

A Stunning FREE GIFT-See Inside!

No. 965. Vol. XXX. Week Ending August 14th, 1926

The Magnet 2^d

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MONDAY.

*This Superb
Stand-up
Figure*

OF
C.G. MACARTNEY
(AUSTRALIA)

FREE

Inside!



"HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN INDIA!"

(A magnificent story of thrilling adventure, dealing with the Chums of Greyfriars—inside.)

Another Topping Free Stand-up Cut-out Photo with next week's MAGNET!

Maurice W. Tate—



The Sussex and England Wonder Bowler

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Don't Forget-Next Monday!

TO & FROM YOUR EDITOR

THOSE FREE GIFTS!

CAN you beat them? By every post I am getting congratulatory letters from chums all over the place about the right down excellence of the stand-up, cut-out photos of famous cricketers. The portrait this week of C. G. Macartney, is one certain to give a lot of pleasure to every Magnetite. While I am about it I must thank the loyal supporters who have written in to tell me how highly they think of the whole series.

GREAT THINGS TO COME.

This photo-feature scores every week. It runs on from triumph to triumph. Next week we shall have Maurice W. Tate, the marvellous record bowler of Sussex, the county that has sent out so many good men. Tate carries the tale further so far as Sussex is concerned in particular, and the whole big world of cricket in general. Be sure you add Tate to your collection. Every week I have not failed to draw attention to what the "Popular" is achieving in this line as well. The "Popular" is going great guns with its special series of cut-outs. Make a note of the fact that this week's issue of the "Popular" contains a vivid portrait of the action sort of W. R. Hammond, the celebrated batsman of Gloucester. But for his unlucky illness, Hammond would have been doing good work in the recent Test matches. We shall hear a lot more of him as time goes on.

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 this week's wonderful photo of C. G. Macartney 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 nicely and firmly.

THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

This is a reminder. On September 1st the new volume of the "Holiday Annual" will be on sale, and it is a plain duty I owe to all my chums to draw attention to a record book. The new issue will out-distance for all-round attractiveness all previous editions of the world-famous "H.A." It has more stories of all kinds, more coloured plates, and fascinating articles of sport and adventure. And, of course, the three great schools of Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood have their right place in a boom production.

EVERY BOY'S HOBBY ANNUAL.

Another exceptional treat this! Same date, please! September 1st is the day on which "Every Boy's Hobby Annual," the most wonderful budget of hobbies ever compiled, will see the light. This is a new departure in every sense. You will find your own particular hobby, whether it be connected with wireless, or the workshop, or the laboratory, dealt with by experts, and the subject splendidly illustrated. This is a unique opportunity. Tell your friends of what is indeed a superb chance. "Every Boy's Hobby Annual" should be ordered right away. Every Magnetite must have a copy.

LOOK OUT FOR THE SHERBET MAK!

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

Next Week's Programme!

"BOUND FOR BHANIPUR!"
By Frank Richards.

A grand yarn this. Of course, it is the follow-on of the Indian series. The chums accompany Hurree Singh to the land which owes him allegiance. No side about the Nabob. He shows himself in his true colours, as ever, a gentleman and a right down good sport. Next week's story is crammed with the most amazing adventures, with exciting incidents as plentiful as blackberries in September.

OUR CRICKET SUPPLEMENT.

Don't miss this feature next Monday. You can make assurance doubly sure by putting in your order at once. There is a run on the MAGNET which beats everything. Anyhow, fail not to nail your copy. It is a treat.

"BOUNDARIES" COMPETITION.

This is a genuine curiosity tickler. No MAGNET Competition up to date has caught on as well as our latest. See next week's paper for some enlivening chances.

"CURLEW ISLAND."

In the new instalment it is the destiny of Tommy Comber to meet some queer customers. No ordinary meeting, take my word for that! The coming chapters are marked with thrills galore, so don't miss this treat!

IN A BOMBAY BUNGALOW! In a quiet residential quarter of the Indian city, to all appearances as quiet and orderly as a London suburb, desperate men are creeping—unseen, unheard—through the shadows, approaching the sleeping-quarters of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and his chums, to carry out their dastardly work!

Harry Wharton & Co in India!

A Magnificent, New Long Complete Story,
dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton
& Co. abroad. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter is Fed-Up!

"N^O!"
"But—"
"No, ass!"
"I tell you—"

"Rats!"
Billy Bunter sat up in the long wicker chair, his fat face pink with indignation and the heat of Bombay, and fixed his little round eyes, through his big spectacles, upon Harry Wharton.

It was a withering glare, which ought to have withered the captain of the Greyfriars Remove upon the spot.

But it didn't.

In fact, Wharton did not seem no notice it at all. He turned his back on Bunter, and looked down from the bungalow veranda towards the shining waters of the bay.

Bob Cherry, sitting on the veranda rail, chuckled. Bob balanced himself on the rail, and looked every moment as if he would plunge over into the garden below. Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent sat in cane chairs and sipped lemon-squash through long straws. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh fanned himself gently with a large green leaf.

The Famous Five were far from Greyfriars School now.

"Chuck it, Bunter, old fat bean!" said Bob Cherry. "We're all under orders here, you know."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Don't talk so much, old man!" yawned Johnny Bull.

"The talkfulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The restfulness of his excellent and untiring jaw would be the proper caper."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"Looks ripping from here, doesn't it?" said Harry Wharton. "Bombay's no end of a place!"

"I tell you—" hooted Bunter.

"Dry up!" said Nugent.

"I tell you I'm not sticking here. We've been hanging about this dashed bungalow all day!" said Billy Bunter indignantly. "I suppose we're going to have a look at Bombay before we leave?"

"We had a jolly old walk with the colonel," said Bob.

"You nearly got run over by a bullock-cart, and nearly run in by a Pathan policeman. Now give yourself a rest—especially your chin, old man. It needs it."

"I'm going out!" said Bunter.

"You're not, fathead!"

"I am!" roared Bunter indignantly.

Harry Wharton turned back from the contemplation of the bay and the white sails that dotted the shining waters. He fixed his eyes upon the indignant face of the Owl of the Remove.

"Now, look here, Bunter—" he said quietly.

"Sha'n't!"

"Look here, you ass! My uncle left us here with a strict order not to go out of the bung," said Harry. "We're not going. Now shut up!"

Billy Bunter snorted indignantly.

"That's all very well for you fellows," he said. "You can't take care of yourselves. You think there's danger, and you're funky. I don't care for danger."

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"Fathead!"

"It's jolly slow here," said Bunter—"too jolly slow! I didn't come to India to roost in a veranda and stare at a blinking bay! It's no end jolly down there in the city!"

Wharton glanced towards the city below the ridge; stately white buildings, gleaming in the sun, interminable streets teaming with dusky humanity. He nodded.

"We'd all like to explore Bombay," he said; "but orders are orders, old chap. Stick it!"

"Rats!" growled Bunter.

Bunter was dissatisfied.

If other fellows were dissatisfied, it did not, of course, matter; but when Bunter was dissatisfied it was time for the wide world to sit up and take notice.

"Stuck up on this blessed hill in a bung!" growled Bunter. "I thought we should put up at the best hotel in the place. That's what I'm accustomed to on a holiday!"

"Bow-wow!"

"That's what I had a right to expect!" said Bunter firmly. "Jolly good quarters and the best of grub—plenty of it, too! And something lively going on! It's too slow for me here!"

"We didn't come out to India wholly for a holiday, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "We came to see Inky safe to Bhanipur. We're not at Bhanipur yet, by a long way!"

"Oh, blow Inky!" said Bunter peevishly.

"The thankfulness is terrific."

"There's no doubt that Inky's enemies are in Bombay, watching for us," went on the captain of the Remove. "We saw that kidnapping rascal, Nally Das, the day we landed. I noticed him again in the crowd on the Apollo Bunder after we were ashore. If we'd put up at a big hotel we should have been surrounded by spies."

"I'm not afraid of spies!"

"You don't happen to be the chap who is in danger," remarked Johnny Bull. "We haven't brought Inky as far as Bombay, to let him be kidnapped here. Bunter."

"Rats! I'll protect him!"

"Ass!"

"It was a stroke of luck my uncle getting the offer of this bungalow for a few days in Bombay," said Harry. "We're comfortable enough here; the khansama looks after us all right."

"Blow the khansama!" said Bunter. "He doesn't treat me with what I call proper respect."

"And we're going up-country to Delhi in a day or two."

"If it's as hot in Delhi as it is here, I don't specially want to go to Delhi," said Bunter. "Blow Delhi!"

"After that we get to Inky's country—among the tigers and things," said Bob. "You'll be able to hunt giddy tigers, Bunter, and take home a tiger-skin to the study at Greyfriars—unless the tiger takes home a Bunter-skin to the jungle instead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Colonel Wharton's busy making the arrangements for the journey up-country," said Nugent. "We're all right here till it's time to start. Now shut up, Bunter, old man."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Yes, cheese it," said Johnny Bull. "Can't you have another meal and be happy? It's a quarter of an hour since your last."

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rose from the long chair. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 965.

There was a determined expression on his fat face.

"I'm going!" he said.

"Sit down, ass!"

"Rats!"

Billy Bunter rolled away towards the curtained doorway. Harry Wharton uttered an impatient exclamation. Johnny Bull put out a prompt foot, and Bunter walked over it—and gave a yell as he staggered.

"Ow!"

Bunter staggered blindly across the veranda, and clutched wildly at Bob Cherry to save himself.

"Look out, Bob!" shouted Wharton.

"Ow!"

Bob Cherry was skilfully balanced on the teak rail of the veranda, swinging his long legs. But he had not allowed for a collision.

As Bunter plunged into him Bob flew backwards and his legs flew into the air. Wharton jumped towards him to catch him, but too late.

With a yell Bob disappeared over the rail.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bob!"

There was a crash and a roar in the gardens below. Bob Cherry had landed there in a mass of shrubbery. He had considerably damaged the shrubs by his

Bob. He was sprawling in the midst of smashed shrubs. Three or four black servants came running out of the house in alarm, led by the khansama.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Hurt?" exclaimed Wharton, as Bob sat up in the smashed shrubs and roared.

Bob ceased to roar for a moment, and glared at him.

"You ass! Hurt! Do you think I'm making this row for fun?"

The juniors dragged him up. Fortunately, the thick shrubbery had broken his fall. Bob was shaken and breathless, and had collected a few bruises and scratches, but he was otherwise unhurt.

"Where's Bunter?" he gasped. "I'll jolly well kick him all round the bung! I'll give him pitching a fellow off the veranda! Ow! I'm scratched all over! Those beastly things are prickly. Wow!"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bob Cherry, having recovered his breath rushed up the steps of the veranda.

Had Bunter been still there he would probably have passed through one of the most painful experiences of his fat career.

But Bunter was not there.

"Where's that fat villain?" roared Bob, glaring round in search of the Owl of the Remove.

"Stole away!" grinned Nugent. "He doesn't seem to pine for your company for the moment, old man."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob rushed into the house. With so many bumps and scratches to avenge, he was anxious to see Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed him, chuckling.

But Bunter was not to be seen in the bungalow. His room was empty, and there was no sign of him.

"Gone into the gardens, perhaps," grinned Johnny Bull. "Leave him till tiffin. He's bound to turn up for the next meal."

"Bunter will keep," suggested Nugent.

"Rats! I'm going to kick him, and jolly hard, too!" roared Bob. And he scudded out into the gardens again, followed by his laughing comrades.

"Khansama!" roared Bob.

"Sahib."

The khansama, a fat little gentleman in a gorgeous purple cummerbund, came bowing up.

"Where's that fat villain?" demanded Bob. "I mean that podgy porker, Bunter."

The khansama grinned.

"Young fat gentleman depart," he said.

"What?"

"Young fat gentleman extract his honourable person from bungalow and perform rapid retreat," he explained.

The juniors grinned.

Since their arrival in India they had heard a good deal of English which resembled that of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

At Greyfriars Hurree Singh was the only fellow who spoke English in his own remarkable manner, but in Bombay there were many educated natives who dealt with the language on similar lines.

"Do you mean to say that Bunter has hooked it?" asked Harry.

The khansama looked puzzled.

Like most native gentlemen in India who occupy the post of khansama, or butler, he understood English quite well, and could speak it in the flowery style of the East. But the verb "to hook" was new to him.

"Has he bunked?" asked Nugent.

The khansama looked still more

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DANDY CUT - OUT
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fall; and, to judge by the roar that rose from Bob, he had damaged himself more than the shrubs.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

After Bunter!

"HE, he, he!" Billy Bunter chuckled breathlessly, as he staggered against the teak rail. The sudden disappearance of Bob Cherry struck him as funny.

Perhaps it did not occur to him that Bob might have been hurt by a fall of a dozen feet. Or perhaps he thought that that did not matter, anyhow.

The other four juniors rushed down the wooden steps into the garden at once. They were concerned for Bob, if Bunter was not.

"Ow! Wow! Yow!"

Bob Cherry's powerful voice was sounding its loudest note.

"Bob, old man—"

"Hurt, old chap?"

Bunter grinned down at the juniors below. Very likely Bob Cherry was hurt—certainly his voice sounded like it. All the Famous Five were busy for the moment, and had no eyes for Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove left them to it.

He rolled into the house through the curtained doorway and disappeared. It was his opportunity for getting away, and Bunter did not neglect it.

Harry Wharton & Co. gathered round

puzzled. This was another new verb for his vocabulary.

"The esteemed khansama does not catch on," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The slangful expressions are the new and unknown experience to him. It is necessary to use well of English pure and undefiled."

"Has Bunter left the bungalow?" asked Wharton.

The captain of the Remove was serious now. It was a serious matter if the Owl of the Remove had carried out his threat of going into the city against the strict orders of Colonel Wharton.

The khansama nodded. He understood now.

"The fat young gentleman's leaving was sudden and prompt," he answered. "His disappearance has taken place in the direction of Bombay."

Wharton set his lips.

"The cheeky ass!" he said. "He's taken advantage of our backs being turned to hook it."

"Let's go after him and yank him back by the scruff of his neck," growled Johnny Bull.

"Let's!" said Nugent.

"But the orderfulness of the esteemed colonel sahib?" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh doubtfully. "The excellent Wharton's avuncular relative commanded us not to leave the precincts of the bungalow."

"All the fat will be in the fire if that fat idiot goes mooching round Bombay," said Harry. "Anybody would know the fat duffer a mile off, and if he is seen he will be followed back here. We know that Nally Das is on the watch."

"That's so," said Bob.

Harry Wharton's brows contracted as he thought it out.

Colonel Wharton was absent, and was not expected to return till a late hour in the evening.

He had left the Greyfriars fellows at the bungalow on Malabar Hill, with strict injunctions not to leave the place till he returned.

It was irksome enough to the juniors, who would have been glad to explore the strange city of which they had, so far, had little more than a glimpse. But no one excepting Bunter had thought of disregarding the colonel's orders. William George Bunter was a law unto himself.

Well the juniors knew that the dangers they had escaped during their long and perilous journey to the torrid south still hung over them, and that it was necessary to be on their guard.

An old friend of the colonel's, who was away from Bombay on military duty, had offered him the use of the bungalow on Malabar Hill during his stay in the city, and Colonel Wharton had been glad to accept the offer. Instead of putting up at a crowded hotel, where they would have been the mark for the spies of Baji Rao, the party were able to lie "doggo," as Bob Cherry described it, during the days they had to remain at Bombay.

In that quiet spot, in the residential quarter of Bombay, it was probable that they would remain undetected by the spies who were watching for them, till the colonel had completed his preparations for the further journey to Hurree Singh's country.

But it was necessary to keep within the garden walls; a necessity which the Famous Five understood, but which William George Bunter chose to disregard.

Bunter was fed up with confinement to the bungalow; a circumstance which outweighed all other circumstances in his fat mind.



Billy Bunter staggered blindly across the veranda, and clutched wildly at Bob Cherry to save himself. "Look out, Bob!" shouted Wharton. "Ow!" Bob Cherry, skilfully balanced on the teak rail of the veranda, was not prepared for the collision. As Bunter plunged into him, Bob toppled backwards, and his legs flew into the air. (See Chapter 1.)

Now he was gone; and Wharton wondered, in a worried frame of mind, what he had better do.

The spies of Baji Rao had tracked the party all the way from England to Bombay; and in that swarming city it was certain that Nally Das and Kalouth and the Russian rascal Lazaroff would find many associates. Instead of two or three spies, there might be dozens or scores.

And Bunter was a fellow who, once seen, was not likely to be forgotten. His circumference was not likely to escape the most casual eye.

For Bunter himself the plotting Hindus cared nothing; but they knew that he was a member of Colonel Wharton's party; and if they spotted the Owl of the Remove, they had only to keep him in sight, and he would be a guide to the spot where Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was to be found.

The fatuous Owl, walking the crowded streets of Bombay, was likely to bring the nabob into danger again at once.

The juniors remained silent, looking at Wharton, waiting for him to decide. In the absence of the colonel, the captain of the Remove was leader.

Wharton made up his mind at last.

"My uncle told us to keep close," he said. "But, of course, he never supposed that that fat idiot would break cover. Inky must not go out, of course, and a couple of us had better stay with him. But I think two of us had better go after Bunter. My uncle would, I think, approve of that. We may catch the fat chump before he gets down into the town. Anyhow, he's got to be rounded up and fetched back. That seems to me the only thing to be done."

"That's so," said Johnny Bull.

"You come with me, Bob," said Harry. "We may get hold of the fat fool in a quarter of an hour, and yank him back by his silly ears!"

"I'll jolly well dribble him back!" said Bob.

"And we'll look after Inky," said THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 965.

Nugent. "Cut off, and don't lose any more time."

"Go it!" said Johnny Bull.

"The go-fulsness is the proper caper," assented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And, without losing more time, Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry left the bungalow on Malabar Hill, and hurried away towards the city, keeping their eyes open for the rotund figure of William George Bunter on the long, white road.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Returns to Bombay!

"K HABARDAR raho!"

Billy Bunter did not heed. Bunter was tramping along the road, and breathing hard with exertion; but he had a very shrewd idea that when he was missed from the bungalow he would be followed and captured. It would be just like those cheeky rotters, Bunter considered, to interfere with his liberty of movement, and they were quite capable of scudding after him and taking him home with a grip on his fat ears. For which reason William George Bunter put on an unaccustomed speed as he negotiated the road down the slopes of Malabar Hill towards the teeming city.

A native hooting out incomprehensible words behind him was not likely to get any attention from Bunter.

Bunter classed all the native population of India together as "niggers," and niggers were far beneath Bunter's notice. From the highest rajah to the lowest pariah they were all "blinking niggers," unworthy of any attention from so lofty a personage as W. G. Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove.

So he did not turn his lofty head, but walked on, as a voice shouted twice the meaningless words, "Khabardar raho."

The words were meaningless to Bunter; but, as a matter of fact, they had a meaning, and rather an important one to a fellow who was tramping along a road in the way of traffic, with a bullock-cart just behind him.

If Bunter had taken the trouble to look round he would have seen a native cart, with a bullock harnessed to it, driven by a dark gentleman whose clothing was extremely sparse, suited to the warmth of the climate. And the bullock-driver called out twice "Take care" in his own native tongue; and as the pedestrian did not choose to take care, the native gentleman let it go at that.

