

Cut-out Photo of England's Captain **FREE!**

No. 962. Vol. XXX.

Week Ending July 24th, 1926.

The Magnet 2^d

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(NOTTS.)

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TO & **YOUR EDITOR**
FROM

BIG HITTERS!

THERE'S nothing that sets the pulse leaping more than a really big hit in a cricket match. True, cricket isn't all big hits and boundaries, but the spectators like to see the chap at the wickets open his shoulders to a ball now and again. Unless I'm greatly mistaken, that's how the majority of you cricket fans think of A. W. Carr—the famous Notts and England captain, for when he's in form "big hits" come natural to him. Look at this week's topping cut-out photo. It depicts Carr in a big-hitting attitude. You can hear the crowd murmur: "Six!" I bet you're mighty pleased at this wonderful addition to your set of Cut-Out, Stand-Up Cricketers. You were promised big things before this Free Gift Series got under way, and you can see for yourselves now that those words of mine weren't idle ones. Of course, you're looking forward to our next Free Gift Number; it wouldn't be natural if you were not. Well, then, chums, get ready to receive a fine action-photo of

A. A. MAILEY,

the famous Australian googlie bowler. Mailey can certainly get wickets; in fact, he's a jolly useful all-rounder. You lovers of English cricket might take the whim to place this coming cut-out photo of Mailey next to that of Carr, and just imagine for yourselves what would happen to one of Mailey's "wrong 'uns" if Carr got his bat to it. And if you did this you wouldn't have to draw on your imagination too much. Every bowler gets hit; even Maurice Tate—the "world-beater" as some scribes call him—sees his average knocked to the boundary now and again. Anyway, this photo of Mailey is the goods; you'll like it, take it from me. Don't forget it's

GIVEN AWAY FREE WITH NEXT WEEK'S "MAGNET."

And while I'm on this subject of Free Gifts, let me remind you that with this week's "Popular" there's a splendid stand-up photo of W. Bardsley, the Australian veteran, whose very lively innings in the second Test match will be remembered for many a long day. Mind you add Bardsley to your set.

HOW TO STAND THEM UP!

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.

For Next Monday.

"OUTWARD BOUND!"

That's the title of the next long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., and, believe me, it shows Mr. Frank Richards in better form than ever. Mind you read it.

"CURLEW ISLAND!"

The next instalment of David Goodwin's masterpiece will hold your interest at a high pitch. Don't miss it whatever you do.

THE CRICKET SUPPLEMENT!

And don't forget the Cricket Supplement, for it contains a special signed article by R. Tyldesley, the Lancs and England bowler, entitled: "The Team Without a Tail!"

"BOUNDARIES!"

In addition to the foregoing, there will, of course, be another simple Limerick Competition. Why don't YOU enter for it? Don't forget next week's stunning Free Gift. Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

THE NABOB'S ENEMIES! Although he is thousands of miles away from India, tucked away in a great public school, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh is not safe from the hands of his enemies. With the coming of night, when Greyfriars lies asleep under the stars, yet another daring attempt is made to kidnap him!



The Peril of the Night!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, dealing with the plot to kidnap "Inky"—the Schoolboy Prince.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Superfluous!

WHEN do we start?" Billy Bunter asked that question, in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

Harry Wharton & Co. were at tea in that celebrated apartment. They were deep in discussion, and they all looked very bright and cheery. The topic under discussion, evidently, was an agreeable one.

It was nothing less than a trip to the native land of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian member of the Co.

Such a prospect was enough to make any schoolboy merry and bright.

True, the matter was not yet settled—but Hurree Singh had to go, and his thumbs had great hopes of being allowed to accompany him. In their own minds, at least, they had settled it.

In his own fat mind, Billy Bunter had settled, also, that he was going. From Bunter's point of view, the party could not possibly be considered complete without him. From the point of view of the Famous Five, the party was complete already, and Bunter would be distinctly superfluous. But it was useless to tell Bunter so. He was, so to speak, deaf on that side of his head.

Twenty times at least in the last few days the Owl of the Remove had inquired when they were to start. Now he made the inquiry for about the twenty-first time.

Having asked his question, Bunter paused, like Brutus of old, for a reply. Like Brutus, he paused in vain.

Nobody answered.

Bob Cherry was speaking, and he went on speaking, just as if Billy Bunter did not matter at all. Perhaps Bob considered that he didn't.

"We shall have to get some clobber before we start," said Bob. "It's jolly hot in Bhanipur, isn't it, Inky?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh nodded.

"The hotfulness is not terrific, but it is not so cold and chilly as the tight little island," he said. "For the first time in your esteemed lives, you will see real sunshinefulness."

"That means some shopping," said Nugent. "But I dare say we can get most of the things we want at Bombay."

"If we get to Bombay!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "It's not quite settled yet."

"I say, you fellows—" hooted Bunter.

"Oh, we shall get to Bombay all right," said Harry Wharton, heedless of William George Bunter. "You see, my

uncle has undertaken to escort Inky to India, and he's bound to put in a word for us. He will see at once that Inky ought to have his friends with him."

"Besides, Colonel Wharton will like our company," said Nugent. "At least, I hope he will."

"Look here, you fellows," bawled Bunter, "I'm speaking! I asked you when we were going to start?"

"Is that a bluebottle?" asked Bob Cherry, looking round at last.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Something keeps on buzzing—oh, it's Bunter!"

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. He had offered to accompany Hurree Jamset Ram Singh to his native land, and protect him from the dangers he might encounter there. Dacoits and thugs and tigers in the jungle were all the same to Bunter—he was prepared to face them all fearlessly—at least so

A Topping Cut-out Stand-up Photo of A. W. CARR—England's Skipper—Given Away with This Issue!

long as they were ten thousand miles away.

Really, Inky might have been grateful.

But he wasn't! There was no doubt at all that he wasn't. So far from accepting Bunter's generous offer with tears of gratitude in his eyes, Inky had declined it without thanks.

Not that it was much use declining it. Bunter meant to go, if he could possibly contrive it.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut the door after you, Bunter."

"I'm not going yet. I asked you when we are going to start?"

"We're going to start in a few days, I hope," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"You are not going to start at all, fatty."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You see, we couldn't roll you all the way to India," said Bob Cherry. "Besides, we may be going into danger. Where would you be then?"

Bunter sniffed.

"That's where I should come out strong," he said. "What Inky wants to see him through a dangerous trip like this is a pal with boundless courage and resource—a fellow afraid of nothing. That's me all over!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Besides, you'll have to travel through France as far as Marseilles," said Bunter. "With my splendid knowledge of French I should come in useful as interpreter."

"With your whatter?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"My splendid knowledge of French," said Bunter firmly.

"Why do you keep these wonderful gifts dark?" asked Bob. "You ought to let Monsieur Charpentier know all about your splendid knowledge of French. He doesn't suspect it at present."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If he knew about it, he wouldn't rag you in the French class as he does," said Bob, with a shake of the head. "You ought to let him know."

"Then there's my ventriloquism," said Bunter. "That would come in jolly useful. Think of the long evenings round the camp-fires and things, and me entertaining you with my wonderful ventriloquial gifts."

"We've thought of that," said Bob, with a chuckle. "That's one reason why you're not on the list, old fat bean."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The esteemed Bunter would be ridiculously superfluous," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You see, this is going to be a holiday of sorts, Bunter," explained Johnny Bull. "Now, it wouldn't be much of a holiday with you worrying all the time, and butting in, and making yourself a general nuisance. You see that?"

Bunter did not seem to see it. He gave Johnny Bull an indignant and scornful blink.

"I don't expect gratitude from you fellows," he said. "You'll want me to pull you through, but you're too jolly conceited to see it. But I'm not going to desert an old pal like Inky. Inky's going into danger among a lot of niggers—"

"A lot of what?" ejaculated the nabob of Bhanipur.

"Niggers," said Bunter. "I'm going to look after you, Inky. Of course, being a nigger yourself. Yaroooooh!"

A cushion flew across the study and interrupted William George Bunter. He caught it with his fat chin, and sat down quite suddenly.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Wibley is Not Taking Any!

"Man down!" chuckled Bob.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "The niggerfulness of my esteemed self is not terrific, my excellent, fat-headed Bunter," said Hurree Singh.
 "Yow-ow-ow!"

Bunter sat and spluttered.
 "Beast! I'd jolly well lick you, only—only—"

"Never mind the only," grinned the dusky nabob. "Get on with the esteemed lickfulness!"

"Only I'm going out to India with you, old chap," said Bunter. "I can take a joke! He, he, he!" The Owl of the Remove picked himself up. "I didn't really mean to call you a nigger, Inky—I'm too polite, I hope, to tell a fellow what I think of him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "When is your uncle coming, Wharton?" asked Bunter. "I shall have to speak to him, to arrange about going, you know."

Harry Wharton laughed.
 "I think my uncle's coming tomorrow," he answered. "But it won't be any use speaking to him, you fat duffer. The trip won't be an easy one—even without a fat, troublesome duffer worrying all the time. You must think of some other dodge for getting off lessons."

"The fact is, I feel bound to stand by you, in spite of your black ingratitude," explained Bunter. "You're going into danger, and it's up to me to see you through. See?"

"The seefulness is not terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Besides, it wouldn't do," said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "There's a certain amount of spoof kept up in India—the natives are encouraged to believe that the white sahibs are a tip-top, superior race. Now, if they saw Bunter it would give the game away."

"What?" howled Bunter.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "For the credit of your native land, old chap, you must stay at home," said Bob.

The expression on Billy Bunter's fat face made the chums of the Remove roar.

"Why, you—you—cheeky beast—" gasped Bunter.

It is said that even the worm will turn. And nobody in the Greyfriars Remove doubted that Bunter was a worm.

His fat face crimsoned with rage. He clutched up the cushion which Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had whizzed at him. It whizzed again, across the tea-table.

Crash!
 Clatter!

"Whoop!" roared Bob Cherry.
 The cushion swept a teapot and a jar of jam along with it, and they landed, along with the cushion, on Bob Cherry. The cushion caught him on the chin, the jam in the neck, and the teapot in the waistcoat. And the tea in the pot was hot—very hot!

There was a formidable roar from Bob as he leaped up, his chair spinning backwards, and Bob sprawling over the chair.

"He, he, he!" gasped Bunter.
 Bob Cherry sprawled and roared.
 "Oh, ow! Oh, wow! You fat villain! You wait a second!" he spluttered.

It took Bob Cherry only one second to gain his feet. But, in the circumstances, one second was enough for Bunter. Generally, his movements resembled those of a tortoise. Now they resembled those of a flash of lightning.

By the time the second had elapsed Bunter had elapsed, too.

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"WIBLEY, old chap!"
 "Can it!" said William Wibley cheerily.
 "I want—"

"Dear man!" said Wibley of the Remove. "Do you think I don't know what you want when you call a man 'old chap'? Nothing doing."

"Look here," roared Bunter, "I want you—"

"I know! I know!" smiled Wibley. "You've been disappointed about a postal-order! You want me to lend you five bob till it comes. I've been there before! Can it!"

And Wibley of the Remove, who had looked round from his study mirror when Bunter blinked in at the doorway, turned back to the glass again. William Wibley's occupation was rather a remarkable one for a junior of the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars. He was trying on a succession of artificial moustaches and watching the effects in the glass. Wibley's "property-box" stood open by the table, and many of his "props" were sprawled over the table—Wibley being a great man in the Remove Dramatic Society, and generally dabbling in theatrical matters in his leisure hours.

Bunter rolled into the study and shut the door. He sat on a corner of the table, swinging his little fat legs and blinking at Wibley through his big spectacles.

"I say, old fellow—" he recommended.

"Cut it out," said Wibley. "I'm busy! Can't you go and talk to Peter Todd? He's your study-mate, and it's up to him to stand it."

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter.
 "Or go and give it to Inky," said Wibley. "I hear that Inky is your great pal now—at least, I've heard it from you. If he's your pal, he ought to take your chinwag. No demand for it in this study."

Wibley's reception of his distinguished visitor could not be called flattering or encouraging. But William George Bunter was accustomed to meeting with receptions that were unflattering and discouraging. Fortunately, he was not thin-skinned.

"The fact is, Wib, old man, I've come to speak to you about it, because you're so jolly clever—"

"Eh?"
 "So awfully clever—"

"Thanks! Too jolly clever to lend you anything on your postal-order," agreed Wibley.

"You silly chump, I wasn't going to speak about my postal-order!" roared Bunter.

"Not!" exclaimed Wibley, in astonishment.

"No, you ass! It's about a theatrical stunt."

"Oh!" said Wibley. He sat up and took notice, so to speak, at last. On this subject it was always possible to interest Wibley. "What's the game? You can run on."

"It's a jape," explained Bunter.

"Go it—"

"That cad Inky—"

"That what?"

"That black cad of a nigger—"

"Oh, my hat! Are you speaking of your dear old pal Hurree Singh?"

"He's no pal of mine," said Bunter. "I'm a bit particular whom I pal with, and I draw the line at niggers."

Wibley looked at him and chuckled.

"Does that mean that you can't land

yourself on Inky, after all, for a trip to India?" he asked.

"Oh, really, Wibley—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, I should refuse to go," said Bunter. "I hope I'm not a snob, but I draw the line at travelling with niggers. I've turned Inky down. I've told him plainly that he can't expect me to come. But the fact is, Wibley, I've thought of a ripping jape, up against that black beast. I'm going to make him sit up for refusing to take me to India—I-I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean," chuckled Wibley. "What's the jape?"

"I'm going to frighten him out of his black wits," said Bunter impressively.

"My hat!" Wibley stared at the Owl of the Remove. "And how are you going to do that? Show him your face all of a sudden when he's not expecting it?"

"You silly ass! I'm going to make up as a nigger—"

"Eh?"

"You see," said Bunter, blinking at the astonished Wibley, evidently very much taken with his own idea, "there's supposed to be a scheme on foot to kidnap Inky. One of his black relations in India is supposed to be at the bottom of it, and his uncle out in Bhanipur has cabled him to come home, to keep him safe under his eye. I've offered to go with him and protect him, and he's turned me down—"

"You mean you've turned him down?" chuckled Wibley.

"Eh? Oh! Yes! Exactly! I mean I've turned him down, of course."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Well, Inky's friends think the kidnappers are still after him, and the Head's ordered him not to go out of school bounds; so the Head thinks there's something in it. Now, on the day of the Redclyffe match you made yourself up as a nigger, Wibley, and took the fellows in. According to what you've told us, those kidnapping chaps took you for Inky, and bagged you in mistake for him. I dare say you pulled the long bow a little—"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, I dare say you didn't pull the long-bow," said Bunter hastily.

"That's what I really meant to say."

"You fat idiot—"

"Oh, really, old fellow! What I'm coming to is this, if a black chap turned up suddenly at Greyfriars and got after Inky, the silly ass would think it was the kidnapper after him. That's the stunt. I want you to make me up as a Hindu, to give him a scare! Some jape, what?" chuckled Bunter.

Wibley stared at him.

"Oh, my hat!" was all he said.

"The jape of the term—what?" grinned Bunter.

"You fat duffer!"

"Look here—"

"That kidnapping affair is a serious matter," said Wibley. "It's not a subject for japes. Inky is really in danger, if those rotters could get at him, and my belief is that that villain Nally Das is still hanging about somewhere for a chance. You might cause a lot of alarm by playing a fatheaded jape like that. Cut it out!"

"You mean you funk it?" sneered Bunter. "You're afraid of a ragging. I'll protect you."

"Fathead!"

"Well, look here, you lend me the things," urged Bunter. "You've got lots among that rubbish of yours—Hindu costumes, and all that. You can make up my face the proper colour—"



Billy Bunter's fat face crimsoned with rage. He clutched up a cushion and sent it whizzing across the tea table. Crash! Clatter! "Whoop!" roared Bob Cherry. The cushion swept a teapot and a jar of jam along with it, and they landed together on the humorous Bob. (See Chapter 1.)

"Bosh!"

"You see, you're so jolly clever at this sort of thing," urged the Owl of the Remove. "Nobody else can do it like you can, Wib."

Wibley nodded.

"That's right enough," he assented.

"There isn't a fellow at Greyfriars who's a patch on you when it comes to making up a fellow for theatricals."

"Quite so."

"Then you'll help me?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"I jolly well won't," grinned Wibley. "It's not a subject for japes, old man. Run away and play."

Billy Bunter gave him a ferocious blink through his big spectacles. He had laid on the flattery thick, with absolutely no result. The Owl of the Remove rolled off the table.

"After all, you wouldn't be any good," he remarked. "You don't know much about these things. You think you can act, but you can't, you know. As for that yarn of yours about being taken for Inky and kidnapped, of course, I don't believe a word of it."

"What?"

"You can't gammon me," said Bunter, shaking his head. "There's only one part you can play really well."

Wibley glared at him.

"And what's that?" he asked.

"The part of a footling ass," said Bunter. "You can play that really well. You don't have to make up for it, you know."

And with that Parthian shot Billy Bunter rolled out of Wibley's study. He rolled out with his little fat nose contemptuously in the air, turning his back

on Wibley with scorn. It was, however, rather unfortunate for Bunter that he turned his back on Wibley. Bunter could have said almost anything else to Wibley—he could have told him that he was no cricketer, or no gentleman, without disturbing Wib's cheery equanimity. But to tell him that he was no actor was the limit.

Crash!

As Billy Bunter rolled in lofty disdain through the doorway, a boot came into violent contact with his tight trousers.

Bunter reached the passage with unexpected speed.

He fairly flew.

"Yoooop!" he roared as he went.

Slam!

Wibley's door closed on him as he sprawled on his hands and knees in the Remove passage.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Wow! I—I've been kicked! Ow! Wow! I—I'll jolly well smash him! I'll pulverise him!"

Bunter scrambled to his feet.

"You rotter, Wibley!" he roared. "You worm! You come out here, and I'll mop up the passage with you!"

"Buzz off!" came Wibley's voice from the study.

"Come out!" yelled Bunter.

"Fathead!"

"I'm going to thrash you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Funk!" roared Bunter.

"Hallo, what's the jolly old row?" asked Skinner of the Remove, coming out of his study.

"I'm going to lick that cad Wibley!" gasped Bunter. "He's afraid to come out of his study! Yah! Funk!"

Bunter kicked at the door of the study.

"Funk, funk! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner. "Mind

he doesn't come out, Bunter!"

Bang! Bunter thumped on the door.

"Funk!" he bawled.

The door suddenly opened, and William Wibley's exasperated face appeared in the doorway.

Bunter's warlike enthusiasm suddenly petered out.

"Now, then—" began Wibley.

Bunter did not wait for him to finish. He suddenly realised that he did not want, after all, to undertake the task of thrashing Wibley.

For the second time that afternoon Billy Bunter negotiated the Remove passage at express speed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Skinner Helps!

"TIPPING!"
"Ripping!"
"Tip-top!"

It was an appreciation at last. Billy Bunter blinked at Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, in Study No. 11, and was comforted.

His wonderful wheeze for making the ungrateful Nabob of Bhanipur "sit up," so scornfully rejected by Wibley, was received with enthusiasm by Skinner & Co.

"Why, it's the jape of the season!" said Harold Skinner, closing the eye that was further from Bunter at his two comrades. "How does Bunter think of these things?"

"What a brain!" said Snoop. Bunter almost purred.

"Well, I think of things, you know," he said. "I'm the fellow for it! Intellectual, and all that, you know."

