

But Wibley was not the only fellow who could not see the point in such cases. The Greyfriars Remove were keen on games, and plenty of fellows in that Form were eager to distinguish themselves in the fixtures. Had every ambitious cricketer in the Remove been given his head, so to speak, Wharton would have taken twenty-two men at least over to Redclyffe, instead of

eleven. Which was manifestly out of the question.

"Rot!" repeated Wibley. "If that relieves your feelings, old man, go it," said the captain of the Remove, "don't mind this study!"

There was a chuckle in No. 1 Study. Harry Wharton & Co. were at tea in that celebrated apartment when Wibley came, to proffer his claims to a place in the eleven for Redclyffe. All the members of the Famous Five would sympathise with a fellow who wanted to play cricket.

"Go it, old man!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly.

"Oh, rats!" said Wibley.

"Why not sit down and have tea instead?" asked Frank Nugent, laughing. "We've got a topping cake—"

"Bother your cake!"

**ANOTHER TOPPING
FREE GIFT
GIVEN AWAY
WITH NEXT WEEK'S
"MAGNET,"
BOYS!**

"And two kinds of jam," said Johnny Bull temptingly.

"Cheese it!" snapped Wibley.

"You see, Wib—" began Harry Wharton.

"I've said that I don't!"

"There are those who, having eyes, see not," grinned Bob Cherry. "The fact is, Wib, you're not up to Redclyffe weight in cricket. It's a painful truth, but there it is!"

"Bosh!"

William Wibley, apparently, was not to be convinced. Wibley was a good-tempered fellow, as a rule, but he seemed quite cross now.

"I'm beginning to think the same as Skinner," he growled. "You fellows keep the games too much on your own hands. Outsiders needn't apply."

Wharton frowned.

"That's rot, and you know it," he said.

"I don't know it!" snapped Wibley.

"Then you ought to," said the captain of the Remove tersely. "Don't be a silly ass, anyhow."

"I suppose all you lot are in the team, anyway?" said Wibley.

"That shows that you haven't read the list, though it's posted up in the Rag," said Wharton. "Nugent isn't down to play."

"And I'm a better man than you at cricket, you know, Wib," remarked Frank Nugent. "I'm not slanging Wharton for leaving me out."

"Jolly good idea to leave you out, I think," said Wibley. "A few more might be left out with advantage, I think. Anyhow, I think it's time I had a chance in a school match. I'm not a dud!"

"Not at all," said Wharton. "I'll fix you up to play in the next Form match."

"Bother your Form matches!" growled Wibley. "I've been sticking to practice ever since the beginning of the term, and it's time I had a look in. Skinner says—"

"Oh, bless Skinner!" interrupted the captain of the Remove. "Don't give us any more Skinner."

"Skinner's pulling your leg, old man," said Bob Cherry. "Skinner thrives on making trouble."

"Oh, rubbish!"

"Look here, Wibley—"

"Rats!"

"You're a cheeky ass!" exclaimed Bob Cherry warmly. "The best thing you can do is to stick to what you know how to do. We've made you president of the Dramatic Society in the Remove—that's a thing you can do. When we're doing theatricals we follow your lead. You can play our heads off in that line, and we admit it. But at cricket—"

"I dare say I could play your head off at that, too!" snapped Wibley.

"Fathead!"

"Skinner thinks—"

"Give Skinner a rest!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "And give us a rest, too, Wibley. There's nothing doing, I tell you! If we were playing Redclyffe at amateur theatricals I'd resign the captaincy in your favour."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But at cricket we want the best men we can get, and you're not the best,"

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by long chalks. Do you want me to leave out a better man to make room for you?" exclaimed Wharton.

"No, a worse one," said Wibley.

"Bull, for instance!"

"What?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Or Inky—"

"My esteemed fatheaded Wibley!" ejaculated the dusky nabob of Bhanipur.

"Or Bob Cherry—"

"Pile it on!" said Bob.

"What's the good of sticking to practice if a fellow never gets a chance to show what he can do?" demanded Wibley excitedly. "I'm not asking a favour of you, Wharton. I'm claiming a right!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And I can tell you that I'm jolly well fed-up with you," went on Wibley. "Got that?"

"Thanks—yes! About time you cleared, I think," said Wharton. "There's the door!"

"Shut it after you," said Nugent.

William Wibley set his lips hard. He was disappointed, and he was angry. He had put in plenty of strenuous practice, in the hope of being picked out for the Remove eleven; and the disappointment was deep. He clenched his hands; and for a moment it looked as if he would hit out at the cool face of the captain of the Remove. Wharton looked at him very quietly.

"Better travel," he said. "You're playing the goat, old man! Better travel."

"The betterfulness is terrific!"

Wibley, choking down his wrath, turned to the door. But he turned back again.

"You mean that you're leaving me out?"

"Yes," said Harry impatiently. "Don't begin all that over again!"

"Then I can jolly well tell you that I won't be left out!" shouted Wibley angrily. "I tell you that I'm playing in the Redcliffe match on Wednesday, whether you like it or not—and you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Harry Wharton."

And with that, Wibley stamped out of Study No. 1 and closed the door after him with a slam that echoed from one end of the Remove passage to the other.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Letter from India!

"H'A'E! Ha'e!"

Billy Bunter jumped.

Bunter was coming along the Remove passage to Study No. 13; and it was from that study that he heard the remarkable exclamation.

Study No. 13 belonged to Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Wun Lung, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

It was the last-named who was there; and it was Hurree Jamset Ram Singh that Bunter was looking in to see.

Not that Billy Bunter had any special yearning for the company of the dusky nabob of Bhanipur. But Bunter—who knew most things that did not concern him—knew that Hurree Singh had had a letter from India, only that afternoon.

Now, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was a nabob in his own country, and was destined to rule, some day, over the dusky native population of Bhanipur, Bunter considered that Inky's letter from home was worth some attention. If Inky's dusky uncle in Bhanipur, who governed that native

state during Inky's minority, had any proper affection for his nephew at school in England, surely he would have enclosed something in his letter as well as avuncular advice. A tip from an uncle who was a sort of viceroy on a small scale, was a matter well worthy of Bunter's consideration. So William George Bunter was rolling along to call on Inky, and he had already wreathed his fat face in its most ingratiating smile, before reaching Study No. 13.

And then that surprising exclamation reached his ears, and he stopped.

"Ha'e! ha'e!"

It was Inky's voice—he knew the soft, purring tones of the nabob of Bhanipur.

But what on earth was Inky saying, and why? His voice, too, was not so soft as usual, and sounded agitated.

At Greyfriars Inky spoke always in English—the wonderful English he had learned under the instructions of the most learned Moonshee in Bhanipur. Having learned that wonderful English, Inky never unlearned it; indeed, it was known that he considered it superior to the common or garden English spoken by the Greyfriars fellows. Undoubtedly it was more picturesque, and had originality. Seldom or never did Inky drop into his native tongue—a tongue which would have been a deep mystery to his friends, and even to the Head. Even the Head of Greyfriars, whose linguistic knowledge was great and extensive, would have been perplexed had Inky talked to him in Hindustani.

Only very occasionally, in moments of excitement or agitation, did Hurree Singh drop into Hindustani. But it did not occur to Billy Bunter that Hurree Singh was uttering an ejaculation in his own language, for the moment.

"What the thump—" murmured Bunter.

"Kya sharm ki bat hai?" went on the voice of the nabob of Bhanipur.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked into the study.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was alone there. He was standing by the window, with a letter in his hand.

His dusky face was set in expression; it was easy to see that the nabob had received serious news.

That, however, did not worry William George Bunter. What Bunter wanted to know was, whether there had been a remittance in the letter from India. That was important.

"I say, Inky—"

The dusky junior did not look round. His eyes were fixed on the sheet of thin Indian paper in his dusky hand.

"Inky!" bawled Bunter.

The nabob glanced round then.

"Dur ho!" he snapped.

"Eh?"

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

"Great pip! I—I say, Inky, are you ill?" gasped Bunter. "Have you got a pain in your neck? Can't you speak?"

"Jawab mat do! Chup raho!"

Bunter blinked at him in alarm.

"I—I say, shall I call somebody—who'd better see a doctor, old chap," he stammered. "Is it—is it croup or something? Are you choking, old man?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh stared at him; and then he grinned faintly. He realised that he had been speaking, unconsciously, in the weird tongue that was spoken at Bhanipur.

"My esteemed fatheaded Bunter—"

"Oh, you can speak?" exclaimed Bunter. "I say, old chap, you were making horrible noises in your throat. What's the matter?"

"My esteemed idiotic fathead, I was

speaking in Hindustani, with the momentary forgetfulness."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter. "You don't mean to say that those funny noises are a language, Inky?"

"Fathead!" said Inky, in quite good English.

"And what did it all mean?" asked Bunter.

"It meant hold your tongue and get out," answered the nabob.

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"Buzz off!" snapped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Don't worry. Is that plain enough English for you, Bunter?"

Bunter blinked at him. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's equable temper was almost a proverb in the Remove. It was but seldom that he was seen annoyed or angry. He seemed both now.

"Oh! I think I catch on," said Bunter, with a curl of his fat lip. "That letter's from your uncle, isn't it? I understand!"

The nabob stared at him.

"You understand?" he exclaimed.

"Of course! I jolly well know why you're cutting up so rusty, Inky," sneered Bunter. "The old joss—"

"The what?"

"The old joss—your uncle, you know—the old joss hasn't shoved a tip into the letter, what?" said Bunter. "Lots of jaw, and nothing better! Blessed nigger!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh fixed his black eyes on William George Bunter. There was a glitter in those black eyes, which might have alarmed William George, if he had noticed it.

"You are speaking of my esteemed and respected uncle the Jam Bahadur?" asked Inky.

"Great pip! You don't mean to say your uncle's named Jam?" exclaimed Bunter. "He, he, he!"

"He is the Jam Bahadur."

"He, he, he! Have you another uncle, named Marmalade?" asked Bunter.

"My esteemed ludicrous Bunter—"

"Anyhow, whether his name's Jam or Marmalade, he might have sent you a tip," said Bunter. "Mean, I call it! Blessed old black joss—what?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh did not answer in words.

He made a sudden stride towards Bunter, and grabbed him by the collar.

"There was a yell from Bunter.

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

The nabob did not let go. He spun the Owl of the Remove round, with his fat face to the door.

Crash!

"Whoooop!"

The nabob's foot was not large or heavy. But it seemed both to Bunter as it landed on his tight trousers.

Bunter flew.

There was a bump in the passage, and a roar, as Billy Bunter landed there. He rolled over and roared again:

"Yaroooh! You cheeky nigger! I'll jolly well come in and lick you! Yaroooh!"

"The lickfulness is a boot on the other leg, my esteemed Bunter!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And he stepped out of the study and applied his boot again to the Owl of the Remove as Bunter rolled and roared.

"Ow! Wow! Wow! Keep off!" yelled Bunter.

The fat junior picked himself up and fled. He bolted down the Remove passage, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh went back to the study. Billy Bunter fled for his life, and crashed into Bob Cherry, who was coming along to the study.

"Oh!" gasped Bob.
He staggered back from the collision and caught at the wall. A charge with Billy Bunter's weight behind it was no joke. Bunter reeled back and sat down.

"You silly owl!" roared Bob Cherry. "Can't you see where you're barging, you fathead?"

"Ow! Wow! I say, he's after me!" yelled Bunter. "He's gone mad, and he's after me!"

"What?"
"Help!" gasped Bunter.

Bob Cherry stared along the Remove passage. He could see no sign of anyone in pursuit of Bunter.

"You silly owl!"
"Keep him off!" yelled Bunter.

"You funky fathead, there's nobody after you!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He blinked round him. "I—I thought that beast, Inky, was after me. He's been kicking me! Ow! Wow!"

"What on earth has Inky been kicking you for?" demanded Bob.

"Nothing. He's gone mad!"

"Fathead!"

"Rushed at me like a maniac!" gasped Bunter. "I did nothing—never said a word! I merely spoke of his uncle as a blessed black joss!"

"My hat! And Inky kicked you for that?"

"Yes, the cheeky black beast!" gasped Bunter. "Why, what—"

Yaroooh! Wharrer you kicking me for, Bob Cherry, you beast? Keep off! Yow-wooop!"

And the hapless Owl of the Remove squirmed away and picked himself up and fled for his life once more.

"Come back and have some more!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

Bunter vanished.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Wibley's Wheeze!

HARRY WHARTON smiled as he came into the Rag after prep that evening.

Wibley of the Remove was sitting there.

Wibley was with Skinner, Snoop, and Stott—fellows who generally were not friends of his—or indeed, of anybody's. But at the present time Wibley seemed to find Skinner's company agreeable. It entertained the cad of the Remove to pull his leg, and in Wib's present mood that was an easy task. Wibley gave the captain of the Remove a hostile glance as he came in—hence Wharton's smile. If Wibley chose to "play the goat" on the subject of the Redclyffe match, he could play it as long as he liked, and Wharton was content to let him go ahead. Certainly he was not prepared to give him a place in the cricket eleven for Redclyffe on Wednesday.

Wibley was a fellow who made his mark in the Remove in his own way.

He was an inveterate japer, and the life and soul of the amateur dramatic society in the Form. He was actor-manager, and in such matters he was given his head. When the Remove fellows performed a play, Wibley took the title-role, as a matter of course. He had great gifts as an actor; in the art of make-up he had no equal at Greyfriars, and few superiors on the professional stage. Even his features seemed to be made of elastic, so completely could he change his expression to suit the character he was adopting. In that line William Wibley was a past-master, and

all the Remove fellows acknowledged his leadership. Wharton, who had been head of the Remove Dramatic Society before Wibley came, had cheerfully resigned the chief place to Wibley.

But, like many fellows, Wibley had an ambition to shine in the things he could not do. At games he was fairly good, but never likely to distinguish himself. But that was a fact he could not quite recognise. He had played in Form matches with some credit, and he was keen to play in a big fixture. And so he had a grievance. He really could not see that he was not up to the form of the best men in the Remove, and he considered himself passed over and wronged. In that frame of mind he was

Wibley, and was sorry to see him persisting in playing the "goat."

"Wibley, old man—" he began.

"Changed your mind?" asked Wibley.

"About the cricket? No, old scout; that isn't possible," said Harry. "But don't be an ass, you know."

"Go and eat coke, then!" said Wibley.

"What's the good of rowing, old scout?" asked Wharton good-temperedly. "Be reasonable!"

"That's all very well," said Skinner. "But I don't see, for one, why Wib should always be passed over."

"Nor I," said Snoop.

"Same here!" said Stott. "Wibley's a good man if he had a chance. I believe in giving a fellow a chance."



"Salaam, sahib!" The soft, silky voice at his elbow startled Billy Bunter to such an extent that he nearly fell off the stile. A lithe, brown-faced man stood before him. "You made me jump!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "The apologize is great," said the brown-complexioned man softly. (See Chapter 5.)

an easy victim for a mischief-making fellow like Skinner.

Not that Skinner cared twopence about Wibley or cricket. But he never lost an opportunity of making trouble for the captain of the Remove.

A good many fellows had heard of Wibley's declaration that he would play in the Redclyffe match, whether Wharton liked it or not. That declaration was, of course, regarded as "gas." Really, it did not seem practicable for Wibley to get into the team without the consent of the cricket captain. Even Skinner & Co., while they encouraged Wibley in his contumacious attitude, laughed in their sleeves, and were very far indeed from guessing the extraordinary "wheeze" that was working in William Wibley's mind.

Wharton smiled as he met Wibley's inimical glance. But after a moment's thought he crossed over to the group. The captain of the Remove really liked

"Oh, cut that out!" said Wharton contemptuously. "Look here, Wib, you're making an ass of yourself in letting these fellows pull your leg. Come over with us to Redclyffe in the brake, and—"

"As a player?"

"No, you ass! The team's complete."

"Well, I shall come over in the brake," said Wibley. "You see, I'm going to play Redclyffe. I mean it!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"And how are you going to work it?" he asked.

"I dare say there are ways and means," answered Wibley coolly. "I'm giving you fair warning. I think I'm entitled to a place in the eleven, and if you don't give it to me I'm going to take it."

"I don't quite see how you're going to do it," said the captain of the Remove, staring at him.

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"Plenty of things you don't see, though you're the Great Panjandrum in the Form!" answered Wibley. "You can take my word for it, though, that I mean business."

"Not wandering in your mind?" asked Harry, laughing.

"You'll see."

"Well, if you play in the Redclyffe match on Wednesday, old scout, I'll eat my cricket-bat," said the captain of the Remove; and he strolled away to meet his friends, who had come into the Rag.

Skinner & Co. eyed Wibley very curiously. He had spoken like a fellow in deadly earnest, and they were perplexed.

"Gammon, of course, old man?" asked Skinner. "You were only pulling Wharton's leg?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"But you can't butt into the eleven," said Skinner.

"Can't I?" growled Wibley. "You'll see. I'm going to do it, and you fellows are going to help me."

"We'll help, if we can," said Skinner, quite mystified. "But I'm blessed if I can see—"

Wibley glanced round him, and lowered his voice.

"You've seen me make up?" he said.

"Yes, and you do it jolly well," said Skinner. "But they're playing cricket at Redclyffe on Wednesday, not private theatricals."

"You've seen me make up as a French master, and as a Spanish brigand, and lots of things, in our plays," said Wibley, still in a low voice. "I made up as a Hindu once, too, in a play. You remember?"

"I remember. But—"

"What I've done once I can do again. On Wednesday afternoon I'm making up as—"

"As what?"

"Inky!"

"Wha-a-a-t?" stuttered Skinner; while Snoop and Stott stared blankly at William Wibley.

"Think I couldn't do it?" said Wibley contemptuously. "Why, I could do it on my head!"

Skinner whistled.

"I believe you could," he confessed.

"But—but mean to say you'd have the cheek to make yourself up as Inky, and go over to Redclyffe with the eleven?"

"You'll jolly well see!"

"But what will Inky be doing all the time?" gasped Snoop. "Inky won't stand by and see you do it, I suppose?"

"That's where you fellows are going to help," said Wibley coolly. "Inky will be locked up in a box-room, or somewhere, and won't know anything about it till it's all over."

"Oh, my hat!" said Skinner.

"But—but—" stuttered Stoop.

"That's the wheeze," said Wibley.

"After the game, Wharton will have to own up that I can play Redclyffe—after I've done it. I'm going to prove that I'm up to Redclyffe form."

Skinner & Co. stared at Wibley. They were far from sharing his opinion that he was equal to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh as a cricketer. In fact, they were quite aware that he was not in the same street with the dusky nabob of Bhanipur in that line.

"But if you let the team down!" stammered Stott.

Skinner gave him a warning glance.

"What rot!" he said. "Wibley won't let the team down. Wibley is all right. He only wants a chance to show what he can do."

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"Oh!" gasped Stott. "Yes; of—of course!"

"If I didn't think I could play Inky's head off, I wouldn't do it, of course," said Wibley.

"Oh, ah! Quite so."