And so it came about that Bunter all of a sudden felt something poking in the middle of his back.

He looked round then, in a great hurry.

"Yoop!" he yelled.

It was the broad muzzle of an ox that poked into his back.

Bunter made a frantic jump to the roadside, tumbled over, and rolled in the dust.

"Ow!" he roared. "Oh! My hat! Wow!"

The bullock-driver grinned down at him. But possibly, in the hope of a tip from the white sahib for rendering assistance, he stopped his slow-moving vehicle and descended. Bunter sat up and blinked at him dizzily.

"You cheeky rotter!" he bawled. "What the thump do you mean by driving your blinking bullock into a fellow's back—what?"

"One thousand pardons, noble sahib!" said the bullock-driver, who, like many natives of Bombay, had a smattering of Baboo English.

He gathered up Bunter's pith hat, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 965.

which had fallen off, and handed it to him.

Bunter staggered to his feet.

He had had a jolt, and he was dusty and annoyed. But it occurred to his fat mind that this was a chance of a lift. If the Remove fellows followed him, they were likely to overtake him, with all the speed he could make. A bullock-cart was certainly not a fashionable method of conveyance, but it was a case of any port in a storm. A long and hot road lay before Bunter, and he had never liked exerting his fat limbs.

The driver eyed him, expecting a rupee, or a few annas, for his service. But Bunter's hand did not go to his pocket.

"You speak English?" asked Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles.

"Some English, indeed," answered the bullock-driver.

Bunter grinned. This was what the "blinking nigger" called English; but, as a matter of fact, it was better than Bunter could have done with Hindustani.

"Well, I want a lift," said Bunter. "I'm in a hurry to get down into Bombay. I'll give you a rupee for a lift in your cart—see?"

The man's eyes opened wide.

"Sahib go in bullock-cart?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Sach bat! As the sahib wishes," said the native.

Bunter climbed into the clumsy cart, and the driver resumed his seat and his way.

The slow bullock loped on, and the cart rumbled on its leisurely way; but, leisurely as it was, it was much faster than Bunter could have walked. The Owl of the Remove blinked back in the direction of the bungalow on the hill. It was out of sight behind tall trees, and there was as yet no sign of a pursuer on the road.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter. "They'll jolly well come after me, but they jolly well won't catch me now. I'll jolly well go back when I jolly well choose. Beasts!"

And he rumbled on contentedly. A jarring sound of croaking came to his ears, and he blinked at a mass of buildings at a little distance. He could see a great gateway, with a great flight of steps within. Overhead vultures were flying and circling and croaking.

"What's that?" asked Bunter.

The bullock-driver looked round.

"The Towers of Silence, sahib."

"What on earth is the Towers of Silence?" asked Bunter. "Those filthy vultures ought to be shot. What do they do there?"

"It is burial-place of Parsees."

"A cemetery?" said Bunter, staring.

The bullock-driver nodded.

"Queer sort of a cemetery," said Bunter.

"It is Parsee custom," said the bullock-driver. "Parsees do not bury the dead like the sahibs, or burn them like the Hindus. They are placed in the Towers of Silence."

"And what happens to them?" asked Bunter.

The driver jerked his thumb towards the circling vultures.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bunter.

And he asked no more questions. Bunter was keen on seeing the sights of Bombay, but he certainly did not want to explore the famed Towers of Silence.

The bullock-cart rumbled on, and came down into the busy city at last.

Bunter was safe from pursuit now, and as he did not want to traverse

Bombay in a bullock-cart with a low-caste native, he alighted. He handed the bullock-driver a rupee, and rolled on cheerfully into the crowd.

The Owl of the Remove was feeling quite elated now.

Harry Wharton & Co. could "stick" in the bungalow on the hill as long as they liked, while William George Bunter, as free as air, roamed through the swarming city and had a good time on his own.

There was plenty in the streets of Bombay to interest even an observant and self-centred fellow like Bunter.

The jostling crowds comprised every kind of dusky humanity—Parsees, Bengalees, Pathans from the hills, Arabs, Sikhs, and Rajputs. Bunter did not know one race from another, but he blinked at them all with inquisitive spectacles as he rolled cheerily along. He found himself blinking at a vast domed building, and looked round for a white man to inquire what building it was. As a matter of fact, it was the Victoria Railway Station, but it bore not the most distant resemblance to the railway-stations Bunter was used to at home. A railway-station, with columns and statues, set among banyan-trees, was rather new to Bunter. Certainly "Victoria" in Bombay was remarkably different from "Victoria" in London.

A tall, bronzed man had come out of the building, and Bunter was about to address his question to him, when he jumped.

The tall gentleman was Colonel Wharton.

Bunter jumped back.

But the colonel's eye had fallen on him, and he stared at Bunter with surprise and displeasure.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed.

The Owl of the Remove backed away.

"Bunter! What are you doing here?" exclaimed Colonel Wharton. "Come here at once, you young rascal!"

But Billy Bunter had no idea of being marched home by the Colonel. He dodged away in the crowd.

"Bunter!" called out Colonel Wharton angrily.

But Bunter was gone.

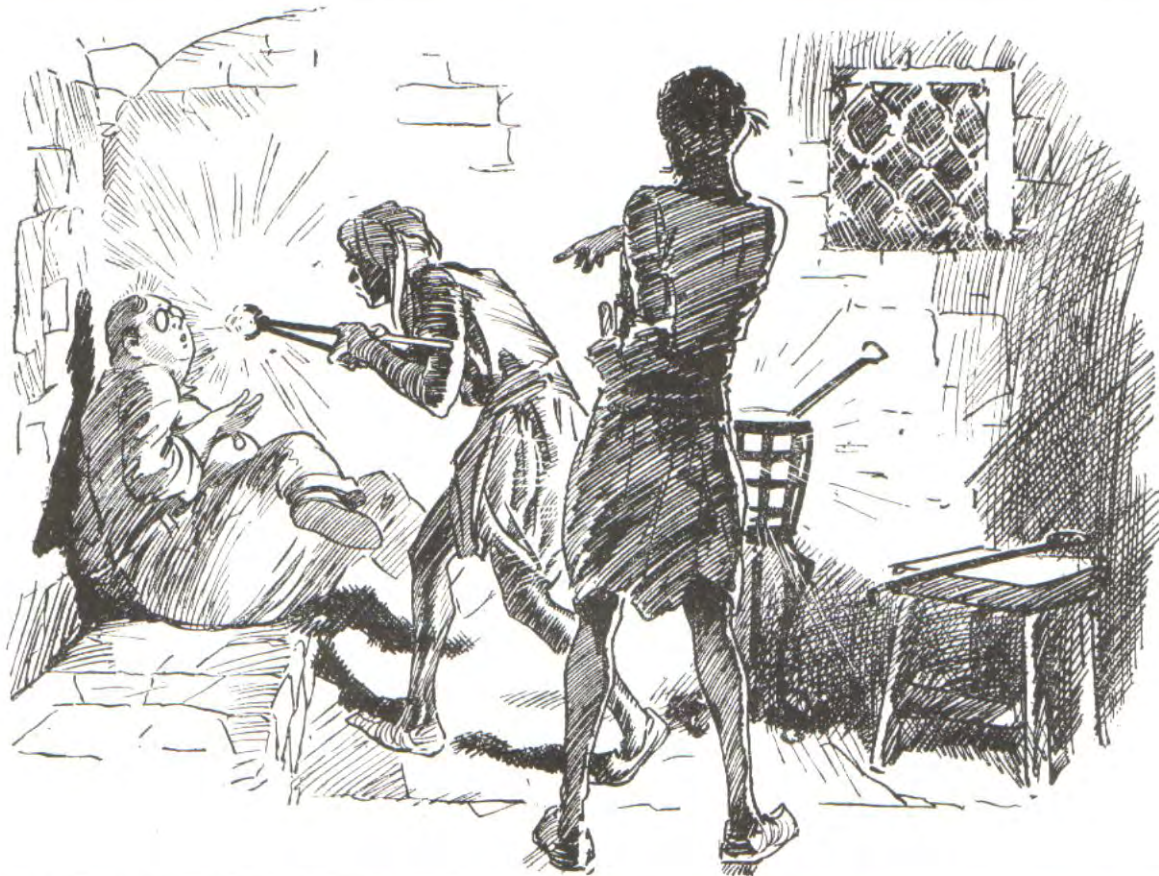
The colonel, setting his lips, made a stride in pursuit; and Bunter scuttled round a corner and took to his heels.

He did not stop till he found himself in the native city, in narrow streets and crowded bazaars, where he dropped into a walk again, and grinned over his success.

Here, indeed, it was impossible to proceed at more than a walk; for the streets were crowded and almost crammed. Narrow streets, with jutting upper stories to the houses, dusky little shops where dark men with gleaming eyes sat cross-legged among their wares; babble of voices in uncounted languages, glaring colours, every hue of the rainbow, in strange costumes. It was the real East, with its strange sights and sounds—not to mention smells. Billy Bunter was not specially sensitive on such matters, but he could not help noticing the smells.

He was in a Bombay now that might never have known the white man at all; the unchanging East as it had been before British feet trod the Indian shores; as it still would be when—if ever—the white sahibs trod those shores no more.

Billy Bunter wandered on, blinking round him as he went, taking in all the strange sights and sounds. In a narrow street where the jutting top stories almost shut out the sky, he stopped at last, realising that he did not quite know



Kalouth lifted a hot ember from the brazier, with a pair of bronze tongs, and approached Billy Bunter. The fat junior gazed at him wildly, and then at the grim, hard face of Nally Das. "Will you speak now?" asked Nally Das. The Owl of the Remove gave a wild yell as the glowing coal remained only a few inches from his terrified face. "Stop!" he yelled. "I—I'll speak!" (See Chapter 4.)

where he was, and that he was getting hungry. He found, too, that he was being jostled by three or four rough-looking natives, and he blinked at them in some alarm. Of what race they were, he did not know or care; but they had the look of their type—"hooligans" in London, "apaches" in Paris, "budmashes" in an Indian city.

Bunter did not like their looks at all, and he decided to get out of that narrow, smelly street as fast as he could.

He was opposite a little dusky den where copper and bronze pots were exposed for sale. The little group of budmashes had edged him, as if by accident, towards the shadowy entrance of the low-ceiled shop. Bunter tried to push his way out.

But he was pushed back, still, as it seemed, by accident, and he found himself on the door-sill of the shadowy little shop.

"Oh crikey!" murmured Bunter.

He did not realise yet that the bazaar roughs were giving him their special attention. He decided to wait in the doorway of the coppersmith's shop until they were gone.

But the budmashes did not go.

They gathered round the narrow doorway, shutting off Bunter from the street.

Bunter felt an inward quake.

It dawned upon him that these roughs, though they paid him no open attention, had jostled him into the shop

doorway intentionally, and were now deliberately shutting him off from egress.

In sudden alarm, Bunter strove to push a way through them. But the budmashes stood together in a thick group, blocking the narrow doorway outward, and Bunter dared not push hard. He backed into the doorway again, palpitating. Bunter was looking for anything but a shindy with a gang of bazaar roughs, and he had not the faintest idea of what he could do in such an emergency.

As he stood wondering and palpitating, blinking out into the narrow street and trying to make up his fat mind to attempt a sudden rush, he felt a grip laid on him from behind.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

He had only time for that one scared yelp.

The next moment a cloth was round his head and face, and he was lifted from his feet and carried away into the interior of the building.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In Merciless Hands!

BUMP!

Billy Bunter was laid down—not gently—on a rough plank floor.

The cloth was still over his head, and Bunter did not venture to make any attempt to remove it.

He lay quite still, save for the trembling that ran through his fat limbs.

He scarcely breathed in his terror.

Into what hands he had fallen he could not guess, save that they were the hands of enemies.

He had been carried up a rickety staircase—he had heard the old wooden stairs creaking under the weight of the two men who carried him—and into a room. Even though the cloth he could smell the close, almost poisonous atmosphere of a Hindu dwelling of a low class. It was clear, to his terrified mind, that he had been watched; that the bazaar budmashes who had grouped round him had purposely edged him into the coppersmith's shop, where these unknown kidnappers had been waiting to seize him. He had, in fact, walked right into a trap with his eyes open; he had rolled unthinkingly into the very danger from which Colonel Wharton had sought to guard the Greyfriars juniors. He was paying now the penalty of his disregard of the colonel's orders. The lofty independence he had asserted did not seem worth much to him now.

He lay and palpitated.

A murmur of voices came to his ears; he distinguished separate words here and there, but they had no meaning to him. It was a native language that was used; of which of dozens that were spoken in Bombay, he did not

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know. But that mattered little, for Bunter did not understand any of them.

Footsteps came and went; but the murmuring of voices showed Bunter that he was not left alone.

He dared not stir.

He lay in expectation of thievish hands stealing through his pockets; but he was not touched. It dawned upon his fat mind that he had not fallen into the hands of common thieves. There was little about him, indeed, to reward a thief: a handful of rupees, and the watch and chain which Bunter had told the Remove fellows at Greyfriars was worth thirty guineas—a statement which the Greyfriars Remove had taken the liberty of doubting. As Bunter lay palpitating and wondering what was going to happen to him, it came into his mind like a flash that it was the enemies of Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh who had seized him. Really, he might have guessed that on the instant, had not his fat mind been so much occupied with himself personally.

He had been spotted in the streets of Bombay by the spies of Baji Rao; that was clear to him now. And he had been followed and trapped; and the object of the kidnappers was to ascertain from him where to find the Nabob of Bhani-pur. Nally Das and his associates knew that Hurree Singh was in Bombay; and they intended to learn more from Bunter; the fat junior's foolish escapade had been a windfall to the plotting Hindus.

With a sudden movement, the cloth was jerked from Bunter's head. He dragged himself to a sitting position against a wall, and blinked round him, setting his spectacles straight on his fat nose.

He was in a shadowy room over the coppersmith's shop, lighted only by a window-space which opened upon a dusky interior corridor. The room was bare of furniture, save for a few ragged mats and a damaged stool. The light was so obscure that for some minutes Bunter could hardly make out his surroundings. But he was aware of a Hindu who stood before him, looking down on him with glinting black eyes, and of two or three dusky figures farther away.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

It was his first experience of a native "interior." The room, lighted and ventilated only by a window-space on the corridor, had no windows at all to the open air; the atmosphere was thick and foul, almost mephitic. In such a room a dozen Hindus might live, and work, and feed, and sleep, in the native quarters of Bombay. But the room was occupied now only by Bunter and his captors.

He blinked at the dark-skinned man who stood over him, and at last, in spite of the obscurity, recognised him. It was Nally Das, the man he had seen long ago near Greyfriars School in far-off England; the rascal who had kidnapped Wibley, of the Remove, in mistake for Hurree Singh, and who had afterwards attempted to kidnap the nabob in the Remove dormitory; the man who had tracked the Greyfriars party across Europe, and attacked Hurree Singh at Marseilles, and again attacked the party in the Red Sea with the help of a crew of Arab pirates. Bunter shivered from head to foot as he recognised him. He knew that he was in merciless hands; that to the Hindu plotter, his life would be no more than the life of a mosquito. Nally Das smiled grimly as he read Bunter's expression.

"It is you, little fat sahib," he said. "G-g-good-afternoon!" gasped Bunter.

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Nally Das stared at him.

"Where is the Huzoor?" he asked.

"The—the what?"

"The Huzoor," snapped Nally Das.

If Bunter had heard that word before, he had forgotten it. He blinked uncomprehendingly at the Hindu.

"I—I don't know," he stammered.

"It is false," said Nally Das, menacingly.

"I—I give you my word!" gasped

Bunter. "I—I don't even know what it is!"

"Fool! I mean his Highness—the nabob," snarled the Hindoo.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He realised that Huzoor was a title of honour, and that Nally Das was alluding to Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

The Hindu bent over him.

"Listen," he said. "It is well known that the colonel sahib and his party are in Bombay; but they are not at any of the hotels—all have been watched. They disappeared after landing at the Bunder. They have not yet left for the up-country—watch has been kept. The Huzoor is still in this city. Where?"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter again.

On points of honour, the Owl of the Remove was not very particular, in a good many respects. But even Billy Bunter had his limits. To betray Hurree Singh into the hands of his enemies was beyond Bunter's limit. Terrified as he was, the fat junior remained silent, blinking at the dark, threatening face of the Hindu.

"Son of a pig, answer me!" snapped Nally Das.

"I—I say, you know!" gasped Bunter.

"Where is the Huzoor?"

"I—I'm jolly well not going to tell you where he is," stammered Bunter.

"You can't expect it, you know."

"What?"

"You'd better jolly well let me go, too," said Bunter. "You'll get run in for this—you can't play these games under the British flag. My friends will search for me. I can tell you!"

"Will they find you here?" said Nally Das. "Do they know whither you went, and that you strayed into the shop of Bibi, the coppersmith?"

Bunter did not answer.

He did not even know where he was himself; he was lost in the maze of narrow, tortuous streets in the native city. That Harry Wharton & Co. were looking for him was very probable; that they would find him was very unlikely indeed.

"Will they find you here?" grinned Nally Das. "Will they find your body when it is buried under the coppersmith's floor?"

Bunter shuddered.

"Waste no more time in words," said Nally Das. "Your life is nothing to me—after the Huzoor is in my hands, you may go free, I care not. But you have been brought here to tell me where to find him."

"I—I can't!"

The Hindu shrugged his shoulders, and called:

"Kalouth!"

A brawny Hindu came forward.

Nally Das spoke a few words rapidly in Hindustani. Kalouth left the dusky room, and Bunter heard him tramp down the rickety, creaking stairs.

He waited in dismal apprehension.

There was a red glow in the shadows as Kalouth returned. He carried with him an iron brazier, glowing red. It was set down on the floor close to Bunter, so that he felt the heat from it.

Bunter's heart almost died within him.

"Will you speak now?" asked Nally Das grimly.

Bunter shivered, and was silent.

"Place a hot coal on his mouth!"

Kalouth lifted a hot ember from the brazier with a pair of bronze tongs, and approached the fat junior. His dark face was expressionless. Bunter gazed at him wildly, and then at the grim, hard face of Nally Das. He was to be put to torture, and in Nally Das' savage face he read no mercy.

A wild yell burst from Bunter.

"Stop!"

Nally Das signed to his associate. The glowing coal, held in the tongs, remained a few inches from Bunter's terrified face.

"Will you speak now?"

"Take it away!" panted Bunter.

Kalouth, at a sign from Nally Das, replaced the coal in the brazier. Bunter lay back in a state of collapse against the wall, the perspiration pouring down his fat face.

"Speak!" said Nally Das.

Bunter groaned.

There was no help for it. To face the torture was impossible, for Bunter at least. He had plunged himself into a terrible danger which he was not equal to facing. At that moment, he would have given the treasures of Golconda to be safe back in the bungalow on Malabar Hill. If only he had stayed there—if only he had had the sense enough to obey the colonel's orders! But it was too late to think of that now. He was in ruthless hands, and there was no help for him.

"Speak!" said Nally Das again.

And Bunter spoke. It came out in a terrified babble of words, and Nally Das listened intently. In a few minutes he knew all that the Owl of the Remove could tell him.

The Hindu smiled grimly.

"That is the truth?" he demanded.

"Yes," groaned Bunter.

"Ach-cha!" said the Hindu. "If it is the truth, well, the Huzoor will be in our hands to-night. If you have spoken falsely, you shall be torn by hot pincers before the morning."

