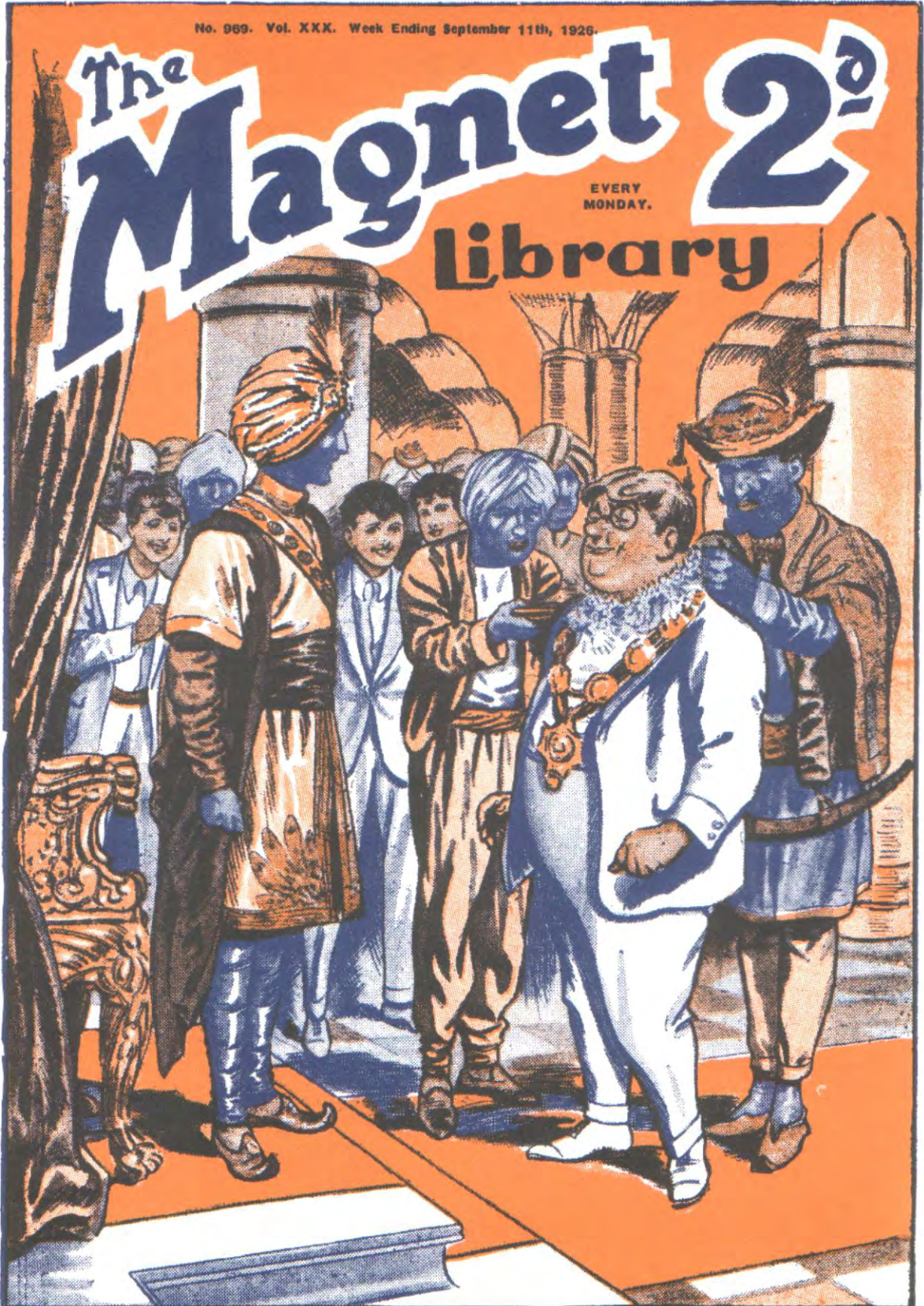


"THE NABOB'S RIVAL!" This week's magnificent story of
Harry Wharton & Co. in India.