"If they won't give me a chance, I shall just take it," said Wibley. "I think I'm justified."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Don't you?" demanded Wibley warmly.

"Yes, rather!" gasped Skinner. "Certainly! Oh, my eye, what a jest on these rotters! Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner roared. It was a great jest all round, in his opinion, especially if the undesired recruit let the team down, and gave the game away to Redclyffe. That, in the amiable Skinner's opinion, would be the cream of the jest.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry glanced across the room at Skinner & Co. "What's the jolly old joke, Skinner?"

"You are, old man!" answered Skinner genially.

"What?"

"Your features, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" chorled Snoop and Stott.

"Come up to my study, and talk it over with me," said Skinner in a lower voice. "If there's any chance of pulling it off, we'll help you—rather! It will be the joke of the term! What a wheeze!"

And Wibley left the Rag with Skinner & Co. In Skinner's study there was deep discussion, and the three young rascals gave in their hearty adhesion to the scheme.

Outside the study not a word was said. Wibley's great wheeze was to remain a dead secret till it came off on Wednesday. It could not be kept too secret, for Harry Wharton & Co. would certainly have taken drastic measures had they learned that a scheme was afoot for keeping a man away from a cricket match. Only William Wibley himself was satisfied that he could take the place of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh with satisfaction to all concerned.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Danger!

"GIVE it a name!"

Bob Cherry made that remark as the Remove came out of the Form-room for morning break the next day.

He addressed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The dusky face of the nabob was not wearing its usual sunny smile. At prep the previous evening Bob had noticed that Inky was unusually thoughtful. In first and second lessons that morning Inky had been so very thoughtful that Mr. Quelch had called him to order more than once. His thoughtfulness, obviously, had not been caused by unusual attention to his lessons; he had been extremely absent-minded. And Bob wondered what was the trouble.

"Give it a name, Inky, old man," he said encouragingly. "Been getting into trouble with Loder of the Sixth?"

"The answer is in the esteemed negative."

"Not an esteemed licking hanging over your ludicrous head?" asked Bob, grinning.

"Not at all-fully."

"But there's something up."

"What's the row, Inky?" asked Harry Wharton. "We've all noticed that you seem to have something on your mind."

The nabob was silent as the Famous

Five walked into the quad. There was a troubled wrinkle in his dusky brow.

"Not feeling fit for the game to-morrow?" asked Harry. "We're depending on you to bowl, you know, Inky. But if you're seedy—"

"The fitfulness is terrific."

"Oh, good! Then it's nothing serious—what?" asked the captain of the Remove.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sighed faintly.

"No bad news in that letter you had yesterday?" asked Bob. "I know you had a letter from India."

"Is that it, Inky?" asked Nugent.

The nabob sighed.

"The frown of adversity has discounted the smile of contentment," he answered. "But I did not wish to worry my esteemed and ridiculous friends."

"Bosh!" said Johnny Bull. "Get it off your chest. Is your jolly old uncle ill, or anything? What's his name—Jam or Preserve, or something?"

"The Jam Bahadur," said Inky. "No, my esteemed uncle is enjoyfully preserving his excellent health. Nevertheless, there is bad news from Bhanipur."

"If it's not a secret, cough it up," said Bob.

"Of course, if it is a private affair, Inky—"

"Not at all. There is trouble in the palace at Bhanipur," said the nabob.

"The Jam Bahadur is an old and ancient esteemed gentleman, and perhapsfully he exaggerates. But he fears Baji Rao, one of my cousins, who has recently returned to Bhanipur after being absent in Russia. He has warned me in his letter to take care."

"Take care of what?" asked Bob.

"Baji Rao can't do you any damage while you're in England."

"I thinkfully opine not; but my worthy uncle is uneasy," said Hurree Singh. "If there should be a happenfulness to my esteemed self, Baji Rao would be Nabob of Bhanipur, with the permission of the British raj. And the Jam does not trust him. Likewise, he believes that Baji is a rascal, and has become a greater rascal by consorting with the Bolsheviks in Russia. And he fears a conspiracy in Bhanipur, and he even fears that Baji may make some ludicrous attempt to cause me harm here."

"Phew!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "It isn't all lavender being a giddy prince—in India, at all events. But surely your own cousin wouldn't want to hurt you, Inky?"

"I do not think that Baji would desire to cut short the esteemed life of my honourable self," said Hurree Singh; "and I do not think he would dare, lest the British raj should fall upon him and wring his esteemed neck. But there are other ways. You have heard of the great and glorious Shah Jehan?"

"Eh?"

"Which?"

There were many subjects in the curriculum at Greyfriars, but undoubtedly Oriental history was a little neglected. Great and glorious as Shah Jehan had once been, it is doubtful whether any junior at Greyfriars had ever heard of him.

The nabob smiled slightly.

"Shah Jehan was the builder of the celebrated Taj Mahal," he said.

"I—I think I've heard of the Taj Mahal," said Wharton, rather cautiously.

"Some sort of a giddy tomb or something, somewhere in India, isn't it?"

"Exactly. Some day, when you come with me to see my country, I shall show you that and other terrific works of my countrymen," said Hurree Singh.

"Shah Jehan was a great king and a great conqueror. He built the most wonderful palace in India, and he ended his days as a prisoner in one of the dungeons of his own palace—by order of his son, who was the great Emperor Aurungzebe."

"I've heard of that Johnny," said Bob Cherry. "I should say that old Jehan was a bit careless in bringing him up."

"Such things have happened in India, and may happen again," said the nabob. "I think that Baji Rao would not like to hand me the dagger or the bowstring; but if I were in his hands I should vanish from the light of day, and never see the sun shine again."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Moreoverfully, as Bhanipur is under British protection, Baji might not be allowed to reign," continued the nabob. "And if the British raj became troublesome, Baji might be glad to be able to produce me alive, to avert their wrath and vengeance. So I do not think that my life is threatened, even if I were in India instead of England. But my liberty—if Baji could lay his hands upon me—it would be worth no more than that of Shah Jehan when his son Aurungzebe became ambitious."

"The beggar jolly well can't get at you here, though," said Bob. "Nothing for your uncle to worry about."

The nabob nodded.

"I think the Jam fears too much for me," he said. "I do not fear. But it is a worry on my ludicrous mind that he should fear and be uneasy. He warns me to take care; and I think he has written also to our esteemed headmaster to keep the open and wary eye upon me."

"We'll all keep an open and wary eye on you," grinned Johnny Bull. "So all that was in the letter you had yesterday?"

"Yes. Here is the letter, if you would likefully care to see it, my worthy chum."

"Let's see what the old scout says," agreed Bob.

The nabob, with a dusky grin, held up the letter. Harry Wharton & Co. stared at it.

"Fathead!" said Bob, with a chuckle.

The letter was written in the Devanagari characters used by the Hindus. To the Greyfriars juniors it looked as if a set of flies had dipped their legs in ink and crawled over the paper.

"My only hat! Is that really a language?" asked Nugent, staring at it.

The nabob chuckled.

"Yes, my esteemed chum."

"Looks tougher than Greek," said Wharton.

"It's Greek to me," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is a language beautiful and sublime," said the nabob; "but my esteemed chums would be a long time learning to talk it speakfully."

"My uncle can tackle it," said Harry. "I've heard him shelling out Hindustani to your pater, Bob. Sounds rather like cracking nuts."

"My esteemed chum's uncle, Colonel Wharton, was once in Bhanipur," said the nabob. "He saved me when I was a small nipper, in a rising of the friends of Baji Rao. It was after that that Baji went into exile, and made friends among the Russians. The Russians have always had an eye on Bhanipur. But for the British raj they would have taken it long ago. There are those who think matters are changed, now that there is no longer a czar in Russia; but the mistakefulness is terrific. There is always Russia to threaten India from the north



The bat was in Inky's hand, and he was turning back, when the box-room door slammed shut. Hurree Singh stared at it. Click! He was locked in!
(See Chapter 7.)

—Czarist or Bolshevik makes no difference. Nations do not change when they change their form of government. Baji Rao has come back to Bhanipur to make trouble, and my uncle the Jam is uneasy. I shall write him a letter to tell him that I am terrifically safe in the tight little island."

"And tell him that you've got four pals who will keep an open and wary eye on you," said Bob.

"The open-fulness of the wary eye will be terrific," added Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Bunter! Hook it!"

The Famous Five walked away rapidly. Billy Bunter blinked after them through his big spectacles, and started in pursuit.

"I say, you fellows!" he bawled.

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"I say—"

"Bottle it up, old bean," chuckled Bob Cherry. "We know you're expecting a postal-order. We know you want somebody to cash it for you in advance. Ask us again next Christmas!"

"You silly ass!" bawled Bunter. "The Head wants you."

"Eh?"

Harry Wharton & Co. halted. For once, apparently, the Owl of the Remove was not seeking to "touch" the chums for an advance upon his celebrated postal-order. Bunter came up panting.

"Jolly good mind not to tell you," he gasped. "The Head wants you in his study, Wharton, and Inky, too. I hope it's a licking! Yah!"

And with that charitable wish, Bunter rolled away.

"Oh dear!" said Wharton. "What is it now, I wonder? Come on, Inky! Only us two wanted. Can the Head have heard about our rolling Coker of the Fifth downstairs?"

Wharton and the nabob went back to the House, and proceeded to the Head's study. Dr. Locke gave them a benignant glance over his glasses as they presented themselves. Which was rather a relief to the two juniors. It did not look like a licking.

"Ah! I sent for you, Wharton," said the Head. "I desire to speak to you as head of your Form."

"Yes, sir," said Harry, in wonder.

"The matter concerns Hurree Singh. I have received a letter from your uncle, Hurree Singh. It seems that he is uneasy lest some attempt should be made upon your liberty by some discontented persons in—in Bhanipur," said the Head. "It appears to me highly improbable that such an attempt could be made here in England, but I am bound to regard your uncle's wishes."

"Yes, esteemed sahib."

"For the present, Hurree Singh, I think it would be judicious for you not to leave the school alone," said the Head. "On any occasions when you go out of gates take at least one of your friends with you. I rely upon you not to leave the school alone."

The nabob made a slight grimace.

"The wish of the esteemed Head is law," he said.

Dr. Locke smiled slightly.

"Very good! You will remember this, Hurree Singh. And you, Wharton, as head of the Remove, will be expected to see that Hurree Singh pays due regard to my injunction."

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"Certainly, sir!" said Harry.
 "That is all, my boys."
 And the two juniors left the Head's study.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Man from the East!

"BEASTS!"

Billy Bunter made that remark.

After class that day the Famous Five walked out of gates; and Billy Bunter walked on their track. They were going down to the village; and in Friardale there was only one attraction, from Billy Bunter's point of view, and that was the tuckshop kept by Uncle Clegg in the old High Street. If the chums of the Remove were going to sample the cakes and ginger-pop at Uncle Clegg's, it seemed to Bunter that he was bound to be of the party. It was an occasion when Bunter could not possibly be left out.

So the Owl of the Remove trailed cheerfully after the five juniors as they started walking to Friardale.

Whereupon the Famous Five had quickened their pace, leaving Billy Bunter behind.

It was a warm afternoon, and Bunter was extremely disinclined to exert himself. But he put on speed. Uncle Clegg's jam tarts and cakes and ginger-pop were worth an effort.

Upon which Harry Wharton & Co., regardless of the warmth of the weather, had broken into a trot.

That did it, so to speak.

Bunter was not equal to a foot-race. He had too much weight to carry.

Half way to Friardale Bunter was hopelessly dropped. The chums of the Remove vanished beyond a curve of the lane ahead, and Bunter was left on his lonesome own.

So Billy Bunter leaned on a stile to rest, and ejaculated "Beasts!" Having covered half a mile, Bunter was tired. And the hope of a feed at Uncle Clegg's was gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream.

"Beasts!" repeated Bunter, apparently finding solace in it. "Rotters! After all I've done for them! Beasts!"

Bunter sat on the stile to rest. He needed a rest before he started back to Greyfriars.

"Salaam, sahib!"

The soft, silky voice at his elbow startled the Owl of the Remove to such an extent that he nearly fell off the stile. He had heard no one approach. He spun half-round and stared at the speaker. A little brown-faced man had come up from the footpath across the field and stopped at the stile. Bunter blinked at him.

"You made me jump!" he exclaimed indignantly.

"The apologise is great," said the brown-complexioned man softly. His manner was so civil—indeed, deferential—that Bunter was mollified.

The Owl of the Remove blinked at him curiously.

The man was dressed in European clothes, but his complexion was that of a native of India; very like Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's, though darker. Hindoos were uncommon enough in that quiet quarter of Kent. Indeed, it was probable that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was the only Indian for many a mile. Bunter wondered what this soft-footed fellow was doing there. The man's manner was respectful, deferential, humble—quite gratifying in that respect to William George Bunter, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 960.

who never received the deference which he was convinced was his due.

"What do you mean by saying slam?" asked Bunter.

"Salaam," said the Hindu. "It is the greeting of my country. May the sun shine for ever upon the respected sahib!"

Bunter grinned genially.

He found the effusive politeness of the Oriental grateful and comforting. This fellow was, in Bunter's estimation, only a "blessed nigger," but at least he knew the deference due to a "sahib" like William George Bunter.

"Lost your way?" asked Bunter, quite civilly.

He could only guess that to be the man's motive for addressing him. The dusky Oriental did not look like a beggar.

"I am a stranger in the land," said the man in his soft voice. "I have been told that in this part of the country there is a great and famous seat of learning, and I have desired to look upon it."

"That's Greyfriars, I suppose?" said Bunter.

"The sahib knows Greyfriars?"

"I'm a Greyfriars man," said Bunter loftily.

"It is a great honour to Nally Das to speak to a sahib of the great seat of learning."

"I dare say it is," assented Bunter. "If you want to see Greyfriars you've only got to follow this road, and there it is. The porter will take a message to the Head, if you want to see the place—strangers are allowed to see the sights, you know."

Nally Das bowed his head.

"I am content to see the great seat of learning from afar," he answered.

"Well, that's easy enough," said Bunter.

It did not occur to the Owl of the Remove that the dusky stranger was anything but what he seemed. Certainly it did not enter his mind that the man knew anything about Greyfriars, and knew already that Bunter belonged to the school by the Greyfriars colours on his school cap. And most certainly it was never likely to occur to Bunter that a man who wanted, for reasons of his own, to get into touch with a Greyfriars man, had picked him out because he looked obtuse, and therefore unlikely to suspect the questioner of ulterior motives.

"I have heard," said Nally Das, leaning on the stile, "that natives of my own country are educated at the great seat of learning to which the handsome sahib belongs."

Bunter smiled complacently. The description of himself as a handsome sahib was quite pleasing.

"That's so," he said. "At least, we've got one nigger."

"One what, sahib?"

"One nigger," said Bunter cheerfully. "Well, not exactly a nigger. I mean a Hindu. Chap your own colour."

Nally Das looked at him fixedly for a moment. But his manner was as soft and deferential as ever as he went on.

"I have been mistakenly informed, sahib. Is it not the case that there are many Hindus at Greyfriars?"

"No jolly fear!" said Bunter "Only one—a chap in my Form."

"Perhaps I may have heard his name, if the sahib will deign to repeat it," said Nally Das.

"Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. There's a giddy name for you!" grinned Bunter. "He's a jolly old nabob, or something, in his own country. He, he, he!"

The Hindu's black-eyes flashed for

an instant. But it was only for an instant.

"I have never heard the name," he said. "Yet it would be pleasant to look upon the face of a countryman of my own in this far land. But Nally Das is too humble to go up to the great seat of learning. But perhaps the nabob sometimes takes walks abroad?"

"He's in the village now," said Bunter, with a jerk of his fat thumb towards Friardale. "You could spot him as he comes back, only most likely they'll go round a different way; they know I'm here. Not that he's worth seeing. He's a beast!"

Nally Das eyed him curiously.

"Nally Das is too humble to speak to a nabob," he said. "Yet he would like to see a familiar face in this foreign land. Perhaps the sahib would deign to tell his servant when he might see Hurree Singh out of the gates of the great seat of learning."

"Easy enough," said Bunter. "No harm in going up to our school if you want to, my good fellow." The Hindu's humility had made Bunter feel very pleased with himself, and quite kind and civil for once. "Soft sawder" was an easy avenue to Bunter's esteem. "But if you don't want to go to the school, Inky will be going out to-morrow with the cricketers to Redclyffe."

"Inky?" repeated Nally Das.

Bunter chuckled.

"We call him Inky, because of his lovely complexion. I mean Hurree Singh. He plays cricket for the Remove that's my Form—and he will be going over to Redclyffe School with the team to-morrow. You can see him then if you want to."

"A thousand thanks to the sahib!" said Nally Das. "May you live a thousand years, and be blessed with many beautiful wives."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bunter.

The brown-faced man salaamed respectfully, and moved away across the field. Bunter blinked after him, till a patch of woodland hid him from sight.

"Queer beggar!" commented Bunter.

And he dismissed the Hindu from his fat mind. It had occurred to him that that there might be a forgotten bullseye or aniseed ball in one of his pockets, and he proceeded to search; and that, of course, was a more important matter to Bunter than a wandering Hindu, or indeed than the whole dusky population of the Indian Empire.

Nally Das turned into the wood, threading his way among the trees, till he came to a deep glade. There another brown-faced man rose from a couch in the grass, and greeted him in a language that would have been mysterious enough to Billy Bunter, could he have heard it—though not at all mysterious to the nabob of Bhanipur.

"Aj kya khabar hai?"

Nally Das grinned, and answered in the same tongue. And Billy Bunter, who had been so pleased with the Oriental's soft sawder, certainly would not have been pleased if he had heard—and understood. For what Nally Das answered was:

"I have spoken to a Greyfriars boy—a fat and stupid fool; and he has told me all I needed to know, suspecting nothing. There is only one Hindu at Greyfriars, so we cannot make a mistake. And to-morrow he leaves the school with his friends for a cricket match. We have only to watch, Kalouth."

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Change of Identity!

"COMING over to Redclyffe, Wib?"

Bob Cherry asked the question cheerily on Wednesday morning.

He grinned a little as he asked it. Bob sympathised with Wib; and he would have been glad to see that youth "chuck" his "silly rot," as Bob regarded it. A fellow might be disappointed, without playing the goat in this way, Bob considered. There were other disappointed cricketers in the Remove; but they were not cutting up rusty in Wibley's style.

So Bob Cherry greeted Wibley cheerily, hoping to find him in a more reasonable frame of mind that fine and sunny morning.

Wibley, however, did not smile. He gave the cheery boy a glum look.

"I'm coming," he answered.

"That's right," said Bob. "It's going to be a good game, you know. I hear that Redclyffe are in unusual good form. It will be worth watching."

"I daresay it will, for fellows who want to watch it," said Wibley. "I don't mean to myself."

"Then why come over?" asked Bob.

"I'm playing!"

"Fatehead!"