"Oh, my hat! I mean, exactly!" gasped Skinner. "Mean to say that Wibley refused to help, Bunter? Jealousy, I suppose. He doesn't like the idea of being cut out in his own line."

"That's it, of course," said Bunter. "Of—of course!" said Snoop.

Stott stared inquiringly at Skinner. That that too humorous youth was pulling Bunter's fat leg was obvious; but Stott could not quite see why he was taking the trouble.

"Well, we'll jolly well help!" said Skinner heartily. "We'll be jolly glad to help Bunter bring off a jape like that!"

"Yes, rather!" assented Snoop.

Bunter grinned gleefully.

"You see, it will give that black beast no end of a scare," he said. "He will be frightened out of his wits."

"Frightened into a blue funk," agreed Skinner, with another wink at his comrades, which the short-sighted Owl of the Remove did not observe. "Fairly scared into hysterics. According to Wibley's yarn, a gang of really desperate characters are after Inky, and if he thinks they've got into Greyfriars to collar him, he will be scared quite stiff."

"Serve him jolly well right, after the way he's let me down!" said Bunter.

"He's asked for it," said Skinner solemnly. "The only thing now is to let him have it. And Bunter's the man to do it—with our help."

"We'll jolly well help!" agreed James Snoop.

"Bunter's clever at this sort of thing," went on Skinner blandly. "I always thought it a mistake of the fellows to make Wibley head-cook-and-bottlesher in the theatrical society. Bunter really was the man for the job. You fellows can fancy Bunter playing Hamlet, or Romeo—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"This will be simply pie to a clever chap like Bunter. We can help him make up as a Hindu, and his own natural genius will do the rest."

"His—his what?" gasped Stott.

"Natural genius," said Skinner severely.

"Oh, yes! Quite!"

"Now, I happen to know that Inky's got lines to do this evening," said Skinner. "He will be alone in Study No. 13 to do them. That will be the time. Bunter will trickle in, got up as a Hindu, and frighten Inky out of his silly wits. Yelling for help, he will bring up a crowd of fellows, and then it'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Make him look no end of a scared ass, what?" said Bunter.

"Yes, rather! We'll help you to make up in this study," said Skinner. "In our humble way, we're glad to be useful to a fellow like you."

Billy Bunter grinned expansively. It was but seldom that anyone took the trouble to flatter him, but Bunter liked it on rare occasions when he received it. And he liked his flattery like pineapple—in chunks. Skinner handed it out in chunks, and the Owl of the Remove was satisfied.

"No good losing time," said Skinner briskly. "I'll get along to Wibley's study and borrow the things we want—I mean, that Bunter wants."

"Will he lend them to you, though?" asked Snoop.

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"Oh, yes; he's gone down to the Rag, and I sha'n't mention it to him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner left the study, and returned in a few minutes with a bundle under his arm.

"All serene," he announced, "the coast's clear—nearly all the fellows have finished prep and gone down. Inky's in his study doing his lines for Quelchy. Let's get going."

And the three young rascals got going.

Billy Bunter's fat figure was draped in an Oriental costume borrowed from Wibley's property-box.

Then his face was made up.

Skinner made it up for him very artistically. He relied a good deal upon Bunter's shortness of vision.

Bunter's fat face was made as black as the ace of spades. He looked less like a Hindu than a Hottentot; and less like a Hottentot than a Christy minstrel.

Skinner's face was very grave; he had a great command of his countenance. Snoop and Stott had to turn their faces to hide their emotion as the make-up proceeded.

After Bunter's new complexion was finished, a turban was wound round his bullet head.

Bunter surveyed the result in the glass, and was satisfied.

To his eyes he represented a native of the dusky East; he felt that he looked the part to perfection.

To the eyes of Skinner & Co. he looked like Bunter of the Remove, with his fat face blacked; merely that and nothing more.

But they did not mention that to Bunter.

According to Bunter, this was a great jape on the Nabob of Bhanipur. According to Skinner, it was a jape on the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove—who really had asked for it, in asking the aid of Skinner.

"All O.K., what?" asked Skinner.

"Topping!" said Bunter.

"Now, a few finishing-touches," said Skinner. "Can't be too careful. Of course, the thing chiefly depends on Bunter's own genius. But we can do our best to help, in our small way."

"Yes, rather!" gasped Snoop.

Skinner's finishing touches were really remarkable, after he had got Bunter away from the glass.

Bunter's fat ears were tinted a brilliant crimson, contrasting remarkably with his black face, and a white spot was added to the tip of his fat little nose. A crimson curve ran up from either corner of his mouth, causing that orifice—already extensive—to extend seemingly from ear to ear.

That final touch was too much for Snoop and Stott, who burst into a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked at them.

"What are you cackling at?" he asked. "Isn't it all right?"

"Oh, yes!" gasped Snoop. "Fine! I—I was thinking of Inky—of Inky—and—the fright he'll get!"

Bunter grinned.

"He's going through it," he said. "I'll give him the scare of his life. Fancy his feelings when he thinks that the kidnapper has got into his study!"

"Only fancy!" gasped Stott.

Skinner opened the door and peered out into the Remove passage.

"All clear!" he said. "Go it, Bunter."

Skinner & Co. gazed at Bunter as he rolled to the door. They had taken a

great deal of trouble with the adornment of the fatuous Owl of the Remove, but really they found it hard to believe that even Bunter was ass enough to go out of the study in this extraordinary guise. But the Owl of the Remove had no doubts.

He rolled cheerily out of the study, and Skinner collapsed into the armchair and gurgled.

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jever see such a born idiot!" gasped Snoop. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear!" gurgled Stott.

Skinner wiped his eyes.

"We must tell the fellows this," he said. "Nobody ought to miss this. Let's get down to the Rag. Bunter ought to have an audience."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner & Co. left the study. The Remove passage was deserted; most of the fellows had gone down after prep. But the remarkable figure of Billy Bunter could be seen at the door of Study No. 13—the room which belonged to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and his study-mates. Bunter, evidently, was just going to begin!

"Come on!" gasped Skinner.

The three juniors hurried to the stairs, anxious to spread the news in the Rag of the amazing sight that was to be seen in the Remove passage. On the Remove staircase they encountered a dapper little gentleman—Monsieur Charpentier, the French master of Greyfriars.

"Skinnair!"

"Yes, sir," said Skinner, halting unwillingly.

"Do you know where Sheery is?"

"Bob Cherry, sir? No, sir!"

"Sheery has not written zose lines zat I give him in French class," said Monsieur Charpentier. "Vich is Sheery's study, Skinnair?"

"No, 13, sir."

"Zank you, Skinnair!"

Mossoo trotted on along the Remove passage to look into Bob Cherry's study and interview that thoughtless youth on the subject of an impot which should have been written, but had not been written. Skinner & Co. stared at one another.

"He—he's going to Inky's study!" ejaculated Snoop. "And—and—and Bunter's there—in that rig!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Stott.

Skinner whistled.

"Well, we had nothing to do with it," he said. "It's Bunter's stunt. Let's get out of this."

And Skinner & Co. got out of it.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Black Bunter!

"A HA!" Billy Bunter uttered that dramatic ejaculation as he presented himself in Study No. 13. In the full belief that he looked like a native of India, with his amazing complexion and extraordinary clothes, Bunter considered that a dramatic exclamation of triumph was the proper thing.

Hurree Singh, taking him for a Hindu kidnapper, would be startled and scared, and would doubtless expect some dramatic exclamation of that kind. So Bunter let him have it.

"Aha!"

The dramatic exclamation was, so to speak, wasted on the desert air. The study was empty.

Not one of the four fellows to whom it belonged was there.

Bunter did not expect to see Bob

Cherry, Mark Linley, or little Wun Lung, as prep was over, and the fellows had gone down. But he had expected Inky to be there. Skinner had distinctly told him that Hurree Singh had lines, and would be in his study writing them. Skinner did not care much what he told a fellow whose leg he was pulling. He had not been brought up at the feet of the late lamented George Washington.

Bunter blinked angrily round the study.

No one was there. His dramatic exclamation had been a sheer waste; no scared nabob leaped up with a howl of terror at the sight of his black face.

Had the nabob been there, he would have been more likely to utter a howl of laughter than a howl of terror. Bunter was happy in the conviction that he resembled a native of India's coral strand. As a matter of fact, he looked almost as much like a native of Greenland's icy mountains. He did not really look like anything at all except a fat fellow with a blacked face, red ears, enormous mouth, and white-spotted nose, clad in an extraordinary assortment of second-hand stage "props." But Bunter was happily unconscious of all that, and he was angry and disappointed.

"The beast isn't here!" he grunted.

The light was turned low, but it was light enough for Bunter to see that the study was vacant. He stood by the table and pondered.

He was, of course, quite unaware that Skinner & Co. had rigged him up in this attractive manner to pull his leg, and make a laughing-stock of him. Bunter did not guess that—yet. So he pondered over his next move. Inky was not there, and he had to get at Inky if his stunt was to be a success, and the nabob scared out of his wits by the sudden sight of a supposed kidnapper. If Inky did not come to the study, then Bunter would have to find him—like Mahomet going to the mountain, because the mountain would not come to Mahomet.

Then footsteps came along to the study, and Bunter grinned under his black complexion.

If it was Inky coming to do his lines, nothing could be better. He would spring at the nabob as he came in, and make him fairly cringe with terror. If it was somebody else, that somebody else would get a fright. Serve him right for butting in.

Bunter reached up and turned the light lower—as low as he could without putting it out. There was a bare glimmer in the study now, and in the dimness Bunter did indeed look a startling object.

The footsteps stopped at the door.

Knock!

The door was pushed open.

"Sherry!"

Monsieur Charpentier got no further.

A fearsome figure leaped suddenly at him, a hideous black face with an enormous red gash of a mouth glimmered in the dim light, and Monsieur Charpentier jumped back into the passage with a wild yell.

"Mon Dieu! Ciel! Vat is zat?"

Monsieur Charpentier had expected to find Bob Cherry in the study. Certainly he had not expected to find a hideous black-faced object with a mouth that grinned from ear to ear. In the full light he would have seen that it was a schoolboy amazingly got up. But in a mere glimmer he could see nothing of the sort.

He cleared the Remove passage with a backward spring, and staggered against the opposite wall.



Billy Bunter's fat figure was draped in an Oriental costume borrowed from Wibley's property-box. Then Skinner made his face up for him very artistically, and a turban was wound round his bullet head. Bunter surveyed the result in the glass, and was satisfied. "All O.K., what?" asked Skinner. "Topping!" said Bunter. (See Chapter 3.)

"Au secours!" he yelled. "A moi! Help!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bunter in dismay. "It's Mossoo! Fancy a silly master butting in! Oh dear!"

"Au secours!" yelled Mossoo, and he went along the Remove passage towards the stairs as if he were on the cinder-path.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

Whether he would have succeeded in scaring Hurree Jamset Ram Singh might be a question. But there was no doubt that he had scared Mossoo. On that point there was no doubt, no possible probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

Monsieur Charpentier reached the Remove staircase, and went down it in a series of kangaroo-like bounds. He lost his footing twice, and rolled, but picked himself up again with great activity, and bounded on. On the lower landing he crashed into Wingate of the Sixth. The Greyfriars captain had heard Mossoo's frantic yells, and he was coming up to investigate. He staggered as Mossoo collided with him, and gasped for breath, catching hold of the French master to save himself from falling.

"What the thump—" gasped Wingate.

"Help!"

"Oh, my hat! What is it—what has happened?" shouted Wingate.

Monsieur Charpentier reeled against the banisters.

"Ze fearful sight!" he panted. "Mon Dieu! Ze awful apparition! Zat 'orrible negro!"

"That what?" ejaculated Wingate.

"C'est un negro—a ferocious negro!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier. "I go to Sherry's study to demand ze lines, and zat wild and savage negro he spring at me like one tiger—helas! J'avais peur! Mon Dieu!"

Wingate stared at him.

Mossoo's statement that he "had had fear" was evidently well-founded; he still had it. His face was white and terrified.

"A—a negro in the Remove passage!"

exclaimed Wingate. "It's impossible, monsieur. You fancied—"

"I fancy nozzing!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier. "Un negre feroce—a black man ferocious—"

"Great Scott! A—a black man!" Wingate remembered the story of the Hindu kidnappers, and wondered. "Was it a Hindu?"

"I zink him a negro, but perhaps one Hindu—je ne sai pas. He have eyes zat shine like glass, and une bouche enorme—a mouth of the most enormous!" gasped Mossoo.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a howl from the bottom of the staircase.

Wingate stared down, and beheld a crowd of Remove fellows who had come out of the Rag.

"Shut up, you fags!" he called out. "Stop that cackling."

"It is not a matter for to laff!" gasped Mossoo. "Send for ze police! Telephone for zem! Zat savage negro he must be seize!"

"What can possibly be the matter, Wingate?" called out Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, coming up the lower stairs.

"Monsieur Charpentier tells me that there is a black man in the Remove passage, sir."

Mr. Quelch started. "Impossible!"

"Viz my own eyes I see him, monsieur!" hooted the French master. "He spring at me like one tiger! He is in Sherry's study."

The Remove master started again. "That is also Hurree Singh's study. This must be looked into—it may be another attempt on the part of the Hindu kidnappers. Wharton!"

"Yes, sir," answered Harry, from the foot of the staircase.

"Where is Hurree Singh?"

"Here, sir."

"The herefulness is terrific, honoured and esteemed sahib!" called out the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Remain among your friends, Hurree! THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 962.

Singh, while this matter is investigated," said Mr. Quelch. "Wingate, kindly come with me to the Remove passage. This must be seen into at once."

"Certainly, sir,"
"Gardez vous!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier. "Take your guards, mon cher Monsieur Quelch. He is one ferocious savage black. Zere is grand danger. Take one poker at least!"

Mr. Quelch did not heed. He mounted the stairs rapidly, with Wingate of the Sixth at his side. Monsieur Charpentier stared after him, and then, being quite a brave little gentleman, in spite of a sensitive nervous system, he followed on. Gwynne and Loder of the Sixth came running up the stairs after them.

There was a spasm of merriment among the Remove fellows at the foot of the staircase.

"Well, you've done it now, Skinner," said Vernon-Smith.

"You jolly well have!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "There will be no end of a shindy over this—if you've told us the truth, and it's only Bunter."

Skinner shrugged his shoulders. "No harm in helping Bunter to dress up," he said. "We're allowed to go in for private theatricals, ain't we?"

Harry Wharton laughed. "Let's follow on," he said.

And the Remove fellows, eager to be "on" in a scene in the Remove passage, swarmed up the stairs.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter was quaking in Study No. 13. Exactly what to do was quite a mystery to him. And he had only a minute or two in which to make up his fat mind—and Bunter's powerful intellect never did work swiftly. Footsteps came thronging along the Remove passage, as he blinked out of the doorway of Study No. 13.

"There he is!" shouted Wingate.
"Bless my soul!"

Bunter had one terrifying glimpse of Mr. Quelch and two or three prefects. Then he bolted. Like a fat rabbit he bolted along the passage to the box-room stairs, and he went up those stairs two at a time, which was really a remarkable feat with the weight he had to carry. He plunged headlong into the box-room, and howled as he barked his shins on Lord Mauleverer's big trunk.

"Ow! Oh dear!"
"I saw him, sir!" came Wingate's excited voice from below. "A black fellow of some sort—"

"A negro, it seemed to me—" That was Mr. Quelch's voice.

"Un negre feroc!"

"A savage-looking ruffian—" That was Loder of the Sixth.

"Faith, and mightn't it be one of the fags playing a trick, sir?" That suggestion came from Gwynne of the Sixth.

"If so, Gwynne, his punishment will be exemplary," said Mr. Quelch. "If so, he shall be found and punished with the greatest severity."

Bunter quaked.
"We shall see!" continued the Remove master. "He has fled up to the box-rooms! Follow me!"

"Better get a light, sir," said Wingate. "After what happened the other day, it's quite possible that—that—"

"Quite, Wingate! Get a light, by all means, and perhaps some of you had better get weapons of some kind. We cannot be too careful."

Billy Bunter, in the box-room, crouched behind a stack of boxes in a corner, and quaked from head to foot.

By this time, the Owl of the Remove
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repented, from the bottom of his fat heart, that he had ever started on a new career as a practical joker. Once he was safe out of this, he resolved that he would never, never take up japing again.

But he was not out of it yet!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Prout on the War-path!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked on from a respectful distance. They did not venture to approach the group of masters and prefects who stood at the foot of the box-room stairs.

After one freezing glance from Mr. Quelch, they did not venture to laugh. From the point of view of the Remove master, it was very far from being a laughing matter. It was certain that an attempt had lately been made by a gang of Hindus to kidnap Hurre Jamset Ram Singh. If there was a black man within the precincts of Greyfriars, it was only too probable that he was one of the kidnapping gang—and that undoubtedly would not have been a laughing matter.

The Remove fellows, having heard Skinner's story of his little joke on Bunter, took quite a different view. They were aware that the terrifying apparition seen by Monsieur Charpentier was not so black as he was painted. But they did not think of telling Mr. Quelch so. Bunter was booked for a licking if he was found in his remarkable guise, and nobody wanted to get him a licking. The Remove fellows hoped that he would get clear somehow.

But it did not seem likely. Mr. Quelch was evidently determined to probe the matter to the very bottom. His square jaw was shut like a vice. He was waiting for Loder of the Sixth to come back with a light. In a few minutes Loder came along with a bike lantern, and he was followed by two or three more of the Sixth with electric torches. Quite a little army gathered at the foot of the box-room stairs—enough of them to deal with the most desperate kidnapper—more than enough to deal with the fat and quaking junior who crouched in dire terror in the shadowy box-room above. And another form, stout and portly, came pushing through the crowd of Removites in the passage—that of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form.

Harry Wharton turned as something butted into his back, and jumped almost clear of the floor as he found that it was the muzzle of a rifle.

Mr. Prout, once upon a time, had been a great sportsman, and deadly weapons adorned the walls of his study. It was many years since Mr. Prout had been on the war-path; he had grown rather elderly, and rather bald, and rather short-sighted. But at heart he was still the sportsman of old, though it had to be admitted that he did not look the part.

At the first alarm Mr. Prout had dragged down his favourite rifle from the wall—the one with which he had shot grizzly bears in the Rocky Mountains in the dear dead days beyond recall—or with which, perhaps, he fancied that he had shot grizzly bears, for undoubtedly Mr. Prout's hunting stories grew more and more circumstantial with the passage of time.

Mr. Prout often alluded to that gun as his "deadly rifle." Deadly or not, Wharton did not like to feel the muzzle in the small of his back.

"I—I say, keep that thing away, sir!"

he exclaimed, dodging Mr. Prout very actively.

"Where is he?" thundered Mr. Prout.

"He! Who?"

"The kidnapper! The black ruffian!" boomed the Fifth Form master. "I am here to deal with him! Where is he?"

"Oh, my hat! I—I think—" gasped Wharton.

Mr. Prout spotted the group by the box-room stairs, and rushed on, without stopping to ask more questions. The juniors stared after him blankly. Some of the prefects had brought along pokers or cricket-stumps; but Mr. Prout and his rifle made the fellows jump.

"I—I say, has he got that thing loaded?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Phew! Poor old Bunter—if he has!"