"I—I've told you—"

"Enough."

Nally Das turned away, and spoke to his associates in his own tongue. Bunter was seized, and a rope passed round him, knotting his hands and feet. A gag was fastened in his mouth, and another rope secured him to a staple in the wall. Nally Das watched those proceedings, and when they were completed he strode away and disappeared down the staircase.

Bunter lay helpless on the foul floor, helpless as a trussed turkey. He was a prisoner—helpless to move, unable to utter a sound. And he could only wait—wait with terrified forebodings, while the darkness closed in over Bombay, and in the hours of darkness the emissaries of Baji Rao crept through the shadows to their dastardly work.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Spy!

"NOTHING doing!" said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton nodded.

The two juniors had hurried down the long road into Bombay, keeping their eyes open for Bunter. But for the lift the fat junior had obtained, probably they would have sighted him on the road and run him down. But as it was, Bunter had a good start; and once he was within the thronged city, it was futile to think of finding him.

That fact dawned upon the two

juniors as they trod the streets of Bombay. Bunter, evidently, had reached the town; and looking for any individual in the city was like looking for a needle in a stack of hay. Certainly, nine out of ten faces that passed the Greyfriars fellows were dusky faces of the East; and it was a European face they were seeking. But there were hundreds, if not thousands, of European faces to be seen; and Harry and Bob soon realised that only chance could throw them in Bunter's way. And chance did not favour them.

For a long time they strolled about the streets, glancing at all the European faces they saw, under the white topees, without seeing a sign of Bunter. And Bob Cherry pronounced at last that there was nothing doing and the captain of the Remove agreed.

"If we'd caught the fat bounder on the road from Malabar Hill, it would have been all right," said Harry. "But once he got into Bombay, we hadn't an

useless to prolong the vain search in the crowded streets. The two juniors turned their footsteps back in the direction of the bungalow on the hill.

Both of them were on the watch, however; and it was while looking round in the lingering hope of spotting the fat figure of Bunter, that Bob observed a loitering figure behind.

Two or three times he had observed it without specially heeding it; but it was borne in upon his mind at last that the loitering figure never left the track of the two juniors—up one street and down another, and along a third—and still the same figure in white ducks and a topee lingered behind them. Bob Cherry caught his breath as he realised it.

"We're watched, Harry!" he whispered.

"Sure?"

"Yes—that fellow yonder in the white ducks, with a cigarette in his mouth. I haven't been able quite to

"And now we've spotted him," said Harry, "don't give the rotter a sign that we've seen him—we've got to shake him off before we get home."

The juniors walked away by the Malabar Hill road.

Three or four times, glancing about as if at the bright gardens that surrounded the bungalows along the road, they spotted the Russian, loitering at a distance behind them. Further up the hill, the juniors stepped aside from a procession of Hindus coming down from the Walkeswar Temple, and the crowd of natives hid them for the time from the eyes of the following spy.

"This way!" muttered Harry. "Quick!"

He drew Bob Cherry behind the corner of a garden wall, overhung by branches of trees from the garden within.

The juniors stopped. "What's the game?" asked Bob.

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earthly. I only hope he will come back safely."

"Blessed if it matters much if he doesn't!" growled Bob.

"The fat fool may get into no end of trouble," said Wharton, frowning. "There are plenty of places in Bombay where a European cannot go—and Bunter is ass enough to walk right into them!"

"Quite!" agreed Bob.

"And there are spies watching for all of us," said Harry. "If Nally Das or his friends should catch sight of Bunter they could shadow him home and find out where Inky is."

"He ought to be jolly well kicked!" grunted Bob.

"He's likely enough to lose his way, too, and not be able to get back to Malabar Hill," said Harry. "If so, he may stay out the night and we sha'n't know what has happened."

"Blessed if I shall care much."

Wharton shook his head.

The folly of the fat junior was irritating enough, and very probably it meant danger for the whole party. But if Bunter had landed himself into serious trouble it was a matter of concern for the other Greyfriars fellows, all the same.

But there was, as Bob said, nothing doing. The sun was sinking in a blaze of purple and gold; and it was

see his face—he doesn't want it to be seen, I fancy. I'm sure he's following us!"

Wharton set his lips.

It was too exasperating if, in searching for the fatuous Owl of the Remove, the two juniors themselves had fallen in with Baji Rao's spies, and themselves afforded a clue to the nabob's enemies.

"Stop here a minute," said Harry.

He halted before a native shop in which gilt-framed mirrors were exposed for sale. A little fat Parsee, squatted in the dusky shop, blinked inquiringly at the two schoolboys. But Wharton was not thinking of purchasing any of the gaudy wares; he was looking into a glass that gave a view of the street behind him. And, reflected in the glass, he saw the man with the cigarette loitering behind, and saw him give a keen glance. The pith hat shaded his face; but with the backs of the juniors turned to him, he raised his head, and, reflected in the glass, the two Greyfriars fellows saw his features.

"Lazaroff!" muttered Harry.

It was the Russian rascal, whom the juniors knew to be a member of Nally Das' kidnapping gang.

"That settles it," said Bob, in a low voice. "He's spotted us, and he's shadowing us, Harry."

"He will come along past this corner in a few minutes and see us here."

"I know! But he doesn't know we're waiting for him," said Harry. "He will turn this corner, thinking we're fifty yards ahead."

Bob's eyes gleamed.

"Good; and we'll collar the rotter."

"Just that!" said Harry. "We two can handle him easily enough, together, and we'll give him something else than spying to think about."

Bob Cherry chuckled softly.

The shadows were already lengthening; and the road was deserted. The brief twilight was fading into night, and already stars were glimmering in the deep blue of the sky. On the Malabar road a motor-car passed, humming; but in the lane into which the juniors had turned, there was not a soul to be seen. It was a favourable spot for dealing with the pertinacious spy who had dogged them up the hill road from the city.

The footsteps of the spy approached the corner.

The juniors waited breathlessly, in the shadow of the overhanging branches by the garden wall.

Lazaroff came quickly round the corner.

He had quickened his steps, probably fearing that the Greyfriars juniors

might enter some building in the lane and escape him. They were, as a matter of fact, still a good distance from home, but Lazaroff, of course, was not aware of that.

He was almost running as he came round the corner, and he came abreast of the two juniors, staring ahead of him, and not even seeing the two figures by the wall.

With a simultaneous spring, the two Removites of Greyfriars were upon him.

The attack was utterly unexpected. Before he knew what was happening, the Russian was sprawling on the ground, and Wharton was kneeling on his chest. Bob Cherry grasped his wrists and held them.

Lazaroff spluttered out something in his own language and struggled fiercely.

But he was at a disadvantage, and the Greyfriars juniors held him well. The next moment he recognised them.

"You!" he exclaimed. "Then you knew—"

"You couldn't speak English when we saw you in England," grinned Bob Cherry. "You've learned all of a sudden, what?"

Lazaroff gritted his teeth.

"Let me go! Release me!" he snarled.

"Not this evening!" chuckled Bob.

The Russian made a desperate effort to drag his hands loose. The juniors knew well enough that he was seeking to get at a weapon. Bob Cherry dragged his hands over his head, twisting his wrists, and there was a howl of pain from the spy.

"Nothing doing, old bean!" said Bob cheerily. "We've got you!"

The Russian panted.

"What do you want? What do you mean to do?"

"We mean to stop your spying, you rotter!" said Wharton.

"I am here by chance. I—"

"What's the good of telling lies?" said the captain of the Remove scornfully. "We've had our eyes on you all the way up from the town. You followed us from Bombay."

A curse was the Russian's answer.

He was powerless in the grip of the two sturdy juniors, but he was watching like a cat for his chance.

But the Greyfriars fellows were careful not to give him a chance. Bob Cherry dragged his hands together and held them in a grip of iron, while Wharton knelt on him and pinned him down. Harry glanced up and down the dusky lane. There was no one in sight—no one to interfere.

"Tie his hands, Bob!" said Harry.

"Good!"

Bob Cherry drew a string from his pocket, doubled it for strength, and proceeded to bind it round the Russian's wrists. Lazaroff struggled again, savagely, and Wharton, without hesitating, grasped his ears and thudded his head on the hard, sun-baked earth.

Thud! Thud! Bang!

Lazaroff gasped and panted.

"Stop! Stop!"

"Keep still, then!"

"You shall pay for this!" hissed Lazaroff.

"Hold your tongue!" said Harry. "Get on with it, Bob."

The Russian, dazed and furious, lay still, and his hands were bound. Then strips were torn from his own white ducks to bind his ankles. In a few minutes the spy lay quite helpless, and the juniors rose and left him.

His eyes gleamed after them.

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"You mean to leave me here—like this?" he panted.

"You can wriggle loose in an hour or two," said Bob cheerily. "It will keep you busy, old bean, and keep you out of mischief."

And the two juniors went on their way, leaving the Russian wriggling, in his bonds, in the shadow of the wall, and yelling for help.

"Trot!" said Harry.

The two juniors went on their way at a run. It was probable that the Russian would be found and released before long. But long before that could happen the Greyfriars fellows were far beyond tracking. The Russian's shouting voice died away behind them.

"All serene!" chuckled Bob.

A quarter of a mile from the spot where they had left the spy the juniors dropped into a walk. Night had closed in now, but it was very hot, and their faces were wet with perspiration.

The whirr of a car on the road behind them caused the juniors to look back. The gleaming lights of the car blazed through the dusky shadows. As they watched it passing the car suddenly stopped.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob. "What—"

"Harry!" came a sharp voice from the car.

It was Colonel Wharton's voice.

"Uncle!" exclaimed Harry.

The bronzed face of the colonel looked from the car with a grim frown.

"Harry! What are you doing here?"

Wharton coloured with vexation. He hastened to explain.

"That ass, Bunter, cleared off, uncle, and we thought we'd better go and look for him."

"Oh! Have you found him?"

"No."

"I saw him myself, near the Victoria Station," said the colonel. "The young rascal had the impudence to elude me. Get into the car."

Harry and Bob Cherry stepped into the car, and it glided on again. The colonel's face was very grim.

"We thought we ought to fetch that fat duffer back, sir," said Bob Cherry diffidently.

"I do not blame you," said the colonel. "But Bunter, the young rascal, will have to be sent back if he cannot obey orders. You have not seen anything of the enemy?"

"We have, though," said Bob.

Harry Wharton explained what had happened to the spy, Lazaroff. The colonel stared for a moment, and then smiled grimly.

"Good!" he said. "But Bunter will not be able to take care of himself in the same way. His folly may mean danger. Perhaps we shall find him at home when we arrive."

But when the car reached the bungalow, and the khansama came bowing down to the gate to usher in the colonel sahib, it was soon learned that Bunter had not come back. And as the night grew older there was still no sign of Bunter, and it became fairly certain that something had happened to the Owl of the Remove in Bombay. The episode of Lazaroff was a proof that the spies of Baji Rao were keenly on the watch for the Greyfriars party, and the conviction grew in every mind that the fat junior had fallen in with the enemy. It was likely to be an anxious night for the party in the bungalow on Malabar Hill.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Danger of the Night!

"THE silly owl!"
"The fathead!"
"The burbling duffer!"
"The terrific clump!"

The Famous Five, sitting in the starlight on the bungalow veranda, were expressing their opinions of Billy Bunter.

It was a late hour, but they were not thinking of bed. They were thinking of Bunter and of the danger into which he had probably fallen, and the danger which might follow to the nabob.

There was likely to be little sleep for the Greyfriars party that night.

Lazaroff had been defeated; if he had rejoined his associates he had been unable to carry them any information. But if Bunter was in the hands of the enemy there was little doubt that Nally Das and his gang knew where to look for the Nabob of Bhanipur.

At midnight the juniors were still up and wakeful.

The weary punkah-wallahs had gone off duty, and the punkahs no longer swayed. The night was hot and stifling. Hardly a breeze came from the sea to fan the perspiring brows of the juniors. It was hot on Malabar Hill, and as they looked at the twinkling lights of Bombay, they wondered what it was like in the close, stifling city. But they were not thinking much about the heat; it was the disappearance of Billy Bunter that troubled them.

"The fat idiot!" said Bob Cherry for the twentieth time. "I jolly well wish we'd chained him up!"

"The chainfulness would have been the proper caper," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and ludicrous Bunter was bound to butt into trouble."

"They've got him," said Nugent.

"Looks like it," grunted Johnny Bull. "And I feel jolly well inclined to think that they're welcome to him."

"But what will happen to the fat duffer?" said Bob, in a low voice. "Those brutes would think no more of wringing his fat neck than of snuffing out a candle."

"Life is cheap in India," said the nabob. "The cheapfulness is, in fact, terrific. Bunter has asked for it."

"The fat clump!"
"It's his own fault!" growled Johnny Bull.

Bunter's folly was exasperating enough, but all angry feelings were banished by the thought of the fat junior's terrible danger. If he was in the hands of Nally Das his life was worth little.

There was a heavy tread, and Colonel Wharton joined the schoolboys in the shadowy veranda. His bronzed face was very grim. The juniors knew that he had been down to Bombay, and they looked at him with quick inquiry.

"No news," said the colonel quietly. "The police will do all they can. But if Bunter has fallen into the hands of Nally Das the police can do little or nothing. He cannot be merely lost; even Bunter would have sense enough to find his way somewhere before this. It is possible, of course, that he has wandered into some dangerous quarter, and been robbed and murdered by some gang of badmashes. But—"

The juniors shivered.

"But I think that I see the hand of our enemies in this," the colonel went on, "and if they have laid hands on Bunter, their object can only have been to learn from him where to look for Hurree Singh."



Harry Wharton rose silently to his feet, his heart beating fast. There was the glitter of a knife. Silently, softly, the man without was sawing away at the mosquito netting over the window. Harry felt a touch on his arm in the darkness, and he turned to see the gleaming eyes of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. The nabob was awake, but in the deep chairs, the other Greyfriars juniors were sleeping. (See Chapter 6.)

"Bunter wouldn't tell them, sir," said Nugent.

"Probably he would use very drastic measures to make him speak," said Colonel Wharton. "If he is in their hands, they know by this time where to find us."

"I—I suppose so."
"But for his folly, we should have left Bombay to-morrow without trouble," said the colonel. "As the matter stands, I expect trouble. Nally Das will not let Hurree Singh reach Bhanipur if he can help it."

Harry Wharton glanced out into the shadows.

"You think—"

"I think that the night will not pass without an alarm," said Colonel Wharton. "What measures Nally Das will take I cannot guess, but I am certain that he will make an attempt upon Hurree Singh now that he knows where to look for him."

"That may mean a scrap?" said Bob.

"Quite probably."

"We're ready, sir," said Johnny Bull.

The colonel smiled faintly.

"Every precaution is taken," he said.

"Every arrangement is now made for our journey up-country, and I had hoped to leave Bombay without trouble, but now I have had to take precautions. The bungalow is well-guarded; if the enemy venture here in the dark hours they will not escape so easily as they come. There are a dozen Pathan police on the watch."

Harry Wharton & Co. stared out of the veranda into the glimmering starlight of the Indian night.

There was no sign to be seen of the Bombay police; the night was quiet, breathless, still. From other bungalows, at a distance among the dark trees, came twinkling lights. From one of them could be heard the strains of wireless

music. It was difficult to imagine that in that quiet residential quarter of the city, to all appearance as quiet and orderly as a London suburb, desperate men might be creeping through the shadows towards the bungalow, and that the dark-faced Pathan police were keeping watch and ward unseen, unheard.

"I shall not sleep to-night," the colonel went on, "and you—"

"Nor us, either," said Bob. "If there's going to be a scrap, we want to be in it, sir."

"At all events, you may watch," said Colonel Wharton. "All lights will be extinguished, and you must go into the house. But you may remain up if you wish."

"Yes, rather!"

It was close on midnight, one by one the lighted windows of the houses on Malabar Hill darkened, and the sounds died away. Bombay was sleeping at last.

In a large room adjoining the veranda the juniors sat in long chairs, sometimes dozing, but never closing their eyes for long. The faint breeze of the night penetrated by the windows, covered only by the mosquito netting.

The colonel had left them; they guessed that he was on the watch outside the building with the Pathan policemen. It was about two o'clock in the morning when Harry Wharton started out of a doze, and listened to a faint sound from the window that opened on the veranda.

He rubbed his eyes and stared at the glimmering starlight without. Against the starlight a dark form showed up, close by the window.

For a moment Wharton fancied that it was the colonel. But dim and shadowy as the figure was, he quickly realised that it was that of a native. He rose silently to his feet, his heart beating fast.

There was the glitter of a knife.

Silently, softly, the man without was sawing away at the mosquito netting over the window, which was all that prevented his entrance.

Harry felt a touch on his arm in the darkness. He turned to see the gleaming eyes of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. The nabob was awake, but in the deep chairs Bob and Nugent and Johnny Bull were sleeping. Hurree Singh pressed the arm of the captain of the Remove.

"Silence!" he whispered in an almost inaudible voice. "Be on your guard, my esteemed chum. It is Nally Das!"

Wharton wondered whether the nabob could see, like a cat, in the dark. But as he watched the stealthy figure at the mosquito netting he realised that its outlines were familiar. It was Nally Das, the kidnapper, and his presence was a proof that he had learned all that Bunter could tell him.

Wharton's grasp closed on a loaded cane.

In spite of the watchfulness of the police in the bungalow gardens, Nally Das had reached the house undiscovered. It was certain that he had associates in his desperate enterprise, but, so far, there was no sound of alarm.

Faintly in the still night came the slight sounds of the Hindu's knife parting the mosquito netting, strand after strand.

Wharton detected a lurking grin on Hurree Singh's dusky face. The nabob, too, held a loaded stick in his hand.

"Let him enter!" breathed Hurree Singh. "This time he will not escape, and we shall leave him behind prison walls when we leave Bombay."

Wharton nodded.

The Hindu had cut an opening now, and with the stealthiness of a tiger, or a serpent, he insinuated his sleek, lithe body through. Slowly, slowly, stealthily, the dusky rascal crept through till he

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stood within the room, his black, glinting eyes watchful. But watchful as he was, Nally Das was not prepared for what happened.

From the darkness there came suddenly the swish of a descending cane, and the end of it, heavily loaded with lead, crashed on the turbaned head of Nally Das.

There was a faint cry.

The Hindu dropped on his knees helplessly under Wharton's sudden, crashing blow.

But he was not stunned; already he was springing up again, knife in hand, when the nabob struck.

Crash!

With a faint moan Nally Das dropped senseless on the floor.

"Good man!" panted Wharton.

The crash of the falling Hindu awakened the sleepers. Bob Cherry and Nugent and Johnny Bull leaped up.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"What—"

"They're at it!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as a sudden burst of startling sound came from the dark gardens.

Crack, crack!

And the sudden ringing of firearms was followed by an outbreak of wild and furious yells.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Ransom!

LIGHTS flashed from the windows of the bungalow. Loud shouts from the native servants' quarters answered the outbreak of yelling in the gardens. There was a pattering of naked feet on the veranda. For a second a dark, savage face looked in at the room where Nally Das lay senseless at the feet of the Greyfriars juniors, and a gleam of steel was seen. But the face and the dagger vanished simultaneously as there was a heavy tread and the crack of a revolver. Outside the window with the torn netting the stalwart figure of Colonel Wharton appeared.