And Bob Cherry gave it up. Wibley's persistence in stating that he was playing in the Redclyffe match seemed to Bob to indicate that he was wandering in his mind a little, since it was obviously impossible that he should do so. Why Wibley was keeping up such "rot" was a mystery.

William Wibley glanced after him, with a sarcastic smile, as he walked away. Bob did not guess—he was not likely to guess the amazing wheeze that was working in Wibley's active brain.

Wibley had quite made up his mind. His own disappointed ambition, supplemented by the cunning influence of Skinner, had made him quite resolved. In justice to Wibley, it must be said that he was quite confident in his own powers as a cricketer, and really believed that he would do the team credit. After he had helped to win the match the cricketers would pardon the deception—in fact, they would be pleased at discovering hitherto unsuspected talent in the Remove. That was how Wibley looked at it.

Had he been a hopeless "dud" like Bunter or Skinner, the matter would have been different. But Wibley was a fairly good man at games; and he really could not see that he was not up to the form of the Redclyffe men. And undoubtedly disappointed ambition and wounded self-love had made it facile for Skinner to pull his leg. In a sulky and resentful frame of mind, Wibley did not realise how unprejudiced fellows would have regarded what he was planning.

At all events, it was settled now; and Wibley was resolute. Doubtless he was tempted also by the attraction of bringing off such a "spoof" on the Famous Five. Whether he was a first-class cricketer or not, Wibley was certainly first-class in his own peculiar line, and he had often gone in for risky impersonations for the sheer fun of the thing, and the display of his peculiar powers. All the Remove had chuckled over the occasion when he had impersonated Mr. Quelch, and given out lines to unsuspecting Remove fellows. And the task of making up as a Hindoo was infinitely easier.

All was ready in Skinner's study. Wibley had chosen Skinner's study, as

his own study-mates in Study No. 6 were certainly not likely to render aid in such a scheme. Morgan and Desmond had noticed that Wib had removed some of his multifarious "props" to Skinner's study—but they were very far from guessing his motive.

Immediately after dinner that day, the Remove cricketers were to prepare to start; the brake was going over at two o'clock. After dinner, therefore, Wibley had plenty to do.

At that time, Harry Wharton & Co. were thinking of the coming cricket match, and not giving the disappointed candidate any thought at all. The brake was taking over as many fellows as it could carry; and Wibley would have been very welcome to a seat in it; but if he did not choose to come as a passenger, he could please himself, and there was an end of it, so far as the captain of the Remove was concerned.

After dinner, Wibley disappeared from general view—without being noticed at all. Nobody was bothering about William Wibley—excepting the three fellows who were helping him in his remarkable stunt.

It was into Skinner's study that Wibley disappeared.

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott were there.

The three young rascals were in a state of cheery excitement, much bucked at the idea of playing such a

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jape on their old enemies, the Famous Five. The only condition they made was, that they should not appear personally in the matter. They were far from desirous of bagging the proper reward of their services, from the Famous Five afterwards.

If—as Wibley hoped—he did wonderful things for the Remove team, and helped to beat Redclyffe, doubtless the deception would be forgiven. But Skinner & Co. did not expect anything of the kind. Their opinion was that Wibley would be hopelessly out-classed by the Redclyffians, and would in consequence let the side down. After which, he would get the ragging of his life from the indignant cricketers. Skinner & Co. did not want to come on in that scene.

They winked at one another, as Wibley came in, full of confidence.

"No time to lose now," said Wibley cheerily.

"We're all ready to help, old man," said Skinner, with a bland smile.

"But what about Inky?" asked Snoop. "You'll have to fix Inky up, before you can take his place, old bean."

Wibley grinned.

"That's all right," he said, "I've fixed that! I've shoved his bat into the top box-room."

"Inky won't go without his bat," said Skinner, with a nod. "But—"

"I've mentioned it to Bunter." Skinner chuckled.

"And he will tell Inky," he said. "That's all right—Inky will go up to the box-room after his bat. But—"

"I've put the key in the outside of the lock," said Wibley. "You'll be on the spot, Skinner."

"Eh?"

"You'll be on the spot, old man."

"Hem!"

"Out of sight, in the next room, you know."

"Oh!"

"When Inky goes into the box-room, rooting after his bat, you'll nip out and lock the door on him, and take away the key."

"Um!"

Harold Skinner seemed dubious.

"Nobody will see you," said Wibley, rather sarcastically. "You needn't be nervous. I shall take the whole thing on myself; and when it comes out, it will be supposed that I locked Hurree Singh in."

"That's so," assented Skinner. "We don't want to be mixed up in a row with those cads afterwards, of course."

"That's understood, though I don't think there will be a row."

"Hem!"

"Anyhow, if there's trouble, I'm taking it on. All you've got to do is to watch the box-room, and lock the door on Inky. That's as easy as falling off a form."

"Right-ho!" said Skinner.

Having thought it out, Skinner decided that there was very little risk involved, and he gave his assent.

"Better get off now," said Wibley. "These chaps can help me to rig out. Keep out of sight, and keep an eye open for Inky."

Skinner nodded, and left the study.

The door was locked after him. Chance visitors were not wanted in Study No. 2 just then.

Then Wibley, with the assistance of Snoop and Stott, proceeded to "make up."

He needed little assistance.

Snoop and Stott grinned as they watched him rubbing the Oriental complexion on his face.

In a very short time Wibley's face and hands, and all the parts of him that were likely to become visible, had assumed the deep bronze complexion of Hurree Singh.

What seemed like a magic touch gave his eyebrows the rather bushy look of Hurree Singh's. Even his features seemed to lend themselves to the disguise, as if they had been made of rubber.

The fact that there was only one Indian at Greyfriars made the impersonation easier. Any fellow with a dark complexion was likely to be taken for Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, at a cursory glance.

But Wibley, when he had finished, was in a state to sustain more than a cursory glance.

He not only looked like Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; it was difficult even for the fellows watching the process to realise that he was not the genuine Nabob of Bhanipur.

"My only hat!" said Sidney James Snoop, with a deep breath. "It's a giddy miracle. You'll make your fortune on the stage some day, Wib."

"My esteemed Snoop—"

Snoop fairly jumped.

Wibley seemed to have the very voice of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, as well as his peculiar English.

"Oh, my word!" said Stott.

"My excellent and ludicrous friends—"

grinned Wibley.

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"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Snoop and Scott.

"Do you think I shall pass musterfully?" asked Wibley.

"My dear man, if Inky saw you now, he would think he had a twin-brother," chuckled Snoop.

"Or he would think he was staring into a giddy looking-glass!" said Stott, with conviction.

Wibley grinned complacently.

"You can jolly well do impersonations, whether you can play cricket or not," said Snoop.

"My esteemed fat-headed Snoop, I can play cricketfully better than I can impersonate."

There was a discreet tap at the door of the study.

"Hush!" muttered Snoop.

"Only little me!" came Skinner's whisper through the keyhole.

"Right-ho!"

Snoop opened the door wide enough for Skinner to enter, and Skinner came in, and fairly jumped at the sight of the new edition of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"What the thump!" he ejaculated.

"Is—is that you, Wib?"

"My esteemed and ridiculous self!" answered Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

"And Inky?"

"Safe as houses."

"Good!"

William Wibley took a last glance in the glass, and grinned at his dusky reflection.

"I told Wharton I should play in the Redclyffe match!" he remarked. "Looks now as if I was right—what?"

And Skinner & Co. chuckled, and agreed that it did.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Left Behind!

"MY esteemed Bob—" "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" "Have you seen my excellent and ludicrous cricket-bat?"

"It was in the study last night," said Bob. "I remember seeing it there, Inky."

"It has disappearfully gone now," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "You have not taken it mistakenly?"

"No, old bean."

"Lost your bat, Inky?" asked Harry Wharton. "Back up and find it. The brake will be here in ten minutes now."

"I have not lost it," said the nabob. "Some esteemed and practical joking ass has removed it from my study."

"He, he, he!"

The Nabob of Bhanipur glanced round at Bunter as that fat youth emitted an unmusical cachinnation.

Bunter grinned at him.

"Can't you find your bat—what?" he asked.

"Perhapsfully you have taken it away, my worthy idiotic Bunter," said Hurree Singh.

"Perhaps I know who has," answered Bunter, with a fat chuckle. "Perhaps it was a fellow who wanted to play in the Redclyffe match. He, he, he!"

"Not Wibley?" asked Bob Cherry, with a stare.

"The silly ass, to play such a trick," said Harry Wharton. "I'm getting rather fed-up with Wibley's nonsense."

"Where's Wibley?" asked Bob.

"Give it up," said Bunter. "I saw him with the bat under his arm, though. He bagged it from your study."

"The punchfulness of the nose 's the

proper caper, I think," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Do you know where he has put the bat, Bunter?"

"It's all right, old bean," said Bunter reassuringly. "Wibley told me where he was going to shove it. He told me to tell you at the last minute—just to pull your leg, you know."

"If that's Wibley's idea of a joke, I don't see the fun of it," growled Johnny Bull.

"Same here," said Bob. "It's no joke to bag a fellow's bat just when he's starting for a cricket match. But there's no harm done if he's told Bunter to tell you where it is. Where is it, Bunter?"

"Top box-room," grinned Bunter.

"Why couldn't you have fetched it down, fathead, if you know where it is?" said Nugent.

"Catch me fagging up all those stairs," said Bunter. "Besides, Bunter asked me not to. His game was to set Inky hunting for his bat. He, he, he!"

"The huntfulness has been terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the jokefulness does not seem to me to be great."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There comes the brake!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh hurried away to the stairs, and ascended them two at a time. He hurried up the Remove staircase, and scudded along the Remove passage, to where the little stairway led up to the top box-room.

His dusky face was not so good-humoured as usual. Practical jokes were not uncommon in the Lower Fourth, but it was difficult to see any humour in a practical joke of this description. To make a fellow ascend a lot of stairs to find his bat, just before starting for a cricket match, was hardly to be regarded as humorous. If Inky had encountered Wibley on his way to the box-room, he would have been tempted to bang the practical joker's head on the wall.

He did not encounter Wibley, however. Indeed, had he encountered him at that moment, he certainly would not have recognised him.

He hurried up to the box-room, of which the door stood open. He ran into the room.

There, among the trunks and boxes, he looked round for the bat.

It was in full view, in the farthest corner of the room. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh ran across to it.

The bat was in his hand, and he was turning back, when the box-room door slammed shut.

Hurree Singh stared at it.

The door had been suddenly slammed from outside, and he had not seen who slammed it. For a moment he fancied that it was the wind, but the next moment he heard the key turn in the lock.

Click!

He was locked in!

"Wibley!" gasped the nabob.

He realised that someone in the adjoining room must have been watching him, and had locked him in. He had little or, rather, no doubt, that it was Wibley. It flashed into his mind at once that the practical joke did not consist only of giving him a tramp up to the box-room after his missing bat.

He raced across to the door and dragged at the handle. Then he clumped the end of the bat on the panels.

"Wibley, you esteemed rotter!" he shouted.

There was no answer, but a sound of retreating footsteps on the stairs.

Bang, bang!

"Wibley!" roared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I shall be latefully delayed. Let me out at oncefully!"

But the unseen fellow who had locked him in was gone.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh breathed hard and deep.

It was a trick to delay his departure for Redclyffe, or to keep him away from the match. But the latter did not seem possible, for certainly the cricketers would not start without him. Harry Wharton & Co. knew that he had ascended to the top box-room for his bat, and, if he did not return, they would come up to fetch him.

Hurree Singh knocked on the door again and again. He knew that the noise could not be heard downstairs, at the distance, but it would be a guide for his friends when they came to search for him. And he had no doubt, of course, that they would come.

He was very far from guessing that, in those very moments, a fellow who looked exactly like him had issued from Skinner's study, and was going down the Remove staircase, just as if he had descended from the box-room.

Hurree Singh was not likely to guess that.

He left off knocking at the door after a few minutes, however, and crossed to the window. But the box-room window looked out only over roofs, and tiles, and chimneys; there was no chance of shouting to fellows below. From that coign of vantage he could see nothing of Greyfriars, though, in the distance, he had a view of part of Friardale Lane and the fields and woods beyond.

He went back to the door and banged on it again. By this time, surely, his friends must be wondering why he did not return. They would be puzzled, but surely they would come up to call him? At every moment he expected to hear Bob Cherry's powerful voice booming up the box-room stairs. But he heard nothing save the echoing of his own knocking. The brake was waiting—the cricketers could not have started. What did it mean? It was impossible that they could have started without him!

"My only esteemed hat!" murmured the nabob. "I will give that worthy and villainous ass the thrashfulness of his life!"

Bang, bang, bang!

The din from the box-room could have been heard in the Remove studies, had anyone been there. But it was not probable that there was anyone there, just after dinner, especially with the fellows gathering in the quad to see the cricketers off. At all events, there was no response of any kind to Hurree Singh's knocking.

He gave it up at last, angry and exasperated, and went back to the window. As he looked out he gave a jump.

Far in the distance, in Friardale Lane, he sighted a brake, crowded with fellows!

It was the brake for Redclyffe, he knew that. The distance was too great for the recognition of features, but he knew Harry Wharton & Co. The cricketers had started!

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh stared blankly after the brake.

They were gone—they had started without him! It was simply incomprehensible. Hurree Singh was the champion bowler of the Remove; it was no secret that he was a tower of strength to his side, and badly wanted whenever the Remove had a hard game to play. There was scarcely any member of the eleven who could not have been better spared. And they had gone without him—without even giving him a call!

The nabob's face set.

This was not the kind of treatment

to be expected from friends. It was but seldom that Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was angry, but he was angry now. His black eyes glittered as he stared after the brake, rolling on by the leafy lane, till it vanished beyond the trees.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Man Who Watched!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"What?"

"A jolly old countryman of yours, Inky!"

The brake rolled away from the gates of Greyfriars with the cricketers on board, and five or six other fellows. A dozen more of the Remove were following on their bicycles.

Among the cricketers sat a dusky junior, whom every other fellow on the brake believed to be Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Not the slightest suspicion had anyone in the brake of the amazing trick that had been played.

The dusky junior had come downstairs with a bat under his arm, joined the waiting cricketers, and clambered into the brake with them. It had been simple—simplicity itself. The total absence of suspicion made it easy enough. Certainly the cricketers would not have started without Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh—had they known it. Wibley sat among the juniors, his dusky face shaded by a panama hat—a hat belonging to Hurree Singh, and coolly borrowed for the occasion. Confident as he was in his disguise, the trickster was glad to keep his face in the shade of the broad brim.

Bob Cherry jerked his elbow.

"Countryman of yours, Inky."

"Eh?"

"Same jolly old complexion, at any rate," said Bob with a grin. "He seems interested in you, too."

A brown-faced man, with an aquiline nose and keen black eyes, was standing by the roadside with his eyes on the Greyfriars brake.

Evidently he was a native of India, which doubtless explained his interest in the dusky junior in the vehicle.

Most of the fellows glanced at him.

Harry Wharton started as he saw him, and looked at him very intently. The sight of a Hindu was extremely uncommon in the vicinity, and Wharton could not help thinking of Hurree Singh's letter from the Jam Bahadur, and the warning Dr. Locke had given.

He touched the dusky junior on the shoulder.

"Ever seen that chap before, Inky?" he asked.

Wibley breathed hard.

If the brown man standing by the roadside was an acquaintance of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, from his far-off native land, Wibley of the Remove was not likely to know him.

"Eh! No!" stammered Wibley.

"He seems to know you from the way he keeps his eyes on you," said Harry.

"The esteemed individual is unknown to me, my worthy chum," answered the spoofer, remembering the part he was playing. "I have never before beheld him to, my esteemed knowledge."

The brake rolled on.

Nally Das, standing like a bronze statue by the roadside, was left behind, and disappeared from sight.

"It's a bit queer," said Harry, in a low voice. "Don't you think so, Inky?"

"How?" asked the hapless Wibley.



Fane sent down a ball much faster than Wibley of the Remove expected. Crash! "Oh, my hat!" gasped Wibley, surveying his shattered stumps. There was a chirrup from the Reddlyflans. "How's that, umpire?" "Out!" The feelings of the hapless batsman were deep. (See Chapter 9.)

"After what you told us, yesterday, I mean."

"My esteemed Wharton—" murmured Wibley, quite at a loss.

He had not bargained for this.

Apparently Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh had told his comrades something the day before, which caused Wharton to pay unusual and serious attention to the fact that a Hindu was hanging about the Friardale road. What it was, of course, Wibley had not the faintest idea.

"It's a coincidence, to say the least," said Bob Cherry.

"A jolly suspicious coincidence," said Johnny Bull. "How often do we see a Hindu in these parts?"

"Neverfully, I think," murmured Wibley.

"Well, hardly ever," said Frank Nugent. "I don't remember seeing one since the time some of your giddy relations came to see you, Inky. And that chap isn't a relation of yours."

Wibley grinned.

Certainly, the brown-faced man was not a relation of William Wibley's, whatever he might be to Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"I have neverfully beheld him beforefully," he said.

"You don't feel alarmed?" asked Bob.

"Alarmed?" ejaculated Wibley.

"Well, after what your uncle told you in his letter, I mean."

"M-my uncle?"

"The jolly old Jam, you know," said Bob. "Of course, the merchant may be loafing about here by pure chance. But it's a bit of a coincidence for a Hindu to show up here, just after old Jam has warned you about Baji Rao and his little games."

"It's queer," said Harry. "And the fellow was staring hard at Inky, too. I can't help thinking that it's rather more than a coincidence. The Head was right to tell Inky not to go out of gates alone."

"Yes, rather."

"We'll keep a jolly old fatherly eye on you, Inky," said Bob.

"The thankfulness is terrific!" gasped Wibley.

Wibley was feeling hopelessly at sea, and his heart was beating fast. He had no knowledge whatever of what the juniors were discussing, and he knew that a chance word might give him away.

He was greatly relieved when the

subject dropped. As it was not a matter the nabob desired to make public in the school, the juniors could not very well talk it over in the crowded brake.

So no more was said on the subject, whilst the brake rolled on to Redclyffe, much to Wibley's relief.

But Harry Wharton and his chums were thinking a good deal about it.

The Jam Bahadur had supposed, or feared, that emissaries of Baji Rao might seek to harm the nabob; and that had been followed by the appearance of a Hindu near the school.

It might mean nothing; but on the other hand it might mean a great deal—it might mean deadly peril to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Co. resolved to be very careful indeed that the nabob did not go out of their sight that afternoon, until they were safe back with him within the gates of Greyfriars, little dreaming that Hurree Singh, in those moments, was locked up in the top box-room, and that a spoofer had taken his name and his place for the nonce.

The chums of the Remove noted that the sight of the Hindu had not had any effect on the dusky junior's nerve. Whether there was any danger or not, he did not look in the least alarmed!

This was not surprising, however, as Wibley knew nothing of the circumstances, and, indeed, had forgotten the incident before the brake reached Redclyffe.

He had more important matters to think of than the chance sight of a wandering Hindu by the roadside.

As yet his deception had passed undetected and unsuspected. But a harder test was to come, when the cricketers arrived at Redclyffe.

