

TOPPING FREE GIFT WITHIN!

No. 961. Vol. XXX. Week Ending July 17th, 1926.

The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY.

Library

**THIS GRAND
Stand-up
Figure**

**of
W.A. OLDFIELD
(AUSTRALIA)**

FREE
**in this
ISSUE!**



"THE NABOB'S DOUBLE!"

This Week's Grand School Story of the Greyfriars Chums!

TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

AND SIX MORE!

THAT sounds like a big hit over the pavilion roof, doesn't it?—the sort of thing that gets the crowd on tiptoe yelling their "Bravos!" Well, my piece of news this week is something in the nature of a big hit. In short, I refer to the wonderful series of Cut-Out Stand-Up Photos, two of which you have had and six of which you have still to look forward to. Doesn't that bring a "Bravo!" to your lips? Doesn't that give you a pleasant thrill? Knowing MAGNET readers as I do, I feel sure this glorious news will be as well received as if they all had the opportunity of seeing Jack Hobbs lift the Australian bowling over the pavilion roof six times in an over. Alas! many of us will not have the pleasure of seeing these doughty English and Australian cricketers do battle. But Magnetites, at any rate, have the unique opportunity of collecting a rattling fine series of life-like photos showing their favourite cricketers in action. Take for example this week's grand Free Gift. Just have a squint at W. A. Oldfield; at those big gloves of his. One might, with a slight stretch of imagination, hear his appeal to the umpire as those hefty gloves hold securely a catch off Gregory's bowling. We can't all see Test matches, as I have said before, but it's jolly comforting to know that you have Cut-Out Stand-Up Action Photos of all the leading players grouped together on the mantelpiece in your den. And these Free Gifts, bear it well in mind, are exclusive to the MAGNET and its grand companion paper the "Popular." In all, sixteen superb cut-out photos will be presented with these two papers—as fine a collection of world-famed cricketers as it is possible to get; as fine a series of Free Gifts as anyone could wish for.

YOUR PAL!

Now's your chance to prove to your pal that you think something of him. When a chap discovers something good which he knows will be of interest to his friend, it's obviously up to him to "put that friend wise." That's what I want you fellows to do. When you've secured your own Free Gift each week, and seen for yourselves the merits of it, just speak a few words of advice into your chum's ear and show him what the MAGNET has given you. Unless my knowledge of boys is completely off the rails, I'm ready to wager my best Sunday hat that your pal will scout off to the nearest newsagent like Billy Bunter trots after a free feed. And then when he gets his Free Gift he'll want to hug you for joy.

HOW TO STAND THEM UP!

In passing I should like to say a few words about making these gorgeous Free Gifts stand up. It's quite a simple matter, believe me. Hold the photo in your hand. At the extreme left, on the green base, you will see a short vertical black line marked "Cut." Cut along this line from the top **DOWNWARDS**, taking care not to cut farther than about an eighth of an inch from the bottom of the base. Got that? Good! Now, on the extreme right of the base you will see another short black line marked "Cut." Cut **UPWARDS** this time, taking care to stop a little short of the top of the base. Now bend the stand back at the dotted lines, and interlock the cuts you have made into one another. You will thus have made a strong stand which will support the figure nice and firmly.

ENGLAND'S SKIPPER!

Now we come to further remarks on big hits, for it is agreed on all sides that when A. W. Carr, captain of the English Test team, gets his shoulders open to a loose ball that ball takes a vigorous flight out of the ground for a six. 'Tis in such an attitude that we see A. W. Carr in next week's dandy Free Gift. There's a boundary-looking hit in his eyes that makes me feel jolly pleased it's not my bowling he's getting ready to swipe! But seriously, chums, this photo for next week is really A1. Your set will not be complete without it. There's going to be an unparalleled rush to secure these Cut-Out Stand-Up Photos, so take my advice—trot round to your newsagent and give him a regular order for your copy of the MAGNET. We miss trains, and console ourselves with the reflection that it doesn't make much difference, for we'll catch the next; we miss our tea, and comfort ourselves in the knowledge that there's supper to come, hungry as we are. But if you chaps miss these Free Gifts you'll find little consolation elsewhere. Take my words to heart and give that order To-day! 'Nuff said!

For Next Monday.

"THE PERIL OF THE NIGHT!"

By Frank Richards.

A powerful and dramatic story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, playing a leading part.

"CURLEW ISLAND!"

By David Goodwin.

Another long instalment of this amazing serial story, showing young Tommy Comber trying to prove his innocence to an unbelieving world. And don't forget, also, the special four-page cricket supplement.

Your Editor.

OUR SECOND LIMERICK COMPETITION!

"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. 2,
Gough House, Gough Square,
London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

so as to reach that address not later than Thursday, July 22nd, 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.



A. SANDHAM (of Surrey).

Though Sandham is not very tall,
He knows what to do with the ball.
When "Andy" hits out,
All the spectators shout—

Example last line:—

"To the bowlers, its wormwood and gall!"

MAGNET "BOUNDARIES" COMPETITION No. 2.

COUPON.

2

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

Name

Address

Last Line

Closing Date, Thursday, July 22nd.

MISTAKEN FOR A PRINCE! Not many people would object to being mistaken for a full-blooded prince, but William Wibley, the schoolboy impersonator, does, for he discovers that certain people want to cart him off to India as their prisoner!



The Nabob's Double!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars, with William Wibley, the Schoolboy Actor, in the Limelight.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Hurree Singh Is Wanted!

"BUNTER!"
"Oh dear!" murmured Billy Bunter.

He stopped suddenly. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove at Greyfriars, was standing in his study doorway, when William George Bunter appeared in the office. He called to the Owl of the Remove as he appeared.

Bunter blinked at him in dismay. Mr. Quelch was frowning, and looked as if something had disturbed him. It was quite by chance that Bunter's straying footsteps had led him along by the masters' studies, and he wished just then that they had led him anywhere else.

The Owl of the Remove was at a loose end that afternoon.

Harry Wharton & Co. were over at Redclyffe, playing cricket. Most of the Remove fellows had gone over in the brake or on their bicycles to see the cricket match. Peter Todd, Bunter's study-mate, was in the team; Tom Dutton, his other study-mate, was among the followers; it was past tea-time, and there was no tea in Study No. 7.

Sometimes Toddy and sometimes Dutton provided tea in No. 7—and sometimes both. Billy Bunter was seldom or never known to stand his whack. So Study No. 7 was at the present time an arid desert. Certainly there was tea in Hall. Bunter had disposed of that; but it had left him sighing, like Alexander of old, for fresh worlds to conquer. His celebrated postal-order, which Bunter had expected for so long a time, had not arrived. So Billy Bunter was feeling far from joyful, and he drifted dismally about Greyfriars, waiting for the cricketers to come home. And so he happened along by Mr. Quelch's study—and wished that he hadn't when the Remove master's sharp voice rapped out his name.

"Bunter!"
Billy Bunter wondered for a moment whether it would be feasible to affect deafness and disappear round a corner. He did not like the expression on Mr. Quelch's face at all.

But he realised that that was a chicken that would not fight, so to speak, and he came dismally along to Mr. Quelch's door.

"Bunter——"

"I didn't, sir!" said Bunter hastily.

"What?"

"It wasn't me, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"What? What was not you, Bunter? What do you mean?"

"I—I—I mean——" stuttered Bunter.

"I—I mean, I didn't do it, sir!"

"You did not do what?"

"Anything, sir—I—I mean nothing!"

Mr. Quelch stared at the fat junior blankly for a moment, and then he smiled slightly. Evidently Bunter supposed that he had been "called on the carpet," and was in rather too great a hurry to exonerate himself.

"You utterly absurd boy!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"If—if Coker's been complaining, sir——"

"Coker?" repeated the Remove master.

**A Gorgeous Cut-out
Stand-up Photo of
W. A. OLDFIELD,
Australia's Wicketkeeper,
FREE with this issue!**

"Coker of the Fifth, sir. I never went to his study. I never knew he had a cake——"

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Coker's quite mistaken, sir," said Bunter, with great earnestness. "It wasn't me, sir!"

"You should say, 'It was not I,' Bunter," said Mr. Quelch severely.

Bunter blinked at him.
"You, sir?" he ejaculated. "Oh, no, sir! Even Coker wouldn't think that you had gone to his study after his cake."

"You—you utterly obtuse boy!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Have you no knowledge of English grammar? You should say, 'It was not I'—not 'It was not me.'"

"But Coker didn't think it was you, sir!" gasped Bunter. "He thought it was me, sir!"

Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath.

"I am trying to make you understand, Bunter, that you should have used the nominative case."

"Yes, sir! I—I don't mind, sir!"

"You don't mind!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir! I—I'm willing to use any case you like, sir," said Bunter. "I—I always try to please you, sir. I—I respect you so much, sir. M-m-may I go now?"

Mr. Quelch's glance strayed to the cane on his study table. However, he did not step into the study for it, much to Bunter's relief.

"I called to you, Bunter, to ask you——"

"I know, sir!" gasped Bunter. "And I've told you that it wasn't me, sir! I assure you——"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I called you to ask you whether Wharton and his friends have yet returned from Redclyffe."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"I was not inquiring into any delinquency you may have committed," said Mr. Quelch sternly; "but if you have actually taken a cake from a Fifth Form boy's study——"

"Oh, no, sir!" stuttered Bunter.

"Coker came in and spotted me, sir—I—I mean, I never went to his study, and——"

"Silence! Have the junior cricketers returned yet?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Not yet, sir," said Bunter. "I'm waiting for them to come in now."

"I believe that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh is in the cricket eleven?"

"Yes, sir. But——"

"Very well; as soon as they return, Bunter, tell Hurree Singh to come to my study at once."

"I'll tell him now, sir, if you like."

"What? How can you tell him now if he has gone over to Redclyffe with the other cricketers?" asked Mr. Quelch testily.

"He didn't go, sir," explained Bunter. "A fellow locked him up in the top box-room for a joke, sir, and he was left behind."

"Oh, that alters the case!" said Mr. Quelch. "A foolish joke—an extremely foolish joke—but perhaps fortunate, in the circumstances. So Hurree Singh is still in the school, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir—he's getting his bike out

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to go over to Redclyffe and join the other fellows there."

Mr. Quelch started.

"He must be stopped at once! Go to him immediately, Bunter, and tell him to come to my study. Tell him that by the Head's order he must not go outside the school."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Lose no time, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "It is very important. Go at once." And the Remove master went back to his study.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Bunter, as he rolled away. "I wonder what's up now? I suppose it's a licking. Serve him jolly well right!"

And William George Bunter rolled away to the bike-shed to intercept Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a grin on his fat face.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Something for Skinner!

"INKY!"

"My esteemed fat Bunter—" "Stop!" hooted Bunter.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian junior in the Greyfriars Remove, was wheeling out his bike, when Billy Bunter arrived, breathless. Bunter halted in front of the bicycle, and raised a fat hand commandingly.

"There is no time for the stopfulness, my esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in the beautiful English he had not learned at Greyfriars. "The hurry is terrific."

Bunter grinned.

"You're wanted, Inky—"

"Rats! You are in the way of the esteemed jigger," said the dusky junior mildly. "The stopfulness aside is the proper caper."

"Quelch wants you," explained Bunter. "You're to go to his study at once."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh halted.

He was anxious to get over to Redclyffe School to see the finish of the cricket match there; though it was too late for him to take part in the game. But an order from the Remove master was law.

"What does the esteemed and ludicrous Quelch want?" he asked.

"I fancy it's a licking," said Bunter cheerfully. "Quelch looked rather black, and I noticed that he had his cane on the table in his study. I fancy you're for it. He, he, he!"

Apparently Bunter found something entertaining in the idea that Hurree Singh was "for it."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh looked at him, and wheeled on the bike. There was a sudden collision between the front wheel and Bunter's fat knees.

"Ow!" roared Bunter.

He sat down quite suddenly.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh chuckled—apparently regarding it as his turn to chuckle. He wheeled his machine back into the shed, and replaced it on the stand, and then took his way towards the House. Billy Bunter dusted the knees of his trousers and shook a fat fist after him.

Mr. Quelch glanced up from Latin prose papers as the dusky face of the nabob looked in at his door.

"Come in, Hurree Singh," he said, quite kindly.

The dusky junior entered the study, reassured by the Remove master's manner. Evidently it was not, as Bunter had hopefully anticipated, a licking that he had to expect.

"You sent for me, esteemed sahib?" he asked.

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"Yes, Hurree Singh. You were about to go out, I think?"

"That is the esteemed case."

"I am sorry to have to stop you, my boy," said Mr. Quelch, "but the Head has given instructions for you to remain within school bounds for the present. It is perhaps fortunate that you were prevented from going over to Redclyffe with the cricketers, in the circumstances."

The nabob blinked at him. He did not see anything fortunate in his ill-luck that afternoon.

"You will remember, Hurree Singh, that the Head received a letter a few days ago from your uncle, the Jam Bahadur, at Bhanipur?"

"I remember, sir."

"Your uncle had reason to suppose that trouble was threatening in Bhanipur, and that some attempt might be made upon your liberty, Hurree Singh."

Hurree Singh smiled a dusky smile.

"I am not afraid, sir! I do not think there is any dangerfulness for my esteemed self in England."

"Possibly not," said Mr. Quelch. "Probably not, in fact. But it happens, Hurree Singh, that since the Head received this warning, a Hindu has been seen hanging about in the neighbourhood of the school. It is extremely unusual for a Hindu to be seen in this neighbourhood, as you know, and Dr. Locke thinks it may be something more than a coincidence. For the present, therefore, he desires you to remain within gates."

The nabob looked dismayed.

"Your Headmaster is responsible for your safety, my boy," said the Remove master kindly. "You must obey this order cheerfully."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh did not look very cheerful.

"Since the Head spoke to me, I have made some inquiries," said Mr. Quelch. "I learn that a Hindu was seen near the school gates to-day, watching the brake in which the cricketers went over to Redclyffe. Three or four Greyfriars boys saw him. I was very glad to hear from Bunter that, owing to some trick played by a schoolfellow, you had not gone to Redclyffe. You will now remain within the school."

"But, sir—"

"This order is for your own safety, Hurree Singh."

"Very well, sir," said the nabob dimly.

Mr. Quelch made a gesture of dismissal, and the nabob left the study.

He made his way disconsolately to the Remove passage.

All his friends were over at Redclyffe; and nearly all the Remove were out of gates that sunny afternoon.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was one of the best-tempered fellows at Greyfriars, but his dusky face was very grim in expression just now.

Possibly, as his Form master had said, the trick that had been played upon him was fortunate in the circumstances; but Hurree Singh did not look at it in that light. He was longing to get within punching distance of Wibley of the Remove, whose amazing trick had kept him out of the Redclyffe match.

Indeed, he wanted to get over to Redclyffe, not so much to see the finish of the cricket match, as to see William Wibley.

But evidently Wibley had to wait now. Probably he was not quite so anxious as Hurree Singh for the meeting.

Almost all the Remove were out of gates; but as Hurree Singh came up the

Remove staircase, he heard voices in the passage. Skinner & Co. were "frowsting" indoors, as they often did on a half-holiday. Harold Skinner's voice came to the nabob's ears as he mounted the stairs.

"That fat idiot Bunter let him out."

"Bunter was bound to butt in," of course," said Snoop.

"Coker of the Fifth was after him and he scuttled up to the box rooms to get out of his way," growled Skinner, "not that it matters—it's too late for Inky to play."

"Wibley's played by this time!" chuckled Stott.

There was a laugh from the three.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh paused on the staircase, his dusky face growing grimmer.

He had wondered whether Wibley had any helpers in the trick he had played. He was learning now.

"Where's Inky now?" asked Snoop.

"He went to Quelch's study and telephoned to Redclyffe, before Quelch came in," said Skinner. "I suppose he put Wharton wise about Wibley. Must have made his Magnificence jump, I think, to hear that Inky was still at Greyfriars, and that he'd got Wibley in his team made up as a nigger. Ha, ha, ha!"

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

"It's a bit thick, though," said Stott. "Wibley's jolly clever at making up, and playing theatrical tricks, and all that; but he's not much good at cricket. He must have let the team down."

"Serve 'em right," said Skinner coolly.

"There'll be a row!"

"I know that! Wibley thought he was going to put up a good game, and that the fellows wouldn't miss Inky after all. He was relying on that to see him through. My impression is that he's no good at all against Redclyffe, and that he's come a mucker—and that he will get the ragging of his life. But it's no end of a joke on the Great Pandjandrum, Wharton."

"I shouldn't care to be in Wibley's shoes."

"Same here. But Wibley's a fellow of his word, and he won't drag us into it," said Skinner. "As far as we're concerned, of course, we know nothing whatever about it. Inky's gone over to Redclyffe on his bike now—"

"Not at allfully, my esteemed Skinner."

Skinner jumped and spun round in alarm.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came up from the Remove staircase with a grim face, and a glint in his black eyes. The three young rascals stared at him.

"You!" ejaculated Skinner.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Snoop. And he backed promptly into his study. Sidney James Snoop did not like the look in Hurree Singh's eye.

"So you were in it, my esteemed Skinner?" said the nabob.

"I—I—" stammered Skinner.

Stott followed Snoop into Study No. 2. Skinner would gladly have followed them, but a dusky hand grasped his collar.

"My esteemed and rascally Skinner—"

"Let go!" howled Skinner. "I—I had nothing to do with it. Wibley happened to mention to me— Yaroooh! I mean—he said—yoooh! Ow! Wow! You cheeky nigger. Ow, ow, ow!"

Bang, bang!

Skinner's head smote the wall of the Remove passage hard. Skinner roared and struggled wildly.

Bang! Bang!
"Yaroooh! Whoop! Help!"
yelled Skinner.

He tore himself away from the nabob's grasp and ran for his life. But Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was not finished yet. Wibley had to wait till the fellows came back from Redclyffe; but Skinner was on the spot to be dealt with, and the nabob dealt with him effectively. Snoop, peering with a scared face out of Study No. 2, beheld Skinner fleeing wildly up the Remove passage with the dusky junior in hot pursuit, letting out a kick at almost every step.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Snoop. Skinner was fairly dribbled up the Remove passage, yelling frantically. At the end of the passage he dodged into Study No. 14, slammed the door, and locked it, just in time.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Skinner, leaning on the table in No. 14 and pumping in breath. "Ow, ow! Oh, dear! Wow!"

By that time Skinner was feeling exceedingly sorry that he had taken part in William Wibley's extraordinary wheeze. And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, as he went to his study, was feeling a little better.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Where is Wibley?

"THE ass!"
"The fathead!"
"The cheeky chump!"

"We'll lynch him!"

"We'll boil him in oil!"

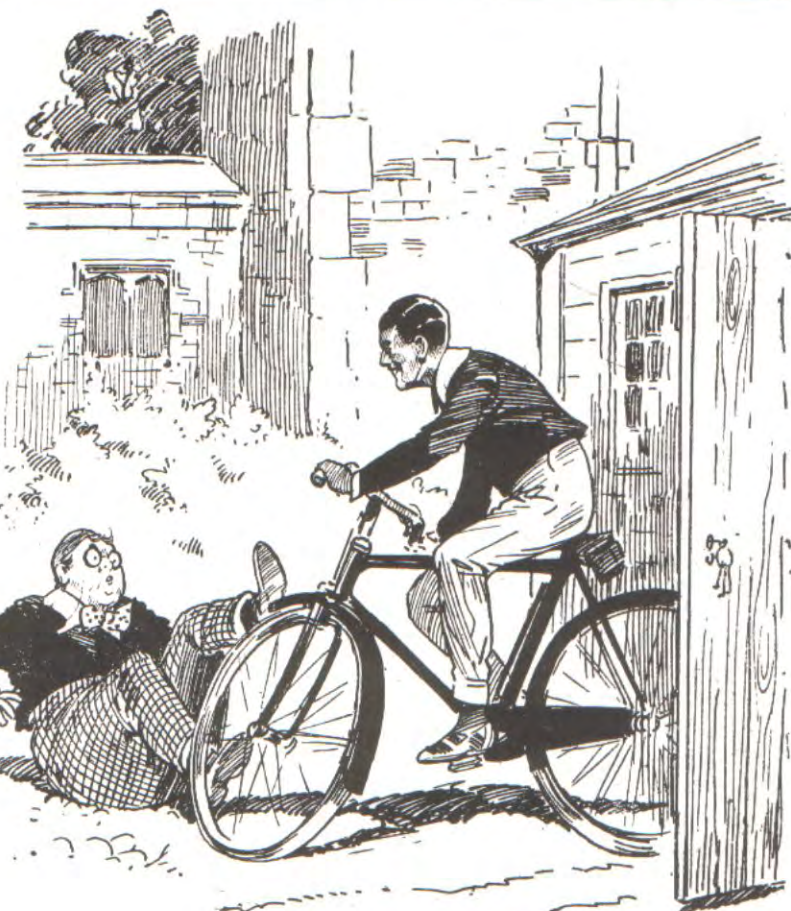
These remarks, and a great many more of the same tenor, were made by the Remove cricketers as they piled into their brake after the cricket match at Redclyffe.