"You are safe here?" cried the colonel.

"All safe, uncle," called back Harry.

Colonel Wharton was panting.

"The cunning scoundrels got through the cordon," he said. "They were too cunning for us—like snakes, the rascals! One of them was on the veranda a second ago. I fired at him."

A light shone in the room now. The colonel looked in anxiously. In spite of the careful watch round the bungalow, the creeping, cunning Hindus had penetrated undiscovered into the gardens, and at least two of them had reached the house. One had fled before the colonel's revolver; but one lay senseless where the juniors had struck him down. Nally Das, at least, was not so escape.

"Have you seen—" the colonel went on, when he sighted the senseless Hindu on the floor, and broke off. "Who—what—"

"It's Nally Das, uncle. He got in," said Harry. "He is stunned."

"Good gad!"

"He won't wake up for a bit," said Johnny Bull, kneeling beside the Hindu and looking at him. "He's had a terrific crack."

"Two," said Harry. "Both Inky and I got him."

"Good!" said the colonel. "When I found that they had got through, I feared — But, thank goodness, you were on your guard! The rest of the rascals will not trouble us much now."

Colonel Wharton strode back from the veranda.

The khansama and the black servants of the bungalow were yelling with alarm, unheeded. In the gardens, the juniors could hear the tramping of the Pathan policemen, and see the flashing of lights, as they hunted for the intruders. Yell after yell broke out in the night, as man after man was discovered and seized. The attempt had been a desperate one. The disappearance of Bunter could not have failed, as Nally Das must have known, to put the Greyfriars party on their guard. He could not have been unaware that watch would be kept at the bungalow, and that the Governor of Bombay would afford the colonel any aid he required for the protection of the Prince of Bhanipur. Yet the desperate rascal had made the attempt, and with such cunning and stealth that it had come near to success. But for Harry Wharton, Nally Das would have reached the nabob, at least.

The juniors listened in silence to the uproar that broke out, and died away, and broke out again, as the extensive gardens were searched, and searched again, for the stealthy intruders. Under a lamp that shone from the veranda, they saw a couple of Pathan police, in charge of a group of handcuffed prisoners. Man after man was added, handcuffed, to the group. Desperate as the attempt had been, it had been made in force, and there had been a chance of success. But it had failed, and failed utterly. Of the kidnapping gang who had stolen so stealthily into the shadowy gardens not one escaped the search of the police.

"Looks like a win for Greyfriars," Bob Cherry remarked, with a cheery chuckle.

There was a faint moan from Nally Das. In a moment the juniors surrounded him.

"He's coming to," said Harry.

The Hindu's dark eyes opened wildly, and he stared round him. For a moment he seemed unable to grasp where he was, or what had happened. Then, as his glance fell on the juniors, he made an effort to rise.

Hurree Singh's loaded cane rose in the air.

"Stay where you are, son of a pig!" he said.

"Huzoor!" gasped the Hindu.

"If you move, my esteemed kidnapping scoundrel, I shall crack your skull like a disgusting eggshell!"

Nally Das eyed him evilly, and lay still. It needed only a blow from the loaded cane to stun him.

"You have failed, you rascal!" said Harry Wharton contemptuously; "and your friends are rounded up by the police."

The Hindu's eyes glittered.

"I have obeyed my lord!" he said.

"Who is master of his fate?"

And he lay silent.

The tramping and the outcries in the gardens ceased at last. Colonel Wharton came back to the veranda, and Wharton opened the door to him: The Pathan police were already marching away the prisoners. Nally Das remained in the bungalow.

"Is this rascal going with the rest, sir?" asked Bob.

"I have to question him first. Stand up, Nally Das."

The Hindu rose to his feet. There was a bruise on his dark forehead, and a trickle of blood ran down his cheek. He tottered for a moment, and then pulled himself together, and faced the colonel. His face was almost impassive, only the savage glitter of his eyes betraying his rage and disappointment. Colonel Wharton eyed him grimly.

"You came here by the order of the Rajah Baji Rao?" he said.

"Nally Das does not betray his master, sahib."

"It matters little. It is well known who is at the bottom of this plot," said the colonel. "The scoundrel will be dealt with before long. You will precede him to the convict settlement on the Andaman Islands."

The Hindu shrugged his shoulders.

"It was written that I should fail," he said. "But there are others, and the Huzoor is not yet at Bhanipur."

"Look!" said Colonel Wharton, with a gesture towards the gardens. "Your accomplices have been taken. They are on their way to prison in Bombay. You will follow."

"Have I asked for mercy?" jeered Nally Das.

"I have a question to put to you before you go, you dog. Bunter has fallen into your hands."

"The sahib speaks truly. The little fat sahib is a prisoner," said Nally Das calmly.

"Where is he?"

The Hindu grinned, and did not answer.

"Is he alive?"

"As yet he lives," said Nally Das coolly. "But if I do not return before dawn, he will not see the sun rise on the morrow."

The juniors exchanged glances.

"In the Bombay prison they have ways and means of making you tell where you have hidden him," said the colonel.

"The sahib says what he does not believe," answered Nally Das. "The British Raj does not use the torture; but even the torture would not draw a word from Nally Das that he did not choose to utter. Send me to your prison, and send me to the convict prison on the Andamans. That will not save the life of the little fat sahib. He will die under the red-hot pincers, and his body will never be found."

There was a pause. Harry Wharton & Co. were silent. They understood the mocking, ironical expression on the dark face of Nally Das. He was bargaining for his own liberty, and offering Bunter's life as a ransom. It was easy to read his thoughts.

Colonel Wharton spoke at last.

"Bunter deserves to suffer for his disobedience," he said. "But I cannot let him perish. Your liberty for his life, Nally Das."

"The sahib might have said so without waste of time," said the Hindu composedly. "Did I not know why the police were sent away without me? Give me my freedom, and the little fat sahib shall rejoin his friends."

"When Bunter is here you shall go," said Colonel Wharton. "Bandy no more words with me, you scoundrel! A servant here shall take any message you wish to send, and you shall be given one hour to make your escape."

"Much less would suffice for Nally Das." The Hindu bowed his head. "Let me write, and let a bearer take the message to the coppersmith's shop in the Bandar Bazaar."

And when the letter was written, in strange Nagari characters that the juniors could not read, Nally Das sat in a chair, leaned back his head, and composed himself to sleep. Treacherous rascal as he was, he knew that he could place implicit faith in the word of the sahib, and he had no fear for himself.

Harry Wharton & Co. went to bed, to snatch a little sleep before dawn. The

(Continued on page 17.)



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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.

Boundary Hits! "SCORED"

THE Yorkshire players carry a portable gramophone about with them, and the tunes are turned on whenever there is a break in the play. We have heard the gramophone, and thereby learnt another reason why Yorkshire win so many of their matches.

When going to attend each of the Test matches of the present season, Arthur Carr, the England captain, has worn the regimental colours of the Fifth Lancers. This, we take it, has been to enable him to get into the right fighting mood to meet the Australians.

Freeman, the Essex player, has announced his intention of retiring from cricket at the end of the present season. We don't see any reason for him to do this, but he is a free man, so he can't be prevented.

It has sometimes been said, during the present season, that Lancashire have rightly earned the distinction of being the worst fielding side among all the counties. The reply of one of their players to this charge is that some counties are not distinguished for anything.

The left-handed batsmen of England have not shown up particularly well during the current campaign, which merely emphasises what the office-boy has been telling us all along—that the left-handers can't really be right.

At one period of the season Major Green, the new captain of Lancashire, won the toss six times off the reel. We suppose he always did an Irish jig each time.

For a long time the bowling averages have been headed by Rhodes, Cox, Tyldesley, and Richmond. Now, as it happens, all these are slow bowlers, merely providing another illustration of the wisdom behind the story of the hare and the tortoise—that the race is really to the slow and not to the fast.

Grimmett, the Australian bowler, is a sign-writer by trade. It is said that he came over here with the direct intention of giving us more than a touch of the "blues."

Jack Gregory is among the most enthusiastic of autograph hunters. He has a copy of Ranji's book of cricket in which are pasted leaves containing the autographs of all the most famous players. But Jack has more sense than to ask a player for his autograph after he has just bowled him out.

A. A. Mailey is a cartoonist, but though he draws faces very well, on the cricket field he prefers to get a back view of his opponents.

Root, the bowler who has come to the front so much this season, has a habit of rubbing the ball up and down his trouser-leg every time he prepares to send down a delivery. I am anxiously awaiting news of what his laundry thinks about this habit.

Cold Feet in the Tests!

A trying ordeal for the Test Match player.

IT would be difficult to imagine a more trying sporting ordeal than that which faces a batsman who goes to the wicket for the first time in a Test match. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that more than one player has confessed to me that he has suffered from "cold feet," or to put the matter in other words, "stage fright." Especially is the ordeal a big one if the player happens to be called upon when things are going badly for his side. Think of his feelings. He goes out of the pavilion. First of all, there is the round of applause; then the tens of thousands of spectators sit back in absolute silence. The batsman sees the bowler preparing to send down that first ball to him; a terrifying bowler like Gregory, it may be, running twenty yards or more at top speed before he delivers the ball. The batsman who shivers a bit in his shoes, who wonders whether

THAT FIRST BALL

is also going to be his last may well be forgiven. Yes, it needs a man of iron nerve to face such an ordeal and to do himself justice.

We have all heard a lot during the present season about big match temperament, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that some men are lacking in this most valuable asset, while it is equally true that others seem most at home when the occasion is biggest.

Just take an example of the latter from Herbert Sutcliffe, the famous Yorkshire batsman. He did very well in Australia during the last English tour there, but after his return his county form had not been extraordinary. Indeed, some people thought that he should not have been picked for this season's Test matches. But when he went out to bat with Jack Hobbs in the second Test match at Lord's, we soon knew that the selectors were right; that an ordinary Sutcliffe in county games became an extraordinary Sutcliffe in Test matches. He and Hobbs had to start the England innings against a big Australian total, yet they never flinched. Here, indeed, were two men of the right stamp; who knew not what the phrase "cold feet" means.

While some men can be chosen because they have

THE RIGHT TEMPERAMENT

for big Test games, others have to be left out because they are lacking in that necessary confidence. One player I know—it would not be quite "cricket" to mention his name, is of no use at all unless he goes in first. If he has to get on his pads and go to the wicket immediately after the other fellows have got out, he is as right as rain. On the other hand, if he has to sit and wait for his innings he is just a bundle of nerves when his turn comes to bat, and he utterly fails to do himself justice.

In this matter of "nerves" the bowler is in a much better position than the batsman. So far as the bowler is concerned, everything doesn't depend on two or three balls, as it may in the case of the batsman. The bowler with "cold feet" may send down a wide with his first ball, but he gradually recovers, and eventually has time to forget his "nerves."

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THE PROUDEST BOY IN ENGLAND



CORNELIUS KING, the lucky recipient of the bat with which W. Bardsley, the famous Australian, compiled his fine century in the second Test Match.



Charles Gordon Macartney

The Brilliant Australian All-Rounder,

who forms the subject of this week's topping
Free Gift.



WHEN the English cricketers were last in Australia the goddess of fortune did not smile kindly on them as a whole, but they had one piece of good luck—in the fact that Charles Gordon Macartney was too ill to play against them. Of all the giants of Australian cricket, Macartney is perhaps the greatest idol—a most popular little figure, and at his best perhaps the greatest all-rounder in modern cricket.

He is thirty-nine years of age, but having fully recovered from his serious illness, he was chosen to take part in yet another trip to England without the slightest hesitation, and among the other treats he has given English audiences was a delightful century in the second Test. Perhaps we do not all

agree with Clem Hill when he says that Macartney is a better batsman even than Jack Hobbs, but, all the same, there are few more delightful men to watch than the man who goes under the pet name of

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

By way of starting his business career he went into Government service, but an indoor office job suited neither his health nor his temperament, so he left it, and is now engaged in a sports outfitting business with Oldfield, the wicket-keeper, at Sydney. This fact should be remembered, for, in addition to a business partnership, these two men have been partners in the dismissal of many English batsmen.

Macartney, who both bats and bowls left-handed, sends down some most tempting slow ones, and is extremely difficult to play on a damaged wicket. With the ball he is really a sort of "spoof" artist, up to all the legitimate

TRICKS OF THE TRADE.

I have seen him move his field most carefully and obviously, change his run to the wicket, and even the manner of holding the ball as he advanced. But after all this preparation to get the batsman guessing, he has sent down exactly the same sort of delivery as the one before it.

Yet when all is said and done, the charm of Macartney's cricket, and the secret of his popularity, lies not so much in what he does as the way in which he does it. It is his electrical quickness and intensity of concentration that make so wide an appeal. He never does anything in a slovenly way—never ambles along either with bat or ball or when in the field. He always plays in a cap closely fitted to his head and with the peak shielding his eyes. If he got a century or two, the cap would remain there unmoved, and if he got ten wickets he would still go about his cricket in the same businesslike way, without any sign of pleasure or excitement. He has played cricket practically all over the world, has scored many centuries against England, and when with the Australian team in this country in 1921 he kept the bowlers and fielders of Notts at it while he made 345 in one innings. Indeed, just about then he had the following scores in consecutive innings—105, 193, 345, and 115, the last-mentioned effort being in a Test match.

Honest Stealing!

How "cheeky" singles may be as valuable as boundaries.

THERE are few things more thrilling in cricket as what are called stolen runs. When two men "steal" one after giving the ball ever such a gentle tap the on-lookers thrill with delight. I shall never forget one such stolen run in the second Test match at Lord's during the present season. Sutcliffe was batting, and Gregory sent down a nasty " Yorker." Sutcliffe jammed his bat down right on top of the ball so that it did not travel a yard. From the other end there came a cry "Yes!" from Jack Hobbs, and away the batsmen flew across the wicket to steal one safely, in spite of a desperate effort by Gregory, who came tearing up the pitch, to kick the ball into the wicket and run Hobbs out. How the onlookers cheered that "cheeky" one! Anybody listening outside, and not knowing what was happening, would have suspected from the cheer that somebody had just done the hat-trick or completed a century.

GOOD TACTICS.

As a matter of fact, however, this sort of "honest stealing" has much more value than that of providing the spectators with a thrill. It is good cricket tactics in the game right down from Test matches to the humblest of boys' cricket.

In the first place, no one can tell in the early stages of any match just how many runs will be required to win the game. Consequently, it is up to the batsmen to make every possible single. I remember once, after a Test match had been lost by three runs, talking to a man who took part in it. And this

is what he said: "We should have won the match easily if every possible single had been run; but some chances of getting the singles were wasted, and we lost by three." Probably at the close of every match which has resulted in a very near thing the players have been able to look back and decide that the result would have been different if every possible single had been stolen.

TRICKING YOUR OPPONENTS!

Look at the good effect, from the batting side's point of view, in other directions, too. Nothing so worries the fielding side as to have "stolen runs" booked up against them. The fielders are apt to get flurried, and to shy at the wicket with the object of running the batsman out, but these mad shies often only end in a boundary "overthrow" being recorded against them.

Again, if a couple of batsmen at the wicket are stealing runs, the captain of the fielding side is apt to get at his wits' end as to what to do. If the fielders are kept well out to save hard hits, the batsmen steal short runs. If the fielders are brought in to save the short ones, then the batsmen find it ever so much easier to record the boundaries. I have never seen a captain and his fielders look so worried as have Collins and his men when Hobbs and Sutcliffe, those expert stealers of runs, have been getting cheeky ones. They didn't know what to do. That was obvious from the way they moved about, first a little bit nearer the wicket, and then a little bit further away.

UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER FIRST!

It should also be remembered that a couple of batsmen who make a habit

of stealing runs make the fielders much more tired, too. Suppose a man is fielding at mid-off, and the ball goes in his direction. If the batsmen don't even shape for a run, mid-off is able to stand still and wait for the ball to come to him. If, however, he suspects that the batsmen will steal one if he doesn't hustle, mid-off must dash to meet the ball, thus taking much more out of himself, and, incidentally, render himself much more likely to mis-field the ball.

It may seem a little matter that the fielders should have to run quickly to every ball which is driven in their direction. But in the long run the expenditure of energy tells. As everybody knows, practically every Test innings of the present season has occupied the greater part of a day, and some innings have not even been completed in a day. Now the fielders will dash eagerly enough after a ball in the early part of the innings, but continual dashing makes them tired, and compels them to spend energy which they would rather retain for bowling and batting. Thus from every point of view it will be seen that when batsmen steal runs they are doing their side an all-round service.

On this matter of stolen runs, however, my readers will probably want to pull me up and remind me of the risks which the batsmen run—the risks of being run out. That there is this risk cannot be denied, but, on the other hand, there is not really a big risk provided the two batsmen understand each other, and have confidence in each other's calling for the "short ones." Therein lies the secrets of run-stealing. It is hopeless for two fellows to try to steal runs if one of them is going to yell "Go back!" when the other fellow says "Come on!" It is also hopeless trying to steal short ones if the batsman who is not actually playing the ball is not absolutely ready and practically on the move when his partner makes the stroke.

COURAGE *at the* CREASE!

Crippled Heroes Who Have Played Their Parts By ALEC KENNEDY.

(The Famous Hampshire and England Bowler.)

WE should scarcely be justified in referring to cricket as a dangerous game. I can certainly think of some other sports in which the players run a much greater risk of meeting with serious injury. In cricket we get raps on the knuckles sometimes, while a split finger is frequently the relic of a ball which should have been taken by the middle of the hand, while bowlers naturally suffer from strains and sprains at times. But although, generally speaking, cricket is not particularly dangerous, the game has, nevertheless, provided occasions for gallant heroes—for crippled men to show that even if cricket is not so dangerous as other games, the men who play it will snap their fingers at injury or illness when it is necessary for them to do so. I have been asked to recall here some of these crippled hero stories, and this being a season of Test matches, I shall practically confine myself to doings in those games. Indeed, thinking over my time in cricket, it is not necessary for me to go outside Test games to find sufficient "crippled hero" stories to fill the space at my disposal.

AN UNLUCKY MATCH!

In the Test match between England and Australia at Leeds in 1921 there was an heroic innings which certainly gripped the imagination of the sport-loving public, and I am inclined to place it first in these notes, because it directly concerns the Hampshire county captain, the Hon. Lionel Tennyson. You may recall the circumstances. It was an unlucky match for England altogether, for just at the beginning of it Jack Hobbs was taken ill with appendicitis and could not play. The Australians batted first, and put up a good score of over four hundred. In the course of their innings the Hon. Lionel Tennyson hurt his left hand very badly in stopping a ball—so badly, indeed, that the hand was almost useless, and it seemed unlikely that he would be able to take further part in the match.

FACING THE WORLD'S FASTEST!

As a matter of fact, however, he played a most heroic part. England fared badly on going in to reply to the Australian total and only 166 were on the board, with two wickets remaining to fall. Tennyson saw his duty. Against the advice of everybody, he took his bat in his right and sound hand, went to the wicket, scored 63—or more than half the total obtained while he was there—and was last man out, having, among other things, enabled his side to avoid the follow-on. Fancy standing up to Macdonald and Gregory, two express men then at their very best, with one hand useless, and scoring 63!

WICKET-KEEPER HEROES!