Wibley had plenty of nerve, and plenty of confidence in himself and his peculiar powers. But he was not feeling wholly at his ease.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are!" exclaimed Bob Cherry as the brake arrived at Redclyffe School.

Fane, the junior captain of Redclyffe, greeted the visitors cheerily. The stumps were pitched, and a Redclyffe crowd was gathering on the ground, and the followers of the Greyfriars team joined them.

Harry Wharton won the toss and decided to bat. Fane and his men went into the field. There were a good many fellows round the ground, a sprinkling of Greyfriars juniors among the Redclyffe crowd, and a few strangers who had strolled along to see the game, as sometimes happened. Bob Cherry tapped Wharton on the arm as he was buckling his pads.

"Look over yonder, old man," he said.

"What is it?"

"That fellow by the oak-tree yonder."

Wharton glanced in the direction indicated, and started a little. Under the oak-tree, at a little distance from the cricket pitch, a dark-complexioned man was standing, looking on. It was the man who had watched the Greyfriars brake pass in Friardale road.

"That merchant!" exclaimed Harry. "He's followed us," said Bob. Wharton knitted his brows.

"That looks like watching Inky, Bob—the man is keeping an eye on him, even if he doesn't mean harm."

"Looks like it," said Bob.

"Inky's safe enough, among a crowd of us," said Harry. "But we'd better jolly well keep an eye on him, and report this to the Head when we go

back. It's too jolly queer to be a coincidence."

Wharton spoke to Fane as he went to the wickets.

"See that brown-faced Johnny yonder?" he asked.

"Yes—some pal of your Inky?" asked Fane.

"No, a stranger to all of us. Ever seen him about before?"

"Never."

"You don't know what he wants here?"

"Some giddy traveller, having a look at the cricket, I suppose," said the Redclyffe skipper carelessly. "People are allowed to trot in and see the matches, if they like. What does he matter, anyhow?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Wharton went to his wicket, with Bob Cherry at the other end. And as the bowling began he had to dismiss the dark-faced stranger from his mind; the Redclyffe bowling gave him plenty to think about.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Not as per Programme!

"INKY!"

"Man in!" Wibley of the Remove grinned a dusky grin.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was third on the batting list; and Bob Cherry, having been caught out, Wibley was wanted.

He answered to his name—or, rather, to the nabob's name—at once, and very cheerily.

"Right-ho! Ready!" And then he added at once: "The readiness is terrific!"

He was grinning under his shady hat as he walked out to the wickets.

Any uneasiness Wibley may have felt was quite gone now. Not the faintest suspicion had been aroused. To the Remove cricketers he was Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; and, naturally, to the Redclyffians also. All was going well—that is, if Wibley's play was equal to the strain, and turned out to justify his assumption of the nabob's name and place. On that point Wibley had few—if any—doubts.

He strolled down cheerily to his wicket.

The Remove batsmen watched him as he went. Bob Cherry had had rather bad luck, having been dismissed for eight. He hoped that his dusky chum would do better. It was as a bowler that Hurree Singh shone; but he was a good, reliable bat, and expected to keep his end up pretty well. Some of the Remove men, as they looked at him going on, looked a little curious.

"Is Inky in good form to-day?" said Vernon-Smith. "A lot of the spring seems to be gone out of him."

"He doesn't seem to shape quite as usual at the wicket, does he?" remarked Peter Todd.

Bob Cherry eyed the dusky junior curiously.

The batsman certainly did not look quite like Hurree Jamset Ram Singh as he stood at the wicket. In appearance he was the same; but there was an indefinable something wanting. Bob wondered whether the nabob was off colour. The previous day he had seemed rather worried by the letter from the Jam Bahadur at Bhanipur. But that seemed to have passed off—certainly he had not seemed worried at all coming over in the brake from Greyfriars. Yet there was something unusual about him, now that he was

playing cricket. About Hurree Jamset Ram Singh there was a lithe springiness, almost like that of a tiger of the jungles of his native land. That lithe-ness seemed somehow to be gone, as if the spring had been taken out of him.

"Well, I know Inky's a good man," remarked the Bounder. "But if I didn't know that, I should say that he wouldn't stop the bowling. He doesn't look to me like stopping it."

"Off colour, I fancy," said Mark Linley.

Fane, of Redclyffe, was bowling. He sent down a fast ball, much faster than Wibley of the Remove expected, and with a twist on it that Wibley was not looking for in the least. It was quite different from the bowling that Wibley had handled successfully in matches with Temple, Dabney & Co., at Greyfriars.

Crash!

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a chirrup from the Redclyffians.

"How's that, umpire?"

"Out!"

Bob Cherry's face lengthened.

"Poor old Inky!" he said. "He's off his form."

"Poor old us, you mean," said Vernon-Smith, tartly. "There's a duck's egg—and if he's not fit, he might have said so, and given another man a chance. Redwing was willing to play."

Bob Cherry made no answer. It was utterly unusual and unexpected for Hurree Jamset Ram Singh to be dismissed for a duck's egg. It could only mean, in Bob's opinion, that he was off colour, perhaps due to worry over the disturbing news from his far-off home. If that was so, there was some justice in the Bounder's remark. Inky should have known whether he was up to Redclyffe form or not.

The feelings of the hapless batsman were deep.

His imposture had been a complete success; until it came to playing cricket. There the success had stopped.

An awful doubt came into Wibley's mind, as to whether he had, after all, over-estimated his powers. Had Wharton been right, after all, in leaving him out of the eleven? Did Wharton know more about a fellow's form than the fellow himself?

It was a sickening doubt—coming so late in the day. It was too late for the hapless impostor to back out now.

Wharton stared along the pitch at him, as surprised as the other fellows by the easy fall of the wicket.

Wibley stared at the fallen bats, and with a sigh, turned back to the pavilion.

"Bad luck, old man," said Johnny Bull, passing him coming in.

Wibley nodded and walked off without replying. His dusky face was downcast.

Bob Cherry clapped him on the shoulder, as he rejoined the group of waiting batsmen.

"Hard cheese!" he said. "But buck up, old man—you'll do better in the next innings."

"The betterfulness will be terrific," said Wibley, his confidence returning a little.

After all it had only been a fluke. At least, Wibley tried his hardest to believe that that was so.

He moved away from the batsmen; he had nothing more to do till the innings was over, and good as his disguise was, he prudently did not wish to keep under constant close observation.

(Continued on page 17.)



Harry Wharton's Cricket Supplement

No. 10 (New Series). Vol. 2.

July 10th, 1928.

No trouble or expense has been spared to make this supplement interesting and informative. In it all phases of cricket will be discussed by writers chosen from the foremost cricket authorities in the land. Readers may, therefore, rely upon the facts, figures, etc., mentioned from week to week in this supplement as being authentic.

HARRY WHARTON, Editor.

Boundary Hits! "SCORER"

People in close touch with the Australians tell me that Warren Bardsley is essentially the "little gentleman." All the time—the most courteous of a courteous lot. Well, seeing that Bardsley started his business career in the *Civil Service* he ought to be.

We are a very difficult people to satisfy concerning our sport. Football, so it is said, is bad because everything is sacrificed to speed, and cricket is bad, according to the same people, because it is too slow.

Mr. Sydney Smith, the manager of the Australian team, says: "We have held the 'Ashes' for a considerable time, but by the law of averages the honour has to go round." Unfortunately, as one of my contributors points out this week, averages are unreliable things.

It is said of "Patsy" Hendren that the best judges of cricket in Australia have a higher opinion of his abilities than any of us in England. Another case of a prophet being without honour in his own country.

Fred Chester, who was one of the umpires in the first Test match of the present series, would have been playing for Worcester now if he had not lost his right arm during the War. It isn't the right arm that cricketers worry about now, so far as Chester is concerned, but that left hand which goes up to say that they are "out."

According to one critic, a great deal of balderdash is written about what is called the Test match temperament, and Mr. "Plum" Warner is among those who doesn't believe there is any such thing. I don't know, but I suppose Mr. Warner might be tempted to use a much shorter word than temperament to sum up the players who don't give of their best in these big games. And the word would probably be "funk."

The bowler dragged his back foot several inches over the line, and, of course, the umpire said "No ball!" "I am sorry," said the bowler, "but my foot slipped!" Shortly afterwards the bowler again dragged his foot over the line, but this time didn't actually deliver the ball. However, the umpire yelled "No ball!" Whereupon the bowler laughed at him. "I am sorry," said the umpire immediately, "but my tongue slipped!"

In a club match in Lancashire recently a ball hit the stumps and sent the bats into the air, but they fell back again into position; and one of our readers asked us what we make of that. Not being able to answer the question myself, I gave it to the office-boy, and his reply was: "A miracle."

HOW to PLACE YOUR FIELD!

YOU need not get alarmed that I am going to use up a lot of space telling you about the importance of fielding. I am not, because the youngest of schoolboy cricketers must realise that the difference between good and bad fielding very often means the difference between a match won and a match lost. Rather do I want to talk about the necessity for placing the fielders properly—for using the players in the team to the best possible advantage.

A well-placed field is a delight, and when I think of it, I am not so sure that much of the success of the Australians is not due to the fact that they have studied the art of placing the field until they are past-masters at the business. How often, when our batsmen have been batting against the Australians, have I heard people in the crowd say: "The fellows are knocking every ball to the fielders." The suggestion is that there is some fault with the batsmen, but rather should the credit on these occasions go to the captain of the fielding side, who has so placed his field that the batsmen find it next to impossible to get the ball through a gap to the boundary.

LOOK AFTER YOUR BOWLER!

The actual placing of the field depends to a very large extent—must always depend—on the pace of the wicket and the sort of bowler who is "on." A fast bowler on a fast wicket may demand three, or even four, slips—one man deep, in order to save runs from those snicks which escape the vigilance of the slip fielders who are near in.

Of all fielding, I think fielding at slip is a job for the specialist; and let me say here that if in your side you have a fellow who is a good slip fielder, don't, for goodness' sake, waste him by putting him anywhere else! Let him field slip at both ends.

Another point in regard to slip fielding—don't let your other bowler field at first slip when he is not bowling, because in this position he will often be called upon to chase snicks almost to the boundary, and thus use up the energy which he should rightly keep for bowling. Point can often be dispensed with; but if it is necessary to have a fielder at point, you want a courageous fielder there.

In any event, point cannot be considered as important as either slips or cover-point. For this last-mentioned position you want a really good man. In ordinary play he will get no end of work, and, as a general rule, he should be just sufficiently near in to prevent singles being obtained when the ball is driven in his direction. In passing, and to emphasise the importance of a good all-round fielder at cover-point, I may mention that in one tour in Australia Jack Hobbs, who always fields at cover-point, ran out fifteen Australian batsmen.

A DANGEROUS POST!

Mid-off will get plenty of work, too, and should have the courage to stop everything, no matter how hard it is driven. In practice every team there are one or two men who are not as good in the field as they ought to be, but as they are good with the bat, or possibly good change bowlers, they can't be left out. Consequently, it is of real importance to give the indifferent fielder the place where he is least likely to have opportunities for making blunders, and I should say that, with the great majority of bowlers, mid-on is the position which should be given to the least efficient fielder in the side.

Square-leg will not get a lot of work unless there is a leg-break bowler on; but, on the other hand, square-leg, if he is fairly close in—as he very often must be—is not at all an easy position in which to field.

With a slow bowler on—a bowler who tempts the batsmen to hit—the slips will be reduced and the long-fields increased. These long-fields should be safe catches, fast runners, and good throwers. The wise captain of any side will find out in which position a fielder gives of his best, and he will keep him in that position as far as possible.

The Strong Man of Yorkshire!

A NUTSHELL HISTORY
OF G. G. MACAULAY,
WHO FORMS THE



SUBJECT OF THIS
WEEK'S GRAND FREE
GIFT.

"IN George Macaulay," said Lord Hawke some eighteen months ago, "Yorkshire has one of the best bowlers in the country, and it is a pity that he is not with the English team in Australia." Now Lord Hawke is a very good judge, and demands a high standard from the players of the county which he captained so long, and his opinion of Macaulay is certainly worth a lot. Perhaps the reason why this fine bowler did not go to Australia with the last touring team was that the selectors wanted men with a little more experience, who had been long enough in the game to develop the right spirit and temperament for these big matches. Macaulay is even now only 28, and is, as the saying goes, "young for his years." A big, strong fellow, he first began to show his cricket

skill at Barnard Castle, where he took the honours of both bowling and batting for three seasons in succession. In 1914 he joined the Wakefield club, where, incidentally, Waddington, now also a Yorkshire player, was in the team. He did well with Wakefield, but in the Army during the War received a wound which kept him in hospital for eighteen months, and which threatened to end his career as a cricketer. However, he finally threw off the effects of the wound, and being recommended to the Yorkshire Committee, he played for the county in 1919.

CUTTING OFF THE PACE!

He then had the right to be called a really first-class bowler, but if the truth must be told there was rather more pace than length about his de-

liveries, and during the winter those two fine old Yorkshire players, Wilfred Rhodes and George Hirst, took him in hand. They advised him to cut a bit off his pace, and to cultivate accuracy, of length to a greater degree. Following this sound advice, Macaulay, is now just a fast medium man, but capable of making the ball swing away with his arm. He is much more dangerous than he was when pace was his sole asset. Yorkshire cricket contains many stories of wonderful recoveries from seemingly hopeless positions made by the players of the county, and Macaulay played his part in one such last season. Yorkshire were playing Sussex at Bradford, and at lunch on the last day the Southern county had six wickets in hand and only required forty runs to secure the victory. After lunch Macaulay set about these remaining Sussex batsmen to such tune that they were all dismissed for sixteen runs, Macaulay having five victims for eight. In all Macaulay took 176 wickets for Yorkshire last season. He is not a great batsman by any means, but can get a few runs occasionally, and has passed the century mark on behalf of the county more than once. His recent century against Somerset was a fine example of his improved ability, with the bat. In fact it can now be said that for a No. 11 he is quite first class.

WHY THE AVERAGES ARE ALL WRONG! BY "STUDENT."

THERE is a popular saying that what can't speak can't tell lies. Well, figures can't speak, but, so far as cricket is concerned, figures certainly can tell lies. We have all come to regard batting and bowling averages as an indispensable part of the summer game, and the cricket follower gets quite a lot of innocent enjoyment over watching his favourite batsmen or favourite bowlers rise in the table of averages.

Personally, I think it would be very good for the game if we could wipe out these averages in every class of cricket, for the simple reason that some players go through their cricket with one eye on the averages, instead of going into it with both eyes on the success of the team. The team as a whole should always be the thing; not the success or failure of this or that individual player as judged by the averages. I have certainly known county batsmen who have played for their averages instead of for the side. They have gone to the wicket when there has been every incentive to force the pace, when the thing to be done in the interests of the side was to get on or get out. But, keeping one eye on their average, these batsmen have refused to take risks, valuable time has been lost, and their side has been deprived of victory which might have been gained if there had been no such things as averages.

THE VALUE OF REST.

The real trouble with these averages, however, as I stated at the outset, is that they don't tell the whole truth. Take the bowling side of the game, by way of a start. Here is a star bowler in a side which contains several good bowlers. A moment's reflection

will serve to show that such a bowler is likely to have much better average figures than if he played in a side in which he was the only bowler of real class.

The Yorkshire bowlers provide a typical example of what I mean. I am not going to say that fellows like Macaulay, Kilner, Rhodes, etc., are not good bowlers. They are. But I do say that they are all likely to get better averages because they are in a county of many bowlers than any of them would have if they were in a county with only one or two good bowlers at the outset. If Maurice Tate, of Sussex, or Parker, of Gloucester, had the same measure of support as any of the Yorkshire bowlers mentioned, I am quite sure that they would have better averages at the end of each season. There is never any necessity for a Yorkshire bowler to bowl his heart out by sending down thirty or forty overs in an innings. The county has so much variety that any bowler can be given a rest even before he begins to get tired.

And I do suggest to you that what is true of the Yorkshire county is true of every club, no matter how insignificant, which has a wealth of bowlers. The bowlers of that club will have better figures than equally good bowlers in a side which only contains one star performer.

GOOD AND BAD PITCHES.

Then turn to the batting averages. Here in much the same way it will be found that the figures tell lies. In the first place the averages take no sort of account of the conditions under which the runs were made. I have seen many an innings of thirty or forty which have had more merit than centuries. Thirty runs on a sticky wicket against

good bowlers is much more creditable than a century on a perfect pitch.

Again, a man who plays half his matches at the Oval, say, ought to finish any season with a better batting average than the man who belongs to Lancashire, and who plays half his games at Old Trafford. On the whole, the pitch at the Oval is ever so much easier than the pitch at Manchester.

Another direction in which the placings in the averages don't reveal the true state of things is in regard to the position which the batsman occupies in the "going in" list. The man who goes in first, when the bowlers are fresh, has a much more difficult task than the man who goes in fifth or sixth wicket down, when the bowlers are less fresh and the fielders ditto. So, altogether, although I admit that the averages of cricketers are always interesting, I put it to you that they don't tell the whole truth.



An action photo of G. G. Macaulay

Australia's Inner Secrets!

VICTORY IN THE TESTS
THE RESULT OF CON-
STANT ATTENTION TO
DETAIL.



By E. A. MACDONALD

(The Famous Australian and Lancashire Bowler.)

THERE is no necessity for me to dwell on the fact that in recent years Australia has had a very definite ascendancy over England in Test match cricket. The figures speak for themselves. Since the series of games in Australia in 1911-12, when England had recovered from a very bad start and then won the four remaining games, there have been eighteen contests between the chosen of the two countries. Of these eighteen games four have been left unfinished. Of the remainder the Australian players have gained twelve victories, which leaves only two successes to England. I am now asked to explain in which direction we should turn in order to put a finger on the secrets of Australia's successes in the intervening years.

EXCUSES FOR ENGLAND.

In order to be strictly fair and impartial, let me say right here that certain very good excuses could be made for the comparative failure of England's cricketers in the last few seasons. The War, for instance, took a greater toll of England's players than it took of Australia's, and, incidentally, the development of the young players was held up to a greater extent. This point should be made, because, in my view, England is coming back, and may this season prove to have the men who can beat my countrymen once more, and win back the "Ashes." But even, after every possible excuse has been made, it is still obvious that Australians generally have proved such apt pupils at this game which was taught by men from the Motherland, that there must be some reasons for such a striking run of success.

NO MONOPOLY OF SUPERMEN.

Of course, there is one very simple way out of the question of why Australia wins; it would be to say that they have better batsmen, better bowlers, and better fielders. This is not necessarily the whole truth, however. You have your wonder-players of your own. The last team which went from England to Australia contained Jack Hobbs, Herbert Sutcliffe, and Maurice Tate, each in his own way at least as effective as anything which Australia—or even England, for that matter—has ever produced. So we are compelled to dig a little bit deeper for the secret of Australia's success, and I think perhaps the best possible summary is to say that Australia wins because Australia organises for victory.