"Prouty couldn't hit the wall of a house!" said the Bounder. "I've seen him potting at the range. If he really shot that grizzly bear we've heard about, it was a shooting accident."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Prout joined the group at the box-room stairs, rifle in hand. Mr. Quelch had taken the lamp from Loder, and was leading the way upward. The prefects would have followed, but Mr. Prout pushed them aside, and mounted the stairs after the Remove master.

"Have no fear, my dear Quelch!" he said. "I am here!"

"Thank you, Mr. Prout, I am not in the least in a state of trepidation," answered the Remove master icily.

"I will deal with the scoundrel, Quelch, if you will hold the light," said the Fifth Form master. "Forward!"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch testily, as the eager gentleman followed him fast. "Please do not poke that stick in my back, Mr. Prout. It is most uncomfortable!"

"It is not a stick, Quelch," said Mr. Prout. "It is the muzzle of my rifle."

"What!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Merely the muzzle of my rifle. Why, what ever is the matter, my dear Quelch?" exclaimed Mr. Prout, in astonishment, as the Remove master fairly spun round on the stairs above him.

Mr. Quelch had been quite calm hitherto; but now he looked quite excited. A poke in the back from the muzzle of a rifle was really enough to disturb any middle-aged gentleman's equanimity.

"Take it away!" he hooted.

"What? What?"

"Point it some other way, sir!" bawled Mr. Quelch. "I refuse, sir—I absolutely refuse—to be shot in the back, sir! Take it away."

"My dear Quelch—"

"Are you aware, sir, that you are pointing that rifle directly at me?" shrieked Mr. Quelch in frenzied tones.

"Dear me! So I am!" said Mr. Prout. "I will point it upward—there—Let us advance, sir—"

"Take your finger from the trigger, Mr. Prout."

"Really, Mr. Quelch—"

"Take your finger from the trigger!" spluttered Mr. Quelch. "Do you hear me, Mr. Prout? Upon my word—"

"Nonsense, Quelch!" exclaimed Mr. Prout hotly. "I am about to encounter a desperate scoundrel. I must be prepared. Probably he is armed. At any moment he may open fire with a revolver. I must be on my guard. Pray stand aside, my dear Quelch, and allow me to lead the way!"

"Mr. Prout—"

"Follow, and show me a light," said

Mr. Prout. "I need but one glimpse of the villain—my aim is deadly. If he does not immediately surrender, his blood will be upon his own head. Let me go in advance."

The Fifth Form master pushed past Mr. Quelch, who was only too glad to let him pass. Mr. Quelch was not afraid of the black man in the box-room, but the Fifth Form master seemed to have quite a terrifying effect upon him.

Mr. Prout marched up the box-room stairs, with his deadly rifle well ahead, his fat finger still on the trigger. The whole party followed him, glad to be behind the rifle.

"Keep the light steady, my dear Quelch," said Mr. Prout, looking round as he reached the landing. "Fear nothing—"

"I fear nothing but that dangerous weapon in your hands, Mr. Prout," hooted the Remove master.

"Really, Mr. Quelch—"

"If you persist in turning it towards me, Mr. Prout—"

"Dear me, I did not intend to do so! A moment's absent-mindedness—"

"I do not wish my career to be suddenly terminated, Mr. Prout, by a moment's absent-mindedness on your part."

Mr. Prout gave a snort, and marched on again.

Behind him, Mr. Quelch held up the light: and the Sixth-form fellows followed, flashing ahead the light of the electric torches.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Only Bunter!

"BUNTER!"

"Bless my soul! Bunter!"

"But what—what—"

"Bunter!" said Mr. Prout dazedly. "I—I do not recognise him, but the—the voice seems familiar! What—what—"

"Bunter!" boomed Mr. Quelch.

"It's a practical joke, sir," said Wingate, trying not to chuckle. "One of the Remove kids japing."

"Mon Dieu!" murmured Monsieur Charpentier, his face crimsoning. "Ma foi! C'est un garçon—je suis trompé—mon Dieu!"

And the French master beat a hurried retreat, and passed with a burning face through the grinning crowd in the Remove passage and vanished.

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "You

"How dare you play such tricks?" boomed Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I—"

"Mr. Quelch, if this boy were in my Form, I should punish him with the greatest severity!" hooted Mr. Prout. "An incident like this, sir, could occur in no Form at Greyfriars with the exception of the Remove."

"Mr. Prout!"

"I repeat it, sir—in no Form but the Remove!" hooted the Fifth Form master. And Mr. Prout tramped wrathfully out of the box-room, still trying—unsuccessfully—to hide the deadly rifle from general view.

In the Remove passage he had to pass between two lines of grinning Removites, with a crimson face, and the hapless rifle, the cynosure of all eyes.

"Have you shot him, sir?" asked Skinner.

"What—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smack!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mind that gun doesn't go off!" yelled the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Prout hurried on, leaving Skinner rubbing his eyes furiously, and the other fellows yelling. Mr. Prout longed for only one thing just then—to get the deadly rifle out of sight. That fearsome weapon had been brought along to terrify a desperate kidnapper into submission; and the desperate kidnapper

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With the Fifth Form master in the lead, they tramped into the box-room.

It seemed to be vacant, save for the empty boxes and trunks.

"Probably the villain is hiding!" exclaimed Mr. Prout, with a really ferocious glare round the dusty, dusky room. "Search among the boxes. Fear nothing; my rifle is ready! At the first sight of the villain, I will pull the trigger—"

"Yaroooh!"

"What—what—"

"Help! Keep him off! I don't want to be shot!" yelled Billy Bunter, from behind the stack of boxes in the corner. "Mr. Quelch—Wingate, keep him off! Yaroooh! Help! Yoooop!"

"What—what—" stuttered Mr. Prout.

"Bunter!" roared Wingate.

The captain of Greyfriars plunged behind the boxes, and dragged an extraordinary figure into view.

At the sight of the black face Mr. Prout mechanically raised the rifle.

There was a wild howl of terror from Billy Bunter, and he tore himself away from Wingate's grasp, and dodged behind Mr. Quelch for protection, clutching at the Remove master's coat.

"Yow-ow! Help! Keep him off!" shrieked Bunter.

Bunter's frantic yell was heard far and wide. And from the Remove passage came an answering yell:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

—you utterly ridiculous boy—you—you young rascal—You—you—"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter.

"Absurd!" snapped Mr. Prout, his fat face as red as a turkey's. He had lowered his deadly rifle now, and seemed to be trying to squeeze it out of sight in the folds of his coat. In the circumstances, Mr. Prout realised that the deadly rifle was a little ridiculous. "A practical joke—a foolish joke! Ridiculous."

He glared round at the grinning prefects. It did not seem to Mr. Prout an occasion for grinning.

"Bunter! What does this mean?" roared the Remove master.

"Oh dear!"

"Why are you dressed in this ridiculous manner?"

"Oh, lor'!"

"Why is your face blacked?"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Bunter.

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had turned out to be a Remove fag with his face blacked.

Deeply as he was attached to that relic of ancient hunting days, Mr. Prout would have been glad to see it vanish into thin air. Instead of which, it seemed to the unhappy gentleman as large and conspicuous as a cannon, as he bore it along the Remove passage amid yells of laughter.

Portly gentleman as he was, Mr. Prout fairly raced down the stairs, and the slam of his study door was heard all over Greyfriars.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, almost weeping with merriment. "Poor old Prout! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites. But there was one Remove fellow who was not laughing—one to whom the situation was fraught with seriousness. That one was William George Bunter in the box-room, quaking under the gimlet eyes of Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Quelch's eyes seemed almost to bore holes into the wretched Bunter. Wingate and Gwynne and Loder, and the other Sixth Form fellows, were grinning—they could not help it. But the comic side of the situation was utterly lost upon Mr. Quelch.

He gave the grinning prefects a glance. "This is not a laughing matter!" he snapped.

"Hem! No! Of—of course not, sir!" stammered Wingate.

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"Bunter!"

"Oh dear!"

"Explain yourself!" said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice. "Why are you dressed in this ridiculous manner, and why is your face blacked? What does it mean? Are you out of your senses?"

"Ow! No, sir!"

"Then what does it mean?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I—I didn't—"

"What?"

"I—I mean—"

"What do you mean?"

"I—I—I—it was a—a—a joke, sir!" groaned Bunter. "Only a—a—a jape, sir. I—I—"

"You disguised yourself in this absurd manner for a practical joke?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"You have thrown the whole school into commotion, for the sake of a foolish, practical joke on your Form master!"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I wouldn't joke with you, sir! I—I'd rather joke with a lion or a tiger, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I mean—it was Inky, sir."

"What does this boy mean? Explain yourself, Bunter! Do you mean that your face is inky? It does not look like ink to me."

"Nunno, sir! Inky, sir—Hurree Singh—"

"Was Hurree Singh a party to this ridiculous performance, Bunter? Is that what you mean?"

"Oh dear! No, sir! It—it was a joke on Inky—I mean, Hurree Singh," groaned Bunter. "I was going to frighten him, sir—"

"Frighten him?"

"That's it, sir—making up as a Hindu, making him think the kidnappers were after him, sir—"

"Bless my soul! Do you suppose that you look anything like a Hindu?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I'm rather clever at make-up, sir—"

"Bunter! You have thrown the school into turmoil—you have wasted my time—you have caused great alarm—and all for the pernicious purpose of a jest upon a serious subject! Bunter, you will immediately remove this ridiculous attire, and—clean yourself. Then you will come to my study."

"Wha-a-a-what for, sir?"

"For punishment!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "For the most severe and drastic punishment, Bunter!"

"Oh, lor!"

Mr. Quelch strode out of the box-room, and down the stairs. There was no laughter in the Remove passage as he passed his hopeful pupils there; the expression on his face discouraged merriment. But when he was gone there was a chorus of chortling and chuckling. Billy Bunter, with a dismal expression on his blacked face, rolled into view, and at the sight of him, the Remove fellows shrieked again.

"Here he is!" yelled the Bounder.

"Here's Bunter—behold, he is black but comely!" sobbed Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"He's got on some of my props," exclaimed Willey. "You cheeky, fat villain, you've been at my property-box—"

"Oh dear! I—I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did—did you think Quelch looked very waxy, you chaps?" groaned Bunter. "Like a hungry tiger," chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Oh dear!"

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"You're for it, Bunter!" chuckled the Bounder. "You can't say you haven't asked for it, old fat man."

"The askfulness was terrific, my esteemed, fatheaded Bunter!"

"Go and get yourself washed, you awful ass!" said Peter Todd. "The longer you keep Quelch waiting, the harder he will lay it on."

Bunter gave a deep and dismal groan, and rolled away to a bath-room, followed by a yell of laughter. When he emerged—clothed, and in his right mind, so to speak—he almost tottered to Mr. Quelch's study. After the feast came the reckoning; and to judge by the wild howls that were heard from Mr. Quelch's study a few minutes later, the reckoning was severe.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

An Alarm in the Night!

GROAN!

"Chuck it, Bunter!"

Groan!

Bolsover major sat up in bed.

"Look here, Bunter," he bawled. "Enough's as good as a feast, see? Chuck it, and let a fellow go to sleep."

Groan!

The Remove fellows had gone to their dormitory; most of them in a hilarious mood; Bunter, fresh from the hands of Mr. Quelch, in a mood that was far from hilarious.

After lights out, a succession of deep groans proceeded from the bed occupied by William George Bunter.

There was some sympathy for Bunter. That he had asked for it was certain; and there was no doubt that he had received all that he had asked for, and that it was painful. Mr. Quelch had not spared the rod; and Bunter had been fairly squirming after the Remove master had done with him. So the juniors listened to Bunter's deep and dismal groans, for some time, with kind patience.

But as Bolsover major remarked, enough was as good as a feast. It was all very well for Bunter to express his feelings in that way; but fellows wanted to go to sleep.

"Yes, chuck it, old man," said Bob Cherry. "You've had a jolly good innings, you know. You've been groaning for a good ten minutes now."

"Beast!"

"If he jolly well doesn't stop I'll get out and jolly well give him something to groan for!" said Bolsover major.

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"Shut up!"

"I say, you fellows, I've got a frightful pain—"

"Didn't you ask for it?" hooted Bolsover.

"Quelch gave me a dozen—"

"Serve you jolly well right!"

"Beast!"

"You shouldn't have played the goat, old fat man," said Harry Wharton. "Japing isn't really in your line."

Groan!

"That does it!" exclaimed Bolsover major exasperated. "I'm getting out to him with my pillow!"

"I—I say, I—I'll try to hear it!" gasped Bunter. "You're a lot of unsympathetic beasts! I'm suffering frightfully!"

"Suffer in silence, old chap," said Peter Todd. "Silence is golden, you know."

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter suppressed his dismal groans at last. After Mr. Quelch's cane, he did not want Bolsover major's pillow.

He laid his head on his pillow and strove to sleep. Sleep generally came very easily to William George Bunter. He could do with a great deal of sleep. But for once he was wakeful. His fat person fairly ached with the severe caning he had received; and the fact that he had asked for it was no solace, and certainly did not relieve the pain.

For the first time on record, Billy Bunter was the last fellow in the Remove to fall asleep.

All the rest of the Lower Fourth were deep in slumber, while Bunter's round eyes were still open, and he lay blinking dimly into the darkness, and watching the stars at the high windows of the dormitory.

He reflected bitterly that Mr. Quelch might have left that hefty licking till the morning, and let a fellow get his night's rest. Mr. Quelch had not even seemed to think of it. Possibly, had he thought of it, he might have supposed that Bunter's wakeful reflections would be for his good. Certainly, Bunter realised very clearly that the career of a practical joker was not the career for him—that was borne in very clearly upon his fat mind.

He slumbered at last.

But his slumbers were uneasy. Generally, he closed his eyes immediately he turned in, and did not open them till the rising-bell clanged out in the morning—and then unwillingly. But matters were quite different now. His deep and resonant snore, instead of rumbling continuously through the night, echoed only by fits and starts. He woke, and woke again, and groaned dimly as he composed himself to slumber once more. But after a few "cat-naps" slumber refused to come. Bunter lay with his round eyes blinking at the windows, sleepless, while round him the other Remove fellows slept the sleep of healthy youth.

It was an uncommon experience for Bunter—very uncommon indeed. He did not like it at all. He felt bitterly how selfish the other fellows were to sleep peacefully like this, while he—W. G. Bunter—couldn't sleep. He dared not even groan aloud, for fear of waking Bolsover major. Gladly enough he would have awakened the whole dormitory. For why should any fellow sleep while Bunter couldn't sleep? But he did not want to be pillowed or bolstered, and so he was silent as he lay and blinked, and reflected what a hard and unfeeling world it was, especially for a fellow of such really eminent merit as himself.

It was long past midnight. In the silence of the night Bunter heard all sorts of sounds, which are only heard when a house is stilled in slumber—faint creaking of ancient woodwork, the clatter of some distant gate that had been left unfastened, the rustling of a branch against the panes of a window. These eerie sounds of the night came through the sound of steady breathing from many beds.

Suddenly Bunter started and shivered.

In the dim dormitory something moved. It made no sound, and it might have been a shadow. But it was not a shadow.

Bunter's fat heart almost stood still. Every fellow but himself was fast asleep. He knew that no Removeite had left his bed.

Yet someone with noiseless footsteps was moving in the dormitory.

Burglars was the word that flashed into Bunter's startled mind. But, startled as he was, he could not help



The approaching footsteps stopped at the door of Bob Cherry's study. Knock! The door was pushed open. "Sherry!" Monsieur Charpentier got no further. A fearsome figure leaped suddenly at him, a hideous black face with an enormous red gash of a mouth glimmered in the dim light, and Monsieur Charpentier jumped back into the passage with a wild yell. "Mon Dieu! Ciel! Vat is zat?" (See Chapter 4.)

realising that if burglars came to Greyfriars they would not be likely to penetrate into a junior dormitory. Yet at such a late hour it was impossible that it was a raid from another dormitory—Temple, Dabney, & Co. of the Fourth, or Coker of the Fifth, would never raid the Remove in the small hours of the morning.

Bunter lay quite still, scarcely breathing, and listening with all his ears, his fat heart throbbing.

There was no sound of movement, yet something dark was flitting in the shadowy dormitory—something dim and dark that flitted from bed to bed, as if peering at one sleeper after another.

Soundless, dim, shadowy, it loomed by Bunter's bed, and instinctively he shut his eyes and feigned slumber.

He opened them again; the shadow was gone.

His heart throbbed almost to suffocation.

It could not be a burglar—that was inadmissible. It could not be a fellow from another dormitory japing at such an hour. What was it?

Without raising his head from his pillow Bunter blinked about him, seeing little, however, as his big spectacles were tucked away in their case under his

pillow, and he dared not venture to move to take them out and put them on his fat little nose.

From somewhere a faint and sickly smell came to him—a smell that he did not recognise, but which he knew must be the scent of some drug.

What did it mean?

Bunter's terror was so great that he could scarcely keep himself from yelling aloud. Something was going on in the Remove dormitory—something strange and terrible. Some stranger was there—or, rather, more than one. For as Bunter blinked and blinked with straining eyes he made out two dim shadows that stood on either side of a bed—and he knew that it was the bed occupied by Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. And the sickly scent came from that direction, and suddenly it flashed into Bunter's mind that it was the scent of chloroform.

And then he knew.

"The kidnappers!"

The nabob's enemies had penetrated into the school. What Bunter had imagined in jest was taking place in grim earnest, and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh sinking from sleep into blank insensibility under the influence of the drug, lay helpless under their hands.

Bunter gasped.

He did not mean to make a sound; so far as he had any intentions at all, he intended to keep quite silent, hoping that the malefactors would not discover that he was awake. But his fat nerves were not equal to the strain.

He gasped, and in the silence of the dormitory his terrified gasp was more than audible.

He saw one of the shadows move.

The man, dim and shadowy, half seen, was turning towards Bunter's bed, and the terrified Owl of the Remove caught a sudden glint of black, rolling eyes.

The shadowy form was approaching his bed—or he thought that it was. Hardly knowing what he did, Bunter rolled out of the bed on the other side, yelling at the top of his voice.

"Help! Help! Help!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"HELP!" Billy Bunter's frantic yell rang through the Remove dormitory and far beyond.

"Help! Help! Help!"

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Fellows awoke on all sides, springing up in bed.

"Khabardar!" exclaimed a deep, suppressed voice.

"Help! Help!"

Bunter dashed towards the door.

His one thought was to get away before a savage grasp could be laid on him.

But two shadowy figures were fleeing towards the door, carrying between them a still form that did not stir or utter a sound. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, insensible under the chloroform, was like a log in the hands of the kidnappers; and even at that moment, with the alarm ringing in their ears, Nally Das and Kalouth did not abandon their victim, but made a desperate attempt to escape with their prisoner in their hands. But for Billy Bunter's rush to the door they might have succeeded. But the Owl of the Remove, heading blindly for the door at top speed, rushed right into the kidnappers and sent them sprawling.

There was a fierce exclamation in Hindustani as the two ruffians reeled, and their prisoner fell from their grasp and thudded on the floor.

"Help!" shrieked Bunter.

A savage grasp closed on the fat junior.

In his extremity of terror Bunter fought and struggled like a wildcat.

Half a dozen fellows were out of bed by this time, shouting questions. Bunter's wild yelling rang far and wide.

"Help! Help! Help!"

Footsteps rang below, lights flashed from windows and opening doors. Almost all Greyfriars was alarmed now.