No. 969. Vol. XXX. Week Ending September 11th, 1926.

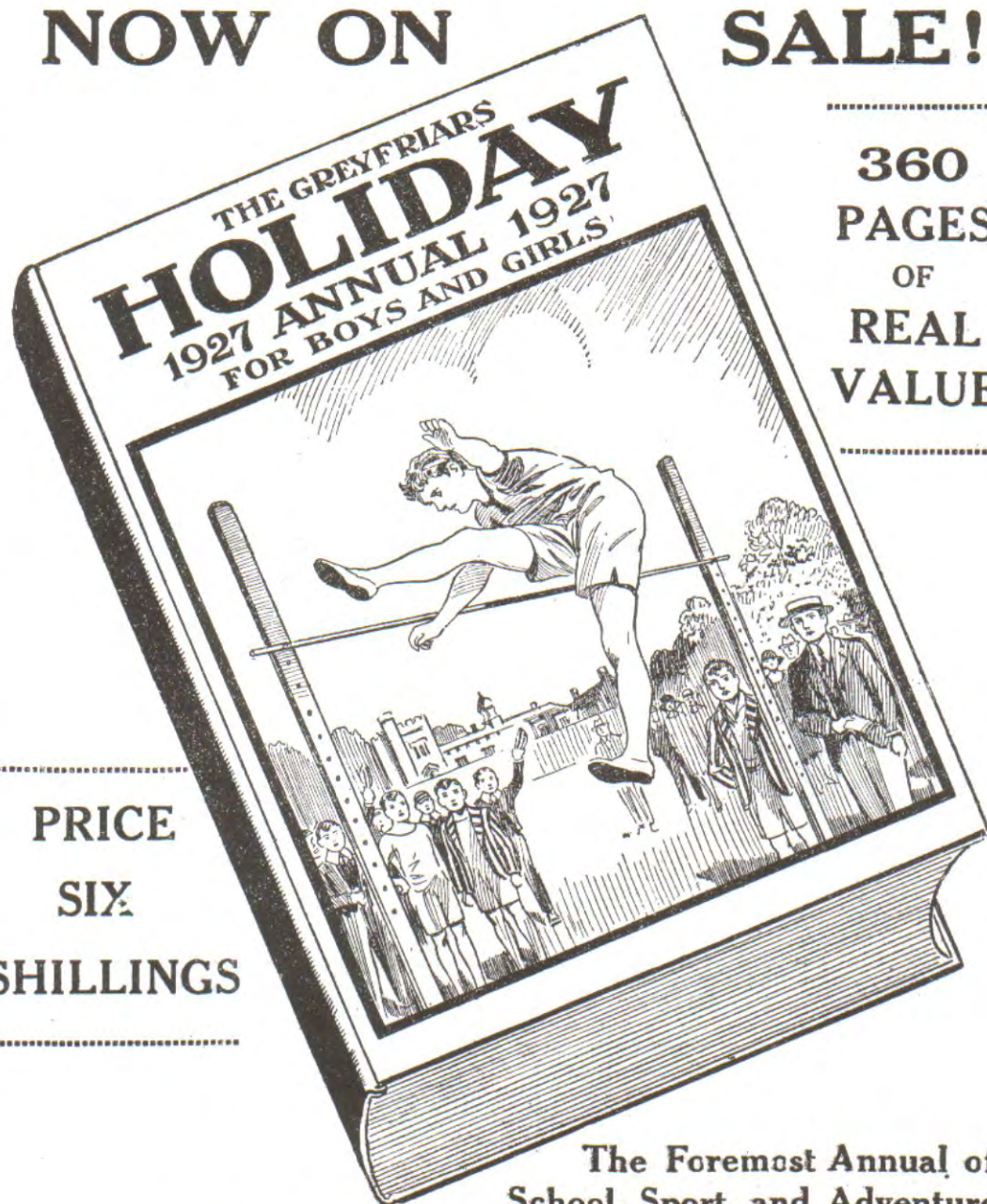


BILLY BUNTER—THE HERO OF THE HOUR!