THE IMPORTANT DAY OF REST.

Let me go into details for a minute or two. The people who are responsible for leading Australian cricket in the right channels know that, other things being equal, it is the little matters—organisation foremost among them—which count. I don't know whether you have noticed that the fixture-list of the Australians for this season has been so arranged that the players have an entirely free day immediately preceding the start of every Test match. Moreover, a closer glance into the fixtures

will show that even the games which have been arranged to precede the Test matches can mostly be described as of the lighter kind.

BOWLERS WHO LACK FIRE.

In this connection I cannot help wondering whether England would not have a better chance of beating Australia this summer if every one of her Test match players had a rest prior to starting on the very serious business of winning back the "Ashes." An England player may be "bowling his heart out" for his county up to five o'clock on Friday evening; then he has to pack his bag, rush to the station, and travel perhaps a couple of hundred miles between the finish of his county game and the start of the Test match. If you asked such a player whether he felt fit on the Saturday morning, he would reply in the affirmative, and probably he does feel all right. But there may have gone from his bowling just that little bit of "fire" which makes all the difference.

A WORD WITH THE UMPIRE!

J. B. Manchester.—If a batsman hits the ball straight down the crease and it hits the other wicket while the other batsman is out of his ground the latter would not be out. But he would be out if, in the course of its flight, the ball just touched the fingers of one of the fielding side.

F. Markland, Leeds.—As I reckon it up, there are actually nineteen hours of cricket in a three-day Test match, according to the way the programme is arranged for the present season. The start on the first day is at eleven-thirty, and on the other days eleven o'clock, and stumps are drawn at six-thirty each day. There is a luncheon interval at one-thirty lasting three-quarters of an hour, and a tea interval at four-thirty lasting a quarter of an hour.

F. Best, Coventry.—I should say that the best all-round performance of any Englishman against an Australian eleven is to the credit of R. G. Barlow. Playing for a North team against the "Aussies" Barlow scored 10 not out, and 101, and in the match took 10 wickets for 48 runs. I cannot trace any other player who has scored a century and taken as many as 10 wickets against the Australians.

Enquirer, Worcester.—You were quite right in your statement that Fred Root has played for three counties. First of all, he turned out for Leicester, the county in which he was born. Then he went to Derbyshire until the War was over. Later he lived at Worcester, and thus put in a residential qualification for that county, for which he now plays, of course.

THE REAL THING.

I expect it will be argued that if every England player were let off from county duty for three days immediately preceding a Test match, the county interests would suffer. With that argument as such I have nothing to do—the county authorities must be allowed to know their own business best. I am dealing with effects, and in the two points of view you have perhaps one reason for Australia's victories. In Australia the Test matches are the things which matter; and, speaking as a man who has played with an Australian team in this country, I may add that when we Colonials are in this country the outlook is the same—the Test matches are all-important.

ONE EYE ALWAYS ON THE TESTS.

I do not mean to suggest that the "minor" games are thrown away—the record of the 1921 team disproves that contention. It is a fact, however, that the Australian captain and selectors regard these games as likely to provide them with information which may help to win a Test match. In the early days of the present tour comment was made that the Australians did not always strain every nerve to emerge victorious. Against the M.C.C. team in May the declaration was delayed, for instance, until it was almost impossible for the Australians to force a win. Knowing the Australian idea as I do, however, I think it is very probable that the leaders of the side considered that more lasting good would accrue to the side by giving certain batsmen practice, and by making experiments with certain bowlers, than would have been gained if victory in this "minor" match had been regarded as of first importance.

THE FIGHTING SPIRIT.

What we call "personality," or "temperament," in cricket is extremely difficult to define, and I confess that in referring to this I am treading on ground about which I know very little. Yet one cannot help the feeling that temperament has counted a great deal in Australia's favour during the last few years. How often has it been said that Australia's teams have had no tail, or, alternatively, that somebody is sure to "come off." Surely this is not entirely due to the fact that Australia has managed to produce all-rounders while England has only produced specialists in one department or the other. Rather do I think it is due to the possession of the fighting spirit which is backed by confidence—a confidence which, I may add, is given to Australian players by the people and the Press.

THE WILL TO WIN.

Did space permit I could tell you much of how the winning of Test matches is made a "study" by the responsible Australian authorities. The strong and weak points of every England batsman are known, and to know them is to play to them. With the things I have written here you may not agree. Some people may think that it is possible to give too much attention to detail, until winning at cricket becomes a business as distinct from a game. That is beside the point, however. I have been asked why Australia wins, and my reply, summarised, is, by organisation, will-power, and the never-say-die spirit.

E. A. Macdonald

AT THE NETS!*By County Cricketer.*

A New Series of Articles which will tell you how to improve your cricket,

CUTS AND LEG HITS.

HERE goes to fulfil my promise to tell you something this week about the "cut" stroke in batting. Let it be said at once that cuts are not easy; on the other hand, they are very useful shots to have in the "bag."

Roughly speaking, cut shots come under two headings—the square cut, and the late cut. The square cut should see the ball whiz to the boundary—or in that direction, at any rate—out of the reach of point's left hand. This is a pretty shot to make from a ball on the off side which is pitched comparatively short. The way to make it is to move the right leg across and bring the bat down sharply on the ball at the time when it is passing the body.

There is a certain amount of wrist work required in this stroke, too, if full power is to be given to the ball, but this wrist work effect can only be got by practice. What I do want you to bear in mind in playing the square cut, is to keep the bat pointing towards the ground.

WAIT FOR THE RIGHT BALL!

The good late cut may be described as one of the most difficult shots in the game, and perhaps the prettiest of all. This is made much in the same way as the square cut, with this difference: that instead of the ball being hit when it is level with the batsman's body, it is made after the ball has passed the body. Bring the bat down late, flick the wrists at the right moment, and you will see the ball go skimming away without any further effort. A word of warning here, however. Don't get into the habit of trying the late cut with balls which are on the wicket, or you will soon find yourself in the pavilion instead of among the century-makers.

A POPULAR STROKE!

Before turning my attention for a few minutes to what may be called legitimate leg strokes, I must just mention a very popular stroke among leading players—the hook or pull of a ball which is on the off, but which, as the words imply, is pulled or hooked round to leg. I am not so sure that this is a shot which boys ought to be encouraged to make, because it is a dangerous stroke. If, for instance, a fast bowler is on, and sends down a short one which you think you can pull, always remember that it may bump shoulder high, and you will then be in danger of getting one on the shoulder or head for your pains. These pulls or hooks are made with a horizontal bat, the right leg being put across the wicket and the left leg drawn round in such a way that at the moment when the stroke is made the batsman is completely facing the bowler.

A DIFFICULT SHOT!

Nowadays the average bowler gives the batsman little opportunity for what is called the leg glide, the glancing stroke which is in many respects similar to the late cut. This is done with a flick of the wrists, and a bat slanting towards the ground to keep the ball down.

A real leg hit should be made by throwing the left leg down the wicket almost as if you were going to kick the ball, with the right leg coming behind, and the whole body thrown into the swinging stroke.

Next week I shall turn my attention to the bowling side of cricket, and start giving some hints on how your bowling may be improved.

G. T. S. Stevens, the Middlesex amateur, is a most likely man to captain an English side in the future. Of him it is said that he is the type of batsman who can go in when things are bad and break the bowlers' hearts. He doesn't even mind breaking a bat or two in the process, either.

It is not true that the popular cricket phrase, "having a dip," was invented by Dipper, of Gloucester. But he does like having a dip, all the same.

AN AMAZINGLY LIFE-LIKE

CUT-OUT STAND-UP PHOTO OF J. S. RYDER,

The Famous Australian Cricketer,

(SHOWN HERE IN MINIATURE)

ADD THIS
DANDY CUT-
OUT STAND-
UP PHOTO TO
YOUR SET,
BOYS!



**"THE TEST
MATCH KID!"**

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by

"PATSY" HENDREN,
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of the

"POPULAR"!

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(Continued from page 12.)

He lounged round the pavilion, impatiently awaiting the end of the innings. When the Redclyffe men came to bat, he was certain to be given the bowling—and then he would show that he was the equal of the fellow he had displaced. At all events he hoped so.

The game went on, and the wickets fell fairly fast. There was no doubt that Redclyffe were in great form, and that the Greyfriars team needed their best men there to keep their end up. All down for sixty was not a flattering total. But Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the champion bowler of the Lower School at Greyfriars, was a rod in pickle for Redclyffe; and if he was in good form, Redclyffe were not likely to beat sixty. Hurree Singh's comrades confidently expected the hat-trick off him, once if not twice. They would not have expected it, had they known the true identity of the junior hidden under the dark Oriental complexion.

"Not so jolly bad," said Bob Cherry, cheerily. "I've had rather bad luck—and poor old Inky worse. We'll make it up on the bowling."

"We'll try," said Harry.

"If Inky's fit," said the Bounder. "He didn't look fit, the way he batted. It was actually clumsy."

"Well, Inky's really a bowler, you know," said Bob.

"Let's hope he can bowl," said Smithy. "Where is he? Inky?"

"My esteemed Smithy—"

"Oh, here you are," said Wharton. "Feeling fit, Inky?"

"The fitfulness is truly terrific," answered Wibley, with a dusky grin.

"We're relying on you for the wickets, you know."

"The relyfulness on my esteemed self is the proper caper."

"Hat-trick, mind," said Johnny Bull.

"What-ho, my esteemed Johnny."

And when the Greyfriars men went into the field, the ball was tossed to the dusky cricketer.

"First over, Inky, and make 'em hop!" said Wharton.

And Wibley, grinning, answered that the hopefulness would be terrific and went on to bowl.

cake, and Bunter had taken the trouble to loot it from Coker's study cupboard; so the loss was serious. But Bunter did not think of stopping to recover the cake. Coker was too dangerous at close quarters, for that.

Had not Coker stopped to pick up the cake, dire vengeance would indubitably have landed on Billy Bunter. He had too much weight to carry, to distinguish himself in a foot-race. But Coker did stop to pick up the cake, and toss it on to his study table; and that gave the Owl of the Remove a chance.

Bunter fled for his life. In the doorway of his study, Coker shouted to him to stop. Coker seemed to be under the impression that his authoritative voice would cause the fat junior to come back and meet his just punishment. In that, Coker was quite mistaken.

"Bunter! Bunter! Come back! Stop! Do you hear? Come back, you fat rascal! Come back, Bunter! Do you hear?" bawled Coker.

Bunter heard, but he heeded not.

His one object, at that moment, was to put the greatest possible distance, in the shortest possible time, between himself and Horace Coker.

He sped on regardless.

"Bunter!" bawled Coker.

Then he rushed in pursuit. He stayed only to catch up a cricket stump, which he felt he would need when he overtook Bunter, and then he was raging on the trail of the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter heard the heavy footsteps

behind as he dodged out of the Fifth Form passage, and panted on.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Bunter.

With wonderful speed Bunter gained the Remove passage, and there he paused for a moment to take breath. Heavy footsteps and a shouting voice rang across the landing. Coker was still in hot pursuit.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

Coker knew whither he had fled. He was certain to search the Remove studies for him. Bunter turned into the stairway that led up to the box-room. His fat hand grasped the door-knob and turned it.

To his dismay, the door did not open.

"Oh!" stuttered Bunter.

The door was locked.

Bunter was turning away to seek another refuge when a voice came from the box-room—a voice that made him jump.

"Open the door and let me outfully!"

Bunter almost staggered.

It was the voice of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, whom he had seen—or supposed he had seen—start in the brake, hours ago, with the Remove cricketers.

Bunter wondered whether he was dreaming. He was so astounded that he forgot even Coker for the moment.

"Inky!" he gasped.

"Is that the esteemed Bunter?"

"Yes," stuttered Bunter. "Is—is—is that Inky? How on earth did you get back? What are you doing there?"

"I am lockfully shut in, my esteemed



THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Bunter!

"BUNTER!"

Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, stood in his study doorway, and fairly bawled.

Coker looked wrathly.

It was enough to make the Fifth Form man wrathly, to drop into his study on a half-holiday, and to behold a Remove junior just leaving—with a cake under his arm.

And that was what Coker of the Fifth had done and beheld.

The surprise was mutual, as Coker and Bunter met. Coker had made a jump at Bunter, and Bunter had made a frantic jump for the door.

Bunter just got clear, and fled down the passage—but the cake dropped from under his arm. It was a nice, fruity

Like the gentleman in Macbeth, Wibley stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once. "Stop!" roared Bob Cherry. "Inky—I mean Wibley—stop!" But the disguised Wibley ran like the wind and soon gained a clear lead of his pursuers. (See Chapter 12.)

Bunter. If the key is in the lock, please turn it backfully and let me out."

"The key isn't here," said Bunter. "That esteemed rascal, Wibley, has taken it away, then," said the nabob. "I will give him the terrific thrashfulness."

Billy Bunter listened intently—but not to the nabob. Heavy footsteps were passing along the Remove passage, and he knew that they were Coker's.

Amazing as it was to discover Hurree Jamset Ram Singh locked up in the box-room, Bunter had no time to think about that. Coker was a more pressing matter.

The heavy footsteps passed the box-room staircase, and Bunter trembled. If Coker came up—

But Coker of the Fifth passed on. Then the footsteps came back and receded towards the Remove staircase. Bunter breathed more freely.

Coker's footsteps died away, the Fifth-Former probably searching the studies, or perhaps giving up the chase, and leaving the study-raider over till a more convenient opportunity.

"Thank goodness!" gasped Bunter.

"My esteemed fat Bunter—"

"He's gone!" gasped Bunter.

"Eh? Who is gone?"

"Coker. The beast was after me," said Bunter. "All serene now! I say, Inky, what are you doing in there?"

"I am locked in, my esteemed Bunter."

"I didn't see you get back from Redclyffe," said Bunter, mystified. "The match can't be over yet. The other fellows haven't come back."

"I have not been to Redclyffe, Bunter."

Bunter jumped.

"Not been to Redclyffe?" he exclaimed.

"No."

"I jolly well saw you start in the brake!" howled Bunter. "Are you off your rocker, Inky?"

It was Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's turn to jump.

"What do you mean, Bunter? Are you potfully insane? I did not go in the brake, as I was locked up here."

"You did!" roared Bunter. "I saw you."

"You saw me in the brake?"

"Yes, you ass!"

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter, I came up here for my bat, and the door was closed and lockfully fastened on me. I have been here all the esteemed time since, and the fellows went without me."

Billy Bunter felt as if his head were turning round.

"You've been locked up here all the time?" he babbled. "Ever since I told you Wibley had put your bat in that room?"

"Yes."

"Then who was it went in the brake with the fellows?" howled Bunter. "You haven't got a twin at Greyfriars."

"The understandfulness is not terrific, my fat-headed Bunter. I suppose Wharton took another man in my place."

"There isn't another nigger at Greyfriars."

"Another what?"

"I mean blinking Hindu," said Bunter. "Think there's another chap with a giddy complexion like yours?"

"Do you mean to say that a fellow with a dark complexion went in the brake, Bunter?"

"Yes, you ass—you are your twin!" said Bunter.

"I do not understand. You are THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 960.

dreamfully imagining, or else pulling my excellent leg. But let me but of this, Bunter. I have been shutfully kept here for hours."

"My only hat!" murmured Bunter. "He's mad—mad as a hatter. Fancy coming back secretly and locking himself in the box-room like this! Must be fairly off his rocker."

"Will you find a key, Bunter, and let me out?" demanded Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Not if you're mad," said Bunter cautiously.

"You fat idiot—" "Oh, really, Inky—" "Let me out!" shouted the nabob.

"Mean to say you didn't lock yourself in?" asked Bunter.

"No, you fooling dummy!" "The key isn't here."

"The esteemed rascally Wibley must have taken it. Find another key to unlock the door, Bunter, and I will lendfully tip you half-a-crown."

"I dare say one of the other box-room keys will fit this door, Inky," he said. "I'll try, anyhow. Sure you haven't got the key in there?"

"You esteemed idiot—" "Keep your wool on! I'll try."

Bunter was successful. The key of the lower box-room fitted the lock, as it turned out. The door opened at last, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was released. He came out of the top box-room with a grim, dark face.

"Now for the esteemed Wibley," he said.

"I say, Inky, hold on—" "The hurryfulness is terrific!"

"Hold on!" hooted Bunter. "What about that half-crown, you beast?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh tossed a half-crown to the Owl of the Remove and scudded down the box-room stairs. Bunter followed him at a more leisurely pace, and—keeping a wary eye open for Coker of the Fifth—rolled away to the school shop. There tuck, liquid and solid, to the exact value of two shillings and sixpence, consoled him for the loss of Coker's cake.

Meanwhile, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was having the surprise of his life, as well as causing amusement. He hurried downstairs and met Russell of the Remove—and Russell jumped at the sight of him.

"You back?" he exclaimed.

"My esteemed Russell—" "What's the matter at Redclyffe?"

asked Russell. "Why have you come back on your own? Wasn't the match played?"

"I did not start for Redclyffe, my esteemed Russell. I have been lockfully shut in the box-room—"

"Potty?" asked Russell. "I saw you start in the brake."

"Hallo! Is that Inky?" asked Bolsover major, coming up. "You've got back jolly early, Inky? Anything wrong?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh blinked at them in amazement. Amazing as it was, incredible as it was, it was forced in upon his mind that the Remove fellows believed that they had seen him start in the brake. Unless they were dreaming—or unless he was—some person unknown, resembling him nearly enough to be mistaken for him, had started for Redclyffe with the Remove cricketers.

There was one way of solving the amazing mystery. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh hurried away, and in a couple of minutes was on the telephone in Mr. Quelch's study—the Remove master being out—and ringing up Redclyffe School.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Champion!

"THE hat-trick!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I don't think!" the

Bounder remarked. Bob was still hopeful, at least, though there was something about the dusky cricketer that made him dubious. The "hat trick" from Hurree Jamset Ram Singh would have been extremely useful to the Remove team. It was not likely to materialise, in the peculiar circumstances. William Wibley, with his weird powers of impersonation, could make himself look like Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; but it was far beyond his powers to play cricket anything like the nabob of Bhanipur. His batting had been a frost, and his bowling was not likely to bear the most distant resemblance to Hurree Singh's. Wibley had bowled well against Fourth Form bats at Greyfriars; but he was destined to discover that the Redclyffe batting was of a different order.

The Greyfriars field watched the first over in surprise that grew into amazement.

Fane was taking the bowling, and the Redclyffe skipper was a good man with the willow. Probably he would have given a good account of himself against even Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Against William Wibley he did not need to exert himself much.

Knowing the nabob's bowling from old experiences, Fane put all he knew into the defence of his wicket. But he very quickly found that it was not necessary. After the first ball, he blinked; after the second, he stared; after the third, he grinned. The first ball he stopped dead; the second he knocked away for two; the third, for four. And his mental conclusion was that Inky was miles off his form, and that bowling of this quality meant a walk-over for Redclyffe.

Bob Cherry almost rubbed his eyes in his astonishment.