Harry Wharton & Co. had been beaten; but that was not the worst of it. They were good sportsmen, and could take a beating cheerfully when the other side put up a better game, or when fortune was against them. But neither was the case now. They had been beaten through the trick played by William Wibley of the Remove—an amazing trick that had been discovered too late.

Wibley of the Remove, taking advantage of his weird and wonderful skill in the art of impersonation, had "made up" as the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur, and played in the match as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Wibley's queer impersonations had often caused merriment in the Remove studies. The fellows had seen him make up as Mr. Quelch, as Monsieur Charpentier, even as the august and respected Head himself. There was no doubt that William Wibley was exceedingly clever in that peculiar line.

But when it came to impersonating a member of the Remove eleven, and taking his place in a cricket match, matters became serious.

With all his skill, Wibley could never have impersonated any member of the team excepting Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Hurree Singh's dusky complexion gave him the chance, and Hurree Singh's wonderful variety of English was equally distinctive. Wibley had completely deceived the Removites, and he had as completely deceived himself with regard to his prospects in the



"Quelchy wants you, Inky," said Bunter cheerfully. "I fancy it's a licking. He, he, he!" The Owl of the Remove apparently found something entertaining in the idea that Hurree Singh was "for it." The dusky nabob wheeled on his bike. "Ow!" There was a roar from Bunter as the front wheel collided with his fat knees, and sent him sprawling. (See Chapter 2.)

game. For poor Wib was not, as he supposed, as good at cricket as he was at amateur theatricals, and it was one of the very best men in the team that he had replaced.

And so the Removites had seen the collapse of their champion bowler, as they supposed, and they had seen the dusky cricketer score a duck's egg in his innings; and they had been amazed at such a downfall on the part of the nabob until the telephone message from Greyfriars enlightened them. Wibley had escaped from the enraged cricketers almost by the skin of his teeth, as it were, and the juniors had not seen him since he fled at top speed from the Redclyffe ground, still in his disguise as the nabob. But they were very anxious to see him.

The Remove had been beaten by a large handful of runs; but had the genuine Hurree Singh been playing for Greyfriars it was quite probable that victory would have smiled on them. Certainly many wickets would have fallen to the nabob's bowling, which Wibley had been unable to touch.

To lose a cricket match for such a cause was naturally exasperating. Wibley had had the impression that he was left out of the eleven in spite of his merits. Everybody else knew that

he was left out on his demerits. Perhaps a fellow could not be expected to realise his own shortcomings so clearly as they were realised by others. But for any fellow to take the law into his own hands in this style, and to shove himself into the cricket eleven by a trick was miles beyond the limit.

Poor Wibley had hoped to prove his quality in the game, and thus earn his pardon. He had proved, even to himself, that Wharton had been right in leaving him out of the team.

"The cheeky ass!" said Bob Cherry for about the twentieth time as the brake started for Greyfriars in the golden summer sunset. "The cheeky chump! Showing himself in and shoving Inky out!"

"He fancied himself a cricketer!" growled Johnny Bull. "He can fancy himself a punch-ball when I get near enough to him!"

"The silly ass!" said Nugent.

"We'll jolly well give him the ragging of his life!" said Harry Wharton. "Wib isn't a bad sort in his way, but he's got to learn that he can't play japes in cricket matches."

"Yes, rather."

"And poor old Inky locked up in a box-room while we were playing!" said

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Bob. "I wonder what he was feeling like?"

"Rotten, I should think," said Vernon-Smith. "But not so rotten as Wibley will feel when we get hold of him."

"What-ho!" said Bob, with emphasis. There was a stream of excited talk in the brake as it rolled homeward. Wibley was the one topic—Wibley and the trick he had played on the Remove cricketers.

Every fellow was anxious to get back to Greyfriars and lend a hand in dealing with William Wibley.

Judging by the remarks that were made incessantly in the brake, Wibley was booked for the time of his life when the cricketers got home.

Greyfriars came in sight at last. The brake rolled on to the school gates, with a bunch of cyclists following it. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth Form were lounging in the gateway, and they grinned at the sight of the returning cricketers. Harry Wharton & Co. did not look like a victorious team.

"Licked?" called out Cecil Reginald Temple cheerily.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "Don't they look licked?"

"How many innings did they beat you by?" inquired Fry of the Fourth, and there was a chortle.

The frowning Removites dismounted from the brake, without condescending to answer these frivolous questions.

"I've told you a lot of times that that fixture was above the weight of a Lower Form team, Wharton," said Temple. "You can't say I haven't."

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"Have you fellows seen Wibley come in?" asked Harry, unheeding.

"Wibley? No."

"Perhaps he hasn't got back yet," said Bob. "He's had lots of time, but he mayn't be anxious to see us."

"Very likely not," said Wharton dryly. "But he's bound to come in for call-over, at any rate."

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter rolled down to the gates.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have you seen Wib, Bunter?" bawled Bob Cherry. "Has he come in yet?"

"Didn't know he'd gone out," said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, Inky was locked in a box-room, and I let him out. I rescued him, you know. I say, I suppose you've been beaten, Wharton?"

"Yes," grunted the captain of the Remove. "We wanted Inky's bowling at Redclyffe."

"Any reason's better than none, isn't it, you fellows?" Temple of the Fourth inquired among his friends.

"Oh, rather!" grinned Dabney.

"Well, it's your own fault, Wharton," said Bunter, blinking at the captain of the Remove through his big spectacles. "If you choose to leave your best man out of an important fixture—"

"You silly ass!" roared Wharton. "Could I help a cheeky chump locking up Inky in a box-room?"

"I wasn't speaking of Inky," said Bunter disdainfully. "I offered to play at Redclyffe—"

"What?"

"I offered my services, and you refused them," said Bunter. "You can't deny it, Wharton—a lot of fellows heard you. Now you've lost the match. I could have told you so."

"You—you—frabjous ass!" exclaimed Wharton. "Cheese it! Come on, you fellows! If that villain Wibley's back we shall find him in the House!" The cricketers tramped on to the House.

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Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came down to meet them. The nabob hardly needed telling that his comrades had not had good luck at Redclyffe.

"The lickfulness was terrific, old black bean!" said Bob Cherry, with a rueful grin.

"Beaten to the wide!" said the Bounder. "But what sort of a silly owl were you, Inky, to let yourself be locked up in the box-room?"

"My esteemed Smithy—"

"Must have been an ass, and no mistake!" said Peter Todd.

"My excellent and fatheaded Toddy, the faultfulness was not mine," said Hurree Singh. "The esteemed and rascally Wibley hid my bat in the top box-room, and when I went up for it I was lockfully shut in. I could not escapefully leave the box-room through the keyhole."

"It isn't Inky's fault," said Wharton. "Who'd have thought of such a trick?"

"The fatheadedness is a boot on the other leg," said the nabob. "You fellows must have been footling duffers to be taken in by a silly ass with his face blacked!"

"He was made up jolly well," said Bob. "It was you to the life, Inky. We never had a suspish."

"We weren't the only ones taken in," said Nugent. "There was a Hindu man watching us at Redclyffe, and he never saw that Wibley wasn't the genuine article—I know that."

"It's the fault of your beautiful complexion, old scout," said Peter Todd. "That's what gave the cheeky ass a chance."

"One nigger's very like another!" said Billy Bunter, with a fat chuckle.

"Ow! Leggo my ear, Inky, you beast!"

"You haven't seen Wibley?" asked Harry.

"He has not returnfully come in yet," said Hurree Singh. "I have been waiting for him with terrific infurination."

"Close on call-over now," said Bob. "He's bound to turn up for roll."

"Yes, rather."

But Bob Cherry was mistaken. All the Remove cricketers looked eagerly for Wibley in the ranks of the Remove when they lined up in Hall to answer to their names. But William Wibley was not to be seen. The doors were closed, and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, called the roll. When he came to Wibley's name, there was no answering "Adsum!"

"Wibley!" repeated Mr. Prout.

No answer.

Mr. Prout blinked at the Remove, and marked Wibley as absent.

In deep disappointment, the Removites left Hall after roll-call. Vengeance, already postponed, had to be postponed further.

"He's staying out," said Bob Cherry. "Silly ass! He knows he's got to have it, and he might as well get it over."

"Must come in for dorm, anyhow," said Johnny Bull.

And Wibley was left over till after prep. But, to the surprise of the Removites, when prep was over that evening there was still no Wibley!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, sir!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had come down to the Rag after prep, when Mr. Quelch looked in at the doorway. They were discussing Wibley

—and their intentions towards him as soon as he should show up. Obviously—it seemed to the Removites—Wib was in dread of a severe ragging at their hands, as he had not yet come in. It was a serious matter to cut calling-over; still more serious to remain out of gates till bed-time; and it was close on "dorm" now. Wibley, apparently, was keeping out as late as he possibly could. If he was doing so in the hope that the wrath of the cricketers would cool down, he was likely to be disappointed. Rather, their wrath improved, like wine, with keeping.

Mr. Quelch glanced over the crowd of juniors in the Rag, and fixed his eyes upon the captain of the Remove.

"Wharton! Wibley, of your Form, seems to be still absent," he said.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"It is now past nine o'clock," said the Remove master. "It is very singular for any junior boy to remain out of gates so late. Have you any knowledge where Wibley may be?"

"No, sir."

"Did he accompany you to Redclyffe for the cricket match?"

Wharton hesitated a moment. Certainly William Wibley had accompanied the cricketers to Redclyffe, though not in his own character.

"Yes, he came over in the brake, sir," said Harry at last.

"Did he leave Redclyffe with you?"

"N-n-no, sir."

"He remained there after you left?" exclaimed the Remove master, in surprise.

"Nunno, sir! He left before us."

Mr. Quelch knitted his brows.

"Then it is very odd that he has not returned to the school," he said. "It is a serious matter, Wharton. Possibly it is some foolish escapade; but there is always the possibility that the boy has met with some accident."

"I—I think not, sir."

Mr. Quelch looked at him keenly.

"Have you any knowledge, Wharton, of the reason why Wibley is remaining out of gates?" he demanded.

Wharton coloured, and did not reply. He was certain in his own mind that Wibley was remaining out of gates from a lively anticipation of what he was to receive when he returned. But the captain of the Remove did not wish to explain that to Mr. Quelch.

"Come, Wharton; I see that you know something of the matter," said the Form master sharply. "Why has Wibley of the Remove not returned at this late hour?"

"I—I think—" stammered Wharton. "Well?"

"I—I think he expects a ragging, sir, and he's putting it off as long as he can," said Harry at last. "The—the fact is, sir, Wibley played a silly trick on us this afternoon, and made the fellows rather wild."

"Just a few!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I have heard that Hurree Singh was locked in a box-room, and prevented from playing in the match. Is that the trick to which you refer, Wharton?"

"Well, yes, sir."

"With such an incident I have nothing to do," said Mr. Quelch. "But it is a very serious matter for a Remove boy to remain out of gates until this hour. However, it appears, from what you say, that no accident has happened to Wibley, and doubtless he will return in time for dormitory."

"I think so, sir."

Mr. Quelch left the Rag, and the juniors looked at one another,

"No accident's happened to him yet," said the Bouncer; "but one's going to happen when he comes in—a rather painful one."

"Yes, rather!"

"The accidentfulness will be terrific."

"It's jolly queer, though, his keeping out all this time," said Harry thoughtfully. "He will be up before the beak for it. It means a jolly good licking. But I suppose he will come in for bed."

The captain of the Remove, however, was feeling a little uneasy as half-past nine drew near and Wibley did not come in.

At the half-hour, Wingate of the Sixth looked into the Rag. It was bed-time for the Remove.

"Bed!" said the prefect. "You, Wharton, are to go to the Head's study. Wibley has not come in."

"Dash it all, nothing can have happened to him, surely!" muttered Bob Cherry uneasily.

"What could have happened?" asked Nugent.

"Goodness knows!"

"Unless he's got run in for going about rigged up as a Hindu," said the Bouncer, with a grin. "Bobby Tozer might have taken him for a suspicious character."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites trooped off to their dormitory, while Harry Wharton made his way to the Head's study, feeling a growing uneasiness. He had taken it for granted, like the other fellows, that Wibley was staying out to avoid reprisals at the hands of the Remove cricketers. But he realised that it was extremely unlikely that Wibley would remain out after bed-time for that reason. Staying out after dorm meant a Head's flogging, a punishment that no fellow was likely to incur if he could help it.

Wharton found Mr. Quelch in the Head's study with Dr. Locke. Both the masters were looking very serious.

"Wharton!" said the Head, "Wibley, of your Form, is still absent. Mr. Quelch has told me your explanation of this, but it does not seem to me to account for such a prolonged absence."

"No, sir," said Harry. "I—I can't think that Wibley would be staying out all this time if he could help it."

"It seems that some dispute or quarrel occurred at Redclyffe," said the Head. "I do not wish to inquire too closely into personal disputes among the Lower School boys; but in these circumstances, as Wibley has not returned, I must ask you, Wharton, to tell me exactly what has occurred."

Wharton hesitated. He was not at all sure what view the Head might take of Wibley's impersonation of the nabob. A rraging from the Remove was the trickster's just punishment; but Wharton did not wish to bring the Head's authority into the matter.

"You will tell Dr. Locke all that occurred, Wharton, at once," said Mr. Quelch severely.

"Very well, sir," said Harry, realising that there was no help for it, "it was what we call a jape, sir—nothing against the rules. Wibley is jolly clever at making up in amateur theatricals, sir, and he made himself up as a Hindu—"

"What?" ejaculated the Head.

Mr. Quelch started.

"It was just a silly trick, sir," said Wharton. "He made himself up as a Hindu and we supposed that he was Hurree Singh. Hurree Singh was locked up in a box-room and left behind."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

He started at Mr. Quelch, who frowned.

"Wibley plays a very prominent part in the schoolboy theatricals, sir," said the Remove master. "He is exceedingly clever at such things. But this trick seems to me extraordinary, indeed incredible. Do you mean to say, Wharton, that you were deceived as to Wibley's identity?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "Of course, we never dreamed of suspecting anything of the kind. But Bunter let Inky—I mean Hurree Singh—out of the box-room, and he telephoned to Redclyffe and gave Wibley away. Then—then—"

"And then?" asked the Head.

"Well, I suppose we should have ragged him," said Harry, colouring, "but he bolted, and got away. Nobody's seen him since."

The Head and Mr. Quelch exchanged a startled glance. For some reason that Wharton could not guess, it was clear that they attached a strangely serious importance to this episode.

"Then Wibley was still in his make-up, and to all appearance a Hindu schoolboy, when he ran away at Redclyffe?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

"You think that anyone seeing him would have taken him for a Hindu?"

"I'm quite certain of that, sir."

Again the two masters exchanged glances.

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"You are aware, Wharton," said the Head, "that certain persons in the native State of Bhanipur, in India, are suspected of harbouring designs against the liberty of Hurree Singh. I have already spoken to you of this, and warned you on the subject."

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"It has transpired that certain Hindus, one or two or more, have been seen in the neighbourhood of the school during the past two days," said the Head. "For this reason Hurree Singh is now kept within gates. Did you see anything of a Hindu this afternoon, while you were at Redclyffe?"

Wharton started.

"Yes, sir—there was a Hindu watching the brake when we started, and we saw him afterwards at Redclyffe."

"Was he there when Wibley left you?"

"I think so, sir."

"Did you see him afterwards?"

"No, sir."

"Suppose—it is not probable—but suppose that some enemy of Hurree Singh's had been watching the school, with the intention of making some attempt upon him—do you imagine that such a person would have taken Wibley, in his disguise, for Hurree Singh?"

"I suppose he would, sir," said Harry, with another start. "We were taken in, and we know Inky jolly well. If that Hindu was watching for Hurree Singh, he must have supposed that Wibley was Hurree Singh, sir."

Mr. Quelch set his lips.

"Very well, Wharton, you may go!" said the Head, after a glance at the Remove master, and Harry left the study.

"Is it possible, Mr. Quelch—I?" began the Head.

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Wibley is still absent, sir," he said. "Had I known earlier that he had played this absurd trick, of disguising himself as a Hindu boy, I should have been alarmed. To my mind there is only one way of explaining his prolonged absence."

"That the warning we have received with regard to Hurree Singh is well-founded—"

"Yes, sir."

"That's the Indian boy's enemies were watching for him, and that Wibley, owing to this foolish trick, may have fallen into their hands by mistake?" exclaimed the Head.

"I fear it, sir."

"In that case, Hurree Singh has narrowly escaped a terrible danger. But Wibley—"

Dr. Locke broke off, and picked up the receiver of his telephone. And the number he gave was that of the police-station at Courtfield.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Under Another's Name!

"JALDI jao!" whispered a soft Oriental voice.

Wibley of the Remove started, and shivered.

It seemed like some horrid dream to Wibley, as he lay hidden under the heavy rug on the floor of the car.

How long he had been lying there, he did not know; it seemed like hours, endless hours, while the car ate up the miles.

The hapless trickster was paying dearly for the trick he had played. Harry Wharton & Co. had taken him for the nabob, as he had planned—and Nally Das and Kalouth, the Hindu kidnappers, had been likewise deceived—as Wibley had never imagined. He had realised that the two dusky rascals must have been watching for Hurree Singh, and believed that they had found him, when they ran Wibley down near Redclyffe. And they had given him no chance to explain.

Once, as he lay hidden under the thick rug, Wibley had tried to struggle—and a keen point had touched his ribs for a moment. At the touch of the knife, his struggles had ceased. He was helpless in desperate hands; and he had no choice but to submit to his fate.

The car stopped at last.

The rug was taken from the concealed prisoner; the blind-folding cloth unwound from his head.

Wibley sat up and stared about him dazedly. His senses were swimming.

All was dark.

Night had fallen—he had been some hours in the car. Only the gleam of the lamps of the car shone through the darkness.

From the far distance, Wibley could hear a low, booming sound. He knew that it was the sound of the sea.

But whether it was the sea that could be seen from the tower at Greyfriars, or whether he had been taken to some totally different part of the coast, he could not guess.

Nally Das' glinting eyes gleamed down at him, as his dusky hand grasped Wibley's shoulder.

"Jaldi jao."

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The Hindu believed that he was Hurree Singh, and he spoke in his own language. The words were a mystery to Wibley.

But he understood at least the Hindu's actions.

Nally Das' sinewy grasp dragged him to his feet, and he was half-led, half-dragged, from the car.

He blinked about him dizzily.

Dimly through the gloom he made out the shapes of trees, and he was hurried on with the dusky hand on his shoulder.

He was led into a dark porch. A door opened and he found himself inside a building.

There was a murmur of voices in the dark, speaking in a tongue incomprehensible to Wibley.

Then he was led on again, another door opened, and he was in a lighted room.

He blinked in the light.