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THE SCHEMER! In the event of Hurree Singh's death his rascally kinsman, Baji Rao, would succeed to the throne of Bhanipur. And Baji Rao, ambitious and unscrupulous to a degree, is determined that Hurree Singh shall die!

The Nabob's Rival!

A Powerful New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., the Greyfriars Chums, on Holiday in the Mystic East. :: By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

No Go!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Can it!"

"But, I say——"

"Oh, run away and play, Bunter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, looking up from the rifle he was cleaning; and for once, Bob's tone was sharp and irritable. "Don't bother!"

"Roll away, for goodness' sake!" growled Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter did not roll away.

He remained where he was, blinking at the four juniors of Greyfriars through his big spectacles, with an indignant blink.

It was morning in Bhanipur; the hot Indian morning.

Far off, the white peaks of the Himalayas glimmered against the cloudless blue of the sky, clad in eternal snow. But the white-walled city, and the vast stretches of rice-land, jungle, and forest and nullah, shimmered in the growing heat of the sun.

Harry Wharton and his comrades sat in a balcony under a wide awning, overlooking the palm court of the palace of Bhanipur—the home of their dusky chum, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

For the first time since their stay in the Palace of Bhanipur, the chums of the Remove were looking worried and troubled.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was not with his comrades; and many hours had passed since the disappearance of the schoolboy nabob. And the mystery of his fate hung heavy on the spirits of his chums.

The juniors were in no mood to be bothered by Billy Bunter just then. It was a time for Bunter to be quiet.

But William George Bunter never could realise that there was a time when his dulcet tones should not be heard. Bunter always found considerable pleasure in the sound of his own voice. He never could realise how quickly it palled upon others.

"Look here——" he recommenced.

"Don't worry now, Bunter," said Harry Wharton quietly. "We're bothered about what's happened to old Inky. Do dry up for a bit."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Go and have a second breakfast, or a third!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Anyhow, dry up!" said Frank Nugent. "Can't you see we're worried, you fat duffer? Nobody knows what's happened to Hurree Singh."

"That's what I was going to speak about," said Bunter calmly. "Inky hasn't treated me really well since I've been here, though I came all the way to India to protect him. He's not really grateful——"

"Cheese it!"

"But I'm sorry he's been bagged by those niggers," went on Bunter. "It

wouldn't have happened if I'd come to the tiger-hunt with you yesterday. I suppose you realise that?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I've been thinking the matter over," said Bunter, unheeding, "and I can tell you, the matter's jolly serious."

"Oh! You can see that, can you?" snorted Johnny Bull. "You can really see that anything is serious, besides sleeping, and guzzling, and wagging your fat chin!"

"It's pretty serious for old Inky," said Harry. "He was kidnapped during the tiger-hunt, Bunter, and it's fairly certain that he's fallen into the hands of dangerous enemies. We may never see him alive again. Goodness knows what may have happened."

And the face of the captain of the Greyfriars Remove clouded. It was terrible to think that perhaps he had looked for the last time upon the dusky, good-natured face of the schoolboy nabob; that perhaps Hurree Singh, in returning to his native land, had returned only to find a terrible doom there.

"It's rotten!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Inky's uncle sent for him to come home from Greyfriars, thinking that he would be safer here. And it's here that those rotters have got him."

"You fellows listen to me," said Bunter. "I tell you I've been thinking over this, and it's serious."

"Don't we know it, ass? It couldn't be more serious for Inky than it is."

"I mean, serious for us!" snapped Bunter.

"Us!"

"Yes, us," said Bunter. "Now Inky's gone—kidnapped, and perhaps killed—where do we come in?"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at the fat junior.

Certainly, in their distress for their vanished chum, it had not occurred to them to think much about themselves.