"What's the row?" roared Bob Cherry, as he leaned out of bed.

"It's Bunter—"

"What is it?"

"Help!" yelled Bunter. "Oh! Help! Murder! Fire! Help!"

Harry Wharton had rushed across to the switch at the door and he turned on the light.

With startling suddenness the Remove dormitory was flooded with illumination.

The scene that met the eyes of the startled Removites was amazing.

On the floor lay Hurree Jamset Ram Singh—motionless, inert, insensible, Bunter, shrieking with terror, was struggling frantically in the grasp of a Hindu, and a second Hindu was darting out of the dormitory and escaping.

"The kidnappers!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Inky! Save him!"

"Help!"

It was Nally Das who was grasping Bunter, and his sinewy, dusky fingers were already on the throat of the Owl of the Remove, stifling his wild cries. But without a second's hesitation Harry Wharton & Co. rushed at the ruffian. Nally Das hurled Bunter aside and rushed out of the dormitory after his associate.

Bunter sprawled on the floor, gasping and spluttering.

"After them!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Help! Help!"

There was a pattering of rapid feet in the corridor outside. The kidnappers, realising that they were defeated, that escape was all that remained—even if that was yet possible—were fleeing.

"After them!" howled Johnny Bull. "I—I say, you fellows, help! Don't leave me! Help!" shrieked Billy Bunter. "I say, I'm dead—I'm injured—I'm murdered—help!"

But Bunter was not heeded. Harry Wharton & Co. rushed out of the dormitory, and a crowd of the

Remove fellows rushed after them. There was a flashing of lights in the corridor, and on the staircase. Mr. Quelch's startled voice came to the ears of the juniors.

"What is it? What has happened?"

"Help!"

"The kidnappers, sir!" shouted Wharton.

"What? What? If this is another absurd jest—"

"It's true, sir—they nearly got Inky—I mean, Hurree Singh," panted the captain of the Remove. "Bunter woke up, and gave the alarm."

"Go back to your dormitory at once, boys," snapped the Remove master. "Is Hurree Singh safe, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir—but—"

"Go back then—leave this to me."

The Remove fellows crowded back into their dormitory. The room was in a buzz of excited voices. The whole House was buzzing now, and flashing with lights. The crash of a breaking window was heard in the distance, and Wingate's voice shouting:

"Here they are! This way!"

Harry Wharton dropped on his knees beside the motionless form of the nabob, on the floor of the Remove dormitory.

"Inky, old man—!"

No sound or movement came from Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. His eyes

NEXT WEEK'S FREE GIFT

SHOWS

A. A. MAILEY

(The Australian Bowler)

IN ACTION!

Make sure of this fine
figure, boys!

were closed, he seemed scarcely to breathe.

"Inky—"

"It's chloroform," said the Bounder. "I know that smell! They've chloroformed him."

"The villains!" breathed Wharton.

"Oh, the rotters!"

"Poor old Inky!"

"Thank goodness we stopped them in time!" gasped Nugent. "They'd got him as far as the door."

"Help! help!" Bunter was still yelling, in such a state of frantic funk that he had no eyes or ears for his surroundings.

"Shut up, you fat duffer!" shouted Bob Cherry. "You're all right now."

"Help! Murder! Fire!"

"They've gone, you fat ass!" yelled Peter Todd, shaking the Owl of the Remove by the shoulder.

"Ow! Eh! Gone?" gasped Bunter.

"Yes—shut up."

"Oh, dear! Oh, crumbs! I've been murdered—I mean, nearly murdered! Oh, crikey! Wow!"

ANSWERS
Every Saturday —PRICE 2:—

"Get him back to bed," said Harry Wharton, referring to the nabob. He took no heed of Bunter. The chums of the Remove lifted the insensible Indian junior, and bore him to his bed, and laid him there gently. His death-like stillness filled them with misgivings.

"He's only drugged," faltered Nugent. "He will be all right, of course. Poor old Inky."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter."

"That's all very well," booted Bunter. Now that it was clear to him that the kidnappers were gone, and that the danger was at an end, Bunter was recovering himself—Richard was himself again, so to speak. "I call that jolly ungrateful, after I've saved Inky's life. Yah!"

"We've got to get a doctor to him," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, I'm not injured so much as all that," said Bunter. "I've had a fearful struggle, but—"

"You fat idiot, I was speaking of Inky."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Here comes Quelch!" murmured Squiff.

Mr. Quelch entered the Remove dormitory. His face was very grave. He came over quickly towards the nabob's bed.

"He's quite insensible, sir," said Harry. "I think it's chloroform. The smell—"

"Thank heaven he is safe," said Mr. Quelch. "Wingate!"

"Yes, sir," said the Greyfriars captain from the doorway.

"Kindly go to my study and telephone to Dr. Pillbury. Explain to him what has happened, and request him to come here as quickly as possible."

"Certainly, sir."

The Greyfriars captain hurried away. Dr. Locke, half-dressed, with a voluminous dressing-gown sweeping the floor around him, came into the Remove dormitory. The Head of Greyfriars was greatly agitated. The midnight alarm had called him up, as it had called up almost everyone else in the school. Sixth-Form men were still searching through the building, with pokers and cricket stumps in their hands, hunting for intruders. In the hall below, a crowd of fellows had gathered round a smashed window, by way of which Nally Das and Kalouth had escaped. Lights gleamed in the quadrangle, where more of the Sixth and the Fifth were searching for traces of the kidnappers. Seldom or never had Greyfriars School been thrown into such a turmoil at such an hour.

"Mr. Quelch—" began the Head.

"Hurree Singh is safe, sir," said the Remove master. "The desperate rascals reached this dormitory, and evidently succeeded in administering chloroform to him—"

"Bless my soul!"

"Their intention, apparently, was to carry him, unconscious, from the house: doubtless a car was in waiting near the school," said Mr. Quelch. "Fortunately, the alarm was given in time."

Billy Bunter blinked triumphantly at the famous Five.

It was he who had given the alarm. As yet, his Form master and his headmaster had no suspicion of the prominent part Bunter had played in the affair. But they were going to learn of it. There was no doubt at that point. Bunter was not the fellow to hide his light under a bushel.

(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.

Nobody's Darling!



A WORD FOR THE POOR WICKET-KEEPER WHO SELDOM GETS PRAISED.

ONE of the things about cricket which I have never been able to understand is how all the teams succeed in finding somebody to keep wicket. Surely this is at once the hardest and most thankless job of any which can be found in the whole world of sport. The wicket-keeper is veritably the Aunt Sally, there to be aimed at by every Tom, Dick, and Harry, while he is, incidentally, running risks to a greater extent than any other player in the game. The batsman runs risks, of course, in standing up to fast bowling, but the difference between the batsman and the wicket-keeper is that the batsman is out sooner or later, whereas the wicket-keeper has to stick it right through an innings.

LET 'EM ALL COME.

Perhaps it wouldn't matter so much from the wicket-keeper's point of view if he got praise for his work. Very seldom does he get that right proportion of praise, however. You will see a side knock up three or four hundred runs, of which total only four or five were byes. But the wicket-keeper doesn't get any praise. He has to take all varieties of bowling—fast ones and slow ones, straight balls and wide ones—but he must take them; and if by chance he misses a chance of stumping or catching an opponent, he is told about it, probably by the critics and by his own bowler as well.

Even the figures regarding cricket matches are so published, as a general rule, as to be unfair to the wicket-keeper of the side. In the scores there is always an item which is called extras, and everything which goes down to extras looks, on the face of it, as something for which the wicket-keeper is responsible. Yet it is not really so. Included among "extras" are leg-byes, wides, and no-balls—things which the best wicket-keeper in the world could not possibly prevent.

A TARGET FOR ALL.

I am afraid, too, that the average wicket-keeper would be justified in suggesting that among the people who don't really love him are the members of his own side—at least, they don't show that consideration for the wicket-keeper to which he is entitled. You will see them banging the ball at him from the field as if it was a stone wall at which they were aiming, often dropping the ball right at his feet, where it is extremely difficult for the wicket-keeper to make anything like a clean pick-up.

And all day long, from early morning till night, in some cases, the wicket-keeper has to go through it, never relaxing his vigilance in the slightest. The other fielders get one or two balls an over which they have to watch; the wicket-keeper has to watch every one.

AN ASSET TO HIS SIDE.

Last of all the points about the wicket-keeper is that people wonder whether a really good man should be played for his wicket-keeping alone, or whether he shouldn't be able to bat well in addition. Of course, there are fair batsmen wicket-keepers—Oldfield, the Australian, "Tiger" Smith, of Warwickshire, Brown, of Hampshire, and so on—but I think if you get a good wicket-keeper you ought to be satisfied, even though he can't score a single run.

Fortunately, the job has one little bit of compensation. Of all the players on the field, the wicket-keeper is in the best position for seeing what is going on.

Boundary Hits! by "SCORER"

Some people say that Test matches without a time limit are the things we want. Others say that such matches would be the very limit.

I have suspended our office-boy for this week because he says that what England needs in Test matches is more of that "don't Carr" policy.

Why were Glamorgan the strongest county side of last season? Because they occupied the bottom position in the championship table throughout, and could thus be said to have held all the others up.

We understand that Manchester has spent many weeks making up its mind that it can provide weather to beat even the experience of Nottingham for the first Test match. Manchester has certainly earned a reputation for wet, for it claims to be the only place where the weather was so bad that not a single ball could be bowled in a Test match arranged to be played there.

Sydney Smith, the manager of the Australians, never played much first-class cricket, but he once made 187 in a minor match, and so pleased his father that he bought him three bats all at once. If Sydney had only made a few more centuries he would have been able to set up in business as a sports outfitter.

If every county or other cricket side had a really fast bowler we should soon see fewer cases of batsmen stepping in front of their wickets to stop the ball with their legs. Or if we didn't have less leg play we should have more inquests.

A really fast ball had just whizzed past the batsman's ear, and off he started for the pavilion. "Come back!" said the umpire. "You're not out." "Perhaps I'm not," replied the terror-stricken batsman; "but I am certainly not going to stay in."

When Maurice Tate was out in Australia he had to have a special pair of boots made for him. It should not be assumed, however, that this was because there were none already made big enough—he had a bad toe.

Jack Freeman, of Essex, takes his benefit match this week-end. We take it this will be a case of "free list entirely suspended."

When the English captain won the toss in the 110th Test match at Nottingham, this meant that England and Australia had won the toss exactly half and half, or fifty-five times each. So the law of averages does work.



ENGLAND'S SKIPPER!

A nutshell history of A. W. Carr, who forms the subject of this week's topping Free Gift.

a new captain, and the choice fell upon Arthur Carr. Let it be said at once that he proved the man for the moment, and no county has a skipper who shows more whole-hearted enthusiasm or is better liked by the players whom it is his duty to command.

A CAPTAIN'S SHARE.

He had a great season in 1922, when Notts finished second to Yorkshire, and the captain made well over a thousand runs. He has captained the Gentlemen in games against the Players more than once, and those who were present will never forget an occasion at Scarborough when he hit in amazing style in one of these representative games, hitting five sixes off Frank Woolley in double-quick time, including three sixes off successive deliveries. He went to South Africa with Frank Mann's eleven in 1922, but was not a great success.

THE RIGHT SORT.

Last season he played better than ever, hitting out in most fearless style to all sorts of bowling, and amassing 2,338 runs in all, had an average of 51.95 for the whole season. This, it may be mentioned, gave him the highest place in the averages of any amateur. In the field he is a wonderful worker, always on his toes and inspiring his men. He is a player of great courage when things are going badly; just the man to turn a seeming defeat into a glorious victory.

A POPULAR CHOICE.

At the early age of sixteen Carr had a trial with the county, and did fairly well, and then the year before the War he first commanded real attention with an innings of 169 against Leicestershire. After the War, owing to the untimely death of A. O. Jones, who skippered Notts for so long, the county required

THINGS work out in most mysterious ways at times. For example, when Arthur William Carr was at school as a boy at Sherborne he was a great all-round sport, and captained all the various teams at one time or another except the cricket eleven. Yet he had no sooner grown into a man than he forsook most of the other sports at which he had played at school, and became captain of the Notts County side. Probably the will of the man had something to do with this, and those who know Arthur Carr best can well imagine him saying something like this to himself: "I was never captain of my school at cricket, but I will captain a cricket team before I have finished, just to show 'em I can do it."

AT THE NETS! By County Cricketer.

A New Series of Articles which will tell you how to improve your cricket.
POINTS ON FAST BOWLING.

YOU will remember that last week I laid down some general principles which can be said to apply to all sorts of bowling. One of these first and most important principles is that any bowler who hopes to achieve success must, by way of a start, have command of length. No bowling is good unless the length is right, and command of length can only be obtained by constant practice.

Here is a method of practice which I recommend in order that this most valuable bowling asset of length shall eventually be obtained. Go on to some suitable bit of ground. It need not necessarily be a cricket-field, so long as you can get the orthodox run. Measure out the distance between the two wickets, and then mark a line across at a yard from the place where the batsman—if there were a batsman—would hold his bat. Try, by way of a start, to drop the ball as near to that line as you possibly can. Stick at it—aiming to drop the ball on the line. When you can drop several deliveries within a very short space of the line, try what you can accomplish when you make up your mind to drop one a little shorter or a little longer.

"KIDDING" THE BATSMEN.

Gradually, if you are what might be called a good bowler, you will get such command of your length that you will be able to drop the ball approximately on the spot where you intend that it should fall. All this practice in the art of

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acquiring length should be done without changing the action at all. Remember that when there is a batsman to be got rid of you will find it necessary, no matter whether you are a fast, a medium, or a slow bowler, to deceive him as regards length. Suppose, just by way of example, that the batsman plays the same forward stroke to three successive balls.

What you have to do, then, is to "kid" him to play the same stroke to a ball which is a few inches shorter. If you thus succeed in "kidding" him, he will probably miss the ball altogether, or put up a catch to a waiting fielder.

The point about length certainly applies to fast bowling as well as to slow, and I want to emphasise it in regard to fast bowling because so many lads seem to think that if they send down the ball fast the length doesn't matter. Perhaps in minor cricket it doesn't, very much, but when you advance into better-class cricket, as I hope you will some day, you will find that fast bowling of an indifferent length is the most expensive of all.

THE CRAZE FOR PACE.

Of course, every boy starts with the idea that he is going to be an express bowler. The fact that at the present moment England is frightfully badly off for fast bowlers shows that very few of these lads succeed in their intentions. I think I can tell you why. It is because lads try to bowl too fast when they are young and before they have gained command of length. You will see young

lads taking a run of twenty yards or so, as if that was the secret of fast bowling. It isn't. I have known fast bowlers who only took half a dozen strides, and the trouble is that some who take a longer run lose all the value of that run because they stop in the middle of it. So I say, get your length, work up your pace, and try, might and main, to get that pace out of the last-minute action of arm and body rather than out of a very long run, which will only make you tired.

Especially for fast bowlers is it essential that the delivery should be made from a fair height—that is, with the arm outstretched upwards instead of merely outwards. The round-arm fast bowler has few terrors for good batsmen, because the ball keeps an ordinary height off the pitch.

("County Cricketer" contributes another interesting article next week, chums. Don't miss it!)

THE LAUGH AGAINST HENDREN.

Patsy Hendren, as most people know, is one of the most brilliant long-fields in the world, and his position on the boundary brings him in closer touch with the spectators than those who field near the wicket.

Out in Australia the spectators got very chatty, and Hendren used to enjoy little jokes with them. Once, however, the laugh was against Hendren. A man in the crowd asked Patsy why Holmes, of Yorkshire, hadn't come to Australia.

"Oh," said Patsy jokingly, "this England team was chosen for its good looks."

"Is that so?" replied the man who had asked Hendren about Holmes. "Then how in the world did you get into the side?"

POINTS to STUDY!

Little things which make the difference between victory and defeat

By J. M. TAYLOR.

The Famous Australian Batsman.

NUMEROUS aspects present themselves from which cricket can be viewed and studied, and it is usually on the so-called minor points which the critic bases his ideas and forms his opinions. It frequently happens that a man is a good batsman or a good bowler, or both, but must be tucked away in the field, or has not learned that more is expected of him than mere batting or bowling. A word or two along those lines, which have probably been neglected, should put right any man who is keen.

THE POINT FROM WHICH TO JUDGE.

It is wonderful what attention to detail will produce. Carelessness cannot be tolerated. Mistakes are made by the most seasoned and expert, but the best players are those who make the fewer mistakes, and do what is best, not for themselves, but for their side. This may entail personal sacrifice at times; but that should not be a matter for regret when it is for the good of the team. Probably the best opportunity for judging a team is to see them for a period in the field, and note their methods. They will usually reproduce that to which they have been accustomed. Slackness must never be tolerated in any shape or form. The reactions, if unchecked, spell disaster, and will go from bad to worse, affecting the whole side, more especially the bowlers who have to shoulder the burden. I have heard a bowler say, when asked why he was not bowling in his usual style, that if the fieldsmen would not catch them he would have to bowl them. That is, his line of attack is limited, and he alters his tactics, and probably plays into the batsman's hands. Slackness has its effect throughout the team.

RETURNING THE BALL.

A common fault is that of returning the ball, either to the bowler or the wicket-keeper. Especially is it to be noted when the ball is new, and you want to give your bowlers the best use of it before it loses its devil. It is thrown back along the ground, or bounces several times, and on rough, dry ground this will soon take the gloss off. In addition, the men who have to do most of the hard work have more inflicted on them through having to stoop down continuously to pick up the ball. If your wicket-keeper has to take all kinds of difficult returns from the field, his hands and fingers may be so sore that he cannot take the chances when they are offered. Preferably, I think, a new ball should always come back to the wicket-keeper on the full where possible, and also to the bowler where there is no danger of injury to his hands.

SAVE THE RUNS.

Keen fielding will inspire a bowler to do his very best, and will hamper a

batsman. While there is a possible chance of cutting off a run, the chase should never be abandoned. If you must give them a certain number of runs you make the batsman's task harder if he has to run them than if he just has to stand and see them go to the fence. You may be tired, but probably the batsman is feeling it more than you. There is always the chance that the captain has some scheme in his head for a particular batsman, probably to catch him on some pet shot, to move a certain fieldman without broadcasting it. Often it is for the reason of blocking a shot. In this case it should not be necessary for him to have to hold up the game. If the fieldsmen will keep that fact in mind, and give their captain a glance occasionally, it will make his work easier if you will only anticipate



J. M. TAYLOR

(the clever Australian player who contributes this striking article).

and be ready. Details like these are what make a team good or indifferent. You will learn more of the actual game for yourself; you can study it from your point of view and also your captain's, appreciating, or otherwise, his methods in dealing with the problem. Whole-hearted co-operation gives a captain a chance to experiment and know that whatever happens he has your entire support.

VALUE OF STOLEN SINGLES.

One often hears comments upon the qualities of a batsman, his mannerisms, style, and accomplishments. These are many and various, and it is not my intention here to write on more than one or two at most. Running between the wickets is a subject which has been largely discussed, and this part of the game is one well worth considering. I should say that too little importance is attached to this department, but when one considers that runs are the all-important factor in the winning of matches, we must also consider and make it our business as cricketers to see

that every available opportunity should be taken to put those runs on the board. Apart from this fact, smartness between the wickets is a very important and enlightening characteristic. To see two smart men between the wickets at once arouses the interest and keeps the spectators keen. This is but a minor factor.