The room was large and lofty, and richly furnished in Oriental style. Thick Persian rugs covered the floor. There was a large window, closed and covered with wooden shutters. The light came from a silver lamp swinging in the centre of the ceiling.

Wibley sank down upon a silken divan, his heart thumping. He was trying hard to keep his nerve.

Nally Das stood before him, with a lurking grin on his face, his manner a curious mixture of respect and mockery. Ruffian and kidnapper as he was, he was a Hindu dealing, as he believed, with a nabob.

He spoke in Hindustani, and Wibley interrupted him.

"Look here, speak English. I suppose you can speak English?"

Nally Das eyed him curiously.

"Has the Huzoor forgotten his own tongue, dwelling in the land of the strangers?" he asked.

Wibley, in spite of his alarm and uneasiness, did not help grinning. He was aware that "Huzoor" meant "Highness"—and he remembered having heard that title applied to Hurree Singh by some Indian visitor to Greyfriars. It was rather a new experience for Wibley of the Remove to be addressed as "Highness."

"The command is to treat the Huzoor with respect," went on Nally Das. "That is the order of Baji Rao."

Wibley wondered who Baji Rao might possibly be. Whoever it was, it was clear that he was the kidnapper's master and employer.

"If it pleases the Huzoor to speak in the language of the sahibs, let him speak," said Nally Das.

Wibley hesitated.

He had had time to think during the long journey in the car. These dusky scoundrels had kidnapped him in mistake for Hurree Singh. His first thought had been to explain the mistake at the first opportunity. But now that he had had time to reflect, he paused.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh they intended to make a prisoner: but what was likely to be the fate of the junior whom they had mistaken for the Huzoor?

That mistake rendered their scheme futile if Wibley returned to Greyfriars to warn Hurree Singh of his danger. After this they would never have a chance to lay hands on the nabob. And, with a cold chill in his heart, Wibley realised that they would never allow him to return to the school to put Hurree Singh on his guard. He might remain a prisoner in this unknown place, or—the ruffians did not look as

if they valued the life of a schoolboy. Wibley remembered with a shudder the keen steel that had touched his ribs when he struggled in the car.

Fortunately, William Wibley had plenty of nerve. The terrible danger of his position was quite clear to him, but he did not lose his head. By informing the Hindus of their mistake, he wouldn't regain his liberty, he was sure of that; and it was extremely probable that he would lose his life as well as his freedom.

Nally Das was watching him like a cat in the shaded light from the swinging lamp. As yet he had no suspicion that it was an English schoolboy who faced him on the divan. Wibley guessed that he did not know Hurree Singh by sight; he had only to look for a Hindu schoolboy among the Greyfriars fellows, and he had, as he supposed, found him.

"The Huzoor would speak?" asked Nally Das, as Wibley remained silent, his brain thronged with uneasy thoughts.

"Yes," said Wibley.

"Speak, then, Huzoor. Nally Das is your servant!" said the Hindu, with the same mixture of mockery and respect in his manner.

"Where am I?" asked Wibley.

"Where is this place?"

"The command is to answer no questions."

"Whose command?"

"The Huzoor can't guess," grinned Nally Das. "The Huzoor knows that this is done by command of Baji Rao."

"Who is Baji Rao?"

"Has the Huzoor forgotten the princes of his own blood, as well as the language of his country?" sneered Nally Das.

Wibley understood. Baji Rao, evidently, was a relative of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; a prince of the reigning house of Bhanipur.

"The Huzoor remembers or forgets as he pleases," said Wibley, trying the effect on the Hindu of mounting the high horse, as it were. "Who are you to bandy words with a prince?"

Nally Das' black eyes gleamed, but he bowed his head. The high rank of his prisoner forced his unwilling respect. To the Greyfriars fellows, the Nabob of Bhanipur was a schoolboy, whom they called "Inky," or "Jampot," and treated him quite unceremoniously. But to the Hindu the matter was very different.

"You have orders to keep me here?" demanded Wibley.

"That is my order."

"How long?"

"Until the ship is ready."

"The ship?" repeated Wibley blankly.

"Does the Huzoor think that he will be kept in this country?" asked Nally Das mockingly. "He will be taken across the black water. He will return to his own land. In Bhanipur there is a safe place prepared for him."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wibley.

"In three days the Huzoor will be taken on the ship," said Nally Das.

"Until then, he will remain here. Has the Huzoor orders to give his servant?"

"Yes; let me out of this place at once," said Wibley.

Nally Das grinned and shook his head.

"Will the Huzoor eat?" he asked.

"You can bring me some supper," said Wibley.

"The Huzoor shall be obeyed."

Nally Das salaamed, and quitted the room. The door closed on him, and Wibley heard a key turn in the lock.

He rose from the divan and moved restlessly about the room.

"Three days!" he muttered. "Oh, my hat!"

In three days he was to be smuggled on board a ship, to be taken to India—to Bhanipur. Baji Rao, who had ordered the kidnapping, was apparently in his native country. If the deception could be kept up so long, it was pretty certain that Baji Rao would discover it as soon as he set eyes on his supposed relative. But it was not likely that Wibley's disguise would escape discovery so long. It was not likely, indeed, that Nally Das would continue to believe that the Nabob of Bhanipur was his prisoner, even for three days.

Wibley was not thinking, then, as Harry Wharton & Co. supposed, of the ragging that awaited him at Greyfriars. The worst ragging he could have received from the Remove cricketers would have been very welcome to the hapless junior if only he could have stepped once more within the gates of the old school. He knew, beyond a doubt, that if he did not escape from the grasp of the kidnappers, he would never see Greyfriars again. That as soon as the scoundrels knew that they had made a mistake, they would take no risk of their prisoner telling what he had discovered. So long as they believed that he was the Nabob of Bhanipur, his life was safe—but at any moment the truth might come to light, and then—

Wibley, as he paced the room with beating heart, realised that it was not his liberty, but his life that he had to fight for.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

No News!

"KIDNAPPED!"

"Poor old Wibley!"

"The kidnappfulness of the esteemed Wibley was his own fault," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "but the sadness is terrific!"

It was the following morning.

All Greyfriars knew by that time what had happened—what must have happened.

Harry Wharton had told his friends of the talk in the Head's study. Wibley of the Remove had not returned; and it was obvious, of course, that he could not have remained out of gates all night of his own free will. Something had happened to Wibley, and nothing could be learned of any accident to a schoolboy anywhere between Redclyffe and Greyfriars. He seemed to have vanished from the face of the earth. And when it was known that he was in a Hindu disguise, and that a warning had been received from India of a plot to kidnap Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the matter was fairly clear.

Other details came to light, too. Billy Bunter remembered his meeting with a Hindu a few days before, who had called himself Nally Das, and had asked him questions about the Indian junior at Greyfriars. All the cricketers remembered the Hindu who had watched the brake start for Redclyffe, and had turned up on the Redclyffe ground to watch the match, and from Bunter's description, it appeared that this was the same man who had questioned Bunter regarding the nabob.

And Coker of the Fifth, who had been out on his motor-bike after tea that Wednesday, handed in the news that he had passed a car with a Hindu sitting in it, driven by a chauffeur whom he believed to be also a Hindu. Coker had passed that car six or seven miles the other side of Redclyffe, going south-west—away from Greyfriars. Inspector

Grimes, of Courtfield, had been over to the school to see the Head. But he had brought no news.

All Greyfriars discussed the matter with breathless interest.

It was clear that the two Hindus had been watching the school, to find a chance of getting at the Nabob of Bhanipur. Wibley's jape on the cricketers' had thrown him into their hands; obviously they had taken him for Hurree Singh, and had disappeared from the neighbourhood, taking their prisoner with them, in a powerful car.

All the resentment of the Remove cricketers towards the hapless Wibley vanished at once.

Nobody spoke further of a ragging. Even the loss of the Redclyffe match, due to his reckless jape, mattered little now, even to the keenest Remove cricketers. If only they could have seen William Wibley walk into the gates of Greyfriars, safe and sound, they would have forgiven him. But that was not likely to happen.

"Kidnapped!" said Harry Wharton. "It's clear enough now. Those rotters were looking for you, Inky, and they got Wibley."

The nabob nodded. "The clearfulness is terrific!" he said. "The esteemed and asinine Wibley walked right into it."

"It's rotten, of course," said Nugent. "But, if they hadn't got Wibley, they would have got Inky."

"Better Wib than Inky, I suppose," said Bob Cherry. "But—"

"I thinkfully opine not," said Hurree Singh. "My uncle, the Jam Bahadur, had written to warn me, and I was on my guardfulness. The whip of adversity would have been averted by the hand of prudence. The disgusting and honourable rotters would not have been able to collar me among my friends. But the asinine Wibley was on his lonely own."

"Fairly walked into their hands by scooting off from the Redclyffe ground as he did," said Johnny Bull. "Those kidnapping scoundrels must have thought they were in luck when they saw him clear off by himself."

"Well, he asked for it," said Harry. "Inky might never have fallen into their clutches—we were all on our guard. We should have taken jolly good care that no Hindu got anywhere near him, after the Jam sent that warning. But Wibley—of course, we never thought of any danger to him."

"But what will happen to him?" said Nugent in a low voice.

The juniors looked at Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"What do you think, Inky?" asked Wharton. "I—I suppose you know best what they are likely to do?"

The nabob looked very serious.

"If it had been my esteemed self, they would have smuggled me to India, to hand over to my Cousin Baji Rao, who seeks to supplant me on the throne of Bhanipur," he said. "A dungeon in Bhanipur would have been my fate. But Wibley, when they find him out, they will not trouble with him. They would not dare shed the blood of a nabob. But Wibley—they will care nothing! And they will not let him return to tell what he knows of them!" Wharton shuddered.

"You—you mean—"

"The dagger or the bow-string," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Unless the esteemed Wibley is saved before they discover the cheat, his life is worth as much as that of an esteemed grass-snapper."



There was a sudden flash of light as Nally Das switched on his electric torch. Holding it before him, he stepped into the room. The moment had come. Crash! With all his strength, Wibley struck. The bronze Buddha crashed heavily on the side of the Hindu's head, and he pitched over on the thick carpet. (See Chapter 8.)

"Good heavens!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"It's only too likely," said Harry.

"They will think of their safety first, and they must be desperate rascals to be engaged in such a business at all. They are risking penal servitude, in any case, and if Wibley got away from them now, he might be able to put the police on their track. It's poor old Wibley's life that is at stake."

"He may keep it up that he is Inky," said Bob hopefully. "So long as they think he is Inky they won't hurt him."

"He couldn't keep that up long, even if he doesn't tell them. He might think they'd let him go if they knew their mistake."

"If he has told them, all is finishfully at an end," said Hurree Singh. "If they know they have made a mistake, they have placed the unfortunate Wibley where he cannot tell tales."

"Poor old Wib!"

"There's only one comfort," said Bob. "It might have been Inky—and Wibley's saved him! But—poor old Wib! Only yesterday I was wanting to punch him for playing such a trick on us, and now—"

"If only we could see him safe and sound!" said Nugent.

"If we only could!"

It was a dismal day to the Remove fellows.

Even Billy Bunter was a little serious. All the fellows realised that the

shadow of a terrible danger overhung their missing schoolmate.

And Hurree Singh and his friends realised that it might well be worse than that—that the kidnappers might have already discovered that they had been deceived, and that vengeance sharp and sure might have fallen upon the junior who had unintentionally deceived them.

The day wore on without further news.

Several times the telephone bell was heard to ring in the Head's study, and the Greyfriars fellows hoped for news. But there was no news.

In class that afternoon Mr. Quelch's face was very grave.

After class Harry Wharton stopped to speak to the Remove master as the Form went out.

"What is it, Wharton?" asked Mr. Quelch kindly.

"We've been thinking it over, sir," said Harry diffidently. "We should like to take part in the search for Wibley, if the Head would give us leave. We could get a good distance on our bicycles, and we might pick up some trace of Wibley."

"I am afraid the Head would not consent, Wharton. The rascals we have to deal with are desperate characters, and Dr. Locke would never allow you to go into danger."

"But, sir—"

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"Neither would it be of any use, my boy," said the Remove master. "It appears to be fairly clear that the car seen by Coker of the Fifth yesterday was the one used by the kidnappers. It is probable that they are at a great distance from Greyfriars. Indeed, they may be hundreds of miles away by this time."

"It's possible, sir," said Harry. "But—" He paused.

"But what, Wharton?" asked Mr. Quelch, looking at him. "If anything has occurred to you, you may mention it to me."

"Well, it seems likely that they had a hiding-place all ready to put Hurree Singh out of sight if they kidnapped him."

"That is fairly certain, I think," said the Remove master. "The scoundrels' ultimate intention seems to be to smuggle him away to India; but, undoubtedly, that would take time, and in the interval he would have to be concealed very carefully. No doubt a hiding-place was all ready. But it is to be supposed that the place was at a considerable distance from here."

"But possibly not, sir," said Harry. "They have been hanging about the school for days, watching for Hurree Singh—we know that now. That looks as if their headquarters might not be very far away."

"True!"

"And they must have garaged the car somewhere, sir. A car with a Hindu driver, hanging about a quiet countryside like this, would have attracted a lot of attention, after a day or two. The man who spoke to Bunter, Nally Das, seems to have been the one who kept watch for Hurree Singh. The man with the car must have been in touch with him. But where was the car all the time? If they'd used any of the local garages, Inspector Grimes would have found it out before this—Hindus would be noticed and remembered. But the car couldn't have come a hundred miles when wanted, and it couldn't have been hanging about in the lanes day after day."

Mr. Quelch looked very thoughtful.

"Of course, sir, I may be mistaken—very likely am," said Harry diffidently. "But it looks to me as if they had some headquarters where they could keep the car within touch of Greyfriars."

"It is possible."

"If so, sir, quite likely it's the same place where they laid their plans to hide their prisoner."

"Very possibly," said Mr. Quelch.

"And—and if we scoured the country on our bikes, sir, we might pick up some trace—"

Mr. Quelch shook his head with a faint smile.

"Your suggestion may be of value, Wharton; but no Greyfriars boys can be permitted to join in this affair. It is in the hands of the police, who are certainly capable of doing all that can be done. But there is one duty you can do, Wharton—you and your friends. Sooner or later they must discover that they have made a mistake—that their prisoner is not Hurree Singh—if they have not discovered it already. That discovery may very probably be followed by another attempt upon Hurree Singh. As he is now strictly confined to school bounds, the attempt, if it takes place, will take place at Greyfriars. You and your friends may be fully occupied in watching over the safety of Hurree Singh, until the rascals are laid by the heels. His danger is by no means over."

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"We will do that, sir, of course," said Harry.

And he left the Form-room and rejoined his comrades in the corridor. The Co. looked at him in eager inquiry.

"Nothing doing!" said the captain of the Remove. "Only we're to keep Inky under our wing, and see that he doesn't get nabbed from the school."

"The nabfulness will not be terrific," said Hurree Singh.

"Poor old Wibley!" said Bob.

And the Famous Five drifted out into the sunny quadrangle, their thoughts fixed upon the Remove fellow who was missing from Greyfriars, the fellow who they dreaded they might never see again.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Hope!

"HUZOOR!"

Wibley started and rubbed his eyes.

No gleam of daylight came to him; the shutters on the windows of his room excluded all light.

The silver lamp, swinging from the ceiling, illuminated the room; the atmosphere was close and heavy.

Wibley had slept at last. For long, long hours he had lain wakeful upon the silken divan; but at last he had slept. It was the soft, half-mocking voice of Nally Das that awakened him.

This time the Hindu had appeared in the spotless cotton clothes of his native land.

Wibley blinked at him, with sleepy eyes, for the moment wondering where he was, and whether he was dreaming. But that was only for a moment; he realised quickly enough that he was not in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars, and the strange events of the previous day came back to his mind with a rush.

"Bhukhe ho," said Nally Das.

"Speak English!" said Wibley.

"Does it still please the Huzoor to speak in the language of the sahibs?" jeered Nally Das.

"It does," said Wibley. "I never speak Hindustani at my school."

Which was a true enough statement.

"The Huzoor has forgotten his own tongue, and yet he thinks to reign in Bhanipur?" sneered the Hindu.

"That is not your business, son of a dog!" said Wibley coolly.

The black eyes flashed at him.

"I asked the Huzoor whether he was hungry," said Nally Das sullenly. "If the Huzoor hungers, there is food."

"You may bring my breakfast."

"The bath is prepared for the Huzoor."

"I do not want it."

A bath was the last thing the disguised junior was likely to want. His dusky complexion was well laid on; but, after a bath, the kidnappers would have been enlightened as to his nationality, there was no doubt about that.

Nally Das stared at him.

"The Huzoor will not take his bath?"

"No, I tell you!"

"In the land of the strangers, the Huzoor has forgotten that his caste requires that he should be clean."

"Mind your own business!" snapped Wibley. "What sort of a dog are you to argue with a prince? Get out!"

Nally Das bowed his head and retired. Wibley had already observed that a bullying tone had a good effect on the Hindu—probably it was what he expected from a nabob.

The door closed, and was locked again.

Wibley jumped off the divan, and

moved about the room restlessly. In a quarter of an hour the door opened, and Nally Das reappeared, carrying a tray. He laid it upon a table, salaamed, and retired, locking the door after him.

Wibley ate his breakfast with a good appetite.

He was thinking while he ate, thinking hard. So far, Nally Das had no suspicion of the truth. But how long could the deception last? Undoubtedly the Hindu was surprised, or, rather, astonished, by the supposed nabob's refusal to take his bath. It was probable that he would wonder on that subject and make surmises—sooner or later suspicion must arise. And then—

The junior finished his breakfast, and struck a gong that lay on the inlaid table.

Nally Das appeared at the door.

Wibley pointed to the tray, and the Hindu entered and removed it. He left the prison-room with the tray, without a word, and the key grated in the lock again.

Wibley was free now from spying eyes; but the fact that he was left alone in the shuttered room was a sufficient indication that the Hindu regarded it as a secure prison. And Nally Das was not likely to have left anything to chance in such a matter.

But Wibley still hoped. While there was life, at least, there was hope; and he would not think of despairing.

He had not been robbed, or even searched; doubtless the Orientals hesitated to lay disrespectful hands on a member of so high a caste as the Nabob of Bhanipur. They had handled him only so far as was needful to make him a prisoner, and to convey him to his prison.

Wibley was still in flannels, just as he had fled from the cricket-ground at Redclyffe, and he had nothing larger than a penknife in the shape of a weapon. But even that was better than nothing. Wibley had read stories of prisoners of ancient times who had wormed their way out of deep dungeons with no aid but that of a rusty nail. Certainly, they had had more time at their disposal than Wibley now had. Still, there was hope while there was life.

He made an examination of the window.

The wooden shutters were inside the windows, and had evidently been specially placed there lately, to turn the room into a prison. They were of new unpainted wood, and contrasted strangely with the rich decoration of the room, when Wibley pulled back the dark hangings. He soon found that the shutters were not intended to be opened; they were screwed in their places, and the heads of the screws had been beaten flat, as an additional security. Even with a screwdriver he could have made no impression upon them.

Wibley's heart sank a little.

That single precaution showed the extreme care the kidnappers had taken to render their prisoner secure. The Greyfriars junior was up against a problem which seemed likely to have no solution.

But he dared not give way to the feeling of despondency that came over him. He needed all his pluck, and all his resolution, if he was to save his life.

Where this strange house was, whether it stood solitary or near other habitations, he could not even guess. But there was a possibility that the window looked upon other buildings—that it looked upon a road where traffic passed.

To cut a way through the shutters seemed hopeless; but there was a hope of making some slight opening, through which he could at least see his surroundings, and perhaps make signals to some passer-by.

The chance seemed faint enough; but it was all the imprisoned junior had. And it was better to work upon the slightest chance than to abandon himself to despair.

With the stronger blade of his penknife, Wibley began on the wooden shutter.

He chipped industriously. The wood being new and unpainted made his laborious task a little easier than it might otherwise have been.