Wibley was not a bad bowler, if it came to that. But his bowling was nothing like what was wanted for this game. The Remove needed their best man. Wibley was by no means the worst. But he was nothing like what was wanted.

"Poor old Inky!" murmured Bob to himself. "He must be feeling this! He knows what we expect of him."

The other fellows were rather disposed to think that the nabob ought to have realised that he was off colour and stayed out of the game. Harry Wharton, in spite of his regard for the dusky junior, could not help thinking so. And before the first over was finished, the captain of the Remove realised that he could not count upon his champion bowler, and that Inky would be a negligible quantity in this game.

Wibley's feelings were not pleasant. He put all he knew into the bowling, and did his very best; but the plain fact was that his best was not good enough.

It was borne in upon his mind again that he had over-rated his powers, and that Wharton had been right in leaving him out of the Redclyffe match.

ANSWERS
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That was not a pleasant reflection for Wibley, now that he was committed to the game, and there was no retreat.

He went on, striving desperately to make some impression on Fane's wicket, and without avail.

At the end of the over Redclyffe went ten to the good, and Fane was grinning cheerily. With the best bowler in the Greyfriars team off colour like this, prospects were bright for Redclyffe. Greyfriars were rather ahead of Redclyffe at games, as a rule. In this game, at least, that was obviously going to be altered.

Wibley hardly dared to meet Wharton's eyes as he gave up the ball. His conscience was at work.

He still hoped, however. It was so excessively unpleasant to realise that he had bitten off more than he could chew, that Wibley was unwilling to realise it.

Vernon-Smith took the next over and did quite well. A Redclyffe wicket went down, rather to the relief of the visitors. The third over was given to Penfold.

"What about Inky?" Bob Cherry asked the captain of the Remove as the field crossed.

Wharton wrinkled his brows.

"I suppose we'd better give him a chance," he said. "But he seems to be in absolutely rotten form to-day."

"May pick up," said Bob hopefully.

"I hope so. It's letting us down," said Harry. "He must be seedy or something, I suppose. He really might have let me know before it was too late."

"Poor old Inky!" said Bob. "Of course, he didn't realise it. He seemed bright enough in the brake coming over."

Wharton grunted.

"I wish he'd brighten up again now," he said.

He called to the dusky cricketer.

"Go it, Inky! Give them something to think about this time, if you can, old fellow!"

Wibley blushed under his dusky complexion.

"I'll try," he said.

"Not feeling well?" asked Harry.

"Oh, yes! Right as rain! The rightfulness is terrific!"

"Well, go in and win," said Harry.

Wibley went on to bowl again. It was not Fane that he had to face this time, and he hoped for better things.

But history repeated itself.

Even Wibley had to realise, beyond the power of self-deception, that the plain fact was that his bowling was not good enough for Redclyffe. He might have taken wickets in a Form match with Temple & Co. at Greyfriars. He could not touch the Redclyffians.

His bowling was knocked all over the field, and runs piled up for the home team.

Wharton watched from his place in the field, with a brow that darkened and darkened, in spite of himself.

Whatever was the explanation, it was obvious that the dusky bowler was of no use against Redclyffe, and that giving him the bowling was making the home team a present of runs.

It was only Wibley's second over; but it was his last also. Runs could not be given away at that rate on the chance of the dusky junior picking up his lost form.

After that over the bowling was left to the Bounder, Penfold, and Tom Brown, with an occasional change; and Inky was left in the field.

More than once Wibley turned an appealing eye on Wharton, hoping for another chance to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat, as it were.

But he was not given another chance. The chances he had had already had turned out rather too seriously for Greyfriars.

It was an uphill fight for the Remove. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had been regarded as a tower of strength, and he had failed hopelessly. There were good bowlers in the team—the Bounder was especially good—but the loss of Hurree Singh was very serious. Even in the field the dusky junior did not display the keenness and activity that was expected of him. There was a groan from the Greyfriars onlookers when Fane dropped a catch almost into the dusky hands, and the dusky hands missed it.

"Butterfingers!" shouted two or three voices.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "What on earth's the matter with Inky? He's really clumsy!"

Wibley's face was crimson under its make-up.

His scheme had succeeded; he had realised his ambition; he was playing in an important fixture. But it was clear to his mind now that he had taken on a job above his weight. A realised ambition does not always bring the expected satisfaction. By this time, Wibley wished from the bottom

Don't Forget!

ANOTHER

DANDY FREE GIFT NEXT WEEK!

of his heart that he was anywhere but on the Redclyffe cricket ground.

The Redclyffe innings ended at last, with an even 100 for the score. The field came off, not looking very bright. With a surplus of forty runs on the Redclyffe side, the Greyfriars men evidently had a hard struggle before them in the second innings. From the Redclyffe point of view, the game was over bar shouting, and they looked very pleased with themselves and things generally.

Bob Cherry clapped the dusky junior on the back, as cheerily as he could.

"Hard luck, old man," he said.

"The hardfulness of the luck is terrific," groaned Wibley. At that moment he would gladly have exchanged places with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh in the box-room at Greyfriars.

He moved away from the cricketers, not caring for their company just then. Harry Wharton glanced after him, with a rather worried glance. He was troubled in his mind about this complete collapse on the part of one of his best men, and he was troubled about the prospects of the match in consequence.

"Wharton!" called out the Bounder. Harry glanced round.

"Here's a Redclyffe man wants you."

A Redclyffe senior had come down from the House. He came over to Harry Wharton, who turned to meet him.

"You're Wharton?" he asked.

"Yea."

"Somebody's rung you up from Greyfriars, and he says it's important. Will you trot along to the House."

Wharton looked astonished.

"A telephone call from Greyfriars?" he ejaculated. "In the middle of a match! My hat!"

"He says it's very important. The phone's waiting if you want to take the call," said the Redclyffe man.

"What on earth—" said Bob Cherry.

"Must be something jolly important, I should think, to make them ring up a chap playing cricket here," said the Bounder. "Better cut off, old bean, and see what it is."

Harry Wharton nodded, and walked across to the school buildings with the Redclyffe man. The other fellows, discussing tea and cake, waited for him and wondered what was up. They little dreamed what it was—though they were soon to know.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

An Amazing Discovery!

"HALLO!"

"Wharton—"

"Speaking!" said Harry.

"My esteemed friend,

Wharton—"

Harry Wharton almost dropped the receiver.

The voice that came over the wires from Greyfriars, was the voice of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Wharton wondered whether he was dreaming.

"You are there, my esteemed Wharton. I have been lockfully shut up in a box-room, and have only recently emerged from it, owing to the ludicrous Bunter coming there chancefully—"

"Wha-a-at?" babbled Wharton.

"The regretfulness is great that I could not come over with you and play—fully join you in the esteemed cricket—"

"Look here—"

"Some of the fellows seem to think that I did come in the brake, my esteemed Wharton, and they say that they saw me, and the mysteryfulness is so terrific that I have rung you up to inquirefully ask—"

"You did come," gasped Wharton.

"Eh?"

"You're here now—"

"What?"

"I—I mean—" Wharton hardly knew what he was saying, in his utter amazement. "Look here, is that really Inky, or some silly ass pulling my leg? It sounds like Inky's voice."

"It is my esteemed and ridiculous self. The disgusting Wibley tricked me into a box-room and locked me in, and I have been a prisoner—"

"Wibley did?" gasped Wharton.

"He did! I expected you to come up for me, but the brake went off leaving me a dismal prisoner—"

"But you came in the brake!" stutered Wharton.

"I am still here, my esteemed chum! If somebody came in the brake as my esteemed self, he was a swindling impostor."

"Great Scott!"

"The understandfulness is not terrific, but our esteemed legs have been pulled," said the nabob. "Is there really and truthfully some person with you calling himself Hurree Jamset Ram Singh?"

"Yes," gasped Wharton.

"Then he is a swindling spoofer. But it is amazeful that you can have been taken in."

"If he's not the genuine goods, he looks the part," said Harry. "I can't understand this. Who could play such a trick? Look here, are you really Inky, or a silly ass pulling my leg?"

"My esteemed Wharton—"

"Your voice sounds genuine—so did his. It beats me hollow!" The captain of the Remove was utterly bewildered.

"Has he played cricket?"

"Yes."

"How has he played?"

"Rottenly," said Wharton, and it was borne in upon his mind that the spoofer was the dusky junior present with the team, not the fellow who was telephoning to him. The amazing downfall of Hurree Singh as a cricketer was explained now, if the fellow was not really Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Did you think I would play rottenly, my esteemed Wharton?" asked the nabob reproachfully. "It is a swindling impostor, and you must be a first-class footling ass to be taken in."

"Oh, my hat! But who—what—you say it was Wibley locked you in the box-room?"

"I thinkfully believe so—at least he hid my bat there and caused me to go there, and then I was locked in—"

"Wibley!" gasped Wharton.

A light flashed on his mind.

"Wibley! He—he said he would play in the match, whether we liked it or not! You remember—"

Wharton gasped with rage.

Back into his mind came the remembrance of Wibley's japes and his weird tricks of impersonation. That, of course, had been in Wibley's mind, when he uttered his apparently absurd threat of playing at Redclyffe in spite of the cricket captain. It seemed incredible—but Wharton knew that it was true! That utter failure of the dusky cricketer in the Redclyffe match did not need explaining—if it was Wibley.

"The esteemed Wibley!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The understandingness is now clear. It is the rascally and ridiculous Wibley. But you must have been a terrific ass—"

Wharton stayed to hear no more.

He barely stayed to ring off, before he rushed away from the telephone, and dashed out of the House, and back to the cricket-field.

If he had been taking a run, with the ball just coming into his wicket, he could not have covered the ground more rapidly.

His eyes were blazing as he ran.

It was Wibley—Wibley, playing a jape, supplanting one of the best men in the eleven, and letting down the team as a result! Wharton wanted to get within thumping distance of William Wibley, and he wanted to badly.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, astonished by the expression on Wharton's face as he came speeding up to the pavilion.

Wharton panted.

"That villain Wibley—"

"Wibley! Wibley's not here," said Nugent. "He didn't come over with us."

"He did!" roared Wharton. "He's pulled our leg—Hurree Singh's still at Greyfriars—it's Wibley—"

"What?"

"Gammon!"

"Impossible!"

"I tell you it's so!" roared the captain of the Remove. "Inky's just rung

me up from Greyfriars to tell me so. He's been locked in the box-room!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great pip!"

"Where is he?" raved Wharton.

"Inky!" shouted half a dozen voices.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he goes!"

There was a roar.

William Wibley had heard—and he had lost no time. What to expect from the cricketers, after the game he had put up, and now that they knew the truth, Wibley did not need telling. The look on Harry Wharton's face was enough for him.

Like the gentlemen in Macbeth, Wibley stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once.

He started at a run; and when the juniors sighted him he was going strong.

"Stop!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Inky—Wibley—stop!"

If the Greyfriars fellows needed any proof, they had it now. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, of course, would not have dashed away like that, fleeing from the wrath of the cricketers. He would have had no reason to do so; while William Wibley had ample reason.

Three or four fellows rushed in pursuit.

"Stop!"

"Stop him!"

"You rotter! You spoofer! Stop!"

Wibley ran like the wind. The Redclyffe fellows stood and stared at the chase, dumbfounded. A brown-faced man who had been watching the game, and was loafing under the shady trees, moved away and disappeared from the Redclyffe cricket ground, with a peculiar glint in his black eyes. Harry Wharton came to a breathless halt.

"Let him rip!" he gasped. "We'll settle with him for this later—it's time for the innings now! We can't keep Redclyffe waiting!"

"It—it—it really was Wib—that villain Wibley got up as Inky!" babbled Bob Cherry.

"That's why he played such a rotten game!"

"Great pip! Of all the neck—"

"Come back!" said Harry. "After all, we can hammer him for his trickery when we get back to Greyfriars."

Wibley had a good start, and he was running like the wind. Later, no doubt, he had to answer for his sins; he could not dodge punishment for ever. But he very prudently did not want to fall into the hands of the enraged cricketers so long as he could avoid doing so. It was wiser to give them as long as possible to cool down.

Harry Wharton & Co. returned to the cricket field. The jape was gone, and they were a batsman short in their second innings—not that it mattered, now that they knew who that batsman was. There was an uphill fight before them to pull the game out of the fire, and it was exceedingly doubtful whether they would succeed. There was no more time to waste on the trickster, and Harry Wharton & Co. devoted themselves to cricket, in the hope of still saving the game, and dismissed Wibley from their minds. They little dreamed what was happening to the impostor while the Redclyffe match went on, and what a price he was paying for his amazing deception.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Kidnapped!

"OH dear!"

Wibley stopped, gasping and panting, half a mile from the Redclyffe cricket ground.

Having looked over his shoulder and seen that the pursuit of the Greyfriars cricketers had ceased, he stopped to take breath.

Perspiration bedewed his brown-stained face, and he gasped and panted, and panted and gasped, as he threw himself into the thick grass by the roadside to rest after his uncommon exertions.

Wibley had started with the cricketers in a happy and confident mood. The game he had played had sapped his confidence and quite banished his happy contentment. But still he had nourished a faint hope of making good in the second innings. That hope was gone now, and all Wib had to look forward to was bearing the brunt of the cricketers' indignation. His failure in the match made him realise how strong and well-founded that indignation would be, and the prospect was not a pleasant one.

"Oh dear!" he gasped.

Somehow or other, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had escaped from the box-room, and had telephoned to Wharton. That knocked on the head Wibley's hope of better things in the second innings. But at the bottom of his heart, Wibley knew that he had made an egregious mistake, and that he ought never to have been in the team, and that a chance in the second innings would have made little difference, if any.

"I've been a fool—a thumping fool!" murmured Wibley dismally. "A crass, fatheaded, conceited fool! That's the long and short of it. Oh dear!"

Wibley could see that at last.

"Skinn—" thought I was good enough for the match; but, of course, he was pulling my leg, just as those fellows said—and—and I suppose I wanted to have my leg pulled!" mumbled Wibley. "Oh dear! I've played the goat, and—and I shall get the ragging of my life for this! Oh crumbs!"

There was not much doubt on that point.

Wibley had escaped for the moment; but he had to go back to Greyfriars, and when the cricketers returned—

"Well, I've asked for it!" groaned the hapless impostor.

As he lay resting in the grass, with these gloomy reflections in his worried mind, Wibley idly noticed a brown-faced man who sauntered along the lane. He noticed that it was the Hindu who had watched the brake start from Greyfriars, and who had later watched the cricket match on the Redclyffe ground.

The Oriental smiled a dusky smile at the junior stretched in the grass by the roadside.

He stopped and saluted Wibley.

"Salaam, sahib!" he said softly. "Dhani dhan."

Wibley grinned in spite of his troubled mind.

Evidently this man from the East took him for what he appeared to be—as the Greyfriars cricketers had done—a Hindu schoolboy.

What "dhani dhan" might possibly mean was a mystery to William Wibley, though the brown man's tone implied that it was an exclamation of satisfaction.



The next moment the grasp of the two Hindus was upon him. The sudden attack so astounded Wibley that he did not even think of resisting till he was swept across to the open door of the car. Then, in angry amazement, he struggled. "Let go!" he shouted. "What do you mean? What's this game? Help!" (See Chapter 13.)

Apparently the brown man was glad to see him, doubtless for the sake of exchanging a word or two with a supposed fellow-countryman. That was Wibley's natural thought.

Wibley's knowledge of Hindustani was limited to the single word "bungalow," so he could not answer in the same tongue. He was about to reply in English, when Nally Das stepped back into the road, put his brown fingers to his lips, and gave a shrill, penetrating whistle.

The hoot of a motor-car answered.

A covered car glided into sight, from a turning of the road, and stopped opposite the grassy bank where Wibley was resting, and where Nally Das was standing.

Wibley watched it idly. He supposed that the brown man was about to be picked up in a friend's car. Not for an instant did it cross his mind that the car was there on his account. That a plot was afoot against Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and that these two dusky rascals had taken him for the Nabob of Bhanipur, was, of course, utterly unknown to Wibley of the Remove.

Nally Das spoke to the man in the car, who alighted. Then he turned back to Wibley with a grin.

He spoke rapidly in Hindustani, and Wibley smiled and shook his head.

"Put it in English, please," he said. "I don't understand."

Nally Das stared at him.

He repeated his words, pointing to the car. Wibley, in amazement, realised that the Hindoo was telling him to step into the car, though he understood none of the strange-sounding words.

"Jaldi karo!" muttered the second Hindu, with a hurried glance down the road, and Wibley, without understanding the words, could guess that they meant "make haste."

The next moment the grasp of the two Hindus was upon him.

The sudden attack so astounded Wibley that he did not even think of resisting till he was swept across to the open door of the car.

Then, in angry amazement, he struggled.

"Let go!" he shouted. "What do you mean? What's this game? Help!"

"Chup raho!" hissed Nally Das.

"Help!" yelled Wibley desperately.

He was tossed into the car like a sack, and the two Hindus bundled in after him.

A moment more, and a heavy cloth was wound round Wibley's face and head, blindfolding him, and at the same time choking his cries. He was stretched on the floor of the car, and a large rug drawn over him.

While Nally Das handled Wibley, with a strength that gave the amazed junior no chance, Kalouth set the car in motion.

It glided swiftly away.

Wibley, amazed, alarmed, terrified, lay blindfolded, gagged, under the thick rug, jolting on the floor of the car as it rushed along the road.

He was kidnapped.

Why, was a mystery to him, till it flashed into his mind that the two rascals had taken him for a Hindu—taken him, as he realised at last, for Hurree Jamset Ram Singh of Greyfriars.

That was the unexpected outcome of his imposture. They were there to kidnap a Hindu schoolboy, and they had taken him for the Hindu schoolboy they sought. That much was clear to Wibley, and his sudden flight from the Redclyffe cricket-ground had made their task easy—much easier than the kidnappers could possibly have anticipated.

Kidnapped!

Wibley's trick had saved Hurree

Jamset Ram Singh from these scoundrels, and Wibley, in his disguise, had fallen into their hands in place of the nabob.

The car rushed on. The kidnapped junior could not speak; half-suffocated by the gagging, blindfolding cloth, and the weight of the heavy rug over him, he could only lie there with whirling senses, while the rushing car bore him on and on, he could not even guess whither.

Harry Wharton & Co., on the Redclyffe cricket-ground, gave no thought to Wibley of the Remove, as they played hard to retrieve the game. It was not till the match ended—in a defeat—that they remembered him, and they remembered him vengefully. Redclyffe, no doubt, attributed their victory to good cricket; the Greyfriars fellows agreed on all hands in attributing it to William Wibley. Undoubtedly, Wibley's trick had helped.

"The ass!" said Bob Cherry. "The dummy! The crass luffer! Chucking away a cricket match for us! Why, we—we—we—we'll scalp him! We'll lynch him! We'll boil him in oil!"

Had Wibley of the Remove been at Greyfriars when the exasperated cricketers arrived there, the ragging of his life would have fallen to the lot of William Wibley. But the hapless japer of Greyfriars was in more dangerous hands than those of the Remove cricketers.