But Bunter had evidently taken thought on the subject. There was one important person whom Billy Bunter never forgot for long, if at all; and that person was W. G. Bunter, of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Look how it stands!" said Bunter, as the juniors remained silent, staring at him. "That nigger, Nally Das, or some of his gang, have bagged Inky—that's pretty clear. But Inky thought—in fact, we all knew—that Nally Das and his gang were acting under the orders of a relation of Inky's, who wants to take his place as nabob—a chap named—What is his blinking name?"

"Baji Rao!" said Harry.

"That's it—the Rajah Baji Rao," said Bunter. "It seems that if Inky pegged out, his Cousin Baji Rao becomes Nabob of Bhanipur. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, ass. That is why the rotter has been plotting against poor old Inky, and trying to get him into his hands."

"And now he's got him," said Bunter. "It looks like it."

"Well, life's jolly cheap in this country," said Bunter. "Now he's got him he will make an end of him. It stands to reason!"

"It's not certain!" said Harry. "There's lots of room for hope yet. Baji Rao hopes to succeed Inky as Nabob of Bhanipur; but he may be afraid to have poor old Inky killed. The British Government may interfere and he may be glad to save his neck by producing Inky alive."

"Anyway, he will keep him jolly safe!" said Bunter. "It comes to the same thing for us. If Inky doesn't turn

up, Baji Rao becomes Nabob of Bhanipur."

"That's so."

"And then, what about us?" demanded Bunter. "We're friends of Inky's. We came here to save him from being kidnapped on the way from England. We've stood by him through thick and thin—me specially. When Baji Rao gets into this place as nabob do you think he will let us get off safe?"

"I haven't thought about it," said Harry.

"You wouldn't!" said Bunter scornfully. "I'm the only fellow in this party that does any thinking at all. I can jolly well tell you that we're in Queer Street!"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Can't you see?" roared Bunter. "I tell you that rajah beast will have his knife into us, and very likely the first thing he will do when he gets the upper hand here will be chopping off our heads."

"Likely enough, if he gets the chance," said Nugent.

"He will get the chance if Inky doesn't turn up; it won't be a chance, it will be a cert!" said Bunter.

"Well, what about it?" exclaimed Harry Wharton impatiently. "Come to the point."

"That's the point—we're in danger! We've got no time to lose!" explained Bunter. "Inky's uncle, the Jam Bahadur, is still boss here; but as soon as it's certain that Inky won't come back, he will have to stand down for the new nabob. Well, we've got to clear out before then."

"Clear out?" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Of course, you ass! I keep on telling you we're not safe here, now Inky's gone!" exclaimed Bunter excitedly.

"Once that rajah gets the whip-hand our number's up. What we've got to do is this—go while the going's good! See? It's a day's journey out of Bhanipur into British territory. We mayn't have any too much time if we start this morning. So, instead of sitting here like a lot of moulting owls, you'd better pack."

"Pack!" said Wharton blankly.

"Yes; and beat it as fast as we jolly well can!"

"Beat it?"

"Just that!" said Bunter. "The going's good, at present, and we'd better go. See?"

The chums of the Remove gazed fixedly at Bunter.

"Go!" repeated Bob Cherry. "Go—and leave old Inky in danger? Take care of our own skins, without bothering about what's happened to him? Is that what you mean, Bunter?"

"Well, I'm sorry for Inky, of course," said Bunter. "He wasn't grateful for all I've done for him; still, I'm sorry! But our number's up if we stay, and we've got to beat it, sharp!"

"You fat villain!" roared Johnny Bull. "Beat it as fast as you like—and the sooner the better!"

"I can't go alone, of course," said Bunter warmly. "You fellows brought me here, and you're bound to see me safe back! Don't be selfish!"

"Don't be what?" ejaculated Nugent.

"Selfish! I never could stand selfishness!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Bob Cherry rose to his feet with a gleam in his eyes that might have alarmed Bunter, if the short-sighted Owl of the Remove had noted it.