Chip after chip was shaved from the selected spot, till quite a little heap lay at his feet.

But the labour was long and fatiguing, and he soon found that his wrist was aching. But he worked on doggedly.

He changed the penknife from one hand to the other continually. And still he chipped and chipped, and shaved and shaved at the wood, tiny fragments peeling off under the blade. Hour followed hour as the imprisoned Removite worked on with a kind of feverish doggedness.

It was the sound of the key in the lock that recalled him to the passage of time.

His heart throbbed at the sound. He thrust the knife back into his pocket, dragged the hangings over the shutters, and threw himself upon a divan.

He was just in time. Nally Das threw open the door and entered, and his black, glinting eyes fixed on the prisoner at once.

Evidently he suspected nothing of Wibley's late occupation, for he did not once glance towards the window.

"Salaam, Huzoor!" he said, with mocking respect.

"What do you want?" snapped Wibley.

"Will the Huzoor eat?"

Wibley realised that it was past the hour at which the Remove had their dinner at Greyfriars. He realised, too, that he was getting hungry.

"I will eat!" he snapped.

This time it was Kalouth who brought in the tray, with an ample meal. Nally Das stood by the door.

It came into Wibley's mind that Nally Das was somehow suspicious. The glinting black eyes never left him; and Nally Das remained all the time that Wibley was eating, and till Kalouth had taken away the tray. Even then he lingered.

Wibley pointed to the door.

"Leave me in peace," he said.

"The Huzoor prefers solitude to the company of his servant Nally Das?" asked the Hindu.

"Yes. Go!"

"Has the Huzoor any further commands?"

"No."

"If the Huzoor desires books to relieve his solitude, they shall be brought."

"I desire nothing but my freedom," said Wibley.

"Of that the Huzoor is deprived by the order of Baji Rao. But all else is at the will of the Huzoor."

"Leave me alone, then," said Wibley, with an air of sullenness. And he threw himself on the divan again.

The Hindu remained a moment or two, watching him like a suspicious cat; but finally he went out, and closed and locked the door.

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Wibley rose from the divan; but on second thoughts he lay down again, and composed himself as if to sleep. It was a precaution well taken, for a few minutes later the door was suddenly unlocked and opened, and Nally Das stared in. Obviously the Hindu was watchful and vaguely suspicious, as Wibley had guessed.

The junior raised his head from a silken cushion.

"What is it now?" he asked.

"Did not the Huzoor call?"

"I did not!"

"Nally Das asks the pardon of the Huzoor for his mistake."

The Hindu disappeared again, apparently satisfied; and once more the key grated.

Wibley rose from the divan and resumed his work on the wooden shutter. He had to take the risk of another surprise visit.

Snap!
The blade of the penknife broke off

short as Wibley hacked too hard at the wood.

He set his lips, and opened the smaller blade and resumed.

He felt at last that he was getting through the wood without resistance.

Wibley's heart beat faster.

With renewed energy, though his wrist and fingers ached, he gashed at the wood, the tiny peelings falling fast at his feet.

A gleam of light came through.

He worked at the orifice, enlarging it, till the centre of the concavity he had excavated was as large as a half-crown.

If Wibley had nourished a lingering hope of being able to cut out a way to freedom, he had to abandon it. It had taken a large part of the day even to penetrate the shutter with that slight orifice.

But at least he could see the daylight now.

He applied his eye to the hole in the THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 961.

shutter. Beyond the shutter was clear glass—a pane of the window. Beyond, he made out the foliage of trees and a blue sky, and a deeper distant blue which he knew must be the sea.

There was no sign of a road; no sign of habitation. But far in the distance, against the sky and the sea, he made out a building, which he knew must be a lighthouse.

Wibley watched that building eagerly. There was something familiar in its aspect; it came to his sight like an old friend. He was certain that he had seen it before—certain that it was familiar to his eyes. And suddenly it flashed upon his mind—he remembered a summer's holiday at Margate, and walks to the North Foreland.

"The North Foreland!" he breathed. It was the North Foreland Lighthouse at which he was gazing through the tiny hole in the shutter.

Wibley stepped back from the window, his brain in a whirl.

He was not twenty miles from Greyfriars!

He remembered that the car in which he had been carried off had covered a great distance; he had reached his prison after dark, and long hours had been spent on the road. That had given him the impression that he had been taken a great distance.

He realised now that the kidnappers had thought only, at first, of getting him away from the neighbourhood of Greyfriars; and then, it was easy to guess, they had chosen to get to this hiding-place after nightfall, lest suspicious eyes should fall upon them. That accounted for the distance the car had covered.

He realised now, too, that he might have guessed as much; for the kidnappers had had to keep the car at hand, and yet out of public view. Greyfriars School had been watched; but from day to day the plotters could not tell when their chance would come. Doubtless Nally Das, when his chance indeed had come at last, had sent word quickly to his confederate—indeed, Wibley could picture it all to himself now. Nally Das had watched him leave Greyfriars in the brake with the cricketers; had followed to Redclyffe, and sent word to his confederate to bring the car there on the chance of success. It was likely enough that he had telephoned—indeed, it was much more likely than not. If there was a telephone in this strange den of the kidnappers, Nally Das had only to step into the call-office at Friar-dale after the brake had passed him to let his confederate know that he was wanted.

Wibley drew the hangings across the window to conceal the hole in the shutter, lest Nally Das should return and surprise him.

Then he sat down to think.

His glimpse of the sky had shown him that the sun was setting; the summer's day was nearly done. A third of the period of his imprisonment had nearly elapsed.

Two more days and all hope would be gone.

Even if discovery of his true identity did not come, there would be no more hope when once he had been smuggled on a vessel bound for India.

He had to act—and to act without losing time. But now that he knew where he was—in some country house only a few miles from the North Foreland—he was able to make plans. It was probable—it was almost certain—that there was a telephone in the house. The conspirators, who had spared no

trouble and expense to carry out this plot, would not have left themselves without so essential a method of communication.

If he could get his hands on that instrument for two minutes—only for a couple of minutes—he was saved! To ring up Greyfriars, and tell them where he was—

Wibley thought hard.

There was a solid locked door between him and the rest of the house. But that door was opened when Nally Das came to see him, and Nally Das generally came alone. So far as Wibley had seen, there were only two men in this plot—if there were others, he had not seen them. But if there were a dozen or a score, he had to take the risk. He repeated to himself that it was not only his liberty, it was his life that was at stake.

His resolution was made at last.

He rose from the divan, and looked round the room for a weapon. There were many ornaments in the room; and Wibley selected a bronze statuette of the Buddha. It was small, but solid and heavy—he could use it as a bludgeon. And on further thought, he climbed on the table and turned off the light of the swinging silver lamp.

The room was plunged into deep darkness. The hangings at the window effectually hid the gleam of daylight from the hole in the shutter.

With the bronze Buddha in his hand, Wibley groped his way round the room to the door.

He placed himself near the door, and, with the weapon in his hand, his heart throbbing, he waited.

He was ready now for Nally Das when he came.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

For Life and Liberty!

WIBLEY started, and his heart thumped.

There was a sound at the door.

How long he had waited there, in darkness, he did not know—he could not even guess. It might have been minutes or hours—it seemed like centuries to him.

But there was a sound at the door at last. His gaoler was returning—perhaps to bring him supper, perhaps only to see that he was safe. At all events, he was coming.

Wibley's grasp tightened on the little bronze Buddha. His courage did not fail him. It was neck or nothing now.

This was his only hope—his only chance; if it failed him he was gone. He needed all his courage and determination.

The key turned in the lock; the door opened.

There was a dim light in the corridor without; against that dim light the figure of Nally Das appeared.

The Hindu stopped in the doorway, staring into the darkness of the room. It was a surprise to him to find that the light was extinct.

Wibley heard him mutter something in his own tongue. Then he spoke aloud in Hindustani and Wibley distinguished the word "Huzoor," which showed that Nally Das was addressing the prisoner. Then, in a sharper and

angrier tone, as there was no reply, Nally Das spoke in English.

"Huzoor! Do you sleep? Or does the Huzoor choose to sit in darkness?"

Wibley made no sound; he scarcely breathed. His hope was that the Hindu would step into the room to re-light the lamp, or assure himself that the prisoner was safe.

There was a sudden flash of light.

Nally Das had turned on an electric torch; and, holding it up before him, he stepped into the room.

The moment had come!

Crash!

With all his strength, Wibley struck.

The Hindu doubtless heard his movement, for he half turned towards him, with a motion of the light; and at the same moment the bronze Buddha crashed on the side of his head.

A faint sound came from Nally Das as he pitched over on the floor, the thick carpet receiving him and deadening the sound of his fall.

Wibley reared over him, the bronze statuette ready for another blow if it was needed. He was desperate now.

But the Hindu lay without motion.

He had fallen like a log, and he lay like one, silent, still. The junior waited a few moments, with weapon upraised, till he was sure. The man was stunned, or— But Wibley put that terrible thought from his mind.

He dropped the bronze statuette on the soft carpet, and stepped quickly to the door. It was closed in a moment, after he had listened and heard no sound.

Then he picked up the electric torch, and, with a beating heart, examined Nally Das. He had struck hard—he had struck for his life. But a terrible fear was in his heart. He was relieved as he saw that the Hindu was breathing—in fact, the twitching in the dusky face hinted that the stunned man was already coming to his senses.

Wibley did not waste a second.

With twisted strips of silk torn from the divan, he bound Nally Das' dusky wrists together, and then his ankles. Then he forced open the man's jaws and wedged in a gag of silken stuff, securing it there with strips tied round his head.

Nally Das was safe.

Wibley turned the electric torch on his face again. Nally Das' eyes had opened.

They gleamed up at Wibley, without understanding for a moment or two. Then, as Nally Das realised the position, his eyes gleamed with rage and hate, and he struggled.

But Wibley had bound him securely. His furious struggles died away in exhaustion. He could make no sound; but his eyes spoke volumes as they glittered at the Greyfriars junior.

Wibley heeded him no further.

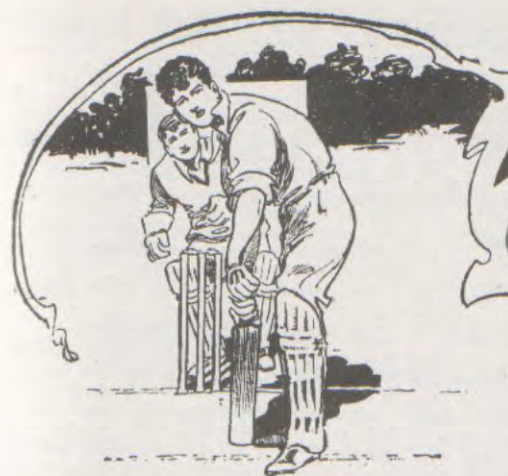
He slipped the electric torch into his pocket, and picked up the bronze Buddha again. He knew that he might yet need it as a weapon. He stepped out of the prison-room and closed the door, locked it on Nally Das, and pocketed the key. One, at least, of his enemies was unable to do him further harm.

Wibley found himself in a broad corridor, from which several rooms opened. It was dimly lighted, and no one was in sight.

From one direction, however, his straining ear caught a faint murmur of voices. It was in the other direction that he turned—realising at the same

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(Continued on page 17.)



Harry Wharton's Cricket Supplement

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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.



Cricket by the Clock!

Play the ball rather than allow the ball to play the bat.

FOR years and years it has been suggested continually that cricket was too slow, but never perhaps has there been so much talk about slow batting as during this present campaign. Everybody has felt that, given good wickets, three days would not be sufficient in which to finish the Test matches because the batsmen did not get their runs quick enough.

As a matter of fact, however, much of the talk about so-called slow batting is just so much balderdash because it ignores vital points. The first question, really, is whether we want cricket by the clock; and let me say that the only reply to that question is that if we decide to have cricket by the clock, then it will be a new game which we have instituted. Incidentally, if we did have cricket by the clock, what a lot of troubles our team selectors would get out of automatically! They would organise a trial match, watch that trial match with one eye on the clock, take a note of the length of time it took the various batsmen to get their runs, and choose the team from the men who scored the fastest. But, of course, in ordinary circumstances mere get-on-or-get-out stuff isn't cricket at all. There are times when it is more important to get a few runs quickly than to get a lot in a long time; but in the ordinary match the bowling must be

TREATED ON ITS MERITS.

This brings me to an important point which all the critics of slow batting completely ignore—that the bowlers are often as much, if not more, to “blame” for slow cricket than the batsmen. Let us imagine Maurice Tate bowling at his very best—every ball a good length, turning a little bit, and every one on the wicket. What is a batsman to do against such accurate bowling? There are two courses open to him, and two only. He must either play carefully to defend his wicket until such time as Tate begins to tire and send down loose ones, or he must become what cricketers call an “iffer.” The word is a very apt one. An “iffer,” in cricket slang, is a man who plays a hit-or-miss game—a player who does little except take wild swipes. If he hits the ball it goes to the boundary, but if he doesn't he is soon in the pavilion.

Another point. It takes all sorts of batsmen to make up an ideal team. The “iffers” have their place in the side, but it is rather low down in the batting list. They come in useful when the early and safe batsmen have worn down the bowling, and their get-on-or-get-out methods are valuable, especially if they are in luck and get on instead of getting out.

I admit that a few Jessops would do cricket a lot of good. But Jessops don't grow on every currant-bush, and some of our most capable batsmen could never be Jessops if they tried for years and years. They are not built for hitting sixes. Personally, I am all for cricket in which the scoring is as brisk as the circumstances will allow, and the standard by which I judge a batsman—and by which all batsmen should, I think, be judged—is the manner in which they treat deliveries which should really be hit. The batsman who plays a purely defensive stroke to a long-hop merely because that long-hop comes from the hand of an Australian bowler with a big reputation should be criticised. He is treating the bowling with more respect than it deserves.

To sum up, we don't want cricket by the clock. We don't want the value of an innings measured purely by the length of time it takes the batsman to make fifty runs. But cricket does want enterprise. It wants batsmen who will make the bat play the ball rather than allow the ball to play the bat. And the batsman who won't hit the balls which really should be hit should be left out of the team.

Boundary Hits! by “SCORER”

Playing for England at Melbourne against Australia in 1912, Jack Hobbs and Wilfred Rhodes made the record first wicket partnership, scoring 323 runs before being separated. That can be called something like a start.

I am able to deny the suggestion that the idea of slow-motion pictures came to the inventor while he was watching a couple of stone-wallers at a cricket match.

It is said that when a certain Yorkshire enthusiast found out that there were only two men from the county in the first Test match team of this season, he sent a wire to the selectors: “What about the other nine Yorkshiremen?”

In a note about Jack Hobbs, P. G. Fender, the Surrey captain, says: “A personality who can draw men—and women—thousands of miles to see him play, as in Australia and South Africa, who can make executives view his dismissal just before the close of play as a possible determining factor in their yearly balance-sheets, who can cause office-boys—and others—to lose more relations by sudden death during the summer than anyone realised they could possess, is surely one of the great ones.” We know a lot of office-boys who won't like Mr. Fender so well as they did after that, for he has let the cat out of the bag with a vengeance.

There is a Rugby football pitch immediately adjoining the county cricket ground at Headingly, where the third Test is being played, and the suggestion has been put forward that if we don't beat the Australians on the cricket pitch we should take them over to the Rugby pitch to give them a hiding.

When England played her last Test match against Australia at Leeds, in 1921, Hobbs had a sudden attack of appendicitis, the Hon. Lionel Tennyson had to bat with one hand, and J. W. Douglas was called away because his wife was very ill. Yet they say there is no such thing as luck!

In a recent Gloucester match, Sinfield, the bowler, had five catches missed off him in one innings. Sins in the field, forsooth!

The people who talk about the poetry of cricket are not necessarily referring to the batting of Tennyson.

Three batsmen—Arthur Shrewsbury, Tom Hayward, and W. G. Grace have all reached the thousand runs mark before the end of May. Nowadays our batsmen would probably consider this unseemly haste.

Sutcliffe is the only player who has ever made four centuries in one series of Test matches between England and Australia. Thus once more Yorkshire leads—or Leeds, whichever you prefer.

Woodfull, the Australian, is often referred to as a batsman who never has his wicket knocked down. I used to boast about the same sort of record when I batted with the barn door for a wicket.

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Bossing the Show!

The Trials and Troubles of Managing a Cricket Team on Tour.

THESE cricket matches between England and Australia are eagerly discussed from almost every possible angle. There is one phase of International cricket, however, which does not as a rule receive much attention. I refer to what might be called "bossing the show." That the visit of an Australian cricket eleven to this country is in the nature of a "show" cannot be doubted, and when you have a show, or an entertainment, it is very necessary for the success of that entertainment to have a most efficient "boss." There must be somebody in charge of all the arrangements, and the man who is really the boss of the Australian show is Mr. Sydney Smith.

yet it is not going too far to assert that the touring team which does not possess a good manager will not prove successful.

Now let us look at his job. In the first place, he is visiting a comparatively strange country, and must be prepared to tackle every emergency, some of which he will have no means of knowing anything about before his arrival. The present manager of the Australian team had worries, almost as soon as he got here, greater than any which have faced a touring team manager in the past. There was the general strike, which made ordinary means of travelling out of the question. Yet the Australians duly fulfilled all their engagements, though to do this

tour, but, of course, no manager would allow his players to accept a lot of night engagements. He has to discriminate carefully lest he should offend anybody. And when a dinner engagement is accepted, it is the manager who has to make the after-dinner speech for the side as a whole. The words of these speeches have to be weighed carefully beforehand, lest one little thing should be said which would annoy.

The Australians, as we know them, are

A VERY HAPPY FAMILY,

but they are only human, and it is the business of the manager to keep them in that happy family spirit which is such a help to the winning of matches. Any and every little difficulty has to be smoothed over by the manager, who needs, most of all, tact, and then some more tact.

At every place where the Australians visit rooms have to be arranged for them, and even the food which the players eat watched, lest they should have something which does not entirely agree with them, and thus affect their cricket efficiency.



A cheery trio. Reading from left to right—Mr. Sydney Smith, manager of the Australian team, Maurice Tate and Andy Sandham.

I expect that you lads, thinking over Mr. Smith's job, may consider it a nice easy holiday. He has five or six weeks of a sea-trip each way, coming and going from Australia. Once he is here, there is no particular necessity, on the face of it, for him to worry a lot. By way of example, he is not asked to make centuries, or to bowl the other fellows out. Believe me, though, the manager of a touring team has

NO MONEY-FOR-NOTHING JOB.

He has to work hard from the moment he sets foot in this country to the moment when he leaves it. If at the end of the tour the team has done well, the members of the team get the praise. Nothing is said about the manager, and

meant spending hours and hours travelling about the country in charabancs, all of which had to be arranged by the manager, who had to stay up far into the night while the players of the team were sleeping.

And even when something like the ordinary train service was restored, Mr. Smith, as he has aptly put it, slept with a time-table for a pillow. Small wonder that the manager of a touring team has to have permanent secretaries going about with the side to help him to make the arrangements, and to reply to the hundreds of letters which pour in day by day.

Before the Australians arrived in this country they had sufficient invitations to dinners and that sort of thing to have occupied them every night of the

Think of the worries of the manager, too, when, as happened early in the present trip, one of the players is taken with an infectious disease. Hendry had scarlet fever, and Manager Smith has said that every morning when he woke up he was almost afraid to look at the other players lest they should also show signs of being ill as well.

When in London, the Australians stay at the Hotel Cecil, where special rooms are kept for them, with a telephone at the bedside of each player. No detail must be allowed to escape the manager's eye, and when he has attended to every little want of the men under his charge, he has also to give his advice on the selecting of the team.

A WORD WITH THE UMPIRE!