"RATTLING" THE OPPOSITION.

Consider the effect on the fielding side. The captain usually has plenty to worry him, without the continual annoyance of repeatedly stolen singles. This has its greatest effect when right- and left-handed batsmen are together, and one has often seen a side go to pieces—"rattled" for the moment. What an opening for the batsman! At this stage he can usually dispense with the singles and concentrate on finding the holes which he has contrived to make, and reach the fence. Consider, too, the bowler. There is nothing so annoying to a bowler as to see singles stolen. A bowler's problem is to find ways and means to dispose of each batsman. He sets out to discover his weak spot. He is content to give away a few runs in experimenting on him at first, but to bowl alternately at one man and then another is totally different. He cannot concentrate on his line of attack.

TACTICS.

It has often happened that one batsman is having a bad time for a period with a particular bowler, while the other man has got his measure. A well-run single will get you away from him for a time, and you can study his methods from the other end, and, further, study the manner in which your partner is dealing with him. More innings have been played for the other man by his partner than are dreamed of or admitted. The judgment of a run should not be difficult. It is not necessary to run because you are called, provided you send the one who calls back without delay. A quick decision is essential. It may seem strange to say, but by far the greatest number of disasters occur through hesitation. Never endanger your wicket for one run, but why not take them when they are asking for it? When at all doubtful don't run.

EVERY RUN COUNTS.

Running between wickets is a thing that every cricketer can perfect himself in. Some can get runs where others can't. No one expects the impossible, but there is no excuse for two men to be stuck in the middle of the wicket "shaking hands." I have mentioned hesitation and misunderstanding, and this accounts for many of the mistakes; but there is another, and no less important, factor, which comes into it. A man who sits on the handle of his bat and waits to see where the ball is going before he moves deserves all he gets. It is surprising what it means to be moving when the ball leaves the bowler's hand, or is in the air. You are moving while the ball is in the air, and while the shot is being made you can decide to go through or send your partner back; or, if the ball should be driven back hard you have a good idea in what direction the ball will travel before you have gone too far to regain your ground. By "backing up," one does not mean endanger your wicket, but being on the move for the start of the run will mean a tremendous lot at the other end.

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 562.

Too Much of a Good Thing!

Our Tired Cricketers Who Suffer From Too Much Play.

THE other day I was talking to one of the Australian cricketers, and we were discussing the chances of the players of the two countries in the remaining Test matches.

"Personally," he said, "I think we have specially good chances of beating your fellows both at Manchester and at the Oval, because your players are getting tired. They are suffering from too much cricket."

Now, it may strike some of my readers who are very fond of the summer game as more or less ridiculous that anybody can have too much of such a good thing as cricket. But it is undoubtedly a fact that the Australian cricketer quoted above was right—many of our fellows, and our bowlers especially, suffer from having too much cricket.

PLAYED OUT.

The programmes of the various counties are so arranged that, unless the clerk of the weather is in a very bad mood, the regular players of the counties have precious few days off, except for Sundays. Perhaps the Yorkshiremen, generally speaking, are fresher even at

this time of the year, because the county, being so strong all round, has a habit of finishing off the weaker opponents in a couple of days, thus providing the players of that county with additional rest. Generally speaking, however, it can be said that the great majority of our cricketers play the game from the beginning of May until the end of August, and, consequently, it is not surprising that some of them fail to give of their very best when we get near the end of July. They are tired cricketers.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE.

In the football game we hear quite a lot about teams going stale—that this or that side does not give of its best because the men playing for the side have lost their zest for the game. We don't hear a great deal about stale cricketers; but I put it to you that if footballers, playing not more than one day a week on the average, go stale, then is it not even more likely that county cricketers, playing the game for six days out of every seven almost, should go stale long before the end of the season.

Some of our very best bowlers are at the present moment suffering from too much cricket. They don't know what is the matter with them—they are certainly not ill, and there is nothing in their condition which suggests that they really ought to have a couple of matches "off." But their bowling lacks that extra little bit of life which makes all the difference between success and failure. They have played so much cricket that they have lost their zest for the game. Show me the cricketer—or the player of any other game—who has had a few days' rest from his favourite pastime, and I will show you the player who is likely to do very well. In every game success depends on the keenness of the player; a man or a boy who is "fed-up" with too much cricket loses that necessary fine edge of keenness.

A WISE PRECAUTION.

In regard to this matter of too much cricket, it should not be overlooked that the county player not only has to play six days in every week almost, but that he has to spend much time in travelling up and down the country. The men of Kent, for example, may finish a match at Blackheath at six o'clock on a Friday evening. Their engagement on the following day may be at Manchester, or Leeds, which means that they have to travel overnight in order to be ready for play next morning.

The Australians know the danger of too much cricket. Out there they only play a very little number of State matches per season, and over here they take care to give first one player and then another a rest. And if you look at their fixture list for the present season you will find that they have carefully left a vacant day immediately preceding each Test match. Our visitors may lose a Test match, but they take care not to lose it because their men are stale with too much cricket.

GRAND NEW 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. 3.

Gough House, Gough Square,

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so as to reach that address not later than Thursday, July 20th, 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.



C. HALLOWS.

The Lancashire folks all agree
That Hallows is forceful and free.
His batting is great,
And the prophets all state

Example last line:—
That his name in the 'Test' team we'll see.

POINTS TO STUDY.

(Continued from page 15.)

THROWN AWAY.

A great many runs are thrown away because the first run is not taken at a fast pace. Whoever the fieldsman may be, he is liable, at some time, to misfield a ball. Especially in the outfield does this apply. If the batsmen have run the first one hard, and turned, looking to see if the ball has been fielded cleanly at the same time, or as soon as he has turned, backing up a yard in the meantime, there is often a run. The fact that a man may have to change the ball from one hand to another will often decide the question. A study of this department, and proficiency in it, will not only improve the cricket generally, but will have a bearing on the batsman individually. Every run helps a batsman to confidence, and he will take pride in the fact that he is a good judge of a run, and will inspire the man at the other end to have confidence in him.

MAGNET "BOUNDARIES" COMPETITION No. 3.

COUPON.

3

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

Name

Address

Last Line

Closing Date, Thursday, July 29th.



(Continued from page 12.)

"How very fortunate," exclaimed the Head. "It seems that there is no doubt that these ruffians were the Hindu kidnappers—"

"No doubt whatever," said Mr. Quelch. "I saw one of them clearly—a Hindu. Wingate saw two of them and others have seen them. Unluckily, they burst through the downstairs window and escaped before they could be seized. But I have already notified the police by telephone."

"Very good."

Dr. Locke bent over the unconscious form of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"There was no movement from the Nabob of Bhanipur. His dark eyes remained closed, the black lashes motionless."

"The doctor has been telephoned for," said Mr. Quelch. "The boy does not seem to have been hurt—he is unconscious from the drug."

"Quite so. Such a desperate attempt is almost incredible," said the Head. "Doubtless Hurree Singh's uncle is right in his desire to have the boy under his own eyes, in these strange circumstances."

"Doubtless."

"In the meantime, every precaution must be taken here against another such attempt," said the Head. "Hurree Singh must be kept safe while he remains with us—a few days now. Bless my soul! But for the fact that someone awoke and gave the alarm, he might be a prisoner now in the hands of his enemies."

"Hem!" coughed Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove was of opinion that it was high time that attention was directed to his worthy self.

Limelight was his due: he was, in his own opinion at least, the hero of the hour: Bunter, for the moment, was "IT." And he wanted that fact to be recognised.

Dr. Locke glanced at Wharton.

"Was it you who gave the alarm, Wharton?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"We woke up, and heard Bunter yelling for help, sir," said Bob Cherry.

"I—I mean, calling for help, sir."

"I put the light on," added Wharton. "We saw the two rotters—ahem—I mean the two kidnappers—getting Hurree Singh to the door. They dropped him, and one of them dodged out of the room, and the other collared Bunter."

The Head turned his glance on Bunter.

"Then it was you, Bunter, who gave the alarm, and caused those rascals to be defeated in their object?"

Billy Bunter swelled with importance. All eyes in the dormitory were on him; he was coming into his own at last, as it were. Like the classic gentlemen of old, Bunter was in a mood to strike the stars with his sublime head.

"Yes, sir," he gasped. "Little me, sir. I—I mean, it was I, sir."

Mr. Quelch gave him a rather icy look. But it did not daunt Bunter. Bunter was the hero of the hour. Bunter was the goods, so to speak. Even the Remove master's gimlet eye could not daunt him now.

"I did it, sir," he said. Bunter had sorted out his spectacles, and jammed them on his little fat nose. He blinked almost loftily at Mr. Quelch, disdainfully at Harry Wharton & Co. For once Bunter was the goods, and Bunter was going to make the most of it.

"Kindly tell me exactly what occurred, Bunter," said the Head.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Hour and the Man!

BILLY BUNTER drew a deep breath.

Never had he enjoyed a moment so much.

The headmaster himself, the majestic Head of Greyfriars, was waiting on his words. Mr. Quelch, grimly as he looked at the fat junior, was silent, and evidently curious to hear what Bunter had to say. All the Remove fellows were rather keen, too; and at the door there was a crowd of seniors, Sixth and Fifth, and they all looked at Bunter and waited for him to speak. Only Bunter knew what had happened before the alarm was given. Only Bunter had prevented the desperate attempt of the kidnappers from succeeding. Only Bunter had saved a Greyfriars fellow from being spirited away to an unknown fate. Only Bunter!

Another Fine Cut-Out Photo Free Next Week, Boys, showing A. A. MAILEY, the Famous Australian Bowler, in Action!

The Owl of the Remove paused a moment or two to collect his thoughts. It was not his intention to explain that he had been in a blue funk, and frightened out of his fat wits. Details like that were better left out of the story.

"I woke up, sir," said Bunter. "I wasn't sleeping very well, sir, owing to some fearful pains—"

"You are not ill, Bunter?"

"No, sir; but I had had a frightful licking, sir," said Bunter, with a blink at his Form master.

"Bless my soul!"

"Bunter was severely caned for the absurd trick of which you are aware, sir, this evening," said Mr. Quelch, with a glare at the Owl of the Remove.

"Quite so," said the Head.

"Being awake, sir," said Bunter rather hastily, "I saw those villains come into the dormitory. I wasn't frightened in the least. I kept quite still, sir, not because I was scared—not at all—"

"Yes, yes?"

"And saw them stop at Inky's bed, sir," said Bunter. "Then I nipped—"

"You what?"

"Smelt the chloroform, sir," said Bunter. "And then I knew that it was the kidnappers bagging old Inky. Without a thought of my own danger, sir, I sprang out of bed and shouted for help."

"A very proper proceeding," said the Head. "In the circumstances, it showed considerable courage."

Bunter blinked triumphantly at the Famous Five.

Even these fellows, he considered, couldn't regard him as a fat funk any more, now that the Head himself declared that Bunter had shown considerable courage.

"They were getting him to the door, sir," said Bunter, proceeding with his story, and improving upon it as he went along. "Heedless of peril, sir, I rushed upon them."

"You rushed upon the kidnappers?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, staring at the fat junior.

"Yes, sir," Bunter had almost forgotten, by this time, that it was in his terrified rush to escape from the dormitory that he had collided with the kidnappers. "I couldn't stand by, sir, and see old Inky bagged and taken away. Not my style at all, sir. All very well for these fellows."

"Why, you—" began Bob Cherry hotly.

"Silence, Cherry!" said the Head.

"Proceed, Bunter!"

"I rushed upon them," said Bunter, with a contemptuous blink at Bob Cherry. "I knocked them right and left, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

"They had to drop Inky, sir," pursued Bunter. "He fell to the floor with a dull, sickening thud."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Nugent.

"One of the villains got clear of me, sir," went on Bunter. "I collared the other in a grip of iron—"

"You mean, he collared you!" said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Silence, please," said the Head.

"It'm! Yes, sir."

"Collaring the ruffian, I bore him to the ground, sir," said Bunter. "I mean the floor, of course. He struggled desperately, but I was too good for him. I kept him busy, sir, till help arrived, and Inky was saved, sir."

The Head regarded Bunter curiously. "Dear me!" he said. "If the matter occurred as you describe, Bunter, you have shown very great courage and presence of mind."

"If!" murmured Bob.

"It did, sir!" said Bunter. "All these fellows are witnesses, sir. They saw me struggling with the black villain; sir—struggling for my life. I—I was just in my element, sir. Any fellow who knows me knows that I am as brave as a lion."

"Oh!" said the Head.

"You see, sir, Inky's my pal," said Bunter. "Risking my life for him is nothing to me—nothing at all. Some fellows would have been in a funk—in fact, all these chaps were scared, especially Wharton—"

"What?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

"Frightened out of their wits, sir, the lot of them," said Bunter. "But for me Inky would be gone now. It was my pluck that saved him!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

Bunter blinked round him. In the circumstances, there should have been admiring glances from all sides. They were his due.

But Bunter did not discern any admiring glances. Most of the Remove fellows were grinning. Mr. Quelch gave the fat junior a glance of strong disfavour.

"Bunter appears to have acted very creditably, Mr. Quelch," observed the Head.

"He appears to have done so, sir," THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 262.

said the Remove master. "But it is very extraordinary to me that Bunter should have attacked two desperate men, as he declares—very extraordinary indeed. Certainly it is not what I should have expected of him, knowing him as I do!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I fear, sir, that this boy has greatly exaggerated his account of the incident," said Mr. Quelch, with a glare at Bunter. "Unfortunately, he is somewhat indifferent to the truth in all his statements."

"All the fellows saw me!" gasped Bunter. "Ask them, sir. They'll tell you!"

"Bunter must be given the credit that is his due," said the Head. "You tell me that you turned on the light, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"What did you see?"

"Bunter was struggling with one of the Hindus, sir," said Harry.

"Where was the struggle taking place?"

"Just inside the door, sir."

"That is a considerable distance from Bunter's bed," said Dr. Locke.

"Bunter must have left his bed and intercepted the kidnappers at the door, it would appear."

"It looks like it, sir," said Harry.

"And he did this before the light was turned on, and before any help could reach him," said the Head.

"I—I suppose so, sir."

"In that case, Bunter's statements are quite borne out by the facts," said Dr. Locke. "Do you not think so, Mr. Quelch?"

"Well, yes, sir, it would seem so," said the Remove master, greatly puzzled. "Unless Bunter was too frightened to know what he was doing—"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bunter. "Really, sir—"

"I think we may conclude that Bunter acted with great courage and presence of mind," said the Head. "Undoubtedly it was he that caused the kidnappers to be defeated. I thank you, Bunter, for what you have done!"

Bunter almost purred.

"Not at all, sir," he said. "It was just in my line, sir—wonderful courage and presence of mind—"

"He! You boys may now return to bed," said Dr. Locke.

"Perhaps I'd better stay up and keep watch, sir," said Bunter.

"You will go to bed, Bunter. No doubt you will remain with Hurree Singh, Mr. Quelch, till Dr. Pillbury arrives."

"Certainly, sir!"

Dr. Locke left the Remove dormitory. The Lower Fourth turned in again; but there was little more sleep for anyone at Greyfriars that night.

In a short time the buzz of a car was heard below, and the school doctor arrived to attend Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. And a few minutes later, Inspector Grimes, from Courtfield, arrived with a constable. Bunter, much to his satisfaction, was questioned by the inspector in the presence of all the wakeful Remove. He gave Mr. Grimes all the details of the happening, with a few additional details that had occurred since to his fertile mind.

Mr. Grimes solemnly examined the broken window, and picked up footprints in the trampled grass on the Sixth-Form green, and made many notes in his notebook. But it was clear that the kidnappers were gone, and that they were far from Greyfriars long before the inspector had arrived.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 962.

When the summer sun peeped in at the windows of Greyfriars, it found most of the school awake—Hurree Jamset Ram Singh among the rest. The Nabob of Bhanipur had a headache, but no worse effect from his strange adventure of the night. And that the effects were no worse, was due—a fact that there was no denying—to William George Bunter of the Remove; a fact which did not seem to afford much satisfaction to the dusky nabob, but which afforded endless satisfaction to the Owl of the Remove.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Whip Hand!

"EVERY giddy cloud has a silver lining."

Bob Cherry made that observation in the morning break the next day.

The Famous Five had walked out into the sunny quadrangle after second lesson; and they were discussing the trip to India—the topic which at the present time engaged their particular attention.

That Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was to go was settled! Wharton's uncle, Colonel Wharton, had undertaken to see the dusky junior safe to Bhanipur, into the care of the Jam Bahadur there. But it was not yet settled whether he was to take his friends with him.

There had been a cable that morning for Inky—from his uncle, the Jam. The dusky old gentleman who ruled in Bhanipur during Inky's minority, had quite agreed that Hurree Singh would do well to travel in company with his friends. So far, so good—but the Head had to be considered. And it was a deep question whether Dr. Locke would give four other Removes so long a leave, for the purpose of watching over Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's safety on the voyage to India. Possibly, in fact, probably, the Head would consider that Colonel Wharton's protection would be sufficient, and that Remove schoolboys would not be needed. Possibly, probably, the Head would be right. Nevertheless, the Co. wanted to go.

"You see," went on Bob Cherry, "what happened last night was rotten—you had a narrow escape, Inky—"

"The narrowfulness was terrific."

"And it's set that fat idiot Bunter swanking," growled Johnny Bull, "and in the circumstances, a fellow can't very well kick him."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh grinned.

"The kickfulness is not the proper caper," he said. "The esteemed and intolerable Bunter has come in useful for once."

"But every cloud has a silver lining," said Bob. "You see, it was rotten—but it shows the Head that you're in no end of danger from those merchants who are after you, Inky; and it ought to make him understand that you need your pals with you when you get away from Greyfriars, see?"

"Something in that," assented Harry Wharton.

"Lots in it," said Bob, "and my idea is to strike the iron while it's hot. Inky had better go and tackle the Head now, while it's still fresh in his jolly old mind."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, dear!"

Billy Bunter rolled up and joined the chums of the Remove.

He blinked at them through his big spectacles, with a somewhat indignant blink. They had ejaculated "Oh dear!"

in a sort of chorus, as if there were something unpleasant in seeing Bunter. That really was too thick, after what Bunter had done for them—at least, for one member of the Co. Had he not rushed gallantly upon desperate enemies and fought like a lion, risking his valuable life to save Inky from the kidnappers? The Owl of the Remove was almost convinced by this time that he had.

"Glad to see me?" he inquired sarcastically.

"Is anybody ever glad to see you?" grunted Johnny Bull. "Roll away, barrel!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"The fact is, you're interrupting us, Bunter," said Frank Nugent mildly.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Cut off!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! If you fellows think I want your company, you're mistaken," said Bunter disdainfully.

"I've come here to speak to my own pal, old Inky!"

"My esteemed Bunter—" murmured the nabob.

"After saving your life, Inky—"

"My excellent and ludicrous life was not in danger," said the nabob.

"Well, I saved your neck, anyhow, didn't I?" demanded Bunter. "What would have become of you if I hadn't tackled the kidnappers single-handed, while you were senseless, and these fellows snoring in bed?"

"Oh, my hat!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh looked a little worried.

After recovering consciousness, he had heard with amazement of the attempted kidnapping in the school, and of the part William George Bunter had played.

That Bunter really had rushed on a gang of kidnappers, reckless of danger, was a little too steep to be believed. Only an eye-witness could have believed that, and probably even an eye-witness would have doubted the evidence of his eyes.