THE END.

(Now look out for the second story in this amazing series, which is entitled: "The Nabob's Double!" and be prepared for something extra good. And don't forget next Monday's FREE GIFT!)

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DAVID GOODWIN AT HIS BEST! The opening chapters of a brilliant new story relating the adventures and misadventures of a boy who found himself "up against it!"

CURLEW ISLAND



by **David Goodwin**

The Watcher on the Wall!

PEEWIT! Weet!
Tommy Comber turned over and grabbed his gun that was lying in the long grass on the sea-wall. He had been half-asleep, and wouldn't have seen the plover at all if it hadn't advertised itself by calling out "Peewit!"

The plover had not seen Tommy or his gun either. It was flying towards him across the creek, just coming up nicely within shot. Another five seconds and the plover would have been down, for Tommy did not often miss, and, next to a good fat wild-duck, a roast plover was a favourite with Tommy.

Bang!

There was a sharp explosion away off on the middle of the island. The plover gave a sort of startled leap in the air, and sheered off in a hurry, just as Tommy was going to fire. He was done out of his shot. But he did not seem to mind. He laid down his gun and laughed.

"Dear old Nunks!" said Tommy. "He's at it again!"

He poked up his head above the sea-wall and looked towards some rough sheds and a small bungalow that stood on the flat, marshy island which the wall surrounded. From one of the sheds a puff of muggy-looking yellow smoke was rising into the air. That was where the explosion came from that scared the plover.

Certainly Nunks was at it again. He had made the explosion, and Tommy wondered whether he had done it on purpose or by accident.

"Nunks" was Joseph Comber, Tommy's uncle, and he was never known as anything but Nunks. He was a jolly sort of bird, and uncommonly clever. Nunks was an inventor and an experimental chemist. He didn't keep a drug store and make pills, but there was nothing he did not know about acids, gunpowder, and stinks that were strong enough to poison a stoat, not to mention all kinds of electrical stunts.

Nunks had endeared himself to Tommy at an early age. He could make the most amazing fireworks, and had taught Tommy to make them, too.

This had given Tommy a taste for monkeying with chemicals. He had not

much appetite for lessons, and the only things he was keen on at school, apart from footer, was the science laboratory. There was a very good one at the Hockstead school. Nunks had taught him a good deal more. Before he was fourteen Tommy was something of a dab at chemistry. But what he preferred was making rockets. He could make as good a rocket as ever burst in stars of five different colours.

When Tommy was fourteen his folks died—his father had been poor—and he found himself alone in the world except for Nunks. He had to get a job quick. Nunks turned up trumps, and brought Tommy down to Curlew Island, where he had the time of his life.

His job was to help Nunks in the chemical experiments. It was more like play than work, and most of the time Nunks was busy with things that were too deep for Tommy. Then he was free to go shooting on the marshes, or sailing and fishing on the river. There was a good boat, and Nunks had given Tommy an old, muzzle-loading gun.

On this afternoon, Tommy, sitting on the embankment by the sunlit creek and chewing a bit of grass, told himself that he was in luck.

Curlew Island was a tophole place. A bit wild and lonely, but none the worse for that. It was a Robinson Crusoe sort of island. No one would have thought London was only forty miles away up the river.

Away on his right was the broad mouth of the Thames, three miles wide, with the great steamers passing by in procession on their way to all parts of the world. All round the back of the island ran a broad, winding creek, blue water and reeds and salt marsh—separating Tommy's island home from the mainland of Essex. The island itself was cut up by dykes and beds of rushes, and surrounded by a high embankment to keep out the tides.

Nunks had bought Curlew Island a year ago. He had not much money, but he got it cheaply. It wasn't a place most people would rush to buy. It was a lonely, secret spot; but Joe Comber liked lonely, secret places. He could make all the explosions he liked, without damaging the neighbours, for there wasn't any neighbours to damage.

Nunks was a capital chap and the best

of company, but Tommy did rather miss having no chums of his own age. However, twice a week he got a whole holiday, and could go off to Gravesend or London, where a cricket match or a visit to the movies lived things up for him.

Once or twice lately he had felt a trifle dull, in spite of the shooting and fishing, and wished something more exciting would turn up. He did not guess that enough excitement was now coming his way to last him a lifetime.

Suddenly Tommy sat up and stared at a round, dark object that showed among the grass on the top of the sea-wall, a long way off to the left, up the creek. It was a man's head. Tommy had a sharp eye, and the slight movement of the head did not escape him. He saw it sink down a little lower in the grass.

Somebody was lying behind the top of the bank, watching the sheds where the bang of the explosion had been heard. Tommy could see nothing but the head, for the embankment made a sharp bend between him and the spot.

"Hallo, hallo!" said Tommy under his breath. "Now who in thunder is that, and what's he after?"

He ducked below the bank on the creek side, and made his way round towards the bend. Whoever the man was he must have come in a boat, for there was no other way of getting there. Visitors were very rare at Curlew Island. The regular landing-place was at the jetty on the riverside. Why should this man sneak round by the creek at the back and then creep up the sea-wall?

Coming round the corner, Tommy was just in time to see the stranger get into a boat and row away rapidly up the creek. Tommy stopped and stared in astonishment.

"If that isn't Chuffer, I'm a Dutchman!" he said.

Chuffer:

"CHUFFER" FOSS was Tommy's cousin, the only relation he had in the world except Nunks.

He was the last person Tommy expected to see there. The rower was a very long way off; it was impossible to see his face. But the rest of him was as like Chuffer's big, hulking shoulders and lumpy figure as anything could be.

Chuffer lived at Gravesend, miles away up the river. He had never been to Curlew Island but once, and that was a year ago. He didn't like boats or rowing, though he could row if he had to. He didn't like cricket, or shooting, or fishing, and he didn't like Tommy. Nor was Tommy very keen about him, though they had never actually quarrelled. Tommy did not know that the last time Chuffer came there it was to borrow money from Nunks, which he had never paid back, and did not intend to. Nunks had helped Chuffer many a time, even when he was hard up himself.

There was no reason Chuffer should not come to the island if he wanted to, but why, thought Tommy, didn't he land at the jetty like any other visitor, and walk straight over to the bungalow where Nunks and Tommy lived?

Tommy shrugged his shoulders, and did not worry much about it. Perhaps it wasn't Chuffer after all. By the time he reached the spot where the visitor had landed, the boat was away out of sight among the maze of creeks at the back of the island. Tommy gave it up, and as the tide was up he pulled a fishing-line and a can of lug-worms out of his bag and sat down to fish for flounders in the creek. He caught a dozen flat-fish. Nunks and Tommy both had a liking for flounders, which are as sweet as nuts when fried for breakfast. An hour later, with his string of fish and the birds he had shot, he set off across the island to the little bungalow, which was no bigger than a log-cabin.

The sheds where Nunks worked were some distance from the bungalow, and one shed in particular, which was called No. 3, stood well apart from all the others. It was here that Nunks did most of his extra special experiments. Even Tommy seldom went into No. 3. As he approached, Nunks himself came out, waved his hand, and shouted cheerily to his nephew.

Joseph Comber was a brisk, lively little man of about fifty, with a face like a rosy pippin, a merry blue eye, and flowing white side-whiskers. Except for the whiskers, and the clever scientific brain under his hair, it always seemed to Tommy that Nunks had never grown up. "Nunks is a regular kid," Tommy used to say, "but one of the best."

"Hallo, old chap!" shouted Nunks. "Got some birds? Fish, too? Good biz! You're the kid to scoop 'em in. Hear that bang I made, awlike back?"

"You did me out of a shot, Nunks, old dear," said Tommy grinning. "Glad you haven't blown yourself up." "No fear," said Nunks cheerfully, "only a bit of a stunt I was trying out. Made a thundering row, didn't it. No, I don't want any grub just now, kid—you have yours. I'm busy. Got something doing in the shed there. Hallo! who's that coming there? Don't want anybody on the island to-day. I want to be private!"

Tommy turned round. A big figure was shambling along the path from the jetty, coming towards them.

"Why, it's Chuffer!" he exclaimed. "I was right, then. Thought I saw him snooping about up the creek just now. He'll be wanting to see you."

The grin faded from Nunks' cheery face. He looked annoyed, and it took a good deal to annoy Nunks.

"I've no use for him," he said. "I won't see him! Chuffer's a dirty dog. Chuffer ain't straight. He—" Nunks stopped. "Never mind about that now. I can't see anybody. You look after the chap, Tommy. Be civil to

him; give him some grub, and then get him off the island. See?"

"Ay, ay!" said Tommy, rather surprised, as Nunks dived back into No. 3 Shed and got to work among his beloved chemicals.

Always ready to carry out orders, Tommy strode down the path to meet Chuffer.

Chuffer was a big, hulking fellow, more than two years older than Tommy, with a slab of a face and small sharp eyes. He was a half-cousin of Tommy's—a cousin once removed. Tommy wished he were removed farther still.

"Hallo, kid!" said Chuffer patronisingly. "Still playing Robinson Crusoe on this rotten island? Haven't seen you for months. Your mouth's as big as ever."

"Well, I don't shoot it off so much as you do yours," said Tommy cheerfully. "What were you after, up the creek? Ducks?"

"Me!" said Chuffer sharply. "Who are you getting at? I haven't been up any creek. Came straight down river from Gravesend, and only just landed on the jetty."

Tommy thought this was queer. He eyed Chuffer curiously, but said nothing.

"Where's Uncle Joe?" said Chuffer. "I want to see him."

"He can't see anybody to-day, he's busy at the sheds. Come along to the house, Chuffer; just going to have grub," said Tommy civilly. "I can give you a good spread. Got a prime eel-pie and a plum-duff I can hot up. Then we might go fishing. Fishing's top-hole just now."

"I don't want grub and I've no use for fishing. I came here to see Uncle Joe, and I'm going to see him."

"Well, you can't see him. Told me he wasn't to be disturbed. And what Nunks says, goes."

Chuffer flushed red.

"I'm in his way, am I?" he snarled. "You kid yourself you're old Joe Comber's favourite nephew, eh? You think he's got a bit of money and he might make a good bit more—and that it'll all come your way when Uncle Joe goes west. That's why you take jolly good care not to let me come near Uncle Joe! I'm as much his nephew as you are, but you've tried to set him against me so I sha'n't get any of his money!"

Tommy was so astonished at this idea that he stared at Chuffer blankly. For a moment he was too astonished even to be angry.

"Are you off your onion, Chuffer! I never dreamed of such a thing. D'you suppose I want good old Nunk's money? I've never said a word to him about you, good or bad."

"Yes, you have!"

Tommy's temper blazed up like one of his own fireworks.

"If you call me a liar, Chuffer, you'll get a plug in the jaw and get it quick!"

"Will I?" roared Chuffer furiously. "From you, you little snipe? You're a liar and a sneak, too. You've done me down with Uncle Joe. You're always telling the old fool lies about me. And you've the cheek to stand there and say he won't see me? Well, here's where you get yours!"

He rushed at Tommy like a bull elephant.

It looked a very unequal fight. Tommy was barely fifteen, though well-grown for his age. Chuffer was over eighteen and enormous. A fist like a ham whizzed past Tommy's ear as he ducked.

The Fight on the Marsh!

CLIP! Whack! Tommy's right came up under Chuffer's chin and Tommy's left got home on the solar plexus: Chuffer staggered back with a grunt of rage and astonishment. He had never had two such punches in his life. He had no idea Tommy could hit so hard.

"I'll slaughter you, you little beggar!" gasped Chuffer, rushing at him again.

"Come on!" said Tommy. "Make a job of it!"

He dodged Chuffer's rush, landed a left swing on Chuffer's ribs, but was just too late to save a return punch that spun him right round.

"Baa!" said a voice reproachfully.

It was Dempsey, the goat. Dempsey was a great pal of Tommy's, and the only four-footed beast on Curlew Island. He had just strolled up, chewing a tomato-can thoughtfully, and was surprised to see Tommy prancing round and round this big stranger and hitting him. Dempsey dropped the can, wagged his beard, and watched the fight. He was interested.

Chuffer's arms were whirling like windmills. He was in such a rage at Tommy's defiance that he slogged like a madman. But Tommy was as quick on his feet as a cat, and as tough as whipcord, while Chuffer was soft and flabby, for all his huge size; yet he was driving Tommy back by sheer weight. Suddenly Tommy became aware that the deep marsh ditch full of water and black mud, was behind him; he side-stepped swiftly, but as he did so Chuffer's fist caught him on the side of the head and knocked him spinning. He went flat on his back.

With a roar of triumph and fury, Chuffer sprang on him, and kneeling over him, gripped Tommy by the neck. The big lout was beside himself with rage, his eyes glowed red, and his fingers tightened on Tommy's throat, before the boy could recover himself or struggle.

"Baa!"

Dempsey sailed in. It was more than he could stand. Dempsey was all for fighting, but there is this difference between a bull and a billy-goat—the goat never butts anybody who is down. Once he has floored his enemy he says "Baa" and walks off. And very likely Dempsey would not have interfered but for the tempting vision of the back of Chuffer's trousers. It was never safe to bend down when Dempsey was around. Even Tommy dared not do it, though Dempsey was fond of him.

The temptation was too much for Dempsey. He launched himself like a hairy thunderbolt. He caught Chuffer bending. The flat of his horns hit Chuffer's pants with a resounding thump, and Chuffer shot clear of Tommy and fell on his face in the mud, nearly a length clear of him.

"Baa!" said Dempsey, bending over his fallen master and sniffing at him. His beard tickled Tommy's face.

"Baa!" repeated Dempsey, as much as to say: "Get up, old son, and slish the big lout properly!"

Tommy struggled to his feet. Chuffer was already up, a bit shaken and bewildered, but more infuriated than ever.

He had not seen Dempsey, and even now didn't realise what it was that had hit him; he was only enraged at being balked for a moment of his prey. But Tommy was now in the hottest temper of the two, and all he wanted was to get at Chuffer.

They went for each other like a pair of gladiators.

Dempsey got out of the way. He saw he wasn't wanted, and he couldn't have butted in without hitting both of them, for they were mixed up like a couple of dogs fighting. He drew off a little distance and watched them, wagging his beard. Dempsey was the referee. He liked fights of any kind, and this was a whale of a fight.

Chuffer had lost both his temper and his head, and he was out of breath. Tommy had lost his temper but kept his head, and so he was dangerous. He was a clever boxer, and Chuffer was only a slogger. One of Chuffer's slogs, fairly sent home, would have knocked Tommy senseless—but they didn't get home. One of them grazed Tommy's ear, and split it; the next moment Tommy got a swinging left jolt to Chuffer's ribs, and a straight right to the jaw. Chuffer, blowing like a grampus, was giving ground, backing all the time to try and get away from Tommy and get the advantage of his own long reach. Not having eyes at the back of his head he did not see that he was backing to the edge of the ditch; he made one last furious slog, and Tommy, ducking, sent in a whizzing right upper-cut to the point of Chuffer's chin.

"Wup!" gasped Chuffer, and sailed backwards.

There was a mighty splash, and he soused into the marsh ditch, disappearing in a fountain of leaping water and muddy spray.

Chuffer came to the surface blowing like a grampus. There was four feet of water in the ditch, and the rest was black mud. His face was plastered with it, and a mat of wet pond-weed hung over his head.

Tommy gave a yell of laughter. Chuffer looked so funny that he forgot his wrath, and, springing to the bank, held out a hand.

"Here, let's give you a pull out!" he said.

Chuffer was not having any. He backed out of reach, floundered across the ditch, and hauled himself out on the far side. He was spitting, and blubbering, and snivelling like a baby. He had had enough. Without so much as a glance at his rival, he set off at a squelching jog-trot along the bank of the ditch, making for the landing-place where his boat was. He seemed to have only one ambition left—to get off Curlew Island as soon as possible. He left a trail of mud behind him, and he looked like an ambling orang-outang who had been dipped in a tar-barrel.

Tommy threw himself down on the grass and laughed till his sides ached and his breath came in gasps. Even Dempsey seemed to be grinning from ear to ear, and his beard wagged like a duck's tail. When Tommy finally picked himself up Chuffer had disappeared over the sea wall.

Tommy and the goat arrived on the sea wall just in time to see Chuffer pushing out in his boat. He turned when he saw Tommy, and shook a muddy fist at him. Chuffer's eyes were glaring, and his blackened face was like the face of a demon.

"I'll be square with you!" he yelled hoarsely. "You'll pay for this yet!"

"Baa-aaa!" said Dempsey scornfully. "Well," said Tommy, watching Chuffer set the boat's lug-sail and steer away up the river towards Gravesend, "I'll be hanged if that isn't the frozen limit!"

Nunks Clicks at Last!

TOMMY shoved his hands into his pockets and walked back towards the bungalow, Dempsey trotting beside him. He could not make it out at all. Why should Chuffer think Tommy was after Nunks' money and wanted to do Chuffer out of the chance of getting it?

It was a mad idea. In the first place, Tommy had never dreamed of doing such a thing, and in the second, good old Nunks was likely to live twenty years; and Tommy hoped he would. He was fond of Nunks. Nor did Tommy ever bother his head about money; for that matter, he did not suppose Nunks had got any money, to speak of. What little cash Nunks had he mostly spent on apparatus and chemicals. He paid Tommy no regular wages, but would always give him ten shillings or so when he wanted a day off to go to a cricket match, or up to London. Nunks, who hardly ever left the island, had enough money to live on, and that was all. He had invented a useful little gadget for trench bombs during the War, and the Government paid him enough money for it to be a useful little nest-egg. But Nunks had spent most of it on his experiments.

Tommy did not know that there were sixty or seventy pounds in notes in Nunks' small iron safe in the bungalow, and that was practically all he had got left in the world.

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One thing Tommy did remember. Nunks had said a rather queer thing to him only a week ago.

"Look 'im," said Nunks, "with a bit of luck I'm going to be as famous as England's Test team, and as rich as Charlie Chaplin! Not that I care a toss about money; what I want is power, kid—power! And if I'm rich you'll be rich, too, for you're a good little partner, and you've stood by me like a brick. But not a word, Tommy, for it mayn't come off!"

Tommy had laughed, and paid very little attention to this. For, clever though Nunks was at chemistry, he had too many queer notions that never came off. There were times when Tommy thought that Nunks suffered from bats in the belfry. He was a bit cracked.

As Tommy came up to the experimental shed, with Dempsey beside him, Nunks burst out of the doorway, his whiskers bristling with excitement and his eyes shining.

"Tommy, lad, I think I've done it!" he shouted. "By the living jingo, I believe I've done it at last!"

"Done what, Nunky?" he said.

"Aha! Wait and see! Another half-hour's work and I'll surprise you. Here, come into the shed; I want you to help. What's the matter with your ear? You're bleeding!"

"It got a bit of a rub."

"Where's that lout, Chuffer?"

"I got him off the island, as you told me. He's pushed off home."

"Oh, well, that's all right, then. I don't want anybody hanging round today. Come along!" said Nunks, and led the way into the shed.