Wm. Kennedy (Sunderland).—The highest score ever made by one side in a first-class match was 1,059 by Victoria, against Tasmania, in 1922-3. The highest score in a first-class match in England was Yorkshire's 887, against Warwickshire, in 1896. The "record" small score is 12, Oxford University and Northamptonshire having been dis-

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missed for that total. Your question as to which English bowler has taken the most wickets in any first-class match cannot be answered by any one name. No player has taken more than seventeen wickets in one match, but nearly twenty different bowlers have got this number. In a minor match, the late F. R. Spofforth, who died just recently, got all ten wickets in each innings of his opponents—that is, twenty in the match.

F. Marsham (Bristol).—There is only one reason why Duleepsinhji is referred to as a "second Ranji," and that is because he is a nephew of the great batsman of other days. So far as method

at the wicket is concerned, they are very different.

George Brand (Birmingham).—It is almost as certain as anything can be that Walter Hammond, of Gloucestershire, would have played for England this summer had he been fit. Unfortunately he has had to undergo several operations since returning from the West Indies.

James G. (Maidstone).—You are quite right. Frank Woolley has played in more Test matches than Jack Hobbs. At the start of the present season their respective Test match appearances were 47 and 44.

Wickets Wet and Dry

Popular Ideas on Difficult and Easy Pitches Which are All Wrong.

By **WALTER R. HAMMOND**

(The Famous Gloucestershire All-Rounder).

PERHAPS the question most frequently heard at cricket grounds during any season is this: "How is the wicket playing?" The ingoing batsman asks the question of the comrade who has just been dismissed, and we fellows who bowl at times are always anxious to know what the wicket is like, even when we are not immediately concerned in the job of getting the other fellows out. In England, of course, we get a variety of wickets in a normal season, which do much to add to the spice of the game. Only the players of cricket know how much of what is called the glorious uncertainty is due to the changes which may take place in the pitch in the course of a single game.

ONLY TWO SORTS.

The finer points of these changes are not always noticeable to the average onlooker, and, indeed, I have more than once come to the conclusion that spectators in general only think of wickets under two headings. They refer to them as wet or dry; and according as they sum up the wicket, so they measure the performances of the batsmen and the bowlers. When the wicket is wet the bowlers are expected to reap a fairly rich harvest, and when the wicket is dry it is expected that the batsmen will get a lot of runs.

WHAT MAKES THE CAPTAIN THINK.

I can assure my readers, however, that this generally accepted idea is far from fact; there are wet wickets which are very easy, from the batsman's point of view, and there are dry wickets which may be really quite difficult. One thing is certain—that the job of the captain of any cricket team would be ever so much easier if this general idea of wet or dry wickets could be accepted. It is the vagaries of these wet or dry pitches, however, which render it necessary for the skipper to be constantly thinking hard in order to get the very best results for his side.

WET WICKETS WHICH ARE EASY.

Perhaps I shall surprise many of my readers with a statement that the greater proportion of what are called wet wickets are really more batsmen's wickets than they are bowlers' wickets. Yet my experience tempts me to suggest that this is a true statement of the position. The definitely wet wicket

is more often than not an easy wicket for the batsman. No matter what sort of a bowler you put on with this kind of wicket he will have very real difficulty in getting any sort of assistance out of the pitch. Spin is well-nigh useless, because the ball fails to grip, and comes straight through at a nice, easy pace. Even if there is a man on who can make the ball turn a bit even on a wet wicket, he ought not to be regarded as dangerous, because the turn is made so slowly that the batsman has plenty of time to watch the ball; to play back at the good-length ones and keep them out of the wicket, and to go forward confidently to the



W. R. HAMMOND.

pitch of the ball which is the least bit "over length."

HANDICAPS FOR THE EXPRESS MEN.

On the wet pitch, too, the fast bowler is well nigh helpless, for he labours under two distinct handicaps. In the first place, much of the pace goes from the ball when it strikes the sodden turf, and in the second place, the moisture on the grass renders the ball continually greasy, and this grease cannot be entirely taken away, no matter how great the amount of sawdust used by the bowler. On top of these difficulties for the bowler on the

wet wicket there is the difficulty of getting a good foothold. To anticipate a question which may be raised by these notes about the wet wicket being a batsman's wicket, I must add that it is not easy to score quickly on a dead pitch, simply because the ball will not travel fast along the surface of the ground. Roughly speaking, it is to his "slighty" bowler that the captain must look to get his opponents out on a wet and easy wicket.

THE SLOW-DRYING PITCH.

Even the wicket which is drying slowly may still be regarded as a batsman's wicket, rather than a bowler's. On such a wicket a spin bowler can certainly make the ball turn; but the turning is not done quickly, and I have often noticed on the slowly drying pitch that there is a tendency for the deliveries of the spin bowler to rise to more than wicket height. This means that if the batsman, playing back, misses the ball, he is not necessarily "out"; and if the bowler, trying to get his spinning delivery to the wicket before it rises too high, pitches it up, then the batsman can treat it as a half-volley should be treated.

THE BOWLER'S DREAM WICKET.

Now let us turn for a moment to what certainly can be described as the bowlers' paradise. This is the wicket which, after rain, is drying quickly under the influence of a hot sun. Given about an hour of this, and the wicket becomes of the sort which can correctly be described as "sticky." The surface of the ground cakes in patches, the ball comes at all sorts of paces, not getting such a grip on a "caked" bit that it whizzes in at an alarming and often disastrous pace off the pitch. This is the wicket on which the break bowlers reap their harvest of victims; the wickets on which we often see quite a strong batting side dismissed for fifty runs or even less. There are certain super-batsmen who have established a reputation for being good on this type of pitch, but for the average player my view is that the best plan is to "go for" the bowling. If your luck and your eye are in, you may get a few valuable runs before being dismissed, whereas if you potter about you will probably be dismissed sooner or later without having made those few runs.

FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF.

As these notes on wet and dry wickets may be read by many club cricketers, as distinct from those who aspire to county rank, perhaps a little general hint may be acceptable. The wise batsman will treat the wicket as he finds it; not make up his mind that because it is wet it must be bad, or because it is dry it must be good. I am quite certain that many a side has got out for a low score because one batsman after another has "imagined" the pitch to be difficult. When your imagination leads you to this stage you are apt to be "out" before you really get "in."

W. R. Hammond.

LOOK OUT FOR THE SHERBET MAN!

Would you like a free gift of a box of delicious sherbet? Of course you would! Then look out for the special representative of the MAGNET at the seaside this summer! At all the principal seaside resorts our representative will be Specially Looking Out for boys and girls who are carrying a copy of the MAGNET. To everyone seen displaying this paper he will present free a box of delicious sherbet! So take your MAGNET with you when you go on the beach, and show it as prominently as you can! Our sherbet man will be on the look-out for you!

YOUR EDITOR.



THE MAN BEHIND THE STICKS!

W. A. Oldfield, the clever Australian wicket-keeper, who forms the subject of this week's grand Free Gift.

THE value of a really first-class wicket-keeper in a team is obvious. To the man behind the sticks come chances of catching or stumping which, if neglected, may mean all the difference between victory and defeat. And in this respect, as in many others, Australia is very well supplied, for in William Oldfield they have a man who is described by Clem Hill as the greatest that country has ever produced. Such praise is praise indeed when we consider the wonder-men who have "kept" for Australia in the past. The value of a man like Oldfield has been shown time after time, for he rarely goes through an innings without two or three victims. Once, out in Australia, he did much to quell the hopes of an England victory by making a remarkable catch on the leg side which dismissed Jack Hobbs for a "duck," when the batsman himself was under the belief that he had turned the ball sufficiently to score a boundary.

AT THE NETS! *By County Cricketer.*

SOME GENERAL POINTS ON BOWLING.

I WANT to refer this week to a letter from a MAGNET reader at Watworth, London, which "Umpire" handed to me to answer, because it deals with a phase of bowling which is of general interest, and touches a side of the art which is often overlooked by the young bowler.

This boy writes:

"I am a slow off-break bowler, and find that after bowling the third or fourth ball of the second over I can no longer make the ball break, although my length, grip, and pace are about the same. I have paid a lot of attention to this, but cannot get out of what seems to me a habit."

Now, on the face of it, there does seem a bit of a puzzle about this letter. Why should a young bowler, after sending down, say, ten deliveries which have shown a distinct break from the off, suddenly find, without any alteration of grip or pace, that the ball no longer breaks? On the face of it, we should say that the grip and the pace being the same, the eleventh ball ought to break in the same way as the other ten.

Now, here is my solution to the problem expounded. Without knowing it, this puzzled boy reader has really confessed that he doesn't know the real reason why he makes the ball turn. I am not blaming him for that; some of our first-class bowlers don't know how they do it. This boy is evidently of the opinion that the break which he imparts to the ball comes from his grip—by a twist which he gives it at the moment of delivery. But if the effect is as he says, then my view is that he doesn't get the break from his grip at all, but from his body. Notice that he bowls an over and a few balls which break, after which, however, he finds that he is not bowling with any break at all. Now, what has happened? I suggest that after he has sent down those eight balls which break he has tired ever so slightly, but that as the result of that little bit of tiring he is not swinging his body in quite the same way, and the ball ceases to break because the break has previously come from his body, and not from his grip at all.

This boy really possesses a big secret of success. The chap who can make five balls in succession break, and then bowl one with exactly the same action, the same grip, and the same pace which doesn't break at all will get a lot of wickets with that ball which doesn't break. The batsman will play for the break, but the ball, going straight through, will either be missed completely or will be taken on the edge of the bat and a catch probably given.

In the foregoing you really have the first big principle which should be behind all bowling—variety without any change of action which is noticeable to the batsman. Why are so many batsmen out leg before wicket to bowlers of the Maurice Tate variety? I will tell you. Because Tate sends down several balls which break a bit, and the batsman guards his wicket with his legs against these break balls. Then there comes, without any visible change in the bowler's action, the ball which goes straight through without break at all. The batsman has his legs there to guard his wicket against the break. The ball doesn't break; it hits his legs, and he is out l.b.w.

Next week I shall talk about various types of bowling.

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A REMARKABLE PERFORMANCE.

Out in Australia there is one bit of advice which is good—humouredly given to a man who misses a catch. It is "Get a bag!" Well, there is no necessity to tell Wicket-keeper Oldfield to "get a bag," because he usually wears one on each hand. At least, they seem like bags to the watcher, who notices how completely he takes the ball in them, with that little bit of "give" which saves the jar even when the fastest delivery has been sent down. There was one occasion when England scored four hundred runs in a Test match, and in the whole course of the innings Oldfield did not concede a single bye—a remarkable performance with express men like Gregory sending them down.

A USEFUL BAT.

Oldfield has been to this country before, but even now he shares with Woodfull the distinction of being the youngest member of the team, for they are both twenty-eight years of age. That Oldfield has the necessary pluck for the job was proved beyond all question of doubt when England players were last in Australia. This fine wicket-keeper had two ribs broken when standing up to Gregory's fast bowling; but he stuck to his place without retiring at all until the interval. The question of whether it is worth while to find a place in a cricket team for a man who is a wicket-keeper only is often discussed; but Australia is not faced with the problem so long as she has Oldfield to depend upon. The bowlers who think they have an easy thing on when Oldfield comes out to bat are quickly undeceived. He is extremely difficult to dismiss, and in the last series of Tests he actually finished fourth in the Australian batting averages, with an average of 41 runs per innings. He has a most annoying way of getting a few with the bat when runs are most wanted, and in inter-State cricket has been known to knock up a century.

HOW'S THAT?

A Tale of a Big Hit at Lord's.

IT WAS the sort of afternoon which was made for cricket—mid-July, with the sun blazing down. I am not sure whether I ought to say that the sky was reflecting the green of the grass, or whether the blue of the sky was reflected in the turf. Anyway, young Bobby Jones was convinced that sky and pitch were somehow welded into a perfect picture.

The sun was blazing down, too, on the roof of the new stand at Lord's, and even old Father Time, who stands aloft on that new stand, seemed to be full of life, winking and telling himself that he was not as old as some people were trying to make out. But he was too old to play for England, and that is where he differed from young Bobby Jones. Bobby was at the wicket, and he was thoroughly enjoying himself, believe me, at the expense of those Australian bowlers. What did he care if Jack Gregory was banging them down like lightning? He just flicked his bat, and the ball went skimming to the boundary to the applause of nearly forty thousand spectators.

Suddenly however, something happened, something which young Bobby Jones had not bargained for. It may have been that fellow Gregory who sent down a bumper; anyway, Jones Minor was conscious of a terrific blow on the head from the ball, and then he wasn't conscious of anything.

It seemed like years and years before Jones came to; actually it was only a matter of minutes ere he heard a voice, as if it came from a wireless loud speaker which was not properly tuned. And the voice said, "How's that?"

Another voice replied—the umpire's, thought Jones—and he was making a funny sort of reply to the appeal. "I think he was very nearly out."

Very nearly out! What was the fellow talking about? He was going to make some more runs for England.

Then Jones Minor opened his eyes wide. He was lying full length on a rough bench, with two or three people bending over him.

"Ah, I think you are all right now," said one of them, "but, really, my lad, when you come to Lord's to see a Test match you shouldn't go to sleep in the stand, because these batsmen of ours are likely to hit the ball in that direction. And one from Jack Hobbs knocked you clean out when you were asleep!"

(Don't forget, chums, there's a ripping cut-out, stand-up photo of A. W. Carr given away free with next Week's MAGNET. Mind you order your copy early.)



(Continued from page 12.)

moment that he still had more than one foe in that mysterious house.

He tiptoed along the corridor.

It led him into an oak-pannelled hall, with a double staircase and gallery. Across the hall was a great door. Beyond that door was freedom; and Wibley cut across to it, rapid but silent. But the door was locked, and no key was to be seen.

He gritted his teeth and turned back. So far, there had been no sound of alarm; the confederates of Nally Das had no suspicion of what had happened. It seemed that they were in the back of the house, to judge by the sound of voices that he had faintly heard.

Half a dozen doors opened from the wide hall; there was no sound, and no glimmer of light, from any of the rooms. The hall itself was lighted only by a cheap paraffin lamp standing on a bracket. Its aspect was very different from that of the prison-room Wibley had left. It was old, stained, mildewed in places, and utterly uncared-for and unclean. It came into Wibley's mind that this was some old, unoccupied country house which the kidnappers had obtained for their purposes, and of which they occupied only a few rooms.

With a curious Oriental respect for the rank and caste of their prisoner,

they had prepared a magnificent apartment for him, prisoner as he was, and doomed to perpetual confinement when he fell into the hands of the aspirant to the throne of Bhanipur. But the remainder of the old house was left in its neglected state, untouched.

Wibley moved silently along, and tried the first door he came to. It opened to his touch.

He flashed the light of the electric torch into the room. It was a large room, unfurnished, with old damp paper almost dropping from the walls. There was a large window, with outside shutters, which were closed.

Wibley moved silently along, and stepped along to the next apartment.

It was a smaller room, but still extensive, with dusty book-shelves on the walls. There were some articles of furniture in the room—two or three cheap Windsor chairs, a table, a desk, and on the desk—Wibley's eyes gleamed as he saw it—a telephone.

The Greyfriars junior stepped into the room.

For a moment he paused to listen, but there was no sound of alarm. Nally Das, gagged and bound in the prison-chamber, had been unable to make himself heard. His confederates, so far, had no suspicion that the prisoner had turned the tables upon him. At any moment they might make the discovery, but so far, all was safe. Wibley closed the door, and felt for the key. It was in the lock. It turned with great difficulty, being obviously old and rusty and disused. But it turned, and the door was locked between the junior and his enemies. His heart beat fast at the loud, grating noise it made in turning,

and he listened intently when it had ceased; but there was no sound of footsteps.

The big windows of the room were covered by outside shutters, and Wibley could guess that they were locked. It was certain that all exits from the mysterious house were either secured or guarded. But he crossed to the window to examine it. As he expected, the shutters were fastened.

He turned back to the desk where the telephone stood.

He was free, so far—free within the limits of the house. But he was as far as ever, or almost so, from escape. Even if he could break a way out, the noise would bring his enemies upon him, and in a struggle against odds he had no chance. But the telephone, which had served the turn of the kidnappers in their plotting, was now to serve the turn of the prisoner.

Wibley, with a beating heart, lifted the receiver from the hooks.

In the mysterious house, with deadly foes so close at hand, and danger dogging his steps, it was strange to hear the calm, normal voice that came over the wires from the telephone exchange.

"Number, please?"

For a second Wibley thought of asking for the police. But it was possible that there would be misapprehension—delay. His startling message might be taken for some prank, such as thoughtless practical jokers sometimes play on the telephone exchanges. It was safer to ring through to Greyfriars.

In a quiet, steady voice he gave Mr. Quelch's number.

"Courtfield, two-four-two."

And with thumping heart he waited.

(Continued overleaf.)

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THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch Hears Startling News!

"I SAY, you fellows—"
Billy Bunter blinked into the Rag through his big spectacles. It was near bed-time for the Remove, and most of the fellows were there, most of them discussing the missing junior, with endless surmises as to what had become of William Wibley. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry looked round quickly. "Any news, Bunter?"

"Grimes's come!" said Bunter.

That was Bunter's disrespectful way of alluding to Inspector Grimes of Courtfield.

"Grimes! That may mean news!" said Harry Wharton.

"Trotter's taking him to the Head's study," said Bunter.

There was a rush of Remove fellows from the Rag. They were in time to see Inspector Grimes' portly form disappear into the Head's study. A minute or two later Mr. Quelch came along and vanished into the same room, and the door closed after him.

An eager crowd of fellows waited in the corridor.

William Wibley might have felt considerably "bucked" had he known how deep a concern the Remove fellows were feeling for him. The juniors seemed to have forgotten, as well as forgiven, the trick he had played on the cricket team.

"I say, you fellows, we're entitled to hear the news, you know," said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five. Bunter was not perhaps moved so much by concern for the missing junior as by his natural inquisitiveness. "I'll tell you what—you keep an eye open for the prefects, and I'll buzz along to the Head's door, and—and—"

"And what?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"And pick up the news," said Bunter. "See?"

"Kick him!" said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

Eager as the juniors were for news, nobody but Bunter thought of the key-hole in the Head's door as a method. They waited for their Form master to emerge.

But no doubt a deep discussion was going on in the Head's study, for Mr. Quelch seemed in no hurry to come out. The juniors waited.

"I say, you fellows—" urged Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Cheese it!" growled the captain of the Remove.

Billy Bunter-grunted and rolled away. But he came rolling back in a few minutes.

"I say, you fellows—"

"For goodness' sake, dry up!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "Can't you understand that you talk too much?"

"The talkfulness is truly terrific, my esteemed chin-wagging Bunter," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"But, I say—"

"Ring off!"

"I'm going to the Head's study—"

"You're not!" snapped Peter Todd.

"I tell you—" howled Bunter.

"Shut up!"

"I've just been to Quelch's study!" hooted Bunter. "I know he had a telegram to-day, and I was going to look—I mean, of course, I should not have looked at Quelch's telegram—"

"You fat idiot! Ring off!" roared Johnny Bull.

"And the telephone bell was ringing

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like anything!" howled Bunter. "Somebody's ringing Quelch up. I'm going to tell him!"

"Oh!" said Wharton. "Quelch had better be told. It may be news from somewhere."

Bunter rolled on towards the Head's study, no one now saying him nay. He knocked at the door and opened it, and blinked inquisitively into the room.

A serious consultation was going on there. Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch looked very grave, and Inspector Grimes' ruddy face was serious and perplexed.

Three glances were turned at once on Billy Bunter, as his fat face and big spectacles glimmered in at the door. The Head frowned.

"Bunter, you should not come here now. Go away at once!"

"If you please, sir—"

"Go away at once, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch in a rumbling voice.

"The telephone, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"It's ringing in your study, sir! I—I thought I'd better come and tell you, sir!" stuttered Bunter.

"Oh! Very well! You may go!" Bunter was not very willing to go, but Mr. Quelch's look was enough for him. He backed hurriedly into the passage.

The Remove master rose to his feet.

"You had better take the call at once, Mr. Quelch," said the Head. "It may possibly be news from some quarter."