Surely the people in cricket who never get the amount of praise which is their due are the wicket-keepers. Their hands, shins, and bodies get knocked about, but they just carry on without

fuss or complaint. Perhaps we are not really surprised when they do heroic things, for the mere fact that they take up wicket-keeping at all shows that they are of the stuff of which heroes are made. All the same, we cannot resist a share of admiration when we read how, in a Test match between Australia and England at Melbourne during the last series, the popular Australian wicket-keeper, "Bertie" Oldfield, had a couple of ribs broken in stopping a ball from Gregory, and yet insisted on carrying on to the very last ball of the match. This heroic feat of Oldfield's reminds me of the reply of a famous wicket-keeper when I asked him if he didn't find the job a very painful one.



ALEC KENNEDY,
The Genius of Hampshire.

"Oh," he said, "there is never much need to worry, because if a bowler at one end knocks one of your fingers up, the bowler at the other is pretty sure to put it right again soon afterwards with another knock!"

RUSSELL'S HISTORIC CENTURIES!

Many are the stories which could be told of Test match cricketers who, in the hour of their country's need, have snapped their fingers at illness and turned out to do a most heroic "bit." One of the most splendid feats in this direction stands to the credit of Russell, the Essex batsman. You will remember that he is one of the very few players who have scored two centuries in one Test game, but we who were with the England team in South Africa did not

suspect that Russell, in the circumstances obtaining, would accomplish the feat. The game was at Durban; it was the fifth Test match of the series, and we had to win to gain the rubber. In the first innings Russell scored 140; but in the course of the match he was taken ill, and on the last day it seemed a thousand to one against his batting at all. In fact, the doctor advised him that he would be running a very great risk to go near the cricket ground. We wanted runs, though; Russell knew that. He ignored the doctor's advice, went to the wicket a second time, and, scoring his second century of the game, paved the way for England to win the rubber.

A GOOD CURE!

Equally dramatic was the heroic part played by Sidney Barnes in the second Test match at Melbourne in 1912. The England team had previously lost the services of P. F. Warner through illness, and we had also lost the first Test in a manner which made all Australia think that our team was not so good as some we had previously sent out there. Men who were out there have told me how, two or three days before the second was due to start, Barnes was taken very ill, being confined to his bed with a high temperature. Surely the deputy captain, Mr. J. W. Douglas, must have thought that England's luck was right out. On the morning of the match the other players left Barnes at the hotel dressing, but still far from well. But the Staffordshire bowler followed his colleagues, and eventually turned up at the ground. He scarcely seemed fit to play, but, on the other hand, told his captain that he couldn't stay at the hotel. And after a close conference the England captain decided to run the risk—to play Barnes more, so he has said, for the moral effect than in the hope that he would get wickets. Yet Sidney Barnes startled the world that morning with one of the greatest bowling performances in the whole history of Test matches, getting out four of Australia's best batsmen with only one run scored off his bowling. That was the sort of performance to cure a cricketer of any and every complaint, and in the fact that England thereafter never looked back was all the reward which a man like Barnes would expect.

I have by no means exhausted the stories of courage at the crease, but I have written enough to show that the battle of the cricket field hath its heroes indeed.

Alec S. Kennedy

A WORD WITH THE UMPIRE.

J. Threlfall, Manchester: There is nothing in the rules of cricket to prevent you from changing from over-arm bowling to lob in the middle of an over, but it is expected, according to the ethics of the game, that you will inform the batsman of your intention. The same remark applies to changing from bowling round the wicket to over the wicket in the middle of an over.

F. Jones, Southampton: Before the captains of Test teams toss for choice of innings they must give each other the names of the men chosen to play in the match. They cannot wait until after the toss before deciding who shall play.

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AT THE NETS!

By "County Cricketer."

Some golden rules for bowlers and fielders.

THIS is the last of the articles I have been asked to do for the MAGNET Supplement for the current season, and here I should like Harry Wharton to spare me a few words to thank the readers who have written to me to say how much they have appreciated these instructive notes. Especially am I pleased to hear from some readers that their game has improved during the season as the result of following my advice.

By way of winding up the series I just want to give a few golden rules for the bowler, and then a short talk about the fielding side of the game.

TAKING THE BOWLING FIRST,

here are some rules which every player should observe, no matter what sort of bowler he is:

1. Don't get into the habit of being cross because one of your fielders misses

a catch. It is all a part of the game, and it won't help your bowling if you get upset about it.

2. Never mind being hit out of the field. It is much easier to get rid of a batsman who is hitting than one who is stonewalling.

3. Don't bowl with your arm only. You have been given brains, and many an opponent who can't be bowled out can be "thought" out.

4. Practically all batsmen are different. Study them; play up to their strong and weak points.

5. Provided you are convinced that your field is properly set, don't change it merely because the batsman gets one past the field. That is what he wants you to do.

Turning to

THE FIELDING SIDE

of the game, I shall have to be very brief; but, as a matter of fact, there is little necessity to go into this side of the game at length. It is easier to become a good fielder than a good batsman or a good bowler; but, on the other hand, fielding does demand practice, and the trouble is that so few players will give the necessary time to this practice. Personally, I think the

man who invented practice-nets did cricket just about as bad a service as anybody could have done. Those nets mean that most of the practice time is spent in batting and bowling, and very little attention is given to fielding. One of the biggest mistakes made by young fielders is that they are too anxious to make the catch, with the result that they snatch at the ball. And, for the most part, snatching means missing. The more "give" there is in the hands as you make the catch, the less likely are you to drop the ball. If you "snatch"—throw out your hands towards it—the ball will probably rebound from the hard part of your hands on to the ground.

As for ground fielding, don't, as I have seen many young players, give the impression that you think you are playing football. Occasionally a ball will come which you can only stop by jabbing out your foot; but, apart from these emergencies, foot-fielding is usually bad fielding. Get into the habit of going down with your hand to the ball as it travels towards you, and, for safety's sake, have your

FEET CLOSE TOGETHER

behind your hand when the ball reaches you.

Throwing in is another important thing in the make-up of the complete fielder. We can't all be good throwers, but we can all improve by practising throwing, and by remembering in the course of that practice that the player who can pick up the ball and throw it in the same action has saved what may prove precious moments. Don't shy the ball at the wicket save when there is a distinct chance of running the batsman out if you hit it. Have some sort of pity for the poor wicket-keeper. He doesn't like stopping cannon-balls when there is no necessity to do so, and he doesn't like the ball thrown so that it drops at his feet.

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PERCY PERRIN.

Percy Perrin was well to the fore
In some wonderful tussles of yore.
He is still going strong,
So to Leyton we'll throng.

Example last line:—

And watch Percy pile up the score.

A WORD WITH THE UMPIRE!

T. Brown (Hants).—The record distance for a bail is held by Burrows, then of Worcester. This was in 1911, when a bail was sent 67 yards 6 inches.

A. E. Clarke (Leigh).—Lancashire's new ground at Nelson was opened last year, when Lancashire entertained Derbyshire. This was the first inter-county match played there.

J. Collins (Manchester).—It was in 1890 that the Test match against the Australians was abandoned without a ball being bowled, owing to rain.

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HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN INDIA!

(Continued from page 12.)

red flush of morning was in the sky when they were awakened by a familiar voice.

"I say, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter had returned.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Left Behind!

BILLY BUNTER slept.

His deep snore echoed through the bungalow on Malabar Hill, and the khansama and the black servants, when they passed his door and heard it, grinned at one another.

Bunter had returned safe and sound, though frightened almost out of his fat wits.

He had awakened the Famous Five, possibly considering that they would be eager to see him. If so, he was mistaken. They only told him what they thought of him, in a few well-chosen words, and then turned over to sleep again.

Whereupon Bunter snorted, and having found some provender and disposed of it, turned in himself.

In the room where he had lain a prisoner over the coppersmith's shop, Bunter had not slept. He had been too uncomfortable and too terrified for slumber. Now he was making up for lost time.

His deep and resonant snore was even more energetic than usual.

He had told the khansama that he was not to be awakened; he wanted his sleep out. As a matter of fact, no one intended to awaken Bunter.

That day, the Greyfriars party were leaving Bombay, to begin their journey into the North of India. And Colonel Wharton had decided that that journey was to be made without Bunter.

More than once the Owl of the Remove had sorely tried the old military gentleman's patience, and now he had passed the limit. His reckless escapade in Bombay was to be his last.

Had he been awake when the party were making preparations for departure, the colonel would have told him so, curtly enough. As he was asleep, he was left asleep.

The bungalow hummed with activity as the juniors prepared to start; but Bunter did not hear or heed.

All was ready at last, and the car came round to take the party to the railway-station. Bunter still slept and snored.

"No need to wake the fat bouncer to say good-bye, I suppose," said Bob Cherry.

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

Bob chuckled.

"Rather a surprise for him, when he wakes and finds us gone," he said. "But I dare say he won't be sorry, after his giddy experience yesterday. He must have sense enough to know that he had a jolly narrow escape."

"Ready?" called out the colonel.

And the juniors packed into the car, with the khansama and the servants of the bungalow bowing them off with endless salaams.

The car glided away on the Malabar Hill road. The last sound the juniors heard from the bungalow was the echoing snore of William George Bunter.

"I have left a message for Bunter, with the khansama," the colonel said quietly. "A lad who does not know how to obey orders is out of place in an expedition like this; moreover, Bunter seems quite

unable to take care of himself. He will be better in Bombay."

To which the Famous Five assented. Bunter's loss left the party quite dry-eyed. His folly had brought them all into danger, and for his sake Nally Das, the most dangerous of Baji Rao's emissaries, had been given his freedom. And it could not be said that anyone was likely to miss Bunter's fascinating company, and his eternal grumbling and grouching.

It was a cheery party that boarded the train for distant Delhi, and turned their backs on Bombay.

The train roared out of the station, and still William George Bunter slept in the bungalow, snoring stertorously while the punkah swayed and swayed in the hands of the untiring wallahs.

But Bunter awoke at last.

Probably he would have slept the clock round, but for admonitions from his inner Bunter that it was high time for tiffin.

He sat up and yawned.

The sun blazed down on the bungalow, and the house was very still and silent.

Bunter rubbed his eyes, and grunted.

He was rather surprised that he had not been called, in spite of his strongly-expressed desire to have his sleep out. Bob Cherry was just the fellow to roll a fat slacker out of bed, regardless of his natural desire to slack in bed. But on this occasion Bob had not done so,

in a deep easy-chair. He felt entitled to a rest, indeed, he needed it after his exertions at table.

Had Bunter been a little more observant, he might have noticed an ironical grin that lurked about the dusky features of the khansama. But Bunter was not observant, and he noticed nothing. But by that time, Bunter began to wonder where the Famous Five might be.

"When are they coming back, khansama?" he demanded. "I suppose they told you when they'd be in?"

"The coming back is never," explained the khansama, in his best Bombay English.

Bunter jumped.

"What do you mean, you idiot?" Bunter had no politeness to waste on a "nigger."

"Sahib!"

"You don't mean that they've gone for good?" yelled Bunter, in great consternation.

"All that the colonel sahib does is good," said the khansama.

"You blockhead, you don't understand. Do you mean to say that Colonel Wharton has left Bombay, and my friends have gone with him?"

The khansama salaamed assent.

"Oh, crumbs! Where have they gone?"

"The railway takes them to depart for Delhi."

"Delhi!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked helplessly at the khansama through his big spectacles. Now, at long last, he noticed the lurking grin on the fat little Parsee's dusky face. Bunter had not made himself popular with the native servants in the bungalow; quite the reverse, in fact. From the khansama downwards, all the numerous staff agreed among themselves that the little fat sahib was not a "pukka" sahib.

"D-d-d-didn't the colonel leave any message for me?" Bunter stuttered, at last.

Salaam!

"Why the thump haven't you given it to me, then?" roared Bunter.

"Bunter sahib did not ask."

"Well, I'm asking you now, you fool!"

"The colonel sahib left the message that Bunter sahib will remain at the bungalow during his honourable absence," said the khansama. "On the return of the colonel sahib from the hills, Bunter sahib will rejoin his friends to return to Inglistan."

Bunter gasped.

"That means that they've gone on to Bhanipur without me!" he exclaimed.

"It is so, sahib."

"Left me behind!" gasped Bunter, scarcely able to believe his fat ears.

In spite of much plain speaking from the Famous Five, Bunter had never been able to get it out of his head that he was an important member of the party—indeed, an indispensable one.

This was rather a rude awakening for him. Obviously, he was not so indispensable as he had supposed.

"Left behind!" he stuttered. "Oh, my hat! The ungrateful rotters—after all I've done for them! What are you grinning at, you black rascal? Do you want me to kick you off the veranda?"

The khansama ceased to grin, and a look came over his dusky face which warned Bunter that he had better not kick the fat little gentleman.

"Is that all the message?" he demanded.

"Except that Bunter Sahib is to live in the bungalow until the colonel sahib returns, and is to be fed and cared for

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and Bunter did not as yet divine the reason. He noticed that the house seemed very quiet, but that was all.

"Khansama!" he roared.

The khansama presented himself, smiling and salaaming.

"Is my bath ready?" snapped Bunter.

At Greyfriars, Bunter had never been keen on ablutions, but in the torrid clime of India, even Billy Bunter rejoiced in the bath.

"The readiness is not complete, as the sahib was constantly slumberous," said the khansama. "But to hear is to obey."

"Buck up with it," growled Bunter.

"As the sahib desires."

"And while I'm bathing, see that a jolly good brekker is got ready," said Bunter. "Something jolly substantial, see? I'm hungry."

The khansama salaamed.

"Where are those rotters?" went on Bunter. "I mean, my friends. Have they gone out?"

"The depart was all together, sahib."

"I suppose that means that they went out together!" grunted the Owl of the Remove. "Just like the cads to clear off for the day and leave a chap on his own. Not that I care."

And Bunter rolled away to his bath.

Then, with much more keenness, he sat down to breakfast and lunch combined, waited on by silent-footed native servants.

Having satisfied the demands of the inward Bunter—which were considerable—the Owl of the Remove rolled out on the veranda, and settled himself down

by my honourable self," said the khansama. "The little sahib will want for nothing."

"I'm jolly well not going to be chucked like this!" howled Bunter.

The khansama grinned again.

"I'm jolly well going on to Bhanipur!" said Bunter indignantly. "Why, I sha'n't be safe, alone in Bombay, among a lot of niggers!"

"The little fat sahib will be quite safe here."

Bunter's eyes gleamed with indignation through his spectacles. Now that the colonel was gone, the khansama ventured to address him to his face as a little fat sahib! The desire to kick the Parsee rose again with Bunter, but again he restrained it. Now that he was alone among the Hindu servants he was doubtful what might be the consequences of kicking even a "nigger."

"Did the colonel leave me any money?" he asked.

"No."

"How the thump does he think I'm going to manage without any money?" demanded Bunter.

The khansama shrugged his shoulders. That, apparently, was no business of his, and he was not interested in the problem.

"Does he think that I'm going to stick in this dashed place with nobody to speak to but confounded niggers!" howled Bunter.

"The colonel sahib did not tell me his thoughts," said the khansama, grinning again.

"Oh, shut up!"

The khansama salaamed himself away. Bunter sat in quite a stunned state for a time. Really, it was an overwhelming discovery. Harry Wharton & Co. were gone on to Bhanipur, and Bunter was left behind in Bombay to await their return, to be picked up on their way back to England like a piece of left luggage! The cheek of it quite took Bunter's breath away.

"If they think they're going to chuck me like this, they're jolly well mistaken!" he murmured. "I'm jolly well going after them, bother them! Why, a fellow wouldn't be safe here among these niggers—and hanging about this dashed bungalow for weeks, perhaps for months! No jolly fear! After all I've done for them—the rotters! Talk about ingratitude being sharper than the tooth of a thankless serpent!"

And Bunter proceeded to comfort himself with coffee and sweet, sticky Indian cakes, while he pondered over the unexpected situation—not at all consoled by the glimpses he caught of grinning dusky faces now and then. He realised that his unfortunate position was something like a standing joke among the khansama and his staff; he actually was an object of merriment to "blinking niggers." And that, so to speak, put the lid on. Bunter's fat mind was made up that he was going to follow the party; he was not to be dropped in this cheeky way. Harry Wharton & Co. were not—as they guilelessly supposed—done with W. G. Bunter!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

On the Indian Railway!

"PANDY DIN!"

"Han sahib!"

"The baggage is on the train?"

"Han sahib."

"Come!" said the colonel.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed the Colonel Sahib into the train, and Pandi

Din brought up the rear, his two arms full of odds and ends of baggage.

It was a comfortable car in which the Greyfriars party settled themselves as the train glided out of Bombay and roared across the bridge connecting Bombay with the Island of Salsette.

The juniors were aware that on the Indian railways the seats turn into beds at night, and that travellers are expected to carry their own pillows and coverings. But they found that they had a special car to themselves, in which the accommodation was more ample than in the ordinary carriages, and which had a kitchen compartment and servants'-room attached. These "tourist cars" had to be booked in advance, which was partly the cause of the stay in Bombay. Harry Wharton & Co. would perhaps have preferred to mix with the other passengers, European and native, had they been on an ordinary tour; but in the circumstances of the journey, it was obviously more judicious to book a car to themselves.

Pandi Din was a stranger to the juniors; they saw him at Bombay station for the first time.

He was a sleek little native, with a good-humoured coppery face, and full of awe and respect in his manner towards the colonel sahib.

When the travellers were settled in their seats Pandi Din disappeared into the kitchen compartment. He was not seen again for some time, though the juniors several times heard his voice addressing the peon, the native servant who was under his orders.

"Pandi Din was my khitmutgar when I served in India," the colonel explained to the juniors. "I knew that he was living at Surat, and sent him word, and he came. He will attend us in the journey to Bhanipur. He is a reliable man; he has served as a sipahi in his time."

"A which?" murmured Bob Cherry.

The colonel smiled.

"A sipahi, which is rendered into English as 'sepooy,'" he said.

"Oh, I know what a sepooy is!" said Bob. "We've had the jolly old history of the Indian Mutiny at Greyfriars, sir, and we know all about sepoys. So a sepooy is really a sipahi, is he?"

"Most Indian words known in England are corrupted," said the colonel. "For instance, a bungalow is really 'bangala,' and a palanquin is a 'palki.' We shall probably make part of our journey in palkees when we reach Bhanipur, as the railway does not extend into Hurree Singh's country."

"Not yettfully," said the nabob.

"What is this giddy bridge?" asked Johnny Bull, looking out of the window.

The train was buzzing along a long causeway; the city of Bombay was behind the travellers now.

"It connects Bombay with the island of Salsette," said the colonel. "I dare say you know that Bombay is an island?"

"I know now!" said Johnny Bull, with a grin.

"The esteemed knowledge of the topography of India is not widely cultivated in the tight little island," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "What is not known there about India would fill many large volumes."

The colonel smiled and nodded.

"You will learn a good deal on this journey, my boys, if you keep your eyes open," he said.

"We've learned something about the climate already," said Bob Cherry gravely. "It's hot."

"Jolly hot!" said Nugent, fanning himself.

"The hotfulness in this esteemed part of India is somewhat terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "But in Bhanipur the coolfulness is grateful and comforting."

"Is it cool anywhere in India?" grinned Bob.

"Even here you will find the nights cold enough," said Colonel Wharton. "You will find that you need your rugs and blankets when we turn in to-night."