But it was clear enough that Bunter had given the alarm that had saved the nabob, and had been handled by one of the ruffians. And that undoubtedly placed Hurree Singh under a deep obligation.

His friends, who would have risked anything to help him, had been asleep when the peril threatened: Bunter had been awake, and though Bunter would have risked nothing of his own accord, the fact remained that it was Bunter who had saved him. It was not exactly pleasant to be under an obligation to a fellow like Bunter. But there it was!

So there was a worried expression on the face of the Nabob of Bhanipur. Almost he would have preferred to be in the hands of the kidnappers to this—but not quite. Bunter was entitled to his gratitude; and Bunter obviously intended to exact his full pound of flesh.

Harry Wharton & Co. frowned: but even Johnny Bull did not think of kicking Bunter. The fellow who had saved Hurree Jamset Ram Singh from the myrmidons of Bajji Rao, was not to be kicked.

"Look here, Bunter—" began Bob.

Billy Bunter waved a fat hand at him. Bunter had the advantage now, and he was the fellow to use it.

"I'm not talking to you, Cherry! I'm speaking to my pal Inky. You fellows can walk your chalks, if it comes to that. I've saved old Inky, which is more than you fellows could have done,

Snoring in bed while I was facing fearful danger!" Bunter sniffed contemptuously. "Likely enough you were only pretending to be asleep, leaving all the danger to me—"

"You fat rotter!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"You needn't yell at me, Bull, because I've done a plucky thing, that puts you in the shade!" retorted Bunter.

"I don't believe you did anything of the kind," roared Johnny Bull. "I believe you were scared out of your wits, and ran into the kidnappers by accident—very likely too frightened to see where you were running."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You weren't awake!" gasped Bunter. "Besides, it was dark—you couldn't have seen—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "So that was it, was it?"

"Nothing of the sort!" howled Bunter. "I've just said that it wasn't."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This jealousy is a bit sickening," said Bunter, glowering at the Famous Five. "Still, I'm sure Inky will stand by the fellow who saved him at the risk of his life. Under the circumstances, I have decided not to turn Inky down, after all. I'm coming to India with him."

"Oh!"

"You're jolly well not!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"If I have any cheek from you, Bull, I shall ask Inky to leave you behind. I feel bound to go with Inky, to look after him and protect him. I've done it once, and can do it again. Suppose he goes into danger again, with you fellows fast asleep, same as before—"

"You—you—you—"

"You needn't gabble at me, Johnny Bull. Last time he was in danger you fellows were fast asleep, and the whole thing fell on me. I'm not grumbling—danger doesn't worry me. In fact, I like it."

"Great pip!"

"Bold as brass and brave as a lion, and all that," said Bunter. "That's me all over! It's settled that I'm coming with you, isn't it, Inky? Not that I'm personally keen on it, but I feel it's up to me to protect you."

"My esteemed Bunter—" murmured the distressed nabob.

"Look here, I'm going to kick him!" exclaimed Johnny Bull hotly. "You know jolly well that Bunter has to be kicked. He gave the alarm last night by some sort of accident."

"Yah!"

"Accident or not, my esteemed Johnny, he did save me from the elegant and disgusting kidnappers," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh ruefully. "The obligation is terrific."

"I should jolly well think so!" said Bunter. "Now you're going to the Head, Inky, to ask leave for your friends to go to India with you. I'll come along with you to speak to the Head."

"But—" murmured the dismayed nabob.

"Enough said. I'll come!" said Bunter. "This way, old chap. Strike while the iron's hot, as Cherry was saying."

The fat junior slipped a podgy arm through Inky's, and drew him towards the House. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gave his friends a dismal glance. They looked grim, but they did not speak. Bunter had the whip-hand, in a sense. Accident or not, funk or not, he had saved the nabob from desperate hands. It was impossible, therefore, to deal with him as he deserved.



"I will deal with the scoundrel, Quelch, if you will hold the light," said the Fifth-form master. "Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch testily as the eager gentleman followed him fast. "Please do not poke that stick in my back, Mr. Prout. It is most uncomfortable!" "It is not a stick, Quelch," said Mr. Prout. "It is the muzzle of my rifle—" "WHAT?" roared Mr. Quelch. (See Chapter 5.)

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh went into the House, and Bunter went with him, casting back a triumphant blink at the Co. And when Hurree Singh presented himself in Dr. Locke's study, the Owl of the Remove rolled in along with him.

"Well," said Harry Wharton with a deep breath, as the chums of the Remove waited for Inky to rejoin them, "Bunter takes the bun, and no mistake!"

"He ought to be kicked!" growled Johnny Bull.

"But he did save Inky," said the captain of the Remove. "Think how we should have felt if we'd woke up in the morning and found that old Inky had vanished!"

"Well, there's something in that," said Bob. "After all, very likely the Head won't give him leave."

"We've stood Bunter before, and can stand him again," said Frank Nugent, laughing. "Besides, your uncle will have to decide, Harry. Most likely he won't let himself be loaded up with Bunter."

"That's the giddy last hope," grinned Bob.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came back at last and rejoined his comrades. His dusky face was bright.

"The answer of the esteemed Head

is in the excellent affirmative," he said. "My friends may come with me, if the worthy colonel consents, and if their respectable paters give leave."

"We'll jolly well write to our people to-day!" said Bob.

"Yes, rather!"

"And what about Bunter?" asked Johnny Bull.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh made rather a wry face.

"The esteemed Bunter is included," he said. "After he had saved my esteemed liberty, I could not turn him down, my excellent friends. But perhaps the esteemed colonel will not be taking any."

"There goes the bell," said Nugent.

And the Famous Five went in to third lesson with very cheery faces. All seemed to be going well, so far as the trip to India was concerned, and if there was, so to speak, a fat fly in the ointment, that could not be helped.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

All Serene!

COLONEL WHARTON arrived at Greyfriars that afternoon.

The Remove were in their Form-room, when the sound of a taxi from the station was heard,

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and Harry Wharton guessed that his uncle had arrived. It was close upon the end of lessons for the day, and the captain of the Remove and his friends were very keen for the end to come. So far as the Head was concerned, all was serene, so to speak; but the colonel had yet to be convinced that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh would travel to India more securely in the company of his Greyfriars comrades. There was a slight doubt as to whether the old military gentleman would see the point. And the chums of the Remove were prepared to deal with him with the greatest possible tact and diplomacy.

There was to be tea in Study No. 1. The colonel was an old Greyfriars man, and had not forgotten old Greyfriars manners and customs. He liked tea in the study when he came to see his hopeful nephew. Long, long years ago that very study had been Jim Wharton's, in the days when the grizzled old colonel had been a chubby schoolboy.

Storm and stress and wars in many lands had left their mark on Jim Wharton since those old days, but in many ways he was still, at heart, Jim Wharton of the Remove. His bronzed face was always bright when he sat down to the table in Study No. 1, to join in a "study brew." That was the time to put it to him, the chums of the Remove had agreed; and they were anxious to get to business. So their eyes wandered constantly to the Form-room clock while last lesson proceeded, and Mr. Quelch imparted valuable information regarding the history of Rome.

"The grandeur that was Rome" did not loom very large in their thoughts just then; the Twelve Cæsars were indeed very small beer, and the invasions of the Goth, the Vandal, and the dwarfish Hun left them quite uninterested. However, Mr. Quelch rang off at last, so to speak, and the Remove were dismissed, much to their relief.

"Now for the giddy colonel!" said Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five hurried out of the Form-room.

"What ho!"

No time was lost. It was discovered that the colonel had gone to the Head's House, doubtless to pay his respects to his old headmaster, and in the interval the chums of the Remove improved the shining hour to great advantage. Study No. 1 had already been newly swept and garnished in honour of the distinguished visitor, but there was more to be done. One member of the Co. went shopping for supplies for tea; another proceeded to bag a supply of flowers from Mr. Mumble, the gardener, to adorn the study, and the blossoms were tastefully arranged in jampots round the room, giving it quite an artistic look, as all the Co. agreed.

Crockery was borrowed up and down the Remove passage—cracked cups and fragmentary saucers could not be used on such an occasion. Extra chairs were brought in, and a handsome Persian rug was borrowed from Lord Mauleverer's study, which made Study No. 1 look really well-furnished. Smithy lent his bronze clock to adorn the mantelpiece; Ogilvy contributed an oleograph which was the pride of his study, and which now temporarily adorned the walls of Study No. 1. Skinner offered a box of cigarettes for the colonel, and Wibley offered to come in and entertain the visitor with some of his masterly impersonations, both of which offers were turned down.

By the time all was ready a heavy tread was heard in the Remove passage. The distinguished visitor was coming.

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"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!" murmured Bob Cherry.

A stalwart figure and a kindly, bronzed face appeared in the doorway of Study No. 1. Colonel Wharton smiled, and nodded to the juniors.

Harry Wharton greeted his uncle affectionately, the rest of the Co. with great cordiality. They were all glad to see him, and hoped that he was glad to see them, and that his gladness would extend to a desire for their cheery company on the journey to India.

The colonel sat down at the table. Experienced waiters at a fashionable hotel could not have attended to his wants more assiduously than did the Famous Five of the Remove.

Colonel Wharton was pleased, there was no doubt about that. But he was a little puzzled. Always when he came to Greyfriars he was greeted warmly and made much of; but on the present occasion there was an unusual empressment about his entertainers. The juniors hardly thought of their own tea, in their anxiety to make much of their visitor.

So far, nothing had been seen of Bunter, much to the satisfaction and rather to the surprise of the chums of the Remove. They had quite expected Bunter to "butt in" at the very beginning. But that he wouldn't butt in at all was too much to hope. And while tea in Study No. 1 was cheerily proceeding, the door was suddenly opened without a knock, and a fat face and a large pair of spectacles glimmered in.

"Beasts!"

That was Bunter's greeting to the assembled company.

The short-sighted Owl of the Remove did not, for the moment, observe the colonel.

"Bunter—" began Harry.

"Yah!"

"You fat duffer—" began Bob Cherry.

"I jolly well know that Colonel Wharton has come!" said Bunter. "Peter Todd told me—he saw him. I've been waiting outside the Head's study to see him. From what Toddy said, I thought he was seeing Dr. Locke in his study. But he wasn't."

The juniors grinned.

Evidently Peter Todd had kindly intervened, in the hope of keeping Bunter off their hands while the distinguished visitor was there. While the colonel had been in the Head's house Bunter, apparently, had been watching the Head's study in the School House, under the erroneous impression that the colonel was there.

"Toddy was pulling my leg," went on Bunter indignantly. "You fellows put him up to it, of course. You don't want me to see the colonel. I'm jolly well going to see him, all the same! And now what I want to know is, where is he?"

"Here!" said a deep, quiet voice.

Bunter spun round towards the colonel.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

"You wished to see me," said Colonel Wharton, eyeing the fat junior curiously. "Well, here I am, Bunter—I think your name is Bunter."

"Oh! I—I didn't see you, sir!"

gasped Bunter. "I—I say, if these fellows have asked you already, and have mentioned me—"

"Asked me already?" repeated the colonel. "Asked me what?"

The Famous Five exchanged dismayed glances.

Their request to the colonel was to have been made diplomatically, ap-

proached carefully with great tact. Evidently diplomacy and tact were out of the question now.

The colonel glanced round at their blushing faces, scrutinizingly, and then fixed his eyes on Bunter again.

"About the trip to India, sir!" said Bunter.

"The trip to India!"

"Inky wants me to come with him, to protect him, sir," said Bunter. "The Head thinks it a good idea. I saved his life last night, sir."

"By gad!"

"I'm going with him, sir," said Bunter. "These fellows want to come, too. Of course, sir, it's subject to your consent; but I feel sure that you won't refuse to take me along, when you understand that Hurree Singh won't feel safe without me."

Colonel Wharton looked at his nephew. Wharton was crimson.

"We—we were going to ask you, uncle!" faltered Harry.

"The Jam has cabled to Inky that he would like us to come along!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"My esteemed uncle and guardian desperately requests the company of my worthy and ludicrous comrades," said Hurree Singh.

"The Head has consented, subject to your consent, sir," said Nugent.

Colonel Wharton smiled—much to the relief of the juniors. No doubt he comprehended now that anxious desire to please on the part of his youthful entertainers.

"I have already discussed this matter with Dr. Locke, and it has been settled," said Colonel Wharton.

"Oh!"

"I agree with the Jam Bahadur that Hurree Singh would be much safer in the company of his friends," said the colonel. "I think also that it is an excellent opportunity for you young fellows to see a little of the wide world. Subject to the consent of your parents, I shall be glad to take you with me."

"Hurrah!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"We've all written to our people already, sir," said Nugent eagerly.

"We've no doubt they'll be glad."

"A chance like this doesn't come every day," said Johnny Bull.

"But about Bunter—" said the colonel doubtfully.

Bunter was already at the table and giving his attention to the cake. But he had some attention for the colonel.

"Inky wants me to come, sir," said Bunter. "He doesn't feel safe without me, do you, Inky, old man?"

"My esteemed Bunter—"

"You see sir, I saved him last night," said Bunter. "While all these fellows were snoring, I saved Inky from the kidnappers, with my splendid pluck and presence of mind, sir. That was how the Head put it—splendid pluck and presence of mind—those very words, sir. I'm not a fellow to brag of what I do. But that's how the Head put it."

"Great gad!" said the colonel.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter suddenly.

"Why—what?"

"Yow-ow! Some beast stamped on my foot under the table!" howled Bunter. "What beast stamped on my foot? Yow-ow-ow!"

Colonel Wharton's bronzed face broke into a grin.

"Dr. Locke has related to me what happened in the school last night," he said. "It appears that Bunter was instrumental in saving Hurree Singh from the scoundrels who came here to kidnap him. If Hurree Singh really desires Bunter's company on the journey, I shall not refuse."



"Help!" yelled Bunter. "Oh, help, murder, fire-help!" On the floor lay Hurree Singh motionless, inert, insensible. Bunter, shrieking with terror, was struggling frantically in the grasp of a Hindu, and a second Hindu was darting out of the dormitory and escaping. "The kidnappers!" yelled Johnny Bull. (See Chapter 8.)

Bunter blinked at the nabob. The Co. looked at him also. There was a momentary hesitation on the part of Hurree Janset Ram Singh. But it was in his mind that, but for Bunter, he would have been, in these very moments, a prisoner in the hands of the Hindu kidnappers; and he felt that it was up to him to play up.

"If the esteemed Bunter really desires to accompany my worthy self to India—" he began.

"Certainly," said Bunter. "Not for my own sake, of course. For your sake, Inky—to protect you, you know."

"My esteemed fatheaded Bunter—"

"In the hour of danger, you will find me there," said Bunter. "If there's one thing I revel in, it's danger, as you fellows know. It's a go, Inky! I'm coming."

"But there may really be danger, Bunter," said Harry.

Bunter sniffed. Danger that was far off did not trouble him; though when it drew nigh, the matter was likely to be different.

"That's all right," he said. "I'm not a nervous chap like you, Wharton. It doesn't worry me."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Then it is settled," said the colonel, with a very curious look at Bunter.

And settled it was.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Not a Blow!

"LUCKY barges!" That was the general verdict in the Remove.

Six fellows were to leave school before the holidays began; and they were to enjoy a trip to the far

East, that was to last over the holidays; amid sights and sounds strange and new. And there was hardly a fellow in the Remove who did not envy them.

In a few days Harry Wharton & Co. were to leave Greyfriars, and join the colonel, and the voyage was to begin. In the meantime, they rejoiced in the prospect.

That danger awaited them on India's coral strand was very probable. Hurree Janset Ram Singh was returning to his native land, at a time when his scheming relative, Baji Rao, was conspiring to oust him from his throne. The desperate attempts to kidnap the nabob showed him how real the danger was—and it was certain that his comrades would share it.

But that did not deter the chums of the Remove—indeed, the fact that Hurree Singh would be in danger when he landed in India, made them only the more anxious to be with him. As for Billy Bunter, he did not think of the danger, because he was accustomed to looking no further ahead than the passing hour. Danger that was still in the dim distance did not daunt him. Bunter was thinking of escaping classes, of getting away from the gimlet eyes of Mr. Quelch, of enjoying an extensive holiday with all his expenses paid. That was quite enough for Billy Bunter to think of.

He was going as the nabob's guest. It was up to the nabob to see him through in the matter of cash—not that Bunter cared much who saw him through so long as somebody did. His lofty mind could not descend to sordid details such as these.

Nevertheless, Bunter was conscious of a need of ready cash on this occasion,

and was giving some thought to this subject. His present cash supply amounted to one penny, which was still in his possession because it was a French one, and had been refused several times at the tuckshop. Even with his travelling expenses paid by the nabob, Bunter realised that it was not judicious to begin a journey to India with his financial resources limited to one French penny.

It was true that he was expecting a postal-order—in fact, several postal-orders. But there seemed to be some doubt whether these remittances would arrive before the party left Greyfriars.

"You've got some money in the bank, Peter!" Bunter remarked to his study-mate in Study No. 7, after deep cogitation on the subject.

"I have!" agreed Peter. And he added cheerily: "It's staying there, too."

"What I was thinking is this—" "Dear man! I know what you were thinking!" chuckled Toddy. "Think again!"

"I'm expecting a lot of postal-orders," said Bunter, unheeding. "My idea is this—you hand me twenty pounds, say—we'll say twenty pounds—"

"No harm in saying it!" assented Peter.

"And I authorise you to open my letters during my absence," said Bunter. "You will take out the postal-orders and—keep them. See?"

"Not quite."

"It's simple enough," said Bunter. "I'll sign a paper if you like, authorising you to keep my postal-orders till your twenty pounds is squared. A legal document, you know."

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"Life's too short," said Peter Todd, shaking his head. "An arrangement like that might have suited jolly old Methuselah. But I'm not expecting to put in five or six hundred years on this planet."

"You silly ass!" howled Bunter. "Wash it out!" said Peter. "But I'll tell you what, Bunter. Write round to all your titled relations, and hurry them up—tell them to let you have your remittances in a lump—all those remittances you've been expecting since you were a fag in the Second Form. See? I'll lend you some stamps for your letters."

"Beast!" That was Bunter's ungrateful rejoinder to Todd's valuable suggestion. He did not seem to think that there would be much doing, so far as his titled relations were concerned.

"After all, there's the pater," he said. "He's bound to stand me something handsome for a holiday like this. I shan't be home for the holidays this summer, and that will make him feel—"

"Joyful?" asked Peter. "It will make him feel grieved at losing me, and all that," said Bunter. "It will be a blow to him, of course. It's rather hard on a chap's pater not to see him in the holidays; I'm making this sacrifice for Inky's sake, Peter. Well, the pater will save something on it, of course—"

"Hundreds of pounds, on his provision dealer's bills, I suppose?" said Todd.

"Beast! He hasn't answered my letter yet," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I dare say he feels that he can't part with me for so long. Of course, it's asking a lot of him. He will have Sammy and Bessie home for the holidays, but I dare say he could do without that. Poor old pater! I really hope that he won't miss me too much while I'm gone."

"I dare say he'll bear up," said Peter. "I know I should, if I were your pater."

"Yah!" Billy Bunter rolled out of Study No. 7, leaving Peter Todd grinning. He came on Harry Wharton & Co. in a group by the window in the Remove passage, cheerily discussing the one absorbing topic—the trip to India's torrid clime.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Changed your mind, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry.