"I was thinking so, sir. I will return immediately."

Mr. Quelch left the Head's study, and whisked away down the passage. He raised his eyebrows a little at the sight of the crowd of juniors at the corner.

"We're waiting for news, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"There is no news, so far, and you should not crowd in the Head's corridor," said Mr. Quelch severely.

And he whisked on.

"I say, you fellows, that's rather thick, isn't it?" said Bunter warmly. "Fat lot he cares about Wibley!"

"Shurrup, you ass!" breathed Nugent.

"Rais! I tell you it's a fat lot he—"

"Bunter!"

"Oh, lor!"

Mr. Quelch was not yet out of bearing, apparently. He spun round and came back along the passage, his gimlet-eyes seeming to bore holes into the hapless Owl of the Remove.

"What did you say, Bunter?" boomed Mr. Quelch.

"Nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What! I heard—"

"I—I mean I—I said we—we all know how much you care about Wibley, sir," stuttered the Owl of the Remove.

"Your remark had a very different meaning to my ears, Bunter."

"Oh, sir! Not at all, sir!"

"I heard you distinctly, Bunter. You will take five hundred lines of Virgil, and go to your study immediately and write them out!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Mr. Quelch whisked on again, leaving the Owl of the Remove in a state of deep dismay.

"Oh dear! What do you fellows think of that?" he gasped.

"Serve you jolly well right!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Buzz off to your study, old fat man!" grinned Peter Todd. "Jolly thoughtful of Quelch to give you something to keep you quiet!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"I suppose you're going to help me, Toddy!" groaned Bunter.

"I'll help you to start!" said Toddy, drawing back his right foot.

"Beast!"

Bunter decided to start without assistance, and he rolled away dismally.

Meanwhile, Mr. Quelch had reached his study. The telephone-bell was going strong as he arrived there.

Mr. Quelch crossed to the instrument and jerked the receiver off. He clapped it to his ear and rapped into the transmitter:

"Well?"

"Is that Mr. Quelch?" came a voice along the wires, which seemed familiar to the ears of the Remove master.

"Speaking!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, good! This is Wibley—"

"Wha-a-a?"

Mr. Quelch almost dropped the receiver.

"Wibley?" he stuttered.

"Yes, sir! Wibley speaking!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He knew Wibley's voice now. But he was so astonished that he stood fairly blinking.

"Wibley!" he stuttered. "Wibley! That is Wibley speaking?"

And two or three juniors, who had followed the Remove master in the hope of hearing whether there was any news, heard that astonished ejaculation through the open doorway of the study. Mr. Quelch having left the door open in his hurry.

"Wibley speaking!" ejaculated Squiff. "Wibley!"

And the news spread along the passages like wildfire. Wibley, the missing junior, was on the telephone, speaking to Mr. Quelch in the Remove master's study!

"Then he is still living!" said Harry Wharton, with a deep breath. "Oh, what jolly good news!"

"The goodness of the news is terrific!"

"Hurrah!"

There had been a crowd in the Head's corridor. But it was nothing to the swarm that gathered outside Mr. Quelch's study when that amazing news spread among the Greyfriars fellows. The passage was fairly crammed with fellows of all Forms, and a crowd of eyes were turned on the Remove master, standing at the telephone.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Told on the Telephone!

"WIBLEY!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Then you are safe?"

"I am a prisoner, sir."

"A—a prisoner?"

"Yes, sir! I may be interrupted any minute. I've been kidnapped by a gang of Hindus, who have mistaken me for Hurree Singh."

"Where are you now, Wibley?"

Mr. Quelch could scarcely believe the ear that was glued to the receiver. His amazement was intense. But he was a man of prompt decision, and he wasted no time in useless words. He realised instantly that moments might be precious.

"I'm in a house I don't know, sir; but it is within sight of the North Foreland Lighthouse."

"The North Foreland Lighthouse!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"I was kept a prisoner in a room; but I have got out, and got into a room where there is a telephone—"

"I understand!"

"I've locked the door, and have rung you up, sir; they may be on to me any minute—"

"Speak quickly!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Give me what indication you can for finding the house where you are now."

"One window looks towards the North Foreland Lighthouse—not more than two miles away, as I judge."

"Very good!"

"The house is very large; a good-sized country house, but looks as if it has not been lived in for a very long time. It is mostly unfurnished, and neglected and disused. Estate agents in the district would be able to tell you something about it, sir."

"True!"

"All the windows are covered with shutters, and I cannot get out of the house. I hope to be able to hide somewhere till help comes. I have seen only two Hindus, but I have heard others. One of them was addressed as Nally Das by the other in my hearing. You've got that, sir? One of them named Nally Das."

"Yes, yes!"

"I suppose you have been told about my making myself up as a Hindu for a lark, sir—"

"Yes, yes!"

"They took me for Hurree Singh, and they still believe that I am Hurree Singh. They intend to keep him a prisoner, and take him to India by smuggling him on a ship."

"Go on!"

"They have mentioned the name of Baji Rao—a relation of Hurree Singh's—as the man who gave the order for the kidnapping."

"I know the name. Go on!"

"If they find out that I am not Hurree Singh, I do not think they will keep me a prisoner, sir; I think my life will be in danger. You will lose no time in getting the police to search for this house, sir?"

"Trust me, Wibley! Can you tell me anything more?"

"I could hear the sea when I was taken from the car on Wednesday night, sir, so this house cannot be far from the coast."

"Anything else?"

"I am to be smuggled on the ship in three days from the time I was kidnapped, so Nally Das told me. The ship will be ready then. That will be Saturday. If they do not find out that I am not Hurree Singh before then, I shall be safe, I think; but they may find out—"

"Wibley!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Look on the instrument you are using, and tell me the telephone number. It will be of great assistance."

"Oh!"

There was a moment's pause. The Remove master's keen mind had seized upon a detail Wibley had not thought of. The answer came:

"Marstairs 584, sir."

"Good!" Mr. Quelch's eyes gleamed over the telephone. "Wibley, my boy, keep up your courage. Every effort will be made at once to find you and save you."

"I'm sure of that, sir!"

"Inspector Grimes is now here, speaking to the Head, and I shall tell him at once what you have told me. It is probable that he will find the house this very night, perhaps in a few hours. From your description, it should not be difficult to find. I will go to Inspector Grimes at once. Keep up your courage."

"One word more, sir."



Having made a fruitless search for a means of escape, Wibley turned back to the desk where the telephone stood. With beating heart, he lifted the receiver from the hooks; then, in a quiet steady voice, he gave Mr. Quelch's number: "Courtfield, two-four-two!" (See Chapter 8.)

"Quick!"

"Warn Hurree Singh to keep close, sir. If they find me out they will be after him again. He is in danger."

"My dear lad, every care is being taken of Hurree Singh; his danger is already known. Keep up your courage, and remember that every effort is being made to find you and to save you."

"Right-ho, sir!"

Mr. Quelch, unwilling as he was to cut off communication with the missing junior, replaced the receiver on the hooks. There was no time to be lost.

Almost miraculously, as it seemed, news had come from the kidnapped junior. But hours at least must elapse before he was tracked out and found, and every minute was fraught with deadly danger to him.

Mr. Quelch hurried out of his study, and found himself in the midst of a buzzing, excited crowd.

"It was Wibley, sir?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yes. Let me pass at once."

The crowd of fellows made room for Mr. Quelch to pass, and he hurried away to the Head's study. In his excitement and anxiety, the Remove master quite forgot his usual dignified deportment, and he almost ran, and his gown streamed out behind him as he went.

Dr. Locke gazed at him in astonishment as he came breathlessly in.

"Is it news, Mr. Quelch?"

"Yes, sir. The telephone call was from Wibley himself."

"What?"

"By gad, sir!" said Inspector Grimes.

Mr. Quelch hurriedly repeated what the kidnapped junior had told him on the telephone.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head, when he had finished. "Bless my soul! This is excellent news; and the boy seems to have shown excellent courage and resource."

Inspector Grimes had been busy making notes. The Head's anxious glance turned on him.

"You will be able to find the house, inspector, from the description Wibley has given?"

"There will be no difficulty there, sir," said Mr. Grimes. "Any estate agent in the district could put his finger on it at once. Even without that aid I should very easily find it. In two or three hours, sir, I hope to have my hands on the scoundrels, and to have Master Wibley safe and sound."

And the inspector hurried away.

At bed-time the Remove were in a buzz over the news. Wingate of the Sixth had some trouble in shepherding them off to their dormitory. Billy Bunter, inky and tired and discontented, came up from his unfinished imposition, and the talk of the juniors first appraised him of the news of Wibley. The Peeping Tom of Greyfriars, generally first in the field in gathering news, was the last this time. Wingate put out the lights and left the dormitory, and a buzz of talk immediately followed the prefect's

departure. The Remove fellows were not likely to go to sleep early that night.

"They may bag old Wib to-night," said Bob Cherry. "I'm jolly well going to stay awake, in case he comes back."

"Yes, rather," said Wharton.

"The wakefulness will be terrific," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The gladfulness will be great to see the esteemed Wibley again."

"And we jolly well won't rag him, after all!" chuckled Bob.

"No fear! He lost us the Redclyffe match with his fat-headed jape," said Wharton. "But he may have saved old Inky at the same time, and Inky's worth more than a cricket-match."

"Hear, hear!"

"My esteemed chums, the testimony of your kind and ludicrous opinions is terrifically grateful and comforting."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, "you needn't stay awake. I'm going to sit up, and I'll call you if Wibley comes back."

"Oh, do!" said Bob.

Five minutes later the buzz of talk was still going on in the Remove dormitory, and mingled with it was a sound like the rumble of distant thunder. It was the snore of the Owl of the Remove.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

At Last!

WILLIAM WIBLEY replaced the receiver on the telephone, and stepped back from the instrument. He tiptoed to the door of the room and bent his head and listened there.

There was no sound.

Wibley's heart was lighter. He had got through to Mr. Quelch. They knew now at Greyfriars that he was still living, that he was a prisoner in the hands of the rascals who had sought to kidnap Hurree Janset Ram Singh, and they had a clue at least to the place where he was imprisoned. Fortune had favoured the kidnapped Removite, aided by his own courage and resource. But he knew that his danger was still great. Hours, at least, must pass before he was rescued, if rescue came; but it was likely to be only minutes before the kidnappers discovered that he was no longer in the prison-room. Sooner or later they would wonder what kept Nally

Das there, and discovery of the facts would follow.

To keep secret the fact that he had telephoned was the most pressing necessity now. If once the rascals knew that, they were not likely to linger in the lonely house with their prisoner. Wibley would be taken into the car, and removed from the spot as fast as the car could go. The kidnappers would take no risks with him; and the police, when they arrived, would find the house deserted and vacant.

This was clear enough to Wibley; and it was clear to him that when the kidnappers began to search the house for him, they must not find him in the room where the telephone stood. He had still time, and he made the most of it.

He unlocked the door of the room as quietly as he could, and stepped out into the dim hall.

The house was almost eerily silent.

In all the great building, which in its palmy days had probably had two or three dozen occupants, there were only the three or four Hindus and the kidnapped Greyfriars junior. The only sound that came to his ears was that of a rat scuttling behind the mildest wainscot.

Wibley closed the door behind him, and crossed the hall on tiptoe to the staircase.

He had some faint hope of finding an upper window unsecured; and, at all events, on the upper floors he was further from the gang of kidnappers, and had more chance of escaping their search, if they began to hunt for him through the old rambling building.

He reached the old gallery that ran round the old hall, at a height of about fifteen feet. All was dark there—the gleam of the oil-lamp below cast only a few faint flickers towards the high ceiling. He leaned on the oaken balustrade, and looked down and listened.

The silence was broken now.

There were footsteps, and two or three voices speaking together, and Wibley's heart beat fast as he listened. A sound of knocking echoed eerily through the old, empty building. He could guess that the Hindus were knocking at the door of the prison-room, astonished not to find the key in the outside of the lock.

In spite of his excitement and anxiety, Wibley grinned. The Hindus knew that their leader had gone to the prison-room, and doubtless supposed him to have remained there with the prisoner, as he had not rejoined them. He realised how perplexed and alarmed the rascals must be at finding the door locked and the key gone, and Nally Das apparently vanished. The knocking sounded louder and louder, and he heard voices calling—and, louder than the rest, the harsh voice of Kalouth, the man who had driven the car.

"Tum sunte ho?"

The words were unintelligible to Wibley; but he knew that the man was calling to Nally Das, and the tone showed that he was puzzled and alarmed.

Knock, knock!

Footsteps came along to the hall. Wibley, peering down unseen from the dark gallery above, saw Kalouth come into the radius of the light from the lamp.

The man stared round him, evidently in search, and called again and again.

"Nally Das! Tum sunte ho? Tum sunte ho?"

Hurree Singh would have known that the words meant, "Do you hear me?" Wibley could guess from the tone that they meant something of the kind.

The man was plainly alarmed and perplexed. Wibley watched him cross

the hall, and enter the room where the telephone was. That room was one of the few used by the gang of kidnappers, and evidently Kalouth was looking there for Nally Das. But he came out again disappointed and puzzled, and hurried back the way he had come. Wibley thanked his good fortune that he had got clear in time.

The knocking was louder now at the door of the prison-room. The kidnappers were gathered there, and the sound of a crash told the listening junior that they were forcing in a door.

It was a matter of minutes only now before they discovered Nally Das in his bonds, and learned what had happened.

Wibley hurried up the second staircase. As he went he heard a rending crash, which told that the lock of the prison-room had given. Immediately afterwards there was an outbreak of excited voices, loud and startled exclamations in Hindustani echoing through the house.

Wibley flashed the light of the electric torch before him, hurrying on up the stairs.

He knew that the Hindus must now be releasing Nally Das from his bonds—that their leader was telling them what had occurred—that a fierce and rigorous search was about to begin. To gain time was Wibley's one object—to keep out of the hands of his enemies as long as he could.

He entered a room—a dismantled, dismal room, which had once been a bed-chamber. The upper windows were not protected by shutters, and Wibley quickly had a window open, and the fresh air of the night, the breeze from the sea, played upon his feverish face.

Stars glimmered in the dark, velvety sky. Far away, the light of the North Foreland glimmered through the night. Far out to sea there were dancing lights—the lights on gliding vessels. But Wibley's gaze was turned below. He made out the dim shapes of trees, but the tree-tops were below the window, a sheer wall was beneath him. His hope of escape had been slight, and it died away now. It was death to fall—and there was no hold for the hand or foot of a climber.

The old house, which had seemed eerily silent only a few minutes before, was now echoing with footsteps and noises of excited shouting. The search was going on. But there were many rooms to be searched, and for some time the Hindus remained on the ground floor. But Wibley heard the footsteps and voices on the stairs at last. The voice of Nally Das, in savage, excited tones, was louder than the rest. A hand tried the door behind which Wibley stood with beating heart; it opened, and a light flashed into the room.

Behind the light was the dusky, enraged face of Nally Das, a white bandage bound round his head. His black eyes flashed round the room like those of a wild animal, and glittered as they rested on Wibley.

"Idhar ao!" he exclaimed.

In a moment two pairs of dusky hands were on the Greyfriars junior.

Wibley's heart throbbed almost painfully, as the kidnappers seized him. So savage were their looks, so menacing the glare of Nally Das, that he feared, for the moment, instant death. But resistance was impossible in the grasp of many sinewy hands. Nally Das stood with the light in his hand, his savage eyes burning at the prisoner. He spoke rapidly in his own tongue, heaping abuse and reproach on the junior, in words of which Wibley did not comprehend a syllable.

"But, savage and revengeful as the

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Nally Das' black eyes flashed round the room like those of a wild animal, and glittered as they rested on Wibley. "Idhar ao!" he exclaimed. The next moment two pairs of dusky hands grasped the Greyfriars junior. Wibley's heart throbbed almost painfully. So savage were his kidnappers' looks, that he feared, for the moment, instant death. (See Chapter 11.)

Hindu was, it was evident that he was restrained from vengeance on the supposed nabob. Wibley knew very well that, had his disguise been penetrated at that moment, his life would not have been worth an instant's purchase. But to the Hindu he was still Hurree Singh, upon whom he dared not lay murderous hands.

He broke off the torrent of Hindustani at last, and rapped out an order to his followers.

Wibley was dragged from the room, and roughly hustled down the stairs. In a few minutes he was again in the prison-room from which he had escaped. The lock on the door was in fragments.

Nally Das followed him in, with a savage face.

"You dreamed of escape, Huzoor," he said, speaking in English at last. "It was only a dream. Here you will remain till you are taken on the steamer."

He tramped out of the room, dragging the door shut after him. The broken lock was useless; but there was a bolt on the outside of the door, and Wibley heard it grate into its socket.

He was a prisoner again—in the room in which he had passed so many weary hours.

But there was hope in his heart now. Obviously the Hindus did not suspect that he had penetrated into the room where the telephone stood. It had not crossed their minds that he had used the instrument. They had found him hiding in the deserted rooms above, and had taken it for granted that he had fled there in search of some outlet from the

house, or to hide himself from their search. That he had communicated with his friends they did not know and did not suspect.

He had only to wait.

How long?

He could not guess. Already, he knew, the police must be in search of the lonely house near the North Foreland. Mr. Quelch would not have lost a moment. How long?

Wibley listened, hoping every moment to hear the knock of the police at the door. But all was silent. And another thought came into his mind as he sat on the divan and waited and waited. When the police came—if they came—it was possible that the kidnappers, unable to carry off their prisoner, might resort to more murderous methods.

At that thought Wibley rose, and, as silently as he could, he dragged the heavier articles of furniture in the room towards the door. The table, and two or three of the long, low divans from the walls, were piled there, barricading the door. The door opened inwards naturally, and it would not be easy for the kidnappers to open it in a hurry.

Wibley finished his barricade, and moved restlessly about the room, waiting, with beating heart and strained nerves. He started as a knock came at the door. The bolt had been withdrawn; a hand pushed at the door, and it did not open. There was an impatient knock.

"Huzoor!" rapped out Nally Das.

"What do you want?"

"What play is this?" snarled the

Hindu. "The Huzoor has blocked the door! Does not the Huzoor decide to eat before he sleeps?"

"No."

"Hunger, then, if you choose!" snarled Nally Das. And he shot the bolt again outside the door and went.

Wibley waited.

The hour was growing late; it was long past midnight when Wibley was still pacing the room, tired, heavy, but never thinking of sleep. Was rescue on the way? Would the police come? Would they ever come? Would they never come? Surely Mr. Quelch had lost no time? Surely he was being searched for? Surely the indication he had given was sufficient to guide the searchers to the old house? And yet, the night was growing old, and the silence was still unbroken.

Knock!

Wibley started violently.

Knock!

Loud and heavy knocking in the distance—at the door of the house! Who could be knocking at that hour of the night—who but the police? Wibley's heavy eyes danced.

It was rescue at last!

There were sounds now in the silent house—footsteps, voices—voices raised in alarm. Wibley's heart thrilled as the door of his room was unbolted—as it was pressed and pushed by someone who strove savagely to enter. A voice, harsh and husky with rage and terror, came to him:

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"Huzoor! Huzoor!"

Wibley ran to the door and added his weight and his strength to the barricade as the Hindu shoved savagely from without. Nally Das yelled to him in Hindustani—doubtless threats and orders to remove the barricade, which Wibley would not have heeded had he understood them. He shoved hard on the pile of stacked furniture, exerting all his strength. At all costs he had to keep the savage Hindu out; it was clear now that rescue was at hand.

Suddenly the pressure from without ceased. There was a patter of fleeing footsteps, followed by a sound of heavy tramping and a voice calling in English. Nally Das was gone—the others had already fled, and Nally Das had followed them, fleeing barely in time. Wibley reeled against the wall, almost faint with relief. He was saved!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Great Expectations!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
The rising-bell had clanged out over Greyfriars in the sunny summer morning.