"My hat!" said Bob.

The sun was blazing down from cloudless blue, and the heat was great. It was difficult to imagine just then what it was like to be cold.

The train hummed and buzzed on its way, mile after mile, on the iron road. Many a time the Greyfriars juniors would have been glad to alight and explore the places they caught glimpses of as they passed. But there was no time to lose; and, cheery as they were, the juniors did not forget that danger dogged their steps. Nally Das had gone free, and there was no doubt he was still at work, seeking to carry out the orders of the Rajah Baji Rao.

Indeed, it was probable enough that he was on that very train; in Bombay the party had eluded his vigilance for a time, but now that he was on their track again it was certain that he would not easily be shaken off.

Meals were served in the car by the khitmutgar, Pandi Din. Then the train stopped at Surat.

"Surat!" said the colonel. "There is a rather lengthy stop here, and if you young fellows like, we can take a walk in the city."

"What-ho!" said the young fellows in chorus, and the colonel smiled.

"We have time for a walk round the city," said Colonel Wharton. "It will do you good to stretch your limbs a little."

"Yes, rather, sir," said Bob.

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"In fact, there is a later train from Bombay, which arrives here before we leave," said the colonel. "But it was better to take the earlier one and make a break in the journey."

"What a chance for Bunter, if he thought of coming after us!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The colonel caught the words, and his brows knitted.

"Bunter would not have the impudence to do so, I imagine," he said dryly.

To which Bob made no rejoinder. His opinion was that William George Bunter had impudence enough for anything.

The juniors quite enjoyed a walk round Surat, and they were back at the station in ample time to take their places in the train. They heard, without heeding, the buzz of a train that came in from the south; and in spite of Bob's suggestion, it did not cross their minds seriously that Billy Bunter might be in that train. Certainly it did not cross the colonel's at all. He had seen a good deal of William George Bunter; but even yet he was not quite acquainted with the whole extent of that cheery youth's "neck."

The train rolled on to Ahmedabad, a city famous for its goldsmiths and jewellers. Gladly enough the Greyfriars fellows would have alighted and explored that famous city, but time did not allow.

The night came on at last, and the beds were prepared in the carriage by Pandi Din and the peon.

"I wonder how Bunter's getting on?" Bob Cherry remarked drowsily.

"Eating his third or fourth supper by this time," remarked Johnny Bull.



Billy Bunter fled wildly, not knowing or caring whither he went, leaving the Eurasian bawling behind. Wild shouts and yells rang behind him, and it seemed to Bunter as if all India was yelling on his track. He butted into a fat Brahmin, and sent him staggering, then he made a desperate bolt for the train. (See Chapter 10.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Greyfriars fellows turned in, little dreaming that in actual fact the Owl of the Remove was not very far away. Much had happened during the stop at Surat of which they were not aware.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Going Strong!

THE Babu in the booking-office grinned as he handed Billy Bunter his ticket in the station at Bombay, and Bunter gave him a glare in response.

Bunter's fat face, burnt crimson by the sun, with his spectacles standing out in striking contrast to the crimson complexion, was perhaps enough to inspire a grin. But that was not why the drowsy Babu grinned.

Bunter, who was extremely careful in spending money when the money was his own, had taken a third-class ticket. Bunter had started on his journey to the Orient with a French penny as his capital; but Bunter had many ways and means of raising money. Huree Singh had been the chief contributor. So the Owl of the Remove had cash in hand now; but he had a strong objection to expending it if he could avoid doing so.

Bunter took it as a matter of course that somebody else should always stand his expenses.

Indeed, he seemed to regard that as the birthright of a Bunter. But the time had arrived when the fat junior had to dive his fat paw into his own pocket; and at such a time he counted every rupee, if not every anna and every "pie."

So Bunter—though he would never have mentioned it at Greyfriars—took a third-class ticket; whereat the Babu in the booking-office permitted himself a drowsy grin.

Bunter did not know that while sahibs do not use the part of the train patronised by the lower caste natives; and he was far from knowing what to expect when he was crowded in among a swarm of peasants, bearers, khitmutghars, jogees, beggars, and what not.

He rolled on his way, blinking about him inquiringly, and asking questions of every sahib he saw, and nearly every Eurasian. He found people very polite in directing him; and one fat Eurasian gentleman even took the trouble to guide him to what he called the "ter-rain," Bunter having to make a mental effort to realise that a "ter-rain" was a train.

"Right for Surat—what?" asked Bunter.

Bunter had learned that the train stopped at Surat, where he had to change for the further journey on to Delhi.

"The depart for Surat is the momentary matter," said the polite Eurasian, and Bunter, with another mental effort,

understood that the train was about to start, and that it was bound for Surat.

He rolled into the compartment.

It was fairly well filled already, and Bunter blinked round him in some dismay.

Every seat was taken, once, if not thrice. A big Arab horse-dealer, a skinny "bhistit," a jogee whose rags hung on his knobby bones, a faded old moonshee who had seen better days; two or three bearers and bullock-drivers; and other nondescript characters were the travelling companions of the Owl of the Remove.

Fortunately for Bunter, there was respect for a white sahib in the crowded compartment, and one of the bearers gave him a seat.

Bunter sank down thankfully; though it did not occur to him to thank the man who had given him the seat.

The train rolled out of the station.

It was hot!

In the compartment packed with dusky humanity, much of it unwashed, the heat was more overpowering than Bunter had found it in the bungalow on Malabar Hill. It reminded him of the hottest part of the passage of the Red Sea.

He mopped his streaming brow and fanned himself, and wondered whether he had done wisely, after all, to set out in pursuit of the Greyfriars party across India.

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He had learned that Colonel Wharton's train made a stop at Surat, and he had a hope of getting in touch with the party there. But it was only a hope; and if he missed them, as was extremely probable, he had hardly any chance of overtaking them before Delhi. And he was not at all certain that his supply of cash would hold out as far as Delhi. He did not know how far away the ancient capital was, but he knew that it was a good many hundreds of miles.

But he was "for it" now that he had started.

There was an incessant babble of talk in the crowded compartment, in two or three languages that Bunter did not understand. His fellow-passengers regarded him with curiosity, wondering what he was doing among them; and two or three remarks were made to Bunter, of which he did not understand a syllable. As the natives learned that he did not comprehend, they began to pass remarks among themselves on Bunter, and dusky grins passed from face to face. That was one of the little customs of the natives of which Bunter knew nothing.

Not a single feature of the fat junior was spared; his rotund figure, his flat face, his crimson complexion, his big spectacles, everything about him was made the subject of jests in incomprehensible words—incomprehensible to Bunter. He did not even know that the natives were discussing him, and for quite a long time the little fat sahib afforded unending entertainment to the native passengers.

Bunter was thinking chiefly of the heat, and the unpleasant scent of packed humanity, and later on he grew conscious of the fact that he was getting hungry. The other passengers unpacked parcels of various kinds of food, and spread it out and ate it, mostly with their fingers; and Bunter demolished a packet of sandwiches and still felt hungry.

What with the heat, the closeness, the incessant babble of incomprehensible voices, Bunter began to feel dizzy, and it seemed to him that Surat would never be reached.

He dozed off at last; and while he dozed, the jogee who sat next him, with light and experienced fingers,

relieved him of all his loose cash and his railway ticket.

The jogee got out at the next station, and some of the other passengers grinned after him as he went; two or three pairs of eyes had seen the nimble dusky fingers at work on Bunter's pockets.

Bunter was still asleep when the train stopped at Surat. The emptying of the carriage awoke him, however, and he set his spectacles straight on his flat little nose, and blinked round him.

He tumbled hurriedly out of the train.

"Tikkut! Tikkut!"

Bunter blinked angrily at an Eurasian ticket-collector. He did not know that the man was a ticket-collector; he did not even know that he was an Eurasian and speaking English! He supposed that he was a "nigger" talking in one of the incomprehensible native lingoes.

"Tikkut!"

"Oh, don't bother!" snapped Bunter.

"But a tikkut—tikkut!" repeated the man, staring at him.

"Let me pass, you ass!"

"Tikkut!"

"I don't speak your blinking language!" roared Bunter. "What's the good of burbling Hindustani at me, you dummy?"

The Eurasian glared at him.

"Tikkut! I speak English to you!" he exclaimed angrily. "I ask you for tikkut!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He realised that the man was saying "ticket" in his own peculiar way.

Bunter groped for his ticket.

He groped in vain.

He remembered perfectly well in which pocket he had placed that ticket. It was in the same pocket with his loose cash. But the ticket was gone, and the loose cash had accompanied it. Bunter's fat jaw dropped.

He groped frantically through all his pockets. Dismal emptiness rewarded him; even his penknife was gone.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "I've been robbed!"

"Tikkut—tikkut!"

"You blinking parrot, don't hoot at me! I've been robbed!"

"Tikkut!"

"Don't I keep on telling you I've been robbed!" howled Bunter. "My ticket's gone and my money, too!"

The Eurasian grinned sourly. The "bilk" is no more unknown in India than in lands farther West. The man did not believe for a moment that Bunter had been robbed of his ticket; he had been there before, so to speak. Certainly, it was rather a new thing in his experience for a white sahib to attempt to "bilk" the railway. But Bunter's manners and customs did not please him, and he decided immediately that Bunter was not a "pukka" sahib. And robbed or not, it was up to Bunter to produce a ticket.

"It is one chicken that will not fight," said the Eurasian, whose knowledge of English extended—rather imperfectly—to slang, "Thinking that you are pulling my own leg?"

"I've been robbed!"

"You tell one such story to Marines," said the Eurasian. "You telling me not any good. Tikkut!"

"You black rascal!" roared Bunter, quite losing his temper, and still under the impression that the dark-skinned Eurasian was a "nigger."

The man's face grew purple with rage. He had white blood in him, some Portuguese, and perhaps a little English, and the word "black" was

the deepest insult that could have been applied to him. Sahib or not, Bunter was a "bilk," at least, he could not produce a ticket to prove that he had paid for his journey. The Owl of the Remove found himself suddenly grasped by the collar.

"Yarpooh!" roared Bunter.

"Leggo!"

"You bilking the railway company, yes!" snarled the Eurasian. "You bilking and calling a gentleman black man! Yes? Tikkut! You giving me tikkut or I giving you to policemen."

"Leggo!"

"Tikkut!"

"You blinking black idiot, how can I give you my ticket when my pocket's been picked by some confounded nigger?" shrieked Bunter.

"You saying nigger?"

"Yes, blow you—blinking nigger! Leggo!"

A crowd was already gathering, of grinning natives, greatly enjoying the scene. It was unprecedented for a white sahib to be collared in this manner, which made it all the more enjoyable to the dusky population.

"You coming with me to station-master!" ejaculated the Eurasian.

"You coming along jolly pretty quick."

"Leggo!"

But the enraged man did not let go; he was a half-white man, immensely bucked by his white half, and as forgetful as possible of his dusky half. Bunter had called him a black man, and that was the limit. The Owl of the Remove was quite unconscious of the terrific offence he had given—if he had heard of the existence of Eurasians he did not know what they were. But he could have no doubt about the ticket-collector's wrath, as he was hauled unceremoniously along to the station-master's office, through lanes of grinning dark faces.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bunter. "Oh crikey! I'm fed-up with India! Ow! I wish I was at Greyfriars! Wow! Leggo, you black beast! I'll jolly well hack your shins! Ow-ow-wow!"

But the man hauled him along vigorously, amid chuckles and laughter.

Bunter's fat brain was in a whirl.

How this awful adventure was going to end he could not imagine. Even if he escaped the charge of bilking, he was left without money to carry on; his railway journey had to end at Surat, which was only a step on the long way to Delhi. From the bottom of his fat heart the Owl of the Remove wished that he had remained at Bombay, as the khansama had advised him; or, alternatively, as the lawyers say, that he had not disobeyed the colonel's orders and caused the old military gentleman to leave him behind. But it was useless now to repent of his many follies; he was "for it" now. His fat brain whirled as the Eurasian hauled him along. Wild visions of a prison rose before his fat mind; he did not know what they did with "bilks" in India, but if this infuriated fellow was anything to judge by, the treatment was not gentle.

Acting rather on instinct than on thought, Bunter suddenly hooked a fat leg in the Eurasian's. The man spun over and sprawled, and at the same moment, Bunter jerked himself free and fled.

He fled wildly, not knowing or caring whether he went, leaving the Eurasian bawling behind.

He crashed into a coolie loaded with baggage and sent the man spinning, scattering bags right and left. He

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butted into a fat Brahmin and sent him staggering. Wild shouts and yells rang behind him, and it seemed to Bunter that all Surat, if not all India, was yelling on his track. He heard the scream of an engine whistle, and found himself close by a train that was about to start. A guard yelled to him—two or three native porters clutched at him—but Bunter was desperate; he bolted into the train like a fat rabbit into a burrow, and rolled among knees and feet amid surprised exclamations from startled passengers. What the train was, whether it was bound, Bunter had no time to think; he was thinking only of escape from the storm he had raised behind.

He rolled breathlessly on the floor of the compartment, amid feet that seemed countless, and gasped for breath. The train was in motion as he sat up; Bunter panted with relief as he realised that he was moving out of Surat; whether, he cared little for the moment.

He sat up and blinked round him. The carriage was crowded with natives, most of them ejaculating and staring at Bunter. Possibly they supposed that he had just caught the train in a hurry. Bunter sat on the floor and blinked at them; and then suddenly he caught his breath with a throb in his fat heart. Among the dark faces staring at him in the crowded compartment, was one face he knew—the face of Nally Das.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Ticket Required!

NALLY DAS stared at the fat junior.

Probably he was more surprised than Bunter by the unexpected meeting.

Spies had watched the colonel's party leave Bombay, and Nally Das knew that Bunter had been left behind. He had given the fat junior no thought. It mattered nothing to him whether Bunter was of the party or not. Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh was his game, and his work was growing more desperate as the nabob drew nearer and nearer to Bhanipur. Once within the borders of the nabob's native country the work would be desperate indeed, with the Jam Bahadur and his numerous guards to protect the Prince of Bhanipur. And after Delhi the journey was not long. But before Delhi was reached Nally Das had yet a card to play, and, screened among the crowded natives at the end of the train, he was travelling along with the Greyfriars party. They had not seen him, though they guessed that he was, as likely as not, on the train. Nally Das had taken care to keep himself at a distance from the special car. And the sudden entrance of Bunter into the compartment where he sat almost confounded the plotting Hindu. It did not even occur to his mind that the fat junior had come there by chance; he believed himself watched and spied upon, as he was watching and spying upon the nabob's party, and his black eyes glinted with a deadly look at Bunter. But in the crowded train it was impossible for him to carry out his desire, which was to drive his dagger into the fat junior and hurl him from the carriage.

Bunter blinked at him in terror, the Hindu's dark, threatening face recalling the horror of his experiences over the coppersmith's shop in the Bombay bazaar.

But it came quickly into Bunter's mind that he was safe with a dozen or

more travellers round him. Certainly Nally Das could do him no harm there. Bunter rose to his feet, gasping for breath, but no longer terrified. Nally Das, who had started forward, sank back into his corner again, and took no further heed of the fat junior—to all appearances, at least. And Bunter, with his courage quite revived, blinked at him loftily and contemptuously, to show that he was not afraid.

"So you're here, you rascal?" he said. The train was out of Surat by the time Bunter recovered his breath and his feet. He looked round in vain for a seat. Every seat was crowded, and nobody showed any disposition to move on Bunter's account. And as Nally Das' manner showed plainly enough that he dared do nothing hostile Bunter's courage rose in proportion.

"Do you hear me?" exclaimed Bunter in a bullying tone, as the Hindu did not answer.

Nally Das' eyes glinted at him. "Get out of that seat!" said Bunter. "Chup raho!" said Nally Das.

And the other native passengers looked round in surprise at hearing a Hindu tell a white sahib to "shut up!"

"You cheeky rotter!" said Bunter. "Do you think I don't know why you're on this train? You're spying, as usual! I'll jolly well call the stationmaster at the next stop and hand you over to the police. See?"

"The colonel sahib is more on his guard than Nally Das believed," he said. "He has set you to watch, little fat sahib. And I believed that you were left behind. Perhaps it would have been better for you."

"You can't frighten me here, you black rascal!" said Bunter coolly. "We're not in that den in Bombay now, you know. I don't know why old Wharton let you off, but I know I'm jolly well going to give you in charge of the police. You can't collar a white man and threaten him with torture for nothing, you scoundrel. See? Get out of that seat! I want to sit down."

Billy Bunter felt that he held the whip hand this time; and he was right, as it proved. Nally Das rose quietly from his seat and allowed Bunter to take his place. The fat junior sank down into it with a grunt of satisfaction.

"That's better!" he said. "You can stand, you rotter, or sit on the floor. That's good enough for you—too good, in fact! You needn't look sulky. I can jolly well send you to chokery if I like, and you know it! Look here, where's this train going?"

The question made Nally Das stare in astonishment.

"The little sahib does not know where the train is going?" he asked, in sheer surprise.

"How the thump should I know where it is going when I jumped into it at the last minute?" snapped Bunter.

The Hindu eyed him in amazement.

"Then the little sahib is not travelling with the colonel sahib?" he asked, quite nonplussed.

Bunter stared.

For the first time it came into his fat mind that he had actually boarded the train upon which Colonel Wharton and the juniors were travelling.

He had learned at Bombay that the train made a considerable stop at Surat, and he had hoped that the stop would be long enough for him to catch the same train.

His adventure with the Eurasian ticket-collector had driven all such thoughts from his mind; he had flung himself into the parting train with no idea but that of escape in his head.

But Nally's words enlightened him. "Mean to say that they're on this train?" he exclaimed.

"Did not the little fat sahib know?" asked Nally Das, suspiciously.

"Never mind whether I did or not," said Bunter. "No business of yours to ask questions. I knew there was a long wait at Surat. I dare say they got out to see the sights. Blow 'em! So they're on this train, are they? Where's the carriage?"

Nally Das' eyes suddenly gleamed as he comprehended.

"The little fat sahib was left behind, and he is following without permission?" he exclaimed.

"No bizney of yours," said Bunter. "You tell me where the colonel sahib's carriage is, and shut up. See?"

"I do not know, sahib," said Nally Das softly. "I am going to my home at Janipur, and I know nothing of the colonel sahib."

Bunter blinked at him suspiciously. He did not believe that statement, but he realised that he would receive no information from the Hindu.

He leaned back in his seat, feeling considerably bucked by the discovery that he had, by sheer luck, overtaken the Greyfriars party, and was on the same train.

Finding the party was only a matter of time, so long as he remained on the train.

Now that he had, practically, found them, a new difficulty occurred to Bunter's fat mind, which he had not considered before. The party ought to welcome him back to the fold; that was certain. They ought to. But would they? The Famous Five, doubtless, would be willing to let the fat junior hook on again; but the colonel was made of sterner stuff. It was quite likely, now that Bunter came to consider it, that Colonel Wharton would provide him with a ticket to Bombay and place him in a train for that city, and see him off.

It was like Bunter to leave such a consideration till the last moment.

Now that it occurred to him it worried him, and he decided to think it out before making a move.

Thinking was not much in Bunter's line, and between the effort of thinking and the heat of the crowded carriage he soon dozed off, and the native passengers were treated to the music of his deep and resonant snore.