"No, you ass!" "Sorry!" said Bob. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've been thinking about my pater, Inky," said Bunter, blinking at the dusky junior. "It seems rather hard to deprive him of my company all through the vacation. He will miss me."

"The hardship is terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"I'm glad you can see it," said the Owl of the Remove. "What I'm afraid of is that he mayn't let me go. A fellow's pater expects to see him in the hols."

"Rather rotten to disappoint him then," said Johnny Bull. "All our people have agreed to let us go."

"They would!" sneered Bunter.

"Jolly glad to get shut of you for a few weeks, I should think."

"Why, you fat rotter—"

"It's a bit different with me," said Bunter. "When my pater realises that he will lose me for the whole vacation, I'm afraid he mayn't be able to face it."

"Why put him to such a strain?"

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asked Wharton. "Stick to him, Bunter. We shall miss you, of course—him! But family affection comes first."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"It would be a terrific grief to me to cause sorrowfulness to the paternal heart of Bunter's ludicrous pater," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh solemnly.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bunter hastily. "He will feel it, of course; but if he refuses to let me go, you can write to him, Inky, and point out that you simply dare not go to India without me with you to protect you. That will work the oracle."

"Oh, my hat!" "It's jolly odd that he hasn't answered my letter," said Bunter. "You fellows have all had answers from your people, but I haven't. I'm afraid the pater rather feels it."

Bunter blinked very seriously at the Famous Five. There was a chuckle from those cheery youths. They really did not think it likely that Mr. William Samuel Bunter, the portly stockbroker, was suffering from any excess of grief at the prospect of losing William George's fascinating company during the long vacation. They would rather have suspected him of experiencing an excess of satisfaction at the prospect.

"You can cackle!" said Bunter disdainfully. "Your people are jolly glad to be shut of you, no doubt. It's a bit different with me. I'm rather anticipating a lot of difficulty in getting my father to let me go."

Vernon-Smith came up the Remove staircase, with a letter in his hand.

Mind you add the topping stand-up photo of A. A. MAILEY to your set, boys! You'll find it in next week's "MAGNET."

"Letter for you, Bunter," he said. He tossed the letter to the Owl of the Remove and walked on. Bunter caught it.

"From my pater," he said. Bunter jabbed his fat thumb into the envelope, which was his usual way of opening a letter.

Harry Wharton & Co. regarded him quite anxiously.

They really did not think it likely that Mr. Bunter would refuse William George permission to go on the trip to India—rather, they expected him to jump at the chance. But Bunter evidently considered that there was a doubt on the subject—and the chums of the Remove hoped that Bunter was right. So far as they were concerned, Mr. Bunter was welcome to William George's company for the whole of the summer, not to mention the winter to follow.

Bunter unfolded the letter and blinked at it. There was an enclosure—a postal-order. Bunter jerked it out.

It was a postal-order for five shillings. Bunter blinked at it, and blinked at it again. Five shillings was five shillings—all was grist that came to Bunter's mill. But it was scarcely the tip that Bunter, or any other fellow, would have expected on the eve of a journey to the other side of the world.

Bunter shook his head sadly. "I'm afraid that means that he won't let me go," he said sorrowfully. "Of course, he would naturally want a lot of persuading."

"Hem!"

"Perhaps we can get Colonel Wharton to call on him and explain to him that I simply must go," said Bunter thoughtfully.

"Let's see what he says," suggested Bob Cherry. "If he doesn't want to part with you, Bunter, you mustn't—hem!—wring his heart, you know."

"Not at all," said Nugent.

"It would be unfeeling," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, I shall work it all right!" said Bunter. "Don't you worry! I've no doubt he's refused in this letter, but I shall keep on hammering at him till he consents. It's a bit of a worry in a way, you know, to be an idolised son—the apple of a father's eye—"

"Phew!" "You can read it out, Wharton," said Bunter, tossing the letter to the captain of the Remove. "I'm not sorry to let you fellows see how my father feels about it, after the way your people have jumped at the chance of getting shut of you for the hols. It may do you good. Are there any tear-stains on the paper Wharton?"

"Nunno! I can't see any."

"Well, read it out, as Bunter wants you to," said Bob Cherry. "Don't prolong the agony, old chap."

Wharton grinned and proceeded to read out the letter from Bunter senior. Billy Bunter shoved the postal-order into his pocket, apparently more regardless of that than of the paternal epistle.

"Dear William," Wharton read out,—"I have received your letter, but have been too busy to reply to it earlier—"

"Too grieved, I expect that means," said Bunter. "Frightful shock to him, you know. He's not like you fellows' paters."

"Go it, Wharton!" The captain of the Remove proceeded with the letter.

"I am delighted to hear that one of your school friends is taking you with him for the summer vacation and longer—"

"Eh?" ejaculated Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"You need not trouble to come home to say good-bye, as the railway fare is somewhat heavy and must be considered," proceeded Wharton.

"Phew!" Bunter's face was a study. "I trust you will enjoy your holiday, and will not tire out the patience of your friends, and come home unexpectedly, as you have sometimes done. As for your request for a considerable remittance, I cannot, of course, comply with it. I enclose a postal-order for five shillings. Make the most of it—"

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Bunter.

"Your affectionate father, W. S. Bunter," concluded Wharton; and he handed the letter back to the Owl of the Remove.

"The blowfulness to Bunter's esteemed pater does not seem to have been terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Billy Bunter jammed the letter into his pocket and rolled away without a word, leaving the Famous Five chortling. He rolled away to the tuckshop; and ten minutes later his financial resources were again reduced to one French penny.

THE END.

(Now look forward to next week's brilliant story of the chums of Greyfriars, entitled: *Outward Bound!* You'll enjoy every line of it.)

ON TRIAL FOR HIS LIFE! Young Tommy Comber, with scarcely a friend in the world, stands in the dock and protests his innocence, knowing that if he is not believed his very life is at stake!

CURLEW ISLAND

by David Goodwin

(Introduction on page 24.)

The Machinery of the Law!

THE business was very short and sharp. Some evidence was given, which Tommy could not make head or tail of. A policeman went into the witness-box and said his piece. Tommy thought he was being tried for his life, but this did not look much like it. He had somehow hoped that Mr. Copley would explain things at once, and that they would let him go.

"I represent Thomas Comber, your worship," said Mr. Copley to the magistrate. "And he reserves his defence."

Then a police-superintendent got on his feet and asked for what he called a "remand." This meant that the prisoner had to be put back till the police were ready with their case. So Tommy was marched back to his cell.

That night Tommy got little sleep. An idea that had long been in his head was taking shape. The more he pondered over it the surer he felt about it. He thought he knew who had killed Nunks.

In the morning Dan came to the station to see him again, and Dan was excited.

"Tommy," he said, as soon as they were together in the cell, "I've found out something. Chuffer—"

"Ah, Chuffer!" said Tommy. "I've been thinkin' about him. Yes—what?"

"He's been going about the town telling everybody how sorry he is about your arrest, an' that he's sure you had nothing to do with it, only you were silly to shoot off your mouth so much about Uncle Joe Comber."

"Chuffer said that!" exclaimed Tommy, utterly amazed, and not caring in the least who heard him. "What's he mean? D'you know what I think, Dan?" he added fiercely. "Chuffer's the one who did—"

"Hush! Yes, so do I!" muttered Dan. "But don't you say so, Tommy. There's a bit more to get hold of yet before—"

At that moment Mr. Copley was announced. Dan had to go, and Tommy

was taken to the consulting-room, where he found the lawyer looking very sour and serious.

"Comber," he said, "I find there's more evidence being got together against you; there will be another witness, and I want to learn all I can from you about it beforehand. But, first, are you still sure you can't account for that money that was found on you?"

"No, sir, I can't!" said Tommy. "But I can tell you this. It wasn't only money the murderer was after; I'm beginning to feel sure of that! It's a secret I was bound to keep; but it isn't goin' to hold me now! It's something worth thousands, and, maybe, millions. Listen!"

He explained how Joseph Comber had invented an explosive which had wrecked the shed, and how anxious he had been that nobody should know anything about it.

Mr. Copley did not seem to think much of this. While he listened, he watched the boy with hard, doubtful eyes.

"Then, according to you, whoever stole the money stole this strange secret, too?" he said.

"No, they didn't!" said Tommy. "If that's what they were after, they were fooled! Uncle Joe had burned all the papers. No one knows it, except me."

"What is the wonderful stuff, then?" said Mr. Copley dryly. "You say you know about it?"

But Tommy shut up at once. It wasn't going to help him, to give away the secret of Comberite.

"The police can see what's left of the shed," he said, "and the hole in the bank, where we tested the stuff."

Mr. Copley made a note.

"Now, listen to me," he said. "The police have been making inquiries of your cousin, Benjamin Foss—the boy whom everybody calls 'Chuffer,' and he has given some evidence about you, which will come out at the trial."

He had found out what Chuffer told the police, and he repeated it to Tommy, who could hardly believe his ears.

"It isn't true!" he cried fiercely. "Chuffer is telling lies about me! Look here, sir! I had a row with Chuffer two days before. And he was sneaking about the island, spying; he accused me of refusing to let him see Uncle Joe—that's what he came for. And we had a fight, and I licked him." He told the lawyer everything that had happened.

"Ah!" said Mr. Copley. "We're getting at it now. But have you any witnesses? Did anybody see or hear all this?"

"No," said Tommy. "There was nobody but Chuffer and me. But what I say is this. Chuffer is the one who committed the crime; Chuffer knew there was something worth stealing, and I'm certain he was on Curlew Island when it happened!"

Mr. Copley shook his head.

"That won't do," he said. "The police have satisfied themselves that Foss never left Gravesend at all that night. They've accounted for him. He's got witnesses to prove it."

"Then I don't believe them any more than I believe Chuffer!" said Tommy. "He is trying to put the blame on to me. But whoever is guilty, I had nothing to do with it whatever!" He looked Copley in the eyes and stood up. "Look here!" he said suddenly. "Don't you believe me, Mr. Copley?"

The lawyer hesitated a moment.

"Yes," he said quietly. "And remember, my lad, I'm doing my very best for you. But it isn't a question of what I believe. It's what a judge and jury are going to believe, and that's a very different thing. You've nearly done with Gravesend now. They will send you for trial."

When he had gone, Tommy sat alone in his cell and thought it over. He had told all he knew, except one thing. He had kept to himself the secret of Comberite powder. It was a power that could blow all Gravesend sky-high, and it was worth half a million.

That would not help him much if he were hanged.

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Next day he was brought before the magistrates again, and Tom Comber was committed to stand his trial for murder at the Maidstone Assizes.

In the Prisoner's Dock!

TWO hundred pairs of eyes were turned upon Tommy Comber as he stood in the great railed dock of the court-house at Maidstone, with a policeman standing bareheaded beside him.

The place was packed full. In the high seat below the Royal Arms sat the judge in his scarlet and ermine robes, a tremendous figure. The barristers, in their horse-hair wigs, sat at a table, and the twelve jurors in the jury-box stared at Tommy with stolid, heavy faces. It seemed strange that such a houseful of men should be gathered together to try one boy of fifteen for his life.

Tommy felt a thrill run through him as he heard the clerk of arraigns read out the charge amid dead silence.

"That you, Thomas Comber, did wilfully and wickedly kill and slay Joseph Buxton Comber.

"How say you, prisoner at the bar, are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty!" said Tommy firmly.

But the tall man in the white wig had not done yet. He had some more to read out.

"And further, that you, Thomas Comber, did feloniously steal and appropriate certain money belonging to the said Joseph Comber, deceased."

"Not guilty!"

Tommy knew what this meant. Mr. Copley had warned him. There were two charges made against him separately, but he would be tried for them both together. One was murder, the other was robbery. If the jury did not believe that the prisoner had himself committed the greater crime, they would still have to say whether or not he had robbed the safe.

And now a famous King's Counsel stood up—Sir Vivian Leigh. He was the barrister for the prosecution, and his job was to prove to the jury that the prisoner was guilty. He was a stout, stern-looking man, with a voice like a bugle.

"Members of the jury," he said, "it will be for you to say, when you have heard the evidence, whether the prisoner did or did not commit the crime of which he stands accused.

"The prisoner lived alone with his uncle, Joseph Comber, who was a more or less scientific experimenter and inventor, though not perhaps a very successful one. The boy Thomas Comber was his nephew and assistant, inhabiting this lonely bungalow on Curlew Island, and it appears he was not paid any regular wages. But he had a gun, and spent a good deal of his time amusing himself by shooting birds.

"Joseph Comber had a small income, and spent very little. He often kept rather considerable sums of money in a little safe in his parlour. He had a bank account in Gravesend, and on the 23rd of last month he drew from the bank the sum of £60 in notes, which were sent him by registered letter.

"On the 29th, a witness who landed on the island went to the bungalow, and what he saw there led him at once to summon the police. Joseph Comber lay dead in his bed. His skull was fractured by a blow from some heavy, blunt instrument; he had evidently been struck while he was asleep. According to the doctors, whose evidence you will hear,

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death had occurred many hours before he was found. The murder had been committed some time early in the night.

"The house was in disorder. The safe in the parlour had been opened with the dead man's keys and completely rifled; nothing was left but some papers of no value. The boy Comber had disappeared, and his boat was gone.

"Where was Thomas Comber?"

"He was arrested that same evening in Gravesend. It was found that, in company with a boy friend, he had been spending money freely. The two boys had been to a picture-palace, witnessed a cricket-match, and had lunched at the most expensive hotel in the place. The prisoner was searched, and £23 in notes and silver was found on him. The notes had belonged to Joseph Comber; that is certain, because the numbers of the notes were recorded at the Gravesend bank from which Mr. Comber got them.

"Where is the rest of the money? That is not known. Perhaps Mr. Comber did not have it all in his safe at that time? Or possibly it had been disposed of before the arrest. What is certain is that the prisoner had on him these notes from his uncle's safe, and he had spent in all nearly two pounds at Gravesend when the police so promptly discovered him.

"You will now hear the witnesses. Call Inspector Marks!"

Nothing could have sounded much more deadly than this story as the Crown Counsel delivered it. The faces of the jury showed what they thought. Tommy himself felt his heart sink. But still he kept up his courage. He was innocent!

A detective-inspector stepped into the witness-box, and took the oath to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He was the man who had the case in charge, and in answer to the prosecutor's questions, he told how he had searched the bungalow, after examining the dead man, of the discovery that the safe had been robbed, and that Tom Comber and the boat had disappeared.

When he had finished, a young barrister who was sitting at the table by the side of Lawyer Copley, got up. This was Tommy's defender, Mr. Cyril Vincent. He was a smart-looking fellow, with a pleasant smile and keen eyes.

WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

TOMMY COMBER, a bright young lad of fifteen, who assists his uncle, **JOSEPH COMBER**, an experimenter, living on Curlew Island, a desolate stretch of land situated in the Thames estuary. "Nunks," as Tommy affectionately calls his uncle, invents a powerful explosive which he names "Comberite," and which he confidently expects will bring him fame and fortune. Of the latter Tommy is naturally promised a big share. Tommy's only other relation is "**CHUFFER**" **FOSS**, a half-cousin, and a rotter of the first water. In a set-to with Chuffer, Tommy proves that he can use his fists to good effect, with the result that Chuffer leaves the island, swearing vengeance.

Fearing that the formula of his high explosive might fall into dishonest hands, Nunks gets Tommy to commit every detail of it to memory, and then destroys the papers.

By a stile that night Tommy is dreaming of the good times in store, when he is pounced upon by two unknown assailants and stunned. The miscreants then attack the inventor, whom they murder and rob. To cover up their tracks they plant some of the stolen cash on Tommy's person. Then they place his unconscious form in a boat which they set adrift. Tommy regains consciousness, but his mind is a blank. He meets

DAN BENNETT, an old chum, near Gravesend, and the two boys have a merry time. That same night, however, Tommy is arrested, and, to his amazement and horror, is taken to the police-court and formally charged with the murder of his uncle, Joseph Comber. (Now read on.)

"Do you know anything about finger-marks, inspector?" he asked.

"Of course, sir!" said the inspector. "At Scotland Yard we recognise criminals by their finger-prints."

The jury began to smile.

"Good!" said Cyril Vincent. "I'm glad to hear you know all about finger-prints. Police have to know everything nowadays, don't they? Now, about this safe that you examined. It was made of polished black steel, wasn't it? Wouldn't anybody unlocking that safe and pulling the door open, and robbing it, be likely to leave finger-prints on the iron?"

"Yes, he would," said the inspector.

"Did you find any finger-prints on that safe like those of the prisoner?"

"No, I didn't," admitted the inspector.

"Did you look for them?"

"Yes, sir."

"Of course you did! Tell the jury what the finger-prints were like on the safe."

"There weren't any finger-prints at all, sir!" said the inspector triumphantly.

"Now we're getting at it," said Cyril Vincent pleasantly. "Thieves take care not to leave finger-prints behind them, don't they? How do they manage that?"

"They take care to wear gloves," said the inspector, after a pause. "thin rubber gloves, generally, before they meddle with a safe."

"Then whoever robbed that safe wore gloves—most likely rubber ones, eh? Or else he took very great care to keep his hands off the door of the safe?"

"Well, yes."

"Either way, that's pretty smart work for a boy of fifteen to think out for himself, isn't it?"

"Maybe," said the inspector cautiously. "Some boys of fifteen are pretty smart nowadays."

"Nearly as smart as a detective-inspector, evidently," said Vincent. And the jury grinned. "Now let's leave the finger-prints which you couldn't find, and get on to foot-prints. Did you find any foot-prints round the house?"

"Yes, a lot; but you couldn't tell anything from them. The ground was hard and dry, and there wasn't a single clear bootmark anywhere."

"Had the prisoner's bed been slept in?"

"No, sir."

"Then, if he came to the house at all, it must have been late? Can you tell how the murderer, whoever he was, went into the house? Did he enter by the door?"

"I should say not," replied the inspector, "because the window was open and I saw some dust and the scrape of a boot on the window-sill; and there was yellow dust on the oilcloth in the room, as if someone had walked through."

"It would be rather strange, wouldn't it, if a boy who belonged to the house and lived there, got in at the window instead of entering by the door? Doesn't that look as if whoever got in thought the door was locked?"

"It might be."

"Now answer this, inspector. Were there any footmarks in that house of a boot making a kind of diamond pattern on the oilcloth or carpets?"