Bob Cherry sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes. He was still drowsy—it was at a late hour that he had slept. Till almost midnight many of the Removites had remained awake, in the hope of seeing Wibley return; but they had fallen asleep at last. And their eyes did not open again till the rising-bell clanged.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that Wib?" roared Bob.

"Wibley!"

"My hat!"

A bed that had been vacant when the Remove went to sleep was occupied now. Bob Cherry jumped out and ran to it. There lay William Wibley, still with the dusky stain on his face, sleeping like a top!

"Wibley!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Really Wibley?"

"The realfulness is terrific."

"Hurrah!"

All the Remove turned to stare at the returned junior. Even Billy Bunter detached himself from his bed, instead of snatching the last few possible minutes. Wibley was back, safe and sound, and sleeping. But the buzz of voices in the dormitory caused Wibley to open his eyes, and he blinked at the crowd round his bed.

"So you're back?" exclaimed Skinner.

Wibley grinned sleepily.

"Looks like it," he answered.

"And where have you been?" said Skinner. "Taken a day off at Margate—what?—and stuffed Quelch with a yarn about being kidnapped?"

"You silly ass!"

"Jolly glad to see you back safe, Wibley," said the captain of the Remove. "We heard about your phoning to Quelch, and stayed awake to see you if you came. You must have got in jolly late."

"At dawn," said Wibley, with a deep yawn. "Oh dear! I'm sleepy! I didn't even stop for a wash. Do I look as if I wanted one?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The esteemed Wibley has a handsomer complexion than usual," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "For once he is almost good-looking!"

Wibley rubbed his eyes and chuckled. "I say, you fellows, we ought to celebrate this," said Bunter. "If my postal-order's come, I shall stand a

spread in the Rag after class to celebrate Wibley's home-coming—what? If it hasn't come—"

"If!" chorled Wibley.

"If it hasn't come, you fellows can lend me—"

"A thick ear!" said Bob Cherry. "Here you are, Bunter—What are you dodging away for?"

"Beast!"

"The gladfulness to see you is terrific, my esteemed idiotic Wibley," said Hurree Singh. "In the excellent circumstances, we shall not rag you for your execrable and ludicrous trickery."

"But if you borrow Inky's beautiful complexion again, old man, we'll boil you in oil!" said Johnny Bull.

"No fear!" said Wibley. "I've had enough of playing nabob! I've had a jolly narrow escape. I can tell you. I don't want to see Mr. Nally Das any more. No Hindus for me!"

"Tell us all about it," said Nugent.

"Yaw-aw-aw!" Wibley yawned deeply. "I'll tell you later—no classes for me to-day. That's a giddy silver lining to the cloud! I'm jolly well going to sleep again. Quelch told me to sleep as long as I liked. And I shall jolly well like to sleep till about eleven."

"But how did you get away?" demanded Peter Todd, shaking Wibley as he laid his head on the pillow again.

"Yaw-aw-aw!"

"Did they bagfully capture the esteemed and rascally kidnappers?" asked Hurree Singh.

"Yaw-aw! No. They bolted like

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rabbits when the police butted in," said Wibley. "Inspector Grimes had surrounded the house, but they had some way out, and vanished. I don't fancy he got one of them—at least, he hadn't made any capture when I saw him last. But they got me—that was the important point."

"And the Hindus believed you were Inky all the time?" asked Nugent.

Wibley chuckled again.

"Yes, rather—though I couldn't speak a word of their nut-cracking language—excuse me, Inky. It sounds like cracking nuts, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I believe they'd have finished me if they'd known," said Wibley. "And my belief is that that old card, Nally Das, meant to finish me off when he found the police were in the house. But I barred him off, and he scudded, with Mr. Grimes' paw almost on his shoulder. I hope they'll get him. If they don't, you'd better look out, Inky!"

"The look-out-fulness will be terrific."

"They'll be after you," said Wibley. "Some delightful relation of yours named Baji Rao was at the bottom of it, and I fancy they had orders to polish you off if they couldn't get you out to India. So you'd better sign the 'Daily Mail' insurance coupon before you take your next walk abroad. Now let a fellow go to sleep!"

And Wibley was left to repose at last.

The Remove went down, leaving

William Wibley fast asleep in his bed. Wibley was not seen in the Form-room that morning. At classes, Mr. Quelch was observed to be in an unusually good-humour; it was evident that he was deeply relieved by Wibley's safe return—a feeling that was shared by all his pupils.

After class that day, Wibley had to tell over and over again the story of his strange adventures. Fellows of all Forms came along to ask Wibley about it. Even great men of the Sixth looked into his study in the Remove passage to hear the strange tale. It was agreed on all hands that Wibley had shown immense pluck and resource, and he was the hero of the hour—which was quite an unexpected ending to the jape he had played on the cricketers at Redclyffe.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. were anxious to hear news of the capture of the kidnappers.

But no news came that day, or the next. Nally Das and his gang seemed to have vanished into thin air.

They had escaped; and it was surmised that they might have fled on board the steamer that was to have taken their prisoner away, and so have escaped overseas. Harry Wharton & Co. hoped that this was the case; they would have been greatly relieved to know that the rascally gang were out of the country. But they could not be sure—and the Head could not be sure. And, for the present, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was strictly "gated," forbidden to step out of the precincts of Greyfriars upon any pretext whatsoever.

The old house by the coast was in the hands of the police. It was learned that it had been bought a few weeks before by a Hindu, calling himself a retired merchant; but after the affair of the kidnapping, the owner did not reappear to claim his property.

Many of the Greyfriars fellows cycled over to the place on the next half-holiday, to ramble through the old rooms where Wibley had spent such thrilling hours. Many signs of the occupation of the place by the Hindu kidnappers were still visible; but the rascals themselves were never likely to be seen there again. Either they had escaped from the country, or they had dived deep into some other hiding-place at a distance and were lying very low.

News of what had happened went out to the East over the wires, and a few days later there came a cablegram for Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. His dusky face was very serious as he showed it to his comrades.

"My esteemed uncle, the Jam Bahadur, has been terrifically alarmed," he told them. "He thoughtfully opines that I am not safe in the tight little island, and demands that I return to Bhanipur."

"What?" ejaculated the Co.

"The esteemed Jam believes that Baji Rao's rascally and worthy followers will make another attempt," said the nabob ruefully. "He desires that I shall be safe under his esteemed eye. Perhapsfully he is right; but the grief of leaving my esteemed chums will be terrific."

The Co. looked quite blank.

"What rot!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You're not going, Inky. Ain't we all keeping a fatherly eye on you?"

"The wish of the esteemed uncle and guardian is law," said Hurree Singh. "The Head will have to play up. But I have thought of a wheezy good idea.

(Continued on page 23.)

ROUGH ON TOMMY! One minute a carefree youth with money to spend and a cheery pal to share it with; the next, arrested on the gravest charge in the calendar with false evidence piling up around him, like an insurmountable barrier!

CURLEW ISLAND



by David Goodwin

Adrift!

GOT him!" said a thick voice. Two dark figures stooped over the fallen Tommy. Both of them wore black cloth masks. One was tall and slim. The other was much bigger, heavy and bulky in build; his huge hand grasped a sausage-shaped sand-bag—the most silent and deadly of weapons, which can kill without leaving a mark.

"That's finished him," muttered the slimmer of the two men. "It's the boy. I thought it was Comber himself."

"All the better," said the big ruffian in a sullen voice, "I was scared of him; he was the likeliest to wake up and give the alarm. We'll get the old chap easy now. What's that standing there by the fence?"

"It's the boy's gun," said No. 1. "He's has been shooting ducks. Wait a moment. Why not use that gun for the job? Who's going to prove the boy himself didn't do it? You see what I mean?"

"Not good enough," growled the other, and showed his sand-bag. "We don't want a noise. This will do it quietly. Come on."

They crept towards the bungalow, and crouched under the window, listening. Everything was quiet. The window was half open.

"Better this way than the door," whispered the man with the sand-bag. "Door might creak. He sleeps in the room on the left. You keep watch here till I tell you it's all right. I suppose we've got to finish him?"

"Yes!" whispered the taller man, "we don't want any one left to tell tales. You fool, are you weakening? Give me the sand-bag. I'll find him, and I can move more quietly than you. Wait here."

He took the weapon from his companion's hand, and crept quietly in through the window. The smaller of the two remained crouching under the window, listening.

A moment later and there was the sound of a blow.

The window was gently opened wide.

"Come in now. Be quick!" said the man inside.

"Finished?" muttered the watcher, heaving his big form through the window.

"Yes. Go see for yourself if you like."

An electric torch was turned on, and the man who had watched passed in through the door of the room in front. In a few moments he was back again.

"Yes," he said very quietly. "You've made sure. Now then, this way to the safe. It's in the parlour."

WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

TOMMY COMBER, a bright young lad who assists his uncle, **JOSEPH COMBER**, in his experimental work with high explosives.

"CHUFFER" FOSS, Tommy's half-cousin, a big, hulking fellow, two years Tommy's senior.

"Nunks," as Tommy affectionately calls his uncle, owns Curlew Island, which is situated near the mouth of the Thames. Here, in this lonely spot, all Joseph Comber's experiments are carried out. Tommy soon proves an adept pupil at "making fireworks," and fills in his leisure time with boating, fishing, and shooting.

He has no love for Chuffer, whom he regards as a "wrong 'un," and on one occasion when Chuffer visits Curlew Island, Tommy proves to him that he can use his fists to good effect. Chuffer leaves the island quicker than he came, swearing vengeance.

Joseph Comber at last realises the ambition of his life, and invents a high explosive which he names Comberite. He confidently expects that his invention will bring him fame and fortune, and of the latter, naturally, Tommy is promised a big share. Fearing that the formula might fall into dishonest hands, Nunks gets Tommy to commit every detail of it to memory. Then all papers connected with the formula are destroyed.

By a stile that night Tommy is dreaming of the good times in store when suddenly two figures steal up behind him. Tommy is dealt a smashing blow over the head, and, without a cry, he sinks to the ground in an unconscious heap.

(Now read on.)

They entered the little living-room. A small, stout-looking steel safe stood in the far corner.

"I've got the keys off him. Didn't have to look for them. They were in his pocket; he hadn't undressed," said the tall ruffian, and producing a bunch of keys, found one that fitted the safe.

In a few seconds the door was open. They kneeled before it, searching the safe by the light of the electric torch.

"Here's the money," said the big man, grabbing a bundle of Treasury and bank notes. "I'll take care of that."

"And here are the papers," said the other, "show the light on them. Deuce take the money! I want to see what this is. Yes . . . notes and figures. This is it. I'll take the lot and make sure. Take those notebooks; too. What's this at the back? Account books. Leave them, they don't matter. Now let's get away quick! Leave the safe open and the keys in it. Don't argue—do as I tell you! The police will see the safe has been robbed for the money. It may be days before any one comes here, but they'll never get on our track. Hurry!"

In a few moments the two night raiders were out of the bungalow. But they halted beside Tommy's prostrate form, and the tall man stooped and laid a hand over his heart.

"Why, the boy's alive!" he said. "Stunned, that's all. Must have a thick skull."

"I thought I gave it him harder. But I was in a hurry," muttered the other. "Still—that's easy mended."

"Stop!" said the tall man. "I've an idea. Pick up that gun and the birds, and put them into the boy's coat. Then come back here."

His partner quickly did as he was told.

"Now hand me some of that money you took out of the safe," said the tall man. He took several of the Treasury notes and stuffed them into the breast pocket of Tommy's rough jacket.

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One or two notes of a pound each he thrust into the waistcoat.

"That's about twenty pounds he has got on him," the man said, "twenty pounds out of his uncle's safe. It's a good deal for a boy to carry. And cheap at the price, to you and me."

"But what on earth!" exclaimed the other.

"Don't you see," replied his companion grimly, "the question will be—'who killed and robbed Joseph Comber?' Here's the answer. But the boy won't be found here on the island. Lift up his feet, while I take him by the shoulders. Put him in his boat."

"You're no fool," said the other, and between them they carried Tommy across the island to the jetty where his own boat was tied up. Tommy was laid on the floor boards, the boat was untied, and gently pushed out into the creek, so that the last ebb tide floated it down to the main river. The two men crouched by the jetty and watched it till it disappeared.

Then they crept along the wall to where their own boat lay hidden in a bed of salt reeds, and pushing out, they vanished into the night.

All was quiet on Curlew Island. In the bungalow Joseph Comber lay dead. Out on the dark river the old boat, bearing Tommy's unconscious form, went slowly drifting up towards Gravesend with the flowing tide.

Tommy opened his eyes slowly. "Crumbs!" he murmured, "my head!"

His head was aching. He put up a hand drowsily and felt it. It was sore at the back, and he felt giddy.

At first he thought he was in his camp-bed at the bungalow. He soon found that was a mistake. He realised that he was lying on his back on the floor of his boat, with his head against the thwart. Naturally he was stiff and sore all over. It was broad daylight, and the sun was shining.

He lifted his head, and the first thing he saw was his gun lying beside him, and a couple of dead wild ducks.

He could remember nothing at all about it. He had a dim memory of shooting some ducks. The boat was apparently lying in the creek, for he could see the muddy bank close to him.

Tommy rose dizzily to his feet and took a look round. He became more and more puzzled. The boat was stranded on the mud, just inside the mouth of a small creek with the wide river channel just outside. But it wasn't the creek, at Curlew Island.

He stood up on the thwart, and stared up and down the river. There was a big steamer ploughing along, far out in the middle of the channel, and a fleet of sailing barges. He was nowhere near Curlew Island. He looked up-stream, and saw a big town, with a forest of shipping lying at anchor abreast of it.

"Gravesend!" exclaimed Tommy. "I'll be shot if that ain't Gravesend! How in thunder did I get here? What's happened?"

During the past night, the boat had drifted with the flood tide up all those miles of river, through Lower Hope and Gravesend Reach in the darkness, and finally stranded in the mouth of a little creek on the south shore not half a mile below Gravesend Town itself.

Tommy could remember absolutely nothing whatever. The whole business had him beaten. The only sure thing about it was that he had a headache, and was miles from home.

"I must have been dog-tired and

dropped off to sleep in the boat—never tied her up," he said thoughtfully. "And she's drifted right up here with the tide. Well, let's get out of it!"

He took an oar and pushed the boat off the mud into the creek-way, and out into the main river. His head began to clear a little.

"Rummy part of it is that the last thing I seem to remember was going ashore with the gun and stopping at the old stile near the jetty," he said to himself. "I could have sworn to that. But I must have dreamed it, that's all. Here I am in the boat, an' there's the gun an' the ducks. But what a dashed silly business!"

He leaned over the side and splashed water over his face and head, and began to feel better. He had had a very hard day and night of it—overdone it a bit. And yonder was Gravesend, with the tide flowing that way.

He did not feel up to rowing all the miles down to Curlew Island against the flood tide. He was stiff and sore, and beginning to feel very hungry.

"Me for Gravesend!" said Tommy, turning the boat upstream. "I'll get some grub there, and look up Danny Bennett, an' call it a holiday. It's Saturday, too, there'll be a cricket match on. Can drop down home along on the evenin' ebb tide."

He did not worry about Nunks, for he knew Nunks would not worry about him. Tommy was often out all night when after ducks or fish, and Nunks knew he could look after himself.

He had not the least idea that anything had gone wrong the night before. It was all blotted out by that sudden, crushing blow which had descended on him out of the darkness. A thick cap and a thick skull had saved him from anything worse than being stunned. All that remained was a sore head; so sore that he began to have doubts.

"I wonder if I really went to sleep, or if I slipped up in the boat and coshed myself on the napper?" he said, as he pulled away towards the town. "But that isn't likely. There's no bump," he added, feeling the sore place on his scalp.

A sandbag does not raise a bump and does not bruise, though it can crash a skull in if the blow is hard enough.

Tom was so fit and tough that the effects had pretty nearly passed off before he reached Gravesend, though he was still a bit giddy. He was making for the lower jetty, where a lot of boats were passing to and fro. Suddenly there was a shout, and a small, black dinghy came pulling towards him at full speed.

"Tommy! Hi, Tommy Comber, you bung-eyed, busy little blighter! Where did you spring from?"

"Dan!" cried Tommy joyously, as the dinghy bumped alongside, and Dan Bennett poked him affectionately in the ribs with the butt of an oar. "You're the stiff I'm lookin' for. Thought you'd be tied up at the shop. Got the day off?"

"Rather! Shop's shut up," said Dan, who was a cheery, red-headed boy of just Tommy's age, with a fleet of freckles on his face, an impudent eye, and a strong, fighting jaw. It was he who had taught Tommy all he knew about boxing.

"So've I. We'll make a beano of it. Can you take me up home an' give me some breakfast? I'm just about starving!"

"Breakfast! What's eating you? It's nearly dinner-time!"

"Great guns, is it?" said Tommy. His watch had run down in the night,

and he thought it was about seven o'clock, though the height of the sun might have shown him his mistake if he hadn't been feeling too knocked out to look at it. "I must have slept the giddy clock round, then."

"You look half asleep now! What have you been up to?"

Tommy told him how he had gone adrift and awakened in the boat. Dan told him he ought not to be out without a keeper. Tommy agreed it was rather queer, and wondered whether he had fallen down and stunned himself.

"No fear. Nothing would hurt your head," said Dan. "I've broken my knuckles against it, and I know."

"I must have been asleep—that's all about it, then. It don't matter. Dinner-time, eh? Lead me to it!"

But Dan explained, as they rowed to the pier, that there was nothing doing at home in the way of dinner.

Dan's father was a chemist and kept a small pharmacy in a back street; Dan, who had left school, helped him in the shop. But old Mr. Bennett had been called off to London for the day and had shut the place up. For Dan, though he knew something about the business, wasn't qualified to sell medicines and poisons, and the two of them lived quite alone. So Dan's father had put up the shutters and given him eightpence to get his dinner out, and take a holiday.

"Eightpence won't give two of us much of a giddy time, will it?" said Tommy, as they tied their boats to the stairs and went up on the jetty. "I'm a sort of millionaire, too! I want to make the fur fly!"

"Millionaire? You?" jeered Dan. "How—what—why?"

But Tommy shut up like an oyster. He had said more than he meant to.

"Tell you what, I'll sell these birds at the poulterers, and that'll stand us a few bob to be going on with," he said, shouldering his gun. "Haven't a bean on me now, though I've a quid down at home that Nunks gave me last time I was in Southend—wish I'd brought it," he added, feeling ruefully in his waistcoat pockets. "Hallo! What the doose—"

He pulled out a one pound note, and then another. He searched all the pockets of his vest and found no less than four pounds ten shillings. Tommy stared at the notes in astonishment.

The Arrest!

"WHY, you are a blessed millionaire, after all!" exclaimed Dan, no less surprised than his chum.

"How the dickens did this get here?" said Tommy. "I'll swear I never brought any money away." He gave a cheer. "By gum, the beano's coming off now all right! Good old Nunks bunged it to me, I suppose."

"What d'you mean—you suppose? Haven't you woke up yet, kid? You must know whether he did or not!"

Tommy reflected. He certainly could not make it out. Nunks had been very much above himself yesterday.

"It's a dashed funny thing, Danny," he said. "I can't remember anything hardly about what happened last night. It seems kind of blank, if you know what I mean. We had a sort of a bust-up on the island—a rare old time. Nunks was awful pleased. Mustn't tell you why. Nunk's business, not mine. But, anyway, here's the stuff, and here's you and me! Whoop! Let her go, Gallagher."

Dan gave a cheer, too. Evidently it



Tommy Comber was making for the lower jetty when a voice hailed him, and a small black dinghy came speeding towards him. "Tommy! Hi, Tommy Comber, you bung-eyed, busy little blighter! Where did you spring from?" Tommy ceased rowing and glanced behind him. "Why, it's Dan Bennett!" he cried in joyous surprise. (See page 24.)

was all right. They went rolling along the jetty arm-in-arm.

Suddenly Tommy pulled up short, bringing his chum to a standstill. He thought he recognised a hulking form louncing against some railings at the end of the jetty and eyeing Tommy furtively. It was Chuffer. As the boys stopped, he melted away silently and disappeared round the corner.