Bunter had put in a good deal of sleep that day; but sleep was a thing that came very easily to Bunter. He could do with a great deal of it—especially in the hot weather.

He snored away contentedly, while the train rattled on, oblivious of the glittering eyes of Nally Das, and of everything else.

When he opened his eyes it was night. Passengers had come and gone during his long nap. And among those who had gone was Nally Das. He was no longer in the compartment when Bunter awoke and blinked round for him.

Bunter blinked at the other passengers, most of whom were sleeping, and yawned deeply.

Then he closed his eyes again behind his big spectacles, and slept once more. "Tikkut!"

That familiar word awoke Bunter.

He started out of slumber and blinked. Lights flashed into the compartment—the train had stopped. It was in the Station of Sidhpur, if Bunter had known it, which he did not.

"Tikkut!"

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A fat Parsee inspector was holding out an olive-skinned hand for Bunter's ticket.

"I—I say!" gasped Bunter. He was travelling ticketless, of course, and it was just like these beasts to ask a fellow for his ticket when he hadn't one.

"Tikkut!"

Bunter was about to state that his ticket had been stolen when he stopped himself in time. He did not want the adventure of Surat over again.

"The—the fact is—" he stammered.

The Parsee inspector eyed him.

"You having no tikkut, you getting out of train," said the Parsee nonchalantly. "You jumping out quick."

"My—my friends have my ticket," gasped Bunter. "They—they're in another carriage—"

"You jumping out?" said the inspector.

"Colonel Wharton's minding my ticket," said Bunter desperately. "You mind what you're about, my man. The colonel sahib is on this train. See?"

"Colonel sahib" evidently impressed the inspector.

"You finding colonel sahib if colonel sahib has tikkut," he said. "You losing no time."

Bunter blinked at him helplessly. He had not yet solved the problem that had worried him—the difficult problem of making his peace with Colonel Wharton, and inducing that stern old gentleman to allow him to resume his place in the party. But he had to chance it now; evidently the colonel was his only way out of this trouble. At the worst, Colonel Wharton could not allow him to be fined or detained for travelling without a ticket; he was bound to see Bunter through this, whether he sent him back to Bombay or not.

"I—I tell you I've forgotten the carriage!" snorted Bunter. "You can take me to it, if you like. It's a party of six—the colonel sahib and five school-boys, one of them a nig—hem—Hindu."

The inspector nodded. Bunter could see by his expression that he knew there was such a party on the train.

"You jumping out, and I taking you to the colonel sahib to ask if you telling truth?" said the Parsee.

"All right!"

Bunter jumped out, and followed the inspector along the platform. He had overtaken the Greyfriars party—he was now being led to their car; that was satisfactory so far as it went. But the thought of the colonel's stern grey eyes, and their keen glance, disconcerted him, and Bunter quaked inwardly as he followed the Parsee inspector along the train.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Again!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were sleeping soundly when the train stopped at Sidhpur, and they did not awaken. The juniors had wondered a little what Billy Bunter was doing in Bombay, and how he liked being left there, but certainly it had not crossed their minds that he was travelling with them on the same train. In the long stop at Surat they had enjoyed a stroll round the city; but they had

been back in their car in good time, and so they had seen nothing of the exciting episode when the Owl of the Remove bolted into the train at the last moment.

They slept on peacefully while the train halted at Sidhpur, and when the door opened and an inspector demanded "tikkuts," it was the colonel who answered him.

The door closed again, the inspector passed on, and Colonel Wharton returned to his seat, which had been made into a bed for the night.

He settled down at once into slumber again; in a few moments his deep breathing showed that he slept.

The lights had been turned off in the car; all was dark, save for a glimmer from the platform.

Colonel Wharton slept soundly, like an old campaigner. It was seldom that his healthy sleep was troubled by dreams; but as he slept now some strange sense came to him of a movement close at hand, of a light touch that glided over him.

It was not wholly a dream.

Suddenly all his senses became wide-awake, with the grip as of a hand of iron on his throat. Something was pressing on his face—something that smothered and suffocated. A sickly, pungent odour filled his nostrils and mouth from the damp cloth that was pressed on his face. He struggled to move, he struggled to cry out, but his limbs seemed heavy and motionless as lead; his voice died in his throat without a sound. In one reeling moment of consciousness he knew that he was being drugged—that the cloth over his face was impregnated with a powerful drug that had almost mastered his senses while he slept, and he knew, dizzily, that he was powerless, helpless, and sliding into utter unconsciousness.

One terrible effort he made, as his senses reeled, knowing that it was life itself that was at stake, and that, with his protection gone, Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was destined to fall into the hands of his foes. But the effort was unavailing; his senses were swimming, and he plunged from half-consciousness into utter blackness.

Still the cloth was pressed on his face, and when it was lifted, and dark, glinting eyes peered at him, the colonel was insensible, still, to all seeming lifeless.

The mouth of Nally Das curved in a cruel grin.

Stealthy as a cat or a panther creeping on its prey, the Hindu had made no sound. Close at hand Harry Wharton & Co. were sleeping, dreaming, perhaps, but never dreaming that death stalked in their midst, and that it threatened the colonel.

But Colonel Wharton's life hung by a thread now.

He lay senseless, unable to move, unable to cry out, unconscious of what was happening; and the sleeping juniors in the car were equally unconscious.

In the deep gloom the dusky hand of Nally Das felt in his girdle for a hidden dagger—the weapon he had not dared to use while the death-blow would have called at least a cry from his victim. But now no cry could come from the senseless man's lips.

The bare steel glimmered in the gloom, and still the juniors of Greyfriars slept. Barely a glimmer of light came in at the curtained windows from the platform. The savage hand of the assassin was lifted, when suddenly the carriage door was flung open from within, and a light gleamed in.

Nally Das, utterly startled, started back and spun half-round. The light

from the platform flashed on the bared weapon in his hand.

"Colonel sahib—" the Parsee inspector was beginning.

He broke off, almost babbling in amazement, as he saw the crouching Hindu, dagger in hand. Billy Bunter gave a yell.

"Look out!"

Nally Das, with a snarl, leaped for the doorway. He had no time to complete his dastardly work—no time for a blow—barely time to escape, even if fortune favoured him. He shoved the Parsee inspector roughly aside and leaped for the platform.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. were wide awake now. The car was filled with light. The startled juniors leaped up from bed, staring about them. The Parsee inspector was on the platform, yelling the alarm. Billy Bunter clambered into the car, gasping for breath.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bunter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bunter turned up like a bad penny!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"But what's happened?" exclaimed Nugent. "What is that chap yelling about? Anything wrong?"

"He—he was here!" panted Bunter.

"He! Who?"

"Nally Das!"

"In this car?" shouted Wharton.

"Yes. He had a knife in his hand!"

"Good heavens!"

Wharton stared round him. His comrades were all with him, safe; but where was the colonel? It was not like Colonel Wharton to sleep when the whole party were up in alarm.

A sickening fear smote the captain of the Remove.

"Uncle!"

He rushed to the colonel's bed.

"Uncle!"

For a moment, as he stared at the still form in the light, Wharton feared that the colonel was dead. But he was only unconscious, and the lingering scent of the drug showed him the cause. Bunter had seen the knife in the hand of Nally Das, but there was no wound upon the colonel. The interruption had come just in time to save Colonel Wharton's life.

"Is—is—is he—" gasped Bob Cherry.

"He is safe," said Harry. "Some drug has been used. The villain must have drugged him to keep him silent, intending—"

Wharton broke off with a shudder of horror.

The juniors stared at Bunter. The Owl of the Remove blinked back at them, and as he realised how matters stood, lofty self-importance crept into Bunter's manner.

"You left me behind at Bombay," he said accusingly. "If I hadn't followed you, what would have happened? If that rotter Nally Das hadn't been interrupted by me, you know—"

Wharton shivered.

The colonel still lay unconscious, but he was safe. The murderous blow had been stayed in time.

"The esteemed Bunter was the right man in the rightful place for oncefully," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh softly. "We may be glad that the excellent and ludicrous Bunter butted in."

Bunter smirked.

"I hope there'll be no more silly talk about leaving me out of the party," he said severely. "I'll turn in now; but if you've got anything to eat, I'll take a snack before I sleep. If you fellows feel

(Continued on page 28.)

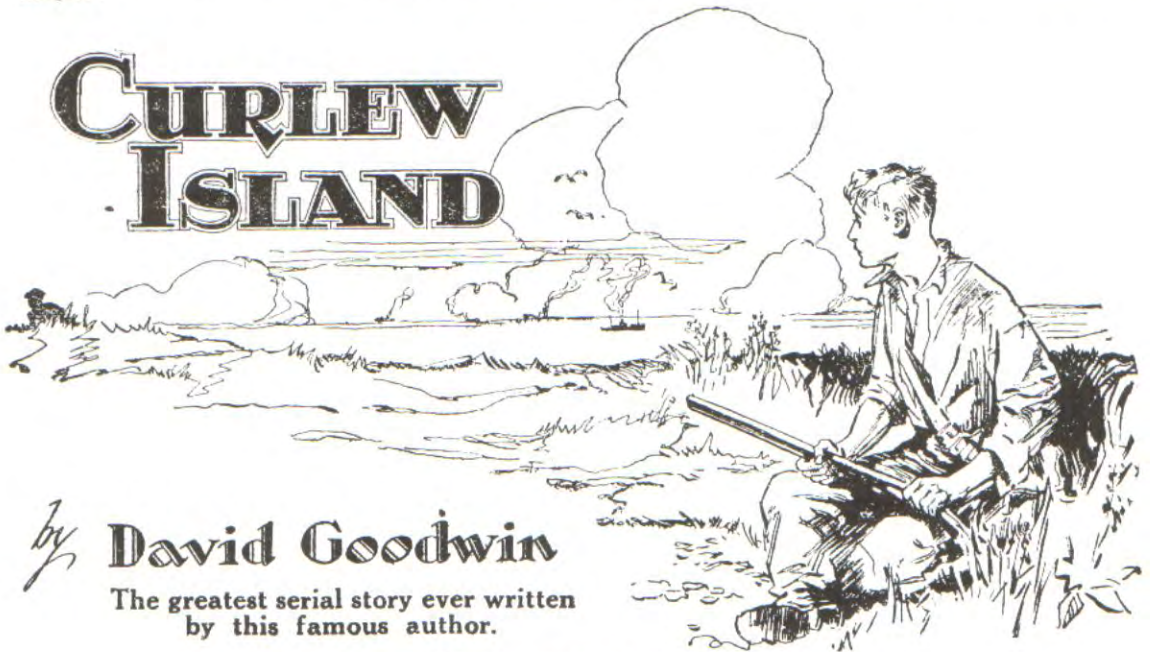
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CURLEW ISLAND

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(Introduction on page 24.)

Saved by a Scarecrow!

AS soon as the two men were out of sight Tommy Comber crawled to the edge of the wood and looked down the hill. Sure enough, the hillside was dotted with men, distant still, but steadily working their way upwards, spreading out so as to beat every bush and hedge on their way.

To stop in the wood was impossible. They would reach it in another ten minutes, and they were bound to find him. Tommy left his shelter and crept away to the upper end of the wood, where it opened on a bushy meadow that could not be seen from below, being screened by tall hedges. He knew that the first man who caught sight of a boy in sailor uniform would raise the alarm and bring all the rest after him. He felt that the last hope was gone.

He was just about to make a dash across the field while there was yet time, when he caught sight of a silent, motionless figure on the other side of the field, watching him.

Tommy crouched down and kept still as death, wondering whether he had been seen. The figure remained still, too. It was standing in a curious attitude, and seemed to be pointing at him. The man was so ragged that, at first glance, Tommy took him for a tramp, and expected to hear him yell out the alarm.

The next moment, however, he saw his mistake.

"Gosh!" he cried, "if it isn't a scarecrow!"

An idea immediately flashed into his head, and with a swift glance round to see the coast was clear, he scudded out across the field, straight for the ragged figure.

"If I can change clothes with you, old chap. I might do 'em yet!" he said to himself as he ran.

He flung his arms round the dummy figure, pulled it loose, and made a dash for the hedge with it. Tommy had not expected to see the day when he wouldn't be too proud to change clothes with a scarecrow. But now it seemed to him a bit of luck. The dummy wore a pair of mouldy trousers, a torn coat, and a moth-eaten cap. If he could get down

into the ditch with it, and have a couple of minutes to himself, there would be a transformation scene. They were looking for a runaway in naval uniform, not a boy tramp.

But before Tommy reached the hedge he heard a fierce yell behind him.

"Hi, stop! Stop, or I fire!"

It was the big gamekeeper. He came bursting through the wood in full pursuit of Tommy, who saw he was not going to get away with it.

Tommy hurled the dummy into the hedge and burst through a gap among the thorns, landing on all fours in a ditch on the other side.

The gamekeeper flung his gun to his shoulder and fired. The scarecrow, which was swaying in the hedge, fell down with a thump.

"Gotcher!" roared the keeper.

Evidently he was rather short-sighted. He rushed in to secure his prey, and at the same time Tommy scuttled out of the ditch and dashed away to the left, keeping close under the hedge out of sight. He left the dummy to the keeper to play with.

"You won't get five pounds for that shot, old horse!" murmured Tommy to himself as he ran.

He had got a good start, and was back into the wood again and out of sight by the time the keeper had found out his mistake and burst through the hedge in pursuit.

Tommy doubled through the wood like a hare. He had shaken off the keeper for the time being, and might get rid of him altogether. On the other hand he had lost his chance of a change of clothes. Still, the scarecrow had brought him luck and helped him on his way; the ragged dummy had been his only friend so far, while all the rest of the world was chasing him.

This time Tommy came out at the north end of the wood, on the far side, and ran up the hill. He covered another half-mile, but his strength was failing and he could not go much farther. Whenever he halted to get breath he could hear people shouting farther down the slope, and another sound

that made his heart sink—the baying of dogs.

"Gosh," he murmured, "I believe they've got a pack hunting me!"

Tommy remembered that he had read somewhere about the police dogs; there was a man who trained them, and sometimes when a prisoner escaped from a gaol the dogs were sent for and laid out to track him down. That explained how the pursuers had found out in which direction Tommy had gone. If the dogs had picked up his scent, he would never be able to shake them off.

"That's torn it!" gasped Tommy. "I'm done!" he added miserably. "May as well give myself up!"

But he could not bring himself to do that. If they wanted him, let them come and find him. He struggled on over the crest of the hill, dragging one foot after the other, and saw a lonely little grey flint church standing on the slope not far away, with a house standing near it in the midst of shrubberies.

Tommy made for the church as if by instinct. He did not know why. In the old days men who were being hunted down for a crime sometimes took refuge in churches or abbeys and were safe for the time from their pursuers. It was called taking sanctuary, and nobody could touch them in a church. But it wasn't likely that the Essex police would let him alone on that account.

He reached the garden of the house and scrambled through the privet hedge. This place, he saw, was the rectory, where the parson lived. There seemed to be nobody about, and the shrubberies gave him a chance to hide for a while and get his breath. But as he came through the bushes he suddenly found himself at the edge of a gravel-path near a stable, and he drew back hastily. It was too late!

"Hallo!" said a voice.

Tommy found himself facing a freckled-faced boy of about fifteen, clad in flannels. He had a mackintosh cape slung over his arm, and was carrying a big, thick stick.

"What are you doing here?" cried the boy. "Who are you?" And before

Tommy could answer he went on: "Why, you're the prisoner that's bunked from the Bellerophon!"

Tommy's jaw set tight. He was looking dangerous, and he drew a step nearer to the boy.

"Yes," he said quietly, "that's who I am. You're quite right. What about it?"

The boy looked Tommy over from head to foot; his torn, blue clothes covered with mud, and his haggard face.

"Well, you look as if you'd had a rotten time, old chap!" he said. "What about it? I'm blessed if I know!"

"Are you goin' to give me up? Are you goin' to put 'em on to me?"

The boy looked puzzled. Tommy could not make him out. Then he began to grin slightly as he looked Tommy over again.

"It's a bit of a problem, isn't it?" he said. "I suppose I ought. Would you if you were me?"

"No, I'm hanged if I would!" said Tommy.

"There you are, then!" said the boy cheerfully. "My dad always tells me to do as I'd be done by; he says it's a good rule. My dad's the parson here. He's out hunting now, but he'll be in presently."

"Hunting what?" exclaimed Tommy. "Me?"

"No. Fox."

"What? Were those the foxhounds I heard just now, then?" said Tommy, with new hope.

"No. I'm afraid that's the police dogs. I saw them when I was up on the hill just now. I'm beastly sorry for you. I don't know what you've done, but I think it's rotten hunting a fellow with dogs—just as if he were a fox. What was that gun I heard just now?"

"That was a gamekeeper—shooting at me."

To Tommy's astonishment, the boy flew into a rage.

"The sweep!" he cried. "It's as bad as shooting at a fox—with the hounds full cry after him, too! But what can you expect of a keeper? I know that chap—he shoots foxes. Any chap who'd shoot a fox would rob a church. My dad says so. I say, isn't there anything I can do for you? You'll never get away in those clothes. Here, take these!"

He hurriedly gave Tommy his cap and mackintosh, shoving the cap on to his head and wrapping the cloak round his shoulders to hide his uniform.

"By gosh, you're the only decent chap I've seen since I got away!" gulped Tommy. "Couldn't you hide me here for a bit?"

"I would, but it's no good," said the boy. "Those dogs are bound to trail you here—they've got your scent. Can't you run for it?"

"I'm tired out—an' I'll never be able to out-run those beastly dogs!" said Tommy desperately. He could hear the noise coming closer and closer. "But I suppose I've got to try it!"

"Can you ride a bike?" cried the boy, as Tommy started away.

"Yes."

"Pop into the coach-house there and take mine—the old one in the corner! You might get away on that!"

"You're a brick!" exclaimed Tommy. Darting across to the coach-house, he found a rusty old bicycle leaning against the wall. He ran it out and vaulted on to it, pedalling down the path to the gate, which the parson's son held open for him.

"Leave it on the road when you've

done with it; I'll get it back some time," said the boy as Tommy flashed past him.

"Don't tell anybody you gave me the bike—say I pinched it!" cried Tommy. "Thanks awfully! You're a sportsman!"

"Good luck to you!" the boy called after him; and Tommy circled round the corner, pedalling for all he was worth.

The baying of the dogs was very near now.

He rode along the lane that topped the crest of the hill and turned into the high road that ran down the inland side. As he did so he heard a shout of rage and triumph, and glanced back over his shoulder.

It was the gamekeeper again. He vaulted over a gate into the road and levelled his gun. Tommy ducked down, just as the bicycle went spinning over the top of the hill.

The Man with the Brown Beard!

BANG! Simultaneously, Tommy felt a sting like a red-hot needle in his leg, and then another bang. He thought it was the report of a second shot-gun, but he was mistaken. It was his back tyre. The shot had punctured it with a loud report. It came very near doing the trick, for the old bike swerved violently, but with a wild wrench Tommy just succeeded in righting her.

He expected another shot, but it didn't come. He was flying down-hill at such a rate that by the time the keeper had run to the place where the road dipped Tommy was pretty well out of gunshot range.

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. "Nooks," 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.

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, covering up their tracks by planting some of the stolen cash on Tommy's person. Tommy remains conscious, but his mind is blank. He meets DAN BENNETT, an old chum at Gravesend, and the two boys have a merry time. That evening, however, Tommy is arrested, and to his amazement and horror, charged with the murder of his uncle Joseph Comber.