He was too excited to ask any more

questions just then, and Tommy decided to say nothing about the fight. Chuffer had accused him of sneaking to Nunks, and he wasn't going to make the accusation good. Chuffer didn't matter. Tommy felt he could give him his gruel at any time without bothering Nunks about it.

Inside the shed was a long table, with a top made of hard slate a foot thick, and a lot of bottles and apparatus on it. There was also a stone sink with a rain-water tank and tap above it.

On the table was an electric coil, a lot of test tubes in a stand, and a little white stone cup no bigger than an egg-cup, in which lay quite a small quantity of bluish-grey stuff that looked rather like crumbled cake. It was slightly damp, and a ray of sunlight that came in through the window shone on it and was slowly drying it.

"What d'you make of this, Tommy?" said Nunks.

"Dunno," said Tommy, sniffing at it.

"Is it a giddy secret?"

"That's what it is," said Nunks, rubbing his hands and chuckling. "And it's taken me a year's work to get that stuff."

"All right," said Tommy. "I'll bet you half-a-crown to tuppence, if I take it into the testing-shed, I'll tell you in ten minutes everything you've put in it."

Nunks slapped him on the back and roared with laughter.

"Cheeky young pup!" he said. "You'd lose your money. You're a right smart little firework-maker and no bad chemist, since I taught you. You can take a bunch of mixed-up chemicals and analyse 'em and name 'em easier than most folks could do a Cross Word puzzle. But not you nor the best professor at Oxford could analyse that stuff and tell what's in it."

"Well, then, it's a giddy secret all right," agreed Tommy; and Nunks winked at him.

"Never mind what's in it—what's it do?" persisted Tommy. "Don't be so beastly mysterious, Nunky!"

Mr. Comber's face fell. He didn't look quite so confident.

"I wonder if I've got it right?" he said. "It's absolutely right on paper, Tommy. It works out like a sum. But there are one or two things about it I'm not quite sure of. There's a bit of work to be done on it yet. Switch on that battery, and bring me the cylinder of oxygen gas."

For the next ten minutes Tommy assisted according to orders, but without understanding what his uncle was driving at. Nunks took a morsel of the crumbly stuff on the end of a glass rod and held it in the oxygen flame, and it burned green, blue, purple, pink, and brilliant crimson by turns; all the while Nunks made notes and calculations in an old exercise-book. Then he shoved the book away and sighed.

"Something wrong!" he said gloomily. "Come on, Tommy; we'll let the stuff get dry and have a go at it later. Let's have some grub. I'd better not tell you about it—it may be a frost after all."

They left the shed together, and Dempsey met them at the door; Nunks seemed rather down in the mouth.

Crash!

There was a roar like a thunderclap. Tommy felt as if he had been hit from behind by some giant with an enormous boxing-glove, and a whole battery of guns seemed to go off in his ears.



The flat of Dempsey's horns hit Chuffer's pants with a resounding thump. Chuffer shot clear of Tommy and fell on his face in the mud, nearly a length clear of him. "Baa!" said Dempsey. (See Page 24.)

There was a terrific blast of hot gas, and Tommy and Nunks and Dempsey the goat went whirling through the air like leaves blown before a storm.

Worth a Million Pounds!

IT seemed to Tommy that the end of the world had come. He was careering through space. Then he hit the earth again.

Luckily for him it was soft earth—a heap of loose sand, near by a small pile of bricks. If he had hit the bricks it would probably have been the end of Tommy. He got a mouthful of sand, spat it out, and sat up, spluttering and dazed.

A few yards away Dempsey was struggling to his feet, and, with a terrified baa! galloped away across the island, his tail cocked like a gun-hammer.

The place looked as if a cyclone had smitten it. The shed was completely wrecked, its four walls had fallen outwards like a house of cards; the roof had been blown off and lay on the marsh quite a long way out.

Tommy sat up, rubbing his eyes, and looked round for Nunks. He saw him close by, lying on his face, quite still—so still that Tommy felt a thrill of horror. Was he dead?

"Nunks!" he gasped.

Mr. Joseph Comber stirred, wriggled, sat up, felt his face, and in a bewildered way began to brush the sand

out of his whiskers; he stared at the wreckage of the shed. Then, with a yell of delight, he rolled over to Tommy, grabbed his hand, and shook it like a pump-handle.

"Tommy!" he whooped. "Congratulate me! Congratulate me!"

"What the dooce—" gasped Tommy.

But Joseph Comber sprang up, and began to dance like a dervish; he danced a hornpipe, then he danced the Highland fling, waving his arms and shaking his fists triumphantly.

"I've done it!" cried Nunks, his voice husky with sand. "I've done it!"

"You jolly well have!" said Tommy faintly. "What was it?"

"Why the powder, kid—the powder!"

"You don't mean that stuff in the cup?" said Tommy, amazed. "Why, there wasn't a teaspoonful of it!"

"Only five drachms!" said Nunks joyfully. "And if there'd been fifty pounds, by jinks, it would have blown Curlew Island clean off the blessed map! That's a powder that'll make every other powder on earth look like a pinch of snuff!"

"But what's the good of stuff like that?" exclaimed Tommy, who was still feeling rather too stunned to take it in.

"Good of it! Why, everybody that uses powder—for blasting quarries, for mining, for war—they'll have to have it, and they'll pay anything for it! It's worth hundreds of thousands!"

Tommy whistled. His head was clearing now, and he saw it was a

mighty discovery, sure enough. It was a winner. Nunks was right.

"It's a holy terror, Nunks!" he said. "But did you expect the giddy stuff to go off like that?"

"No, I didn't," confessed Nunks. "But I know what happened. The stuff became dangerous when it got dry, and it was that ray of sunlight shining on it that suddenly warmed up the temperature and touched off the lot. I own up I'd made it a bit ticklish. I took a chance."

Tommy didn't mind taking chances, but there is a limit.

"Ticklish!" he said. "Why, it's a wash-out, Nunks! Anybody who monkeys with that stuff, or lets the sunlight get at it, will find himself blown into hash before he knows what hit him."

"Oh, skittles!" replied Nunks. "Now I've got the stuff I can make it as safe as gun-cotton—safer. It only wants two things taken out of it, and one thing put in, an' after that you could cook it in an oven or burn it or hammer it with a mallet and it wouldn't go off. I'll fix it so there's only one way it can be exploded, and I'll show you how it's done, Tommy. Gee! But to-day is the greatest day of my life! Now come and let's get cleaned up and have some grub. Then we'll get busy!"

They cleaned themselves and opened a tinned tongue at the bungalow, making a quick dinner. Nunks would

not wait to have anything cooked. They were both very sore and shaken, but Tommy did not mind. He felt that he was next to a big thing; he was nearly as excited as Nunks.

After dinner they got to work. The shed was gone, but that didn't matter. Nunks had kept it specially for that kind of job, in case it got burned or blown up. There were three more sheds, and in one of them the stock of chemicals and apparatus was stored. Nunks made some more of the powder, but he made it differently this time, and used great caution. The job took him three hours. Tommy helped him, carrying out his orders, handing him the test-tubes, and weighing out chemicals for him with the delicate glass scales. This saved time.

Nunks didn't seem to find it as easy as he expected. When night fell he had not finished the experiments, and they

both went to bed tired out. Next morning, after breakfast, they were at it again. They worked all day, and Nunks announced that he had got the stuff safe.

He took a very small quantity of it, just a few grains made into a ball the size of a pea, and played tricks with it that made even Tommy feel a bit nervous. But Nunks only laughed; he knew he had got it right now. He hammered with a tack-hammer, and nothing happened. He set a match to it, and it burned harmlessly, with a greenish purple flame. Then he made another pill of the same stuff, wrapped it in lead foil, fixed a detonator to it—a thing like a small gun-cap—put a slow fuse to the detonator, laid the whole thing under a brick, right out in the open, and lit the fuse. He and Tommy retired right back to the sea-wall,

hundreds of yards away. The fuse burned slowly.

Bang!

There was a roar like a cannon. When they went back to the place they found a hole blown in the ground deep enough to bury a man in.

"Finished!" said Nunks gleefully. "There you are, Tommy, safe as a church, but if you want to explode it, you can do it with a fulminate detonator. You know what that is. Don't forget that, kid. You could make the stuff yourself in a day, if I gave you the recipe—the formula. The greatest powder an' the greatest power on earth, and it's worth millions. Who said I wouldn't be famous?" He clapped Tommy on the shoulder. "I tell you what. We'll call it Comberite!"

"Right-ho! Good luck to Comberite!" said Tommy. "I say, Nunks!"

"What?"

"Does anybody know you've been after this giddy stuff? D'you reckon anybody's wise to it?"

"Not a soul in the world!" said Nunks. "It's a dead secret—no one knows a thing about it except you and me."

"Sure of that?"

"Absolutely sure!" Nunks looked a bit thoughtful. "And I'm going to make sure nobody ever will, Tommy. Tell you what. Get some of that straw and wood over there and light a fire. I'm going to the house."

Tommy, rather mystified, lit a small bonfire on the grass. Nunks had disappeared into the bungalow, but presently he came back, carrying a whole armful of papers and notebooks.

"Know what these are?" he said. "They're about the powder, and the work I've done making it. It's all down here in writing and figures. Well, here goes for the lot!"

He threw the papers on the fire. They blazed up, and he stirred the ashes together.

The Secret of Comberite!

"**T**HAT'S done. Now nobody can track Comberite. I don't need notes an' figures, because, of course, I know all about it. I've got it in my head. I don't mean to have anybody pinching my secret. It stays with me!"

"Good egg! Just as well to make sure."

"Half a mo.!" said Nunks quietly. "I've been thinking, Tommy. If anything happened to me the whole thing is lost. Suppose I fell off the jetty and was drowned, or got struck by lightning, or anything you like? Well, it isn't likely, of course. Still, if something happened to me, the secret would be gone for good—lost to the world. See? I don't want that. I want you to benefit. So I'm going to pass the secret on to you. I can do that in ten minutes."

"Me?" said Tommy. "Gosh! Like-wise hurrah, Nunks! I'll freeze on to it! Nobody'll get it off me. By gum, though," he added, rather anxiously. "I'm a careless sort of bird. I hope I don't lose it!"

"I'm going to give it you in a way you jolly well can't lose it!" said Nunks. "It'd take me too long to show you just how the stuff's made. And, of course, I won't give it you in writing, which you might lose or get it stolen. But I can pack it tight, and you'll have to remember it. And, by jinks, I believe you're the only chap living who

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could do that! You've got that funny trick of remembering things, and never forgetting 'em. You could make money at that, if ever you were out of a job, and broke. It's a gift. You're the Boy Datas, that's what you are. Remember Datas?"

Tommy saw what Nunks was driving at now. Of course he remembered Datas.

Once he and Nunks had gone to a music-hall show at Southend, and there was a performer called "Datas," at least, that was his stage name. He was a sort of human dictionary and newspaper file, and his speciality was that he never forgot anything. Somebody in the audience would ask him about a railway accident that happened ten years ago. Datas was on it. He could give the time, place, the names of all the killed and injured, and everything about it. Another would ask him about a cricket match at the Oval some day the year before last. Datas would whack out the names of all the players, the scores they made, whether they were bowled or caught, and the time stumps were drawn. And he never made a mistake. The audience tried to catch him out, but they couldn't do it. They had to cheer him instead.

Tommy didn't think much of it. It seemed dull to him. He could do it just as well himself, if he wanted.

"It's dead easy, Nunks," he said.

"Easy! It may be to you. I couldn't do it, an' I've a good memory, too," said Nunks. "But I'm going to trust you with a secret worth a million, and I'll give you a bit of a test first." He pulled an old newspaper of last winter out of his pocket. "You read all the football reports, didn't you?"

"Rather! Never missed one."

"How did this one go? Birmingham v. Sheffield United." Linley opened the score with a beautiful shot."

"I got it!" said Tommy. "Beautiful shot after eight minutes' play, Briggs scoring the second when the game had been in progress 23 minutes. But the visiting goal had many narrow escapes during the course of the game, which favoured Birmingham on the whole. Mercer was particularly smart in the attack."

He reeled off a whole column of it, and there wasn't as much as a comma wrong. He had it just as it was in the newspaper, which he had read once, months ago.

"It's a giddy marvel!" said Nunks admiringly. "Now then, here's the secret of Comberite. Got that by heart, quick!"

He handed Tommy a sheet of paper on which he had written about twenty lines of figures and writing and fractions. This was much worse than a football report. It was awful tough stuff; it looked like a doctor's prescription gone mad. Tommy began to read it out.

"H2 SO3-CB4-7T-46-J3."

There seemed to be miles of it. A Cross-Word puzzle was a fool to it. All the same, Tommy knew that if he had all the chemicals that these figures stood for, and plenty of time to do it in, he could probably make the stuff, though it looked like nothing but a nightmare at present. Nunks had taught him to do that sort of thing. It was easier than it looked, and he had had a year of it. He read the paper through twice, slowly, nodded, read it again, and handed it back to Nunks.

"Got it?" said Nunks anxiously.

"Sure!" said Tommy, grinning.

"Listen, Nunks." And, striking an attitude as if he were about to recite

"The Boy stood on the Burning Deck," he reeled off all the figures of the recipe for Comberite.

"Co-rect!" said Nunks. "Once more, Tommy. You're a hard-boiled miracle! You've got old Datas skinned. And—you won't ever forget it?"

"Course not. I could no more forget that stuff than I could forget the ABC!" retorted Tommy.

"And I believe you," said Nunks. He crumpled up the paper and threw it on the fire, where it blazed up. Then he laughed, and tapped Tommy on the forehead with his finger.

"That tough little bullet out of yours is now worth a fortune!" he said. "It holds a secret you could sell to-morrow for anything you liked to ask. Only two people in the world know it—you and me. You're a rattling good kid, and I know I can trust you all the way. You've got to promise me something—that you'll never attempt to make that powder without my leave. For one thing, if you made the smallest mistake, you'd blow yourself up. You mustn't monkey with it—that's not what I gave it you for. It's mine, and you are guarding it for me."

"All right," said Tommy.

"The next thing is, never breathe a word to any living soul about that secret, or let on that you know it. Don't let anybody get it out of you, or I'm done for."

"I'd let 'em cut me in pieces first!" said Tommy. "Don't you worry, Nunks!"

The Sandbag!

NUNKS shook Tommy by the hand silently, and then stood up. He was looking very pale and tired. The strain of the last two days' hard work, and the explosion, had rather taken it out of him.

"I feel done up," he said. "I want about ten hours' sleep. Think I'll have some grub and turn in."

They went over to the house arm-in-arm, and as they were both hungry, Tommy cooked a piping hot meal in quick time—fried flounders and stewed duck. He had put the stew on at mid-day, and it was now luscious and savoury. He also made some hot pancakes, and put a spoonful of strawberry jam in each. Tommy had learned cooking from Nunks, just as he had learned chemistry, and he liked doing himself well. But Nunks was so tired that he nearly fell asleep over the table. After supper he staggered into his bed-room, and turned in "all standing," as sailors say, throwing himself on the bed with his clothes on. In ten seconds he was sleeping like a log.

Tommy was neither tired nor sleepy—

in fact, he felt very wide awake. He was feeling a bit fed-up with chemistry and secrets, and was inclined for some sport. The worst of Curlew Island was that it was sometimes a bit lonely, except for Nunks. He wished Dan Bennett, his pal up at Gravesend, was with him.

He went to the door of the bungalow and took a look round. There was a fiery red sunset, and it was begin-

ning to blow rather hard. Suddenly he heard a familiar sound overhead—wis, wis, wis!—and a rush of wings. It was a big bunch of wild-duck, flying over towards Crane Saltings, up the creek.

"By gum, I'll be after you!" exclaimed Tommy, going for his gun.

Tommy could never resist a shot at wild-duck. It was likely to be a good night for them up the creek. They would be dropping in at all times up to midnight, when the tide was full, especially with this wind. There is no time like night for wild-ducks, and Tommy had a quick eye and could shoot a rising duck by starlight.

He went down to the jetty, unhitched the boat, and rowed away up the creek. It was nearly a mile to Crane Saltings. When he got there the ducks suddenly rose, quacking and shooting up like rockets from among the reeds. Tommy fired twice rapidly and bagged a neat right-and-left. It was a good beginning, and he pushed on for Long Corner, which was a better place still.

But here he had no luck. He heard ducks passing over in the darkness, but too high. He pushed the boat close in to the reeds and waited. It is no use hurrying when you are after duck. Presently he looked at the luminous dial of the watch Nunks had given him, and was surprised to find it was nearly eleven. He had waited two hours without a shot, and had had enough of it. He pulled home to the jetty, tied up the boat, and walked across to the old stile which barred the path leading to the bungalow.

But he still felt as wakeful in the dark as a cat, and, somehow, he was in no hurry to turn in. The events of the day had excited him. Instead of making for the bungalow, he leaned his arms on the stile that crossed the path by the marsh dyke, and thought it over. The secret of Comberite somehow kept running through his head like a tune. He chuckled as he remembered how Nunks and he and Dempsey had gone sailing through the air when the shed blew up. It was a wonder they had not been killed. However, all's well that ends well.

Old Nunks had certainly made good! He was a wonderful chap, Nunks. Was he really going to be rich and famous? It looked like it. Tommy wondered what would happen in that case. They wouldn't go on living on Curlew Island, anyway.

Two heads appeared over the sea-wall away behind him, watching.

Two dark figures came silently down
(Continued on next page.)



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CURLEW ISLAND!

(Continued from previous page.)

the slope of the wall, and crept across the marsh towards the bungalow. They were mere shadows, almost invisible in the gloom. But, whoever they were, they seemed to catch sight of the dark outline of Tommy's figure, leaning on the stile, and they halted.

Then they altered direction, and came towards him, very cautiously and silently. Nearer and nearer they drew, till they were within a dozen yards.

Tommy did not hear or see them. They were behind him. He had no

notion there was anyone within a mile of him except Nunks, asleep in the house. As a rule, Tommy would have been as difficult to catch napping as a weasel. But he was thinking, and dreaming, and the strong wind sweeping across the island made the rushes rustle like a lullaby.

He thought of himself in a big motor-car, sitting beside Nunks in a frock coat and top-hat; rolling off to a cricket match with a bunch of cheery chums. Nunks was a jolly chap, and would give his nephew a rattling time. Maybe he would buy Tommy a small car of his own. Fancy Nunks rich! It was a rummy idea. Nobody now supposed Nunks was rich—except, of course, that

he owned Curlew Island, and kept, maybe, a tidy bit of money in the safe at the bungalow. But that was all he had in the world.

Tommy straightened himself up. He was getting sleepy—

At that moment there was a rush, and a heavy, thudding blow. Tommy felt like a log, and lay face downwards on the grass.

(This is an unfortunate and painful ending to Tommy's dreams of wealth and ease, and worse is to follow. Mind you read the continuation of this powerful and dramatic story, by David Goodwin, and do me the favour of recommending it to your chums.)



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