"See that?" said Tommy. "My cousin, wasn't it?"

"Yes. Chuffer Foss. I noticed him. He was looking at you when you pulled the stuff out. Always loafing about here. Does nothing but loaf. Don't seem to want to give you the glad eye, lad," said Dan.

"I bet he doesn't. Chuffer was down on the island two days ago. We had a bit of a row."

"What about?"

"Oh, nothing much! Tell you some time. Don't want to think about Chuffer on a giddy glad day like this, with quids to burn!"

"Should say not!" chortled Dan. "Nasty bit of work, Chuffer is. Glad he's your cousin an' not mine. He hates the sight of me."

"That's because you're a pal of mine. Let's get rid of this gun an' the birds."

They left them at Dan's home. Then, as they started off to find a place to feed in Dan suggested a tea-shop in the High Street. Tommy was feeling reckless.

"No jolly fear!" he said. "I'm going to lead you to the juiciest feed you ever had in your natural, Danny! The best in this giddy town is good enough for me to-day, and we'll paint the old place red! Which is the slap-up, gilded hall here—eh? Mitre Hotel? Lead on, Horatio!"

"Watch the boy. He's got going," grinned Dan; and they swaggered into the Mitre Hotel, where Tommy threw himself into a chair in the dining-hall and summoned the head-waiter with a lordly gesture.

"What-ho, vintner! Bring us ginger-beer, ere we swoon!" said Tommy. "What have you got? Ox roasted whole? Boar's head? Grilled buffalo hump? Trot it out!"

"Ze menu, sare!" said the waiter, presenting the card with a flourish.

Dan scanned the bill of fare. There were about ten dishes on it.

"I'll have the tongues of fourteen nightingales and a curried cuckoo," he said languidly. "Serve 'em hot!"

The waiter's eye grew wild. He leaned on a chair and mopped his brow with his napkin.

"Curried cuckoo's off, sare," he said.

"Rotten bad management. Bring everything you've got, then," said Tommy; and the waiter did.

The boys waded into soup, cod, beef-steak-pudding, trifle and fruit and custard, and had double portions of everything. The other lunchers stared in astonishment, especially at Tommy's rough, mud-stained clothes; but presently half the crowd were making bets on which was the best stayer at tucking away the victuals. At first the odds were six to four on Tommy; but Dan presently caught him up, and by the time the cheese arrived it was a dead heat.

"Any cricket going?" asked Tommy, with his mouth full.

"Rather! Up at the ground. Gravesend plays Erith," said Dan. "They'll be starting in five minutes."

"By gum! Let's get to it!" said Tommy, starting up.

He paid the bill, and they rushed out of the Mitre. Finding they were late, nothing would do but he must go by car. They got an old Ford from the nearest garage and buzzed away, arriving just in time to see the start.

It was a merry afternoon. Erith won by a narrow margin, after a hard-fought game. The boys returned to the town. Tommy stood a big tea, and the lights began to twinkle on the front of the

chief cinema. "Circus Days" was showing.

Tommy took two of the best balcony seats, and soon he and Dan were roaring with laughter over Jackie Coogan.

Outside the picture-house the lights of Gravesend were lit, and newsboys were calling through the streets, for the papers had just come through by train:

"Lunnon evenin' paper! Special! Mysterious affair on Curlew Island! Paper!"

The posters published the news in big black letters. Everywhere people were buying copies of the paper and reading them by the light of shop windows.

"TRAGEDY ON CURLEW ISLAND! Strange Death in Lonely House."

At dawn this morning a grim discovery was made on the lonely marsh known as Curlew Island, in the Thames Estuary, by a fisherman who landed there to get fresh water from the well which is near a bungalow on the island.

The bungalow is the dwelling of Mr. Joseph Comber, who lived there alone except for his nephew, Thomas Comber. The island is only accessible by boat.

The fisherman, being unable to make anybody hear at the bungalow, and finding the window open and the place in disorder, went in to investigate.

He found Mr. Joseph Comber lying dead in his bed. The visitor sailed at once for Southend and informed the police, who set out for the island in a launch, arriving with very little delay.

The dead man had evidently been the victim of foul play. His skull had been broken by a blow on the head from some heavy instrument, and death must have been instantaneous. The motive of the crime was evidently robbery, for a safe in the parlour had been opened with Mr. Comber's own keys, and was rifled of its contents.

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Thomas Comber, the dead man's nephew, has disappeared, and the police are making inquiries for him.

Thomas is a strongly-built lad of fifteen, well grown for his age, brown hair, light blue eyes, slight scar on back of left hand. When last seen was wearing rough blue serge clothes and rubber knee-boots. Is believed to have left the island in a black-tarred rowing-boat.

All Gravesend was soon buzzing with this sensation. Curlew Island was only a dozen miles away downstream. Not many Gravesenders knew much about the island, but numbers of them had heard of Joseph Comber, the strange character who led such a lonely and secluded life there. Two of the townsmen, who were reading the paper under a street-lamp, talked it over excitedly together, as scores of other were doing.

"It's murder, right-enough!" said one. "That old chap Comber owned the whole island, and I expect he'd got a goodish bit of money. Kept it in his safe, d'ye see?"

"Regular hermit, wasn't he? Bit of a miser, too, most likely," said the other. "Got enough to make it worth while for some scoundrel to rob him, anyway."

"Clever chap, they say. Reckon he had ways of makin' money that most people didn't know of. Inventor, or something. Well, there's an end of him, poor chap!"

"I'll bet the police are hot after that boy!" said his friend. "Disappeared, the papers say. Lay you six to four they catch him."

The audience was pouring out of the picture-palace into the lighted streets, and Tommy and Dan Bennett, as they passed through the gates after an hour and a half's enjoyment, were still laughing.

"Topping good show!"

"Rather! Jackie's always a scream. Smart kid," said Dan. "Gosh! I haven't had such a day in months. Where to now, Tommy?"

"Come on. We'll do ourselves a rare old supper to wind up with!" said Tommy, linking arms with his chum as they pressed through the crowd.

But Tommy little guessed where he was going to have supper that night.

A police-sergeant in uniform, who had been quietly watching the crowd coming out of the cinema, came forward. Tommy felt himself tapped gently on the shoulder, and looked up into the grim face of the man in blue.

"I want a word with you," said the sergeant. "Come this way."

He led Tommy quietly aside, out of the way of the crowd. Dan followed, considerably astonished; and he thought he caught a glimpse of Chuffer Foss, standing in the background not far away, looking on. But he paid no attention to that. As for Tommy, his whole attention was taken up by the policeman at whom he was staring.

"What's up?" said Tommy.

"Thomas Comber," said the police-sergeant, "I arrest you on a charge of murder, and it is my duty to tell you that anything you say may be taken down and used in evidence against you!"

The Cells!

TOMMY had the shock of his life. Then he recovered himself. He thought he must be dreaming again. This couldn't be real. He felt as if he were back in the pic-

ture palace, watching a film, and seeing somebody arrested—for murder!

"What d'you mean?" he said blankly. "What you talking about? Murder? Who's murdered? I'm Tommy Comber. I live on Curlew Island."

"On the charge of the murder of Joseph Comber, on Curlew Island, last night," said the police-sergeant, and his powerful fingers tightened on Tommy's arm. "Now, then! Come quietly, young fellow!"

And before he knew what was happening, Tommy found himself steered away quickly through the crowd. But a lot of them had noticed the incident, and some of those who were nearest had heard what the sergeant said. There was a commotion among the mob.

"Hi! Here's a boy run in!"

The movie audience and the idlers outside were electrified. Sensations were rare in Gravesend.

"It's the murderer!" cried a voice. "Curlew Island! They've got him! Come an' see!"

The crowd took up the cry, and began to surge round excitedly, eager for a glimpse.

But the sergeant was quick. He did not want a fuss in the streets. He brought Tommy rapidly through the mob to the kerb. An old four-wheeled cab was passing, and the sergeant stopped it with a sharp gesture of his hand, and pulled the door open.

"Get in!" he said, bundling Tommy into the cab, and following him. "Police-station!" he said to the driver.

Dan's white and horrified face showed at the open window as he jumped on the step.

"Look here, this is all rot!" he cried. "Tommy, old chap, is there anything I can do—"

"You clear out, my lad, we don't want you!" said the sergeant gruffly, pushing Dan off the step; and the cab bumped and rattled away down the street.

Tommy lay back in the cab, appalled. It was like a nightmare. The news had stunned him as thoroughly as the sand-bag did the night before. He simply could not believe in it.

"Did you say murdered?" he asked hoarsely. "Nunks—do you mean my uncle's dead?"

It was dark in the cab, but the sergeant looked at the boy for a moment, and felt for his notebook. He had warned Tommy already.

"Found dead in his bed this morning—killed!" was all the sergeant said. Tommy was too broken up to say anything more. He tried to ask another question, but his voice failed him, and his captor would not answer.

Poor old Nunks—dead! There was a leaden weight at Tommy's heart. He had never felt such grief since his own parents died. The loss of Nunks filled his mind and wiped out everything else. He did not feel scared about himself. This arrest was some crazy mistake. He was perfectly innocent; they would soon have to let him go. How could anybody be mad enough to think he could have killed Nunks, his best friend in the world?

And why should anybody else kill Nunks? He had no enemies. But—he must be dead. They couldn't have made any mistake about that. Perhaps he had died in his sleep? Tommy felt the tears trickling down his cheek, and brushed his sleeve across his eyes.

He tried to pull himself together when they stopped at the police-station.

The sergeant, still keeping hold of him by the arm, marched him in. Presently they entered a large, bare room where a police-inspector sat at a tall desk. He looked at Tommy with dry satisfaction. He seemed to have expected him. He nodded to the sergeant, who made his report.

Then Tommy was placed in front of the desk. He was feeling dazed and sick. The charge was read out to him, but he hardly heard it. It was like some horrible voice in a dream. The inspector gave him the same warning as the sergeant had done.

"Have you anything to say?" he asked.

"I don't know anything at all about it!" said Tommy, trying to keep his voice steady. The inspector made a note. Then he looked hard at the prisoner.

"Where did you last see your uncle?"

"It—it must have been about six o'clock yesterday evening," said Tommy, pulling his wits together with an effort. "He was very tired. He went into the house—went to bed."

"Went to bed," repeated the inspector. "And you—what did you do?"

"Got my boat an' went duck-shooting. Came back about eleven."

"And what then? You went to the house?"

"No, I didn't. I never went to the house at all!"

"Then where did you go?"

"I—I don't know," said Tommy dazedly.

"Don't know!" repeated the inspector, and his eyes narrowed.

"Well, I believe I went to sleep in the boat. It was late, and I was tired. I never went home, anyway."

The inspector's keen eyes seemed to bore through Tommy.

"Very well. How did you get to Gravesend?"

"The boat drifted there on the tide. I hadn't tied her up. Anyhow, when I woke up I was near Gravesend, half a mile below where we are now."

The inspector wrote it down in his book.

"Your story is that you came to Gravesend without knowing how you got there?" he said grimly. "Is that all you can tell me?"

"That's all I know about it."

"You had a gun, if you were shooting ducks?"

"That's right. It was in the boat. I left it at Danny Bennett's house. It's there now."

"No it isn't. It's here," said the inspector dryly; and for the first time Tommy noticed his own gun, standing in a corner at the back of the room. The police had already got hold of it. The inspector laid down his pen.

"Turn out your pockets!" he said briefly.

"What?" gasped Tommy, amazed.

"Turn them out, unless you want me to have you searched. It'll be quicker if you do as I order you."

Tommy obeyed mechanically. He emptied his trousers-pockets and the big side pockets of his jacket, laying on the inspector's desk an old rag, some pieces of cord, a big clasp-knife, a cartridge belonging to his gun, and some mole-skins, smelling a bit fusty, from moles that he had trapped on the island a few days before. It looked a very poor collection of property, till he took from his vest-pockets a couple of one-pound notes and some loose silver. The inspector looked at these.

"Go on!" he ordered, his eyes scanning Tommy's jacket keenly. "Now your breast-pocket."

Tommy hardly ever used the inside breast-pocket of his coat; he knew he would find nothing there. But when he had put his hand in he drew it out again, and stared in open-mouthed astonishment at a handful of paper-money. There was a greasy banknote for £5, and a lot of smaller notes—in all nearly twenty pounds. His hand trembled. The inspector took it all from him, examined it, and looked at the numbers on the notes.

"Where did you get all this money, Comber?" he said grimly.

"I—I don't know!" stammered Tommy, turning white. "There was a pound or two in my vest-pockets, an' I thought my uncle must have given it me. But I never knew I'd got all this stuff on me at all!"

The inspector stared at Tommy with hard, sardonic eyes. He had dealt with a great many criminals, and was never surprised at any of the tales they told when they were suddenly cornered.

"Don't know where you got it, eh?" He made another note in his book. "What have you been doing in Gravesend this afternoon? Where have you been?"

"Had some dinner at the hotel," said Tommy slowly, "and went to a cricket match, and then to the pictures—"

He stopped, for he began to guess that the police knew just as much about that as he did. He had been watched, or somebody had given him away.

"Anything more to say?"

"No," said Tommy.

"Very well. Now, listen while I read out what you have said. If you want to correct it, now's your time."

He read out all Tommy's statement, which he had taken down word for word. He had told the truth. But when he heard it read out in the inspector's clear, sharp voice, somehow he felt his blood run cold.

"Is that right?"

"Yes, that's all I know!" said Tommy desperately. "But I never took that money; it's all a mistake—I'm innocent!"

"That'll do. You can tell that to the magistrate to-morrow," said the inspector, blotting the book and closing it. "Take him to the cells!"

The prisoner was marched away. Five minutes later the door of a cell clanged behind Tommy Comber.

They brought him some supper, but he could not touch it. Nunks was dead. Tommy threw himself on the hard bed and buried his face in his hands. And at last he fell into a stupor-like sleep.

A Friend in Need!

NEXT morning, after his food had been brought to him in the cold cell, Tommy got his thinking apparatus to work and realised that he was in real danger.

He could see that now, though he did not know what was coming next. There couldn't be much doubt that things looked black against him. He did not believe they could make out that he was guilty, all the same. The truth was bound to come up before long. Only what was the truth? He didn't know. He was in the dark.

It began to dawn on Tommy that if all this business was in the newspapers everybody would be thinking him guilty. The police had been after him, and they had got him; here he was, found with his uncle's money in his pockets. He would have to explain that. And he couldn't do it.

Murder! Accused of murder!

Shut up between those four stone walls, cut off from everybody, Tommy felt more utterly alone than he ever had in his life. Nunks, his only helper, was dead. There was nobody to give him a hand. He had got to face it all by himself.

Just then he heard footsteps tramping along the stone corridor, the key grated in the lock, and the cell door swung open. The police-sergeant was standing there, with the turnkey who had opened the door, and behind them stood Dan Bennett.

For a moment Tommy thought Dan was arrested, too; but he came pushing forward eagerly, and gripped Tommy by the hand.

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"Been waitin' outside ever since six!" he exclaimed. "They've given me leave to come and see you. Look here, old son—"

"Mustn't stop long!" said the sergeant gruffly.

Tommy hung on to Dan's fist as if it were a lifebuoy.

"Danny, old chum," he cried, "you're a real pal!"

"Hang it! You'd do as much for me, wouldn't you?" said Danny cheerfully. "Don't you worry; it's goin' to come out all right. I don't care who says you did it; I jolly well know you didn't! Never heard such rot in my life. Of course, it looks rotten in the papers.

But who cares what the papers say? Why, they can't even report a cricket match without gettin' it all mixed up! I s'pose I'm not much good, but I'm going all out to help you—and I b'lieve I can see as far through this job as some people, and a bit farther! Give us the office—let's hear all you know about it."

Tommy told him. What he knew did not amount to much. The police-sergeant, as was his duty, stood at the door of the cell all the while, and he could hear everything they said.

"It's an awful queer business!" muttered Dan at last. "First thing you've got to have is a lawyer chap. Can't do anything without him. And he must be a good one."

"Of course! Never thought of that. I'll have to have a lawyer to speak for me. Copley's the man," said Tommy—"Mr. Copley, in the High Street. I know he did the law business for—poor Nunks, when he was buying Curlew Island. He knows me. Danny, they'll find the scoundrel who really did this thing, won't they? Don't you think they will?"

Dan was shaken. He had no doubt of Tommy's innocence. But he saw now what a terribly tight place he was in.

"Yes, old chap, they're bound to!" he said hurriedly, and went off on his errand.

Tommy was left to his thoughts—and very mournful ones they were—for nearly an hour, when the turnkey came to the cell again, and led him down the corridor to a bare, whitewashed room, with a desk and table, where stood a policeman and an elderly gentleman with a craggy face and keen, grey eyes. This was Mr. Copley, the solicitor. He set his little black bag on the table and shook hands with Tommy.

"This is a sad business, my boy," he said quietly.

"It's awful, sir!" gulped Tommy. "I s'pose there isn't any doubt—"

"Your uncle is dead, and he met with foul play—that is all that's certain at present," said Copley. "Sit down there, tell me all you know about it, and what happened to you. Think carefully. Tell me the whole truth. Keep nothing back."

The policeman went across to the door and stood there waiting while Tommy told his story, taking great care this time. The lawyer listened in silence, writing most of it down. He looked very grave.

"Humph!" he said at last. "This is a poor story to tell in a court of law. We must find some better defence than this. Now, listen, my boy! You will be brought before the magistrates presently. Don't say anything at all when the charge is read to you, except 'Not guilty.' Don't open your mouth after that. I'll be there to look after you. Leave the rest to me."

At eleven o'clock Tommy was brought into the public court-room. It was crammed with people, who all seemed eager for a view of Tommy as he was marched into the prisoner's dock. A magistrate sat at the desk on the platform, his clerk beside him. The charge was read out, and Tommy answered as he had been told. It all sounded so unreal to him that it seemed like some sort of strange game—a grim joke that was being played on him.

(But Tommy was fated to learn ere long how little jest there was in this tragic affair. Mind you read the continuation of this dramatic yarn, chums.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 561.

"THE NABOB'S DOUBLE!"

(Continued from page 22.)

It may not be safe for me to travel so far with those esteemed rascals watching for me—"

"It jolly well won't be safe," said Wharton.

"And for that reason I should like my esteemed comrades to come with me—"

"My hat! To India!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"If my worthy chums would care to come—"

"Wouldn't we just!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, his eyes dancing. "My only hat! If it could be fixed—"

"A cable to my esteemed uncle, and he would demand it from the Head," said Hurree Singh. "It is as easy as falling off a form. But it would be a long and dangerous journey to Bhanipur—"

"Hureah!"

Evidently the length and danger of the journey to Bhanipur did not daunt the chums of the Remove. Four delighted faces beamed at Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ripping!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Tip-top!" chirruped Nugent.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter, of course, was at hand. "I say, I think it's a topping ideal! No lessons for weeks—perhaps for months! Think of that! I'll come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rely on me, Inky. I'll look after you," said Bunter. "I shall have to ask you to stand the exes—"

"Run away and play, Bunter," said Bob Cherry. "Inky, old man, the sooner that cable goes off to the Mar-malade—I mean, the Jam—the better. We'll all stand our whack in sending it."

"Hear, hear!"

The cablegram went to far-off Bhanipur, and six fellows in the Greyfriars Remove eagerly awaited the response. Billy Bunter was the sixth. Bunter had quite settled that he was going. No lessons for weeks was an attraction that Bunter could not possibly resist. As Inky's oldest chum—Bunter had become Inky's oldest chum on the spot—he simply could not be left behind.

And Bunter, taking the matter as settled, told all the Remove fellows of his prospective holiday on India's coral strand, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's remarks upon the subject he passed by as the idle wind which he regarded not.

THE END.

(Look out for the next topping story in this splendid series, entitled: "The Peril of the Night!" by Frank Richards. It's full of thrills, boys.)

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