Not satisfied with the evidence put up by Foss, however, the jury acquit Tommy on the graver charge. But of theft he is found guilty and sentenced to three years' detention aboard the reformatory ship Bellerophon.

After a series of exciting incidents, however, Tommy makes his escape. Although almost exhausted, he eludes his pursuers and gains sanctuary in the thick woods, where he rests his aching limbs. He is about to crawl from his hiding-place when he hears the sound of voices. Daring hardly to breathe, he peers through the bushes and glimpses two men, one a farmer, and the other a gamekeeper armed with a double-barrelled gun, both of whom are discussing his escape.

This is getting near the limit," mutters Tommy under his breath, "what with sportsmen and search-parties hunting for me, I'm done if I stay here!"

(Note read on.)

"By gum, lucky it was the tyre and not me!" thought Tommy. "The silly beggar's had two chances; he'll never get another! Fire away, my pippin, and welcome! Have a cigar or nuts!"

He nearly yelled aloud with joy; but he knew that the less yelling he did, the better. This was so much better than dragging himself along on foot that he forgot his weariness. He had only to sit in the saddle and let himself go. He didn't even have to pedal.

The descent from Lagdon Hill is over a mile long, and uncommonly steep for Essex. Tommy was whizzing along at over twenty miles an hour, the wind whistling past him. He could laugh at the dogs now. Nothing could catch him except a motor-car.

But it wasn't any too easy to keep from crashing. The back tyre was badly ripped, and the wheel was grinding and jolting horribly. Luckily the road was fairly straight, and Tommy managed to get round what curves there were. But the speed was so dizzy and the jolting so violent that he tried to brake a little for fear the machine would buckle itself to pieces.

It was no use. Crack! went the brake, and gave up altogether.

"She's away with me!" said Tommy. "Well, let her rip! It's neck or nothin' now!"

He coasted the rest of the hill at a pace that would have done credit to the Brooklands track, and it was marvellous that he reached the bottom of the long descent all in one piece.

On the level plain below the bicycle slowed up, and Tommy began to pedal. He could still make a good pace, plugging along blindingly.

He pushed his cap down tight over his head, and drew the mackintosh cape around him to conceal his clothes. The cape had streamed out behind him during the first part of the ride, which was probably the reason why the keeper had spotted him again.

That was a piece of bad luck. When the news spread again, everybody would be looking out for a boy on a bicycle, and they would know all about his cap and cape, too. Still, he had left the whole hunt at least a couple of miles behind him in the last five minutes. He passed nothing except a few farm carts, the drivers of which did not take any notice of him.

As soon as he was well away, Tommy Comber turned off the main road into the side lanes where the hedges were high. He kept on for half an hour, but he was feeling the strain again. Nobody can ride a punctured bicycle very fast for far. Twice he fell off through sheer weariness.

The bicycle was giving up, too. Each time, Tommy managed to drag himself back into the saddle.

But after his third tumble he decided that he could go no farther. The rear pedal was wrecked, and the wheel was jammed.

He picked himself up, and with a great effort managed to drag the machine off the road into a field, and stow it in a ditch where it was not likely to be seen by passers-by.

"That's about the finish of the jigger!" murmured Tommy, looking at it affectionately, for it had been a good friend to him. "When I get Comberite Powder going, I'll buy its owner a motor-bike! That was a jolly decent kid!"

Tommy had no idea where he was. But the place seemed lonely enough, and he guessed that he must have left the pursuers quite six or seven miles behind him. The dogs would not be able to



There was a sudden click, and a beam of blinding white light shot out of the darkness, striking Tommy Comber full in the face. At the same moment, a deep, quiet voice cried: "Hands up!" Tommy obeyed the command instantly.

(See page 26.)

track the bicycle, for tyres don't leave any scent. But his strength was at its last ebb, and seeing a haystack in a corner of the field near by, he staggered towards it.

He could not go on, and if they hunted him down, so much the worse. He would stay here till night, whatever happened.

The haystack had been partly cut, and there was a lot of loose hay at one side of it. Tommy cast himself down on it, and burrowed and wriggled his way into the stack till he was completely covered. Then he collapsed altogether, and fell into a heavy stupor. If an army of men and dogs had surrounded him, he would not have known it.

The night was clear and a high moon shone over the woods and fields when Tommy crawled out of the haystack.

He had no idea what time it was. He had had some sort of a sleep, but so far from refreshing him it made him feel worse than ever. He realised that unless he could find something to eat, his career as an escaped prisoner was pretty near its end. There was a sickening faintness, and his legs were nearly giving way under him.

He reached the road somehow, close to a railed fence that bordered a plantation of fir trees. He staggered along, supporting himself with a hand on the rails, and progressed in this fashion for fifty yards or so, when the trees and the fence came unexpectedly to an end. Tommy remained swaying and doubting his eyes for a moment; then he saw that he was standing in front of an open gate looking on a shabby, weedy

carriage drive, at the end of which was a house.

The moonlight shining full on the front of the house showed it up plainly, and in spite of its size it wasn't much to look at. The whole place had as forlorn and neglected appearance as any inhabited dwelling could have. But it certainly was inhabited, for in the small round glass window over the hall door Tommy could see a feeble glimmer of light.

There was something sinister about the house; something strange and forbidding. But Tommy wasn't waiting for invitations if there was any chance of food. He slipped in through the gate, and keeping well in the shadow of the bushes, crept slowly and unsteadily forward till he reached a point opposite the front door. He crouched there a moment, peering up at the house. Except for that flickering light there was no sign of life anywhere.

At first he had a wild idea of ringing the bell and pretending to be a starving tramp. Then he remembered that his description had certainly been circulated all over the neighbourhood, and the cap and mackintosh he had borrowed from the parson's son would not help him, but only give him away; if anyone was in the house they would recognise him at once as the missing prisoner.

The only alternative was to try and help himself to a crust of bread, as best he could. And that he had no right to do; no doubt it put him in the same class as Joe Slade, who was doing twelve months on the Bellerophon for theft. All the same, there comes a time when a starving person doesn't think of anything else except keeping the life in his body, and Tommy had reached it. It

seemed to him, as he crouched there, that he could smell a faint sniff of food, drifting from the house on the cold night wind, and it struck on his nostrils and made him tremble all over.

There was the chance, too, that a servant or somebody might take pity on him, as the parson's son had done, if he could get in on the quiet. Anyway, it was no use waiting about till he dropped from exhaustion, so, getting on his feet, he slunk along the laurels to the house itself.

He made his way slowly down the path, keeping one hand against the wall, and came out into a small yard paved with cobbles, at the back. There was a door here with a window on either side of it, and overhead several more windows—all in complete darkness.

Tommy had never fainted in his life, but he felt horribly like fainting now. He pulled himself together with an effort, and peered through the pane of the nearest window. He could just see the outline of a table just inside with some plates and dishes piled on it, and he put his hand against the bottom of the sash and gave it a gentle push. The window wasn't latched. It yielded at once, sliding up several inches with a wheezy rattle that brought Tommy's heart into his mouth.

For a moment he waited, listening intently for any sound of movement in the house. All was quiet, and he raised the window a little higher and poked his head in.

It was the kitchen all right; there was no doubt about that. Tommy took one long, luxurious sniff at the scent of meat and pudding that still hung faintly in the air, and with a final effort he hoisted

himself up and scrambled in over the window-sill.

His feet had hardly touched the floor, when there was a sharp click, and a beam of blinding white light shot out of the darkness, striking him full in the face. At the same moment, a deep, quiet voice said:

"Put up your hands!"

Tommy put them up.

There was a brief pause; then from the other end of the room a man in a dressing-gown, tied with a belt and tassels, came slowly forward towards Tommy and the kitchen table. He was holding in one hand a small electric-torch, and in the other a very large revolver at full cock. He laid down the torch on the table, with the light still pointing straight at Tommy's face.

"If you try to move," he said pleasantly, "I shall blow your brains out!"

"All right," said Tommy huskily.

"I don't know if you've got any brains," added the man with the revolver, "but supposing that you have, I shall instantly blow them out if you make the slightest movement."

With that he walked towards the kitchen-range, struck a match against the wall, and with one hand lit a couple of candles that stood on the mantelpiece.

Tommy was too dazed to do anything, even if he had had the chance. He stood there with his hands up, rocking slightly from side to side, and wondering how long it would be before he toppled over.

His captor stood for a moment under the light, looking at him in silence. He was a tall man, about fifty, with a yellow face rather like a hawk's, but very wrinkled; he had a pointed, brown beard, and a pair of very hard, piercing eyes behind a pair of horn-spectacles.

Tommy had a vague idea he had seen him before somewhere. And in spite of his own weakness and distress, he suddenly recognised the man. He had seen those eyes watching him in the court-house at Maidstone Assizes; and, again, yesterday, from the fast motor-boat on the river. Oddly enough the man did not seem at all angry. The eyes were now staring at Tommy with a sort of malicious amusement, and satisfaction.

He came a step nearer, still holding the revolver.

"Dear, dear!" he said smoothly. "And I thought it was Mr. Carfax. What a disappointment! I hope he is not ill?"

Tommy had no idea what the man was talking about, but his voice sounded as if it came from a long way off.

"If you keep me standing like this much longer," he managed to blurt out, "I shall faint, an' that's all about it."

The man looked at him with a mocking smile.

"I shouldn't wonder if you did," he

replied, "and yet you look a tough enough little customer for anything. I should think—"

What he thought, Tommy never heard, for the room suddenly seemed to go dark and the floor appeared to spin round under his feet. He pitched forward, and the last thing he remembered was making a blind but vain grab at the corner of the kitchen table.

Doctor O'Hara!

TOMMY'S first sensation when he came round, was that his mouth was on fire. Then he realised that his mouth was full of spirits of some sort, and with a surprised gulp he swallowed it, choked, coughed and opened his eyes.

He was lying back on the sofa in a wide parlour. There was a cushion under his head. Standing in front of him was the tall man with the brown beard and the dressing-gown, but this time instead of a revolver he was holding an empty wine-glass. When he saw that his captive was recovering, he put the glass down.

"Well, Tommy Comber," he said slowly, "and how are you feeling now?"

A hasty glance showed Tommy that his mackintosh had been opened at the neck, showing his wet and muddy Bellerophon uniform underneath. He saw the game was up, but he was too exhausted to care.

His captor leaned against the table, watching him closely.

"Are you feeling any better?" he repeated.

Tommy tried feebly to raise himself up.

"I don't know," he said weakly, "I'm feeling beastly hungry."

The man stepped forward at once, his wrinkled face breaking into a curious smile.

"Don't sit up. Lie where you are, and I'll get you something to eat. Had any food to-day?"

Tommy shook his head.

"Only rain-water," he said. "It ain't very filling."

"You'd better start with some bread-and-milk then. You've been starving too long to eat a big meal straight away."

The man went across to a door which led to the larder, and then paused and looked back.

"You needn't try to escape," he said. "I am not going to send for the police."

"I don't care a button what you do, sir," said Tommy, "as long as you hurry up with some grub."

Tommy was in the half-stupor that comes from utter exhaustion, and listened to his host moving about and getting the things ready. The unexpected way he was being treated by his captor did not strike him as being particularly surprising; he could think of nothing except the approaching food.

He saw the man bring in a saucepan and a small spirit-stove, and heard him strike a match. After that Tommy lay back in silent contentment, till he was roused by the chink of a spoon and the sound of something liquid being poured out. He saw his host coming to him with a steaming china bowl.

"Here you are," he said to Tommy. "Do you think you can manage to feed yourself?"

Tommy did not trouble to answer him. He made one grab for the bowl, and the next moment was wolfing down a great mouthful of 'warm bread-and-

milk that seemed to him the most heavenly stuff he had ever tasted.

The tall man, watched him and chuckled grimly.

"I shouldn't take it quite so fast," he said. "It will do you more good if you eat it slowly."

The first few spoonfuls had partly deadened Tommy's worst pangs, so he slowed up the pace a little; but even then he got outside the bowl of food in record time, and with a deep sigh handed it back to his captor to fill again.

He was feeling better—a lot better. The food and the rest and the warmth of the room were all bucking him up, and for the first time he began to realise clearly where he was and what had happened. His captor seemed pleased with the change in him, and gave him his second ration approvingly.

"There you are," he said, in that cold, dry voice of his. "Eat that up, and then you'll begin to learn a thing or two. Meanwhile, I think I'll shut that window. I expect you've had enough fresh air."

"I've had enough fresh air, and fresh water, to last me a giddy lifetime, sir," said Tommy, tackling the second bowl of hot milk, while his host shut the window and pulled down the blind.

"That's better," said the man, gently rubbing his hands together. "Now we are more comfortable and more private. By the way, Tommy Comber, I haven't introduced myself yet, have I? My name is O'Hara—Dr. O'Hara."

"I'm delighted to meet you, sir," said Tommy, with his mouth full of bread-and-milk.

O'Hara rubbed his hands together again and smiled.

"It's a mutual pleasure, Tommy," he murmured. "I, too, am very pleased to meet you."

The words were pleasant and smooth enough. But Tommy did not like the tone they were uttered in. It somehow reminded him of a cat purring over a mouse. He took a look at his host over the edge of the bowl as he drank down the last of the milk.

With the same cat-like smile, Dr. O'Hara drew up a chair and sat down opposite him. He kept his hand in the pocket of his dressing-gown, and Tommy guessed that the pistol was there.

"You needn't keep hold of that bit of ironmongery, doctor," said Tommy. "I'm stretched out on my back here, and I'm not armed. You ain't afraid of me, are you?"

Dr. O'Hara chuckled again.

"I am not afraid of anybody living, and I've dealt with some queer people in my time," he said. "But I invariably make sure—quite sure. And, by all accounts, you are rather a tough young customer. Now, if you've recovered enough, tell me something about yourself. At present all I know about your escape is what I've read in the 'Daily Mail.'"

Tommy Comber slowly emptied his bowl, and set it down beside him on the floor. It was a dodge to gain time, and he did not answer in a hurry. His wits were coming back, and he began to see there was something queer about Dr. O'Hara and the way he was treating his captive.

O'Hara must have guessed his thoughts, for he smiled mockingly.

"Come, Tom Comber," he said; "it doesn't pay to be too suspicious. It makes you any easier in your mind, let

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me tell you I haven't any idea—just at present—of turning policeman. Not even for the splendid sum of five pounds. That's what they offer, isn't it? Because I fancy you are worth a good bit more."

"Oho!" thought Tommy. "That's it, is it?"

Evidently Dr. O'Hara, for a good reason, didn't intend to give him up.

"I'll tell you anything you want to know, sir," he said. "Where did the 'Daily Mail' leave off?"

Dr. O'Hara laughed and lit a cigarette.

"If I remember rightly," he said, "you had just taken advantage of the fog to get ashore, and had committed a brutal and unprovoked assault on one of the ship's officers who asked you to surrender. Before that you had stolen a boat belonging to an innocent bargee, and, in fact, you had put the fear of death into everybody, and got right away with it. I gather that people all over Essex are trembling in their beds to-night for fear you'd break in and murder them in order to steal their clothes. However, let's hear what you've got to say about it. It will pay you to tell me the truth."

Tommy explained quite simply all his adventures since the steamer had rammed the whale-boat and set him adrift. He did not try to hide or exaggerate anything, except that he made no mention of the parson's son at Lagdon and the borrowed bike, for fear of getting his temporary pal into trouble. But he told all the rest of his doings, up to the time when, half fainting with hunger and exhaustion, he had climbed in through O'Hara's kitchen window.

O'Hara listened in silence. The blue smoke from the cigarette curled up around his yellow face, and he might have been a statue for all the expression there was on his features, but his piercing eyes never left Tommy's face. When the story was ended he remained for a few seconds, still staring, and then gave a short, cold laugh.

"It must be pleasant to be as young and strong as you are," he said. "I should have been dead long ago."

"Well, I don't feel much like getting up and doing a giddy Highland fling, sir, as it is," said Tommy. "But the question is, what are you goin' to do with me now?"

O'Hara got up and walked slowly as far as the window, where he turned and then he seemed to make up his mind.

"You had better go to bed, Tommy Comber," he said, "and I'll see you in the morning. You are not fit for any more to-night."

"No, I'm not," admitted Tommy frankly. "But before I go to bed I'd like to be a bit more sure where I'm going to wake up."

There was a sudden noise outside, and Tommy saw his host raise his head and listen. It was the distant but unmistakably sound of a motor-car, coming nearer and nearer every moment. For a few moments they both listened, then with a shock Tommy realised that the car had reached the house and was turning in at the drive.

Weak as he was, Tommy sprang up from the sofa, hardly feeling the spasm of pain that shot through him when he moved.

"By gosh!" he cried fiercely. "You've sold me!"

O'Hara whipped out the revolver, and pointed it full in Tommy's face.

"Sit down, you young fool!" he said. "It's not the police!"

Tommy himself hardly knew what he intended to do when he faced O'Hara,

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but, anyway, the revolver wasn't necessary. The moment he was on his feet he turned as giddy as a kite, and it was only by clutching at a chair that he saved himself from falling headlong.

O'Hara lowered his revolver and repeated the order.

"Sit down, boy! No one means you any harm here."

"Who is it in the car?" demanded Tommy, sinking down on the sofa again, not out of obedience to O'Hara, but because he couldn't stand up.

"It's a friend of mine. He has nothing to do with the police. You'll see in a minute."

The car was heard pulling up at the porch, and the doctor opened the window.

"Haynes!" he called out. "Come in here. Don't bother about the car. Got great news for you. A real surprise packet."

Somebody answered, but what he said

Tommy could not catch. He was feeling very queer again, and O'Hara came across to him, stretched him out on the sofa, and felt his pulse.

"You're feeling pretty rotten, I know," he said, "but we'll get your wet things off and put you to bed in a minute. You'll feel a different boy in the morning."

"Shall I? That's jolly convenient," said Tommy faintly. "I mean to say, if I were a completely different chap they wouldn't be able to pinch me for the old Bellerophon, what?"

The doctor gave him a curious smile. "If that's intended for a joke, it's a better one than you think, my lad," he said. "You've just about hit the mark. You've got pluck, anyway."

(Dr. O'Hara is a queer customer and no mistake, and it behoves Tommy Comber to keep his wits about him! Next week's instalment contains thrills galore, chums, so don't miss it!)

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(Continued from page 22.)

inclined to apologise, 'I'm not stopping you.'

Bunter was not heeded. There was a buzzing crowd round the door, and the stationmaster and a swarm of officials had arrived and half a dozen native police. Bunter—fortunate as his arrival had been—found himself neglected in the general tumult.

Colonel Wharton came to himself a

little later. The first sound that greeted him was the deep snore of Billy Bunter echoing through the car. A doctor had been called. But the hardy old soldier needed little assistance; he was soon himself again. He listened quietly to what the juniors had to tell him; and then, for some moments, he stood looking at the sleeping face of the snoring Bunter. What he would have done had Bunter rejoined the party under other circumstances was doubtful, or perhaps not doubtful. But in the actual circumstances there was only one line that the

colonel could take, for there was no doubt that the coming of Billy Bunter had saved his life.

And so when Bunter awoke in the morning he found that he was once more, without question, let, or hindrance, a member of the Greyfriars party;

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