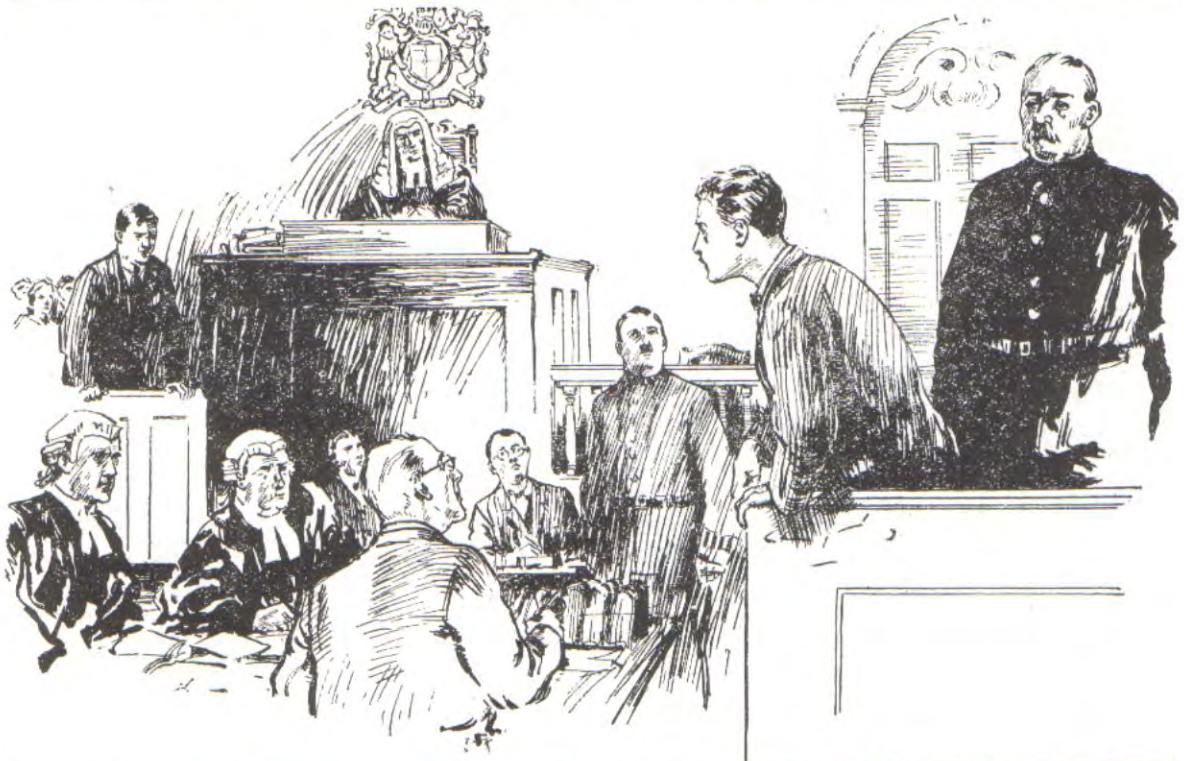
"No. There was nothing of the sort."

"You say that on oath?"

"I say it on oath!" retorted the detective.

Vincent turned to the back of the court.

"Produce the prisoner's boots," he said.



Tommy leaned over the dock rail and his eyes gleamed at Chuffer Foss. "He's lying!" he cried in a high-pitched voice, which electrified the whole court. "I did lick him! I knocked the stuffing out of the big lout! I won't stand here and hear him telling such lies!" (See page 26.)

Tommy's rubber knee-boots, still muddy, were passed up to the barrister.

"Thomas Comber was wearing these when he was arrested," said Vincent to the jury. "Look at them!"

He turned up the soles. They were marked, like most rubber boots, with crossed ribbed lines all over the soles, to prevent slipping.

Mr. Copley then handed Vincent a box full of yellow dust, and a small square of oilcloth. Everybody watched this strange proceeding with keen interest.

"The dust in this box was brought from the path round the bungalow; it was scooped up from just below the window," said Vincent; and taking one of Tommy's boots he pressed it into the box, and then pressed the sole down on the oilcloth, which he held up for the judge and jury to see.

The oilcloth was plainly marked by the bootprint, and it showed a clear pattern of little diamonds, made by the dust on the crossed lines of the sole.

"The witness has told you on oath," said Vincent, "that there was no mark like this anywhere in the bungalow. The boy could not possibly have gone into the house without leaving these marks on the floor. He was wearing these boots from the time he left the house to go duck-shooting until he was arrested at Gravesend. Therefore, gentlemen, whoever got into the house that night just before the murder, it was not Tom Comber who stands before you in the dock!"

Chuffer Takes His Oath!

TOMMY felt himself tingling all over. This fellow was coming to the rescue splendidly; he was as smart as paint. And Tommy needed all the help he could get.

Some unknown person had been into

that house. Who was it? The oilcloth was passed round among the jury. The inspector in the witness-box did not look happy. He looked like a cricketer who has just been smartly caught out in the slips.

But the Crown Counsel now got up and began to question him again.

"Now, inspector, what were those marks on the floor like?" asked the Crown Counsel. "Were they bootmarks, or not?"

"Footmarks, anyway," said the inspector cautiously. "They weren't clear enough to show what he was wearing."

"They were blurred, do you mean? Quite faint? Could they have been made by stockinged feet, with no boots on at all?"

"Yes; they might have been that." "So that if the murderer, wishing to leave no tracks and to move silently, had slipped off his boots before entering, those are the sort of marks he might have made?"

"Yes, sir," said the inspector. "Just so."

"Smart boy," murmured Vincent sarcastically, under his breath, but loud enough for the jury to hear, "if he thought of all that!"

"Next witness!" snapped the Crown Counsel; and a doctor stepped into the box and was sworn.

The doctor told how he had examined the dead man. He described the injury which had caused his death.

"Could that wound have been made by a blow from the butt of a gun?" asked the Crown Counsel.

"Possibly," answered the doctor.

Tommy's gun was produced—the old single barrel, with which he had shot the ducks. It was shown to the jury. There was a dent on the light walnut stock. The doctor agreed that this

weapon might have done it, used as a club; but he would not say more. Cyril Vincent got up. He asked for the gun to be passed to him.

"It would have needed a very heavy blow, wouldn't it?" he asked.

"Very heavy," said the doctor.

"Do you know what happens, doctor, when anybody is clubbed with the butt of a shotgun? Not a rifle, but a gun like this one?"

"No," said the doctor, "I don't."

"Well, I do," replied Cyril Vincent; "and I'll show the jury."

He placed a cushion on a chair, gripped the gun by the barrel, and brought the gun-butt down on the cushion with a thump—not a very hard one.

The gun broke short off at the grip of the stock.

"That's what would have happened to the prisoner's gun if he had dealt that blow with it!" said Vincent. "It would break before it fractured anyone's skull."

There was a murmur of surprise and admiration from everybody in court, except the prosecutor.

"One more question, doctor," said Vincent. "Are you quite sure, anyway, that that would could have been made by the butt of a gun?"

"I didn't say I was sure," replied the doctor. "I should have expected the fracture to be rather different—the gun-butt is narrow and sharp."

"Just so. But isn't it possible that some heavy but soft instrument had done it?"

"Yes, rather like that."

"Such as a sandbag, for instance?"

The doctor hesitated.

"Yes, I think a sandbag certainly might have done it."

Vincent sat down.

"My learned friend ought to have

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been on the stage!" said the Crown Counsel sarcastically. "He had better produce his sandbag. Call Benjamin Foss!"

There was a ruffle in court, and Chuffer, big and burly, stepped into the witness-box. He was dressed in his Sunday best, and his hair was beautifully oiled. He wore a grave, sad expression, as though it grieved him to the heart to see his young cousin charged with murder. But he was careful not to look at Tommy, who stared at him fiercely from the prisoner's dock.

Chuffer lifted the Testament to his thick lips, and swore to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The queer thing about it was that Chuffer, when he started answering the Crown Counsel's questions, looked as if he really were telling the truth. It sounded like the truth. Tommy himself would have believed him if he had not known that Chuffer was telling lies. And the jury believed him, as Tommy could see by their faces. It is very dangerous to tell anything but the truth in an English court of law, but Chuffer was getting away with it. For he told lies that nobody except Tommy could contradict.

He said that he was on good terms with his uncle, the late Mr. Comber; that he did not know whether Mr. Comber had any money or not, and, anyway, it didn't trouble him, as he was doing very well on his own account. And he had the impudence to say that he had never had any quarrel with Tommy. Also that, when he went down to Curlew Island two days before the murder to see his uncle, Mr. Comber had welcomed him, and that he and Tommy and Uncle Joseph had all had dinner together at the bungalow, and were the best of friends.

Tommy listened to this string of falsehoods, perfectly speechless with amazement and anger.

"Now, tell the jury, Foss," said the Crown Counsel. "Did the prisoner ever say anything to you about Mr. Comber keeping money in his safe?"

Chuffer looked down at his feet, and seemed very embarrassed.

"I don't like to answer that, sir," he said in a low voice. "I would rather not say, please. It doesn't seem fair—"

The judge interrupted.

"Listen to me, Foss!" he said sternly. "You are here to answer all questions put to you. And you are on your oath."

"Very well," said Chuffer reluctantly. "When my cousin, Tom Comber, walked down to the boat with me after dinner that day—the twenty-third—he did say that our uncle had a lot of money in his safe in the parlour. I didn't believe it; I never thought Uncle

Joseph had much money, poor old fellow!"

"Go on. What else did he say?"

"He said that Nunks—as he called him—was a mean old hunk," said Chuffer slowly, "who paid him no wages, and hardly ever gave him as much as a few shillings to go on a spree with, or if he did he grumbled about it. Tommy said he was fed-up with Curlew Island, it was beastly lonely, and he was sick of living with Nunks. He wanted to go abroad—to foreign parts."

"Speak up!" said counsel, for Chuffer's voice was low, and the jury were listening eagerly. "What next?"

"Tommy said," continued Chuffer, "that if I would help him to get hold of Uncle Joseph's money that he had in the safe, we would go shares, and both of us could go to Gravesend and get on a ship for Australia, where we could have a good time and then go up the country and prospect for gold. He'd read a book about it, and there were new gold-fields being opened up over there. We should make our fortunes if we had a bit of luck. He said he didn't like to do it on his own, and a chap wanted a partner when he went gold-digging; and as I was a big, hefty fellow and a good pal, to him, he asked me to help him, as it was the chance of a lifetime."

The whole court listened to this in dead silence. Tommy, in the dock, was pale with fury.

"What answer did you make?" asked the prosecutor.

"I told him not to be a silly fool," said Chuffer, "and I shoved off in the boat and went home. I would never have said anything about it, only the police came and questioned me and said I had got to tell everything."

"Did the prisoner say anything to you about killing Mr. Comber?"

"No, he didn't. Nothing of that sort. He only said he wouldn't let Nunks stop him."

"That will do," said the prosecutor.

Cyril Vincent rose to his feet, and looked at Chuffer with eyes that bored right through him.

"Answer this, Foss!" he said quietly. "You say Tom Comber offered you a share in the robbery? Why did you not go straight back to your uncle and warn him?"

"Why?" exclaimed Chuffer. "Of course I couldn't! I thought Tommy was joking. I never dreamed he meant it. I guessed he was just pulling my leg, like he often used to. I just laughed and told him not to talk rot. And that's the last I saw of him."

"You are rather a clever fellow, are you not, Foss?" said Vincent gently.

"What, me? I don't think so. We

always reckoned Tommy was the clever one of the family," said Chuffer simply. "He laughs at me and calls me a fat-head—though I think he likes me all the same."

"You think he likes you, do you? I put it to you, Foss, that this story of yours is false—that Tom Comber said nothing of the sort—that you went to the island to borrow money of Mr. Comber and he wouldn't see you?"

"No!"

"And that you insulted Tom Comber and had a fight with him. That he knocked you down, gave you a good hiding, and you went away swearing that you would be even with him?"

Chuffer stared at him, and then laughed aloud.

"A fight? There was no fight!" he said contemptuously. "That little chap gave me a hiding? Look at him! Is it likely, sir?"

Something seemed to go "snap" in Tommy's head. He could stand it no longer. Till now he had not said a word. He leaned over the dock rail, and his high-pitched voice electrified the whole court.

"He's lying!" he cried. "I did lick him! I knocked the stuffing out of the big lout! I won't stand here and hear him telling such lies!"

"Silence!" cried the ushers. There was a hubbub in court, and a chorus of laughter; half the people were standing up to look at Tommy, who was dancing with rage and shaking his fist at Chuffer.

Tommy Speaks Out!

"HUSH!" said Cyril Vincent, startled. "Be quiet—"

"Silence, prisoner!" said the judge sharply.

"Look here, my lord—an' all the lot of you!" cried Tommy, quite beside himself. "Clear a space in the middle there, an' call Chuffer down, and I'll wipe the floor with him! I'll soon show you! I licked him once, and I can lick him again!"

"For goodness' sake hold your tongue, boy!" exclaimed Mr. Copley under his breath. "Leave it to us—you are doing yourself no good!"

Tommy eventually quietened down, and order was restored. Chuffer had turned very pale. Vincent faced the jury.

"Gentlemen," he said, in a clear voice, "Tom Comber, who stands in the dock before you, had no right to speak, but I shall leave it to you to say which of these two speaks the truth. I shall ask no more questions of this witness Foss," said Vincent, with contempt, and sat down.

Many of those in court believed Tommy. There had been the ring of truth in that outburst of his. But now, as the prosecutor called witness after witness against him, the case began to look blacker and blacker.

Uncle Joe's money was produced; it was proved that it had been found on Tommy. The numbers of the notes were proved and sworn to. Other witnesses testified that Tommy and Dan Bennett had been spending money all over Gravesend, at cricket matches and cinema shows. And when that was the jury had a man who has finished his job like a man who has finished his job.

"That is the case for the prosecution!" he said grimly.

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Then Cyril rose to defend the prisoner.

He had only two witnesses he could call. One was Dan Bennett.

Dan stepped into the witness-box, and looked across at his chum, as if to say, "Buck up, Tommy old son!" He looked bright and cheery, but his heart was heavy as lead. He knew how long the odds were, and there was not much help he could give.

He told how he had met Tommy on the river, and how they had landed together. He also said that Tommy had told him he had gone to sleep in the boat, and that he had no money. And that Tommy was astonished to find three pounds in his vest pocket, couldn't remember how it got there, or when Nunks had given it him. Tommy still seemed dazed and half asleep. But as Nunks often gave him money, he thought there would be no harm if he spent some of it on a spree. In fact, Dan told the exact truth, and told it very well. But he couldn't help feeling it sounded queer—as the truth sometimes does.

"Did Tom Comber say anything whatever to you about going to Australia?" asked Vincent.

"Not a word! He said he was going back to the island that night. And he said he had licked Chuffer—Ben Foss. Only he didn't tell me what for."

"You know Foss, don't you?"

"Rather!" said Dan scornfully. "And I saw him loafing on the quay and watching, when Tommy pulled the money out of his pocket."

"Have you ever had a fight with Foss?"

"Yes, and licked him, too! I taught Tommy to box. Chuffer Foss can't box at all—he can only slog. Any fellow who boxes decently could knock him out."

"That will do," said Vincent, and the Crown Counsel started to cross-examine Ben as if he were going to make hay of him. He asked a lot of sharp questions, but he could get no change out of Ben, and could not make him contradict himself. Tommy's case was looking up.

"Bennett," said the counsel, with a slight sneer at last, "you say the prisoner told you he did not know how he came by that money that you both spent together? Did you believe him?"

"Certainly I believed him, and do now!" said Dan, in a ringing voice. "Tommy Comber's the straightest chap on the river, an' he'd no more rob anybody than you would! Whoever is lying, it isn't Tommy!"

There was a burst of applause as Dan stepped out of the witness-box and retired. Tommy felt a lump rise in his throat.

"Thank you, Danny!" he murmured under his breath. "You're a pal!"

"I shall now put the prisoner himself in the box!" said Vincent. "The law can't make him give evidence, but he may do it of his own free will, and that is what he chooses to do!"

It is a terrible ordeal for a prisoner to go into the box and be questioned by both sides—especially if he is guilty. Tommy had told Vincent he was willing to do it.

He was brought across, the court, and took the oath.

In answer to Vincent's questions, he told his story. All the while the jury watched Tommy closely while they listened. He told it well and fearlessly, but it was a strange story for the jury to hear. Vincent made the best of it.

Nunks' experiments, and the history of Comberite Powder were described, too. And when Vincent had done, the prosecutor stood up and tackled Tommy.

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He questioned the boy mercilessly, and he made the tale sound very thin. How had Tommy come to fall asleep, and wake up miles away, with the stolen money in his pocket?

"You don't know!" repeated the prosecutor coldly. "To everything I ask you, you answer you don't know!"

"I know this," said Tommy, "that the safe wasn't robbed only for the money, but for the secret my uncle had discovered! He wasn't murdered for a few paltry pounds!"

"Indeed!" said the prosecutor. "Then who has got this wonderful secret?"

"They never found it, for it wasn't there to find. They were fooled! I've got the secret myself!"

"Oh!" said the prosecutor grimly. "Then you've got the secret as well as money, have you?"

"My uncle gave it me!"

"I see. He 'gave' you the secret, just as he 'gave' you the money! And he can't deny it because he is dead. The

police did not find this secret on you, it seems. Where do you keep it?"

"In my head," replied Tommy.

"A safe place for it! Will you explain this remarkable secret, and let us hear what it is?"

"No fear, sir!" said Tommy. "You might pinch it!"

There was a roar of laughter from all sides. But Tommy was not laughing. He was blind with anger. His temper, never too good, was boiling over.

"I'm innocent, but it isn't going to help me to give that secret away!" he said fiercely.

"Especially if there's no secret to give!" replied the prosecutor.

Everybody was still laughing, and among them Chuffer Foss, who was sitting on one of the front benches in the well of the court. His hoarse, chuckling laugh caught the ear of Tommy, who turned and faced him. Chuffer's grinning face drove him mad.

(Continued overleaf.)

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CURLEW ISLAND!

(Continued from previous page.)

"You!" cried Tommy. "You did it! And you've tried to put it on me, you coward! If ever I get my hands on you, Chuffer Fess—if ever I get my hands on you—"

There was an uproar in the court, and silence was restored with difficulty. Tommy's eyes were blazing, and he had lost all control of himself. Chuffer had sunk back in his seat, pale and frightened.

"I have done with this witness!" said the Crown Counsel quietly, sitting down. And they marched Tommy back to the prisoner's dock. Then the Crown Counsel got up to make his address to the jury.

He put all the evidence together, like a jigsaw puzzle, and it seemed overwhelming. He showed how every bit of it told against Tommy. He ridiculed the story of the powder, and asked the jury to cast it aside. He ridiculed Tommy's explanation about the money. He put the whole case in a nutshell.

"And mark this, gentlemen!" he concluded. "Even if it were true, as the defence suggests, that some other person whom the police have not found, was on Curlew Island that night, it does not relieve the prisoner of a share in the crime, for he got away with a large

share of the booty. You are told that a boy of fifteen could not plan a crime like this and carry it out. That is not true. It was all simple enough. You have seen

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the prisoner, and heard him, too. You can judge his character. "Hō is sharp enough. And he was sharp enough to get away with the money, too. He could not resist going on what he calls a 'spree' in Gravesend; but a few hours later, when the tide turned, he could have taken passage on a ship and got out of the country. And his own story was clever and ingenious—if anybody could believe it. I submit that his guilt is clear."

Tommy did not listen to this. He tried to shut his ears to it, for he had heard all he could bear. He was looking round the court for Chuffer, but Chuffer seemed to have disappeared.

But all the time these last speeches were being made, he somehow kept noticing, again and again, a man who was sitting among the spectators in the gallery, who never seemed to take his eyes off Tommy. He was a tall, middle-aged man, well-dressed, with piercing black eyes and pointed beard. Tommy had never seen him before, and he was only one among scores of strangers. It was odd that, whenever he looked up, he seemed to catch this man's eye, and his face remained stamped on Tommy's memory.

(Tommy's chances of acquittal of this monstrous charge are very slender. The evidence has piled up around him like an insurmountable barrier—but while there's life, there's hope! Be sure and read next week's fine instalment, chums.)



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