Probably there was a great deal in what Bunter said. Undoubtedly the nabob's ambitious kinsman was at the

bottom of Hurree Singh's disappearance; undoubtedly, Baji Rao hoped to succeed his cousin as nabob. And it was extremely probable that if he came into power in Bhanipur, he would deal very shortly and sharply with Inky's English friends, if they were still in the nabob's kingdom. But such considerations, though overwhelming in Bunter's estimation, did not appeal to the chums of the Remove in the very least. Danger to themselves certainly never would have caused them to desert a comrade in distress. Bob Cherry was about to make that clear to Bunter; not in words which would have been wasted on the fatuous Owl of the Remove, but by a method that even Bunter could not fail to understand.

"That's right—get a move on!" said Bunter approvingly, as Bob rose. "Get going, and—Yaroooh!"

Bunter broke off with a roar as Bob Cherry grasped him by the collar and slewed him round.

"Yow! Leggo! Wharrr you at?" roared Bunter, in surprise and alarm.

Crash!

Bob did not explain what he was at. He let his actions speak for him. His boot crashed on William George Bunter, and William George fairly flew.

"Yaroooop!"

Bump!

Bunter landed, and rolled over. He turned to blink dazedly at the juniors.

"You—you—you—" he spluttered.

"Get out!" roared Bob.

"You—you burbling ass!" yelled Bunter. "Is this a time for ragging? Is this a time for Lower Fourth larks, you footling chump? I tell you—"

Bob Cherry made a stride towards him.

On second thoughts—proverbially the best—Billy Bunter did not linger to say more. He picked himself up and fled. A lunge from Bob's boot as he went accelerated his flight, and Bunter disappeared, roaring.

Probably Bunter did not understand why, but it was, at least, made quite clear to him that, for whatsoever reason, the chums of the Remove did not intend to go while the going was good.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Held by the Enemy!

"HUUZOOR!" The voice of Nally Das was soft and respectful; though there was a mocking in

flection in it. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the schoolboy Nabob of Bhanipur, sat up, with bonds upon his limbs, and looked at him.

It was night in the Indian forest.

In the deep, dense wood, far from any known path, the kidnapped nabob had been set down by the men who bore him on their shoulders, and the blindfolding linen cloth taken from his face.

Nally Das stood before him and salaamed. There was mockery in his look, but respect and fear were strangely blended with it. In the eyes of the Hindu Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was a great nabob, the descendant of a long line of princes, a sacred person of the highest caste. The kidnapper had not hesitated to carry out the orders of his master, Baji Rao; but he was awed by the calm, clear glance of the prince who had fallen into his hands.

Hurree Singh's dark eyes dwelt upon him contemptuously for a few moments, and then he looked round him.

Five or six dusky figures loomed up in the gloom, beyond them the shadowy

forest, with faint starlight filtering through the thick branches overhead.

Where he was, the nabob could not tell.

The kidnapper's opportunity had come during the tiger hunt, and he had been seized and borne away; but he had been blindfolded and bound. He was somewhere in the thick forests that clothed the slopes of the hills on the northern side of his kingdom, and that was all he knew. But he knew that he was far from help and rescue, or the kidnappers would not have halted and set him down.

"Salaam, huzoor!" said Nally Das. "You know me again, huzoor?" He was speaking in his own tongue.

"I know you, son of a pariah dog!" said the nabob contemptuously. "This is done by the order of Baji Rao, as I know also."

Nally Das nodded.

"You have dared to lay hands on a nabob. The punishment is to be trampled to death by an elephant," said Hurree Singh.

The Remove fellows of Greyfriars would hardly have known "Inky, of the Remove" at that moment. He was no longer a junior of the Lower Fourth, he was Nabob of Bhanipur, an Oriental prince to the tips of his dusky fingers. Inky, of the Remove, the best-tempered fellow at Greyfriars, would not have hurt a fly; but undoubtedly the Nabob of Bhanipur would have sentenced Nally Das to death for treason.

"But the power of punishment is not in the hands of the huzoor!" said Nally Das. "I have obeyed my master's orders. It is Baji Rao, henceforth who will reign in Bhanipur."

"My friends will find me," said Hurree Singh. "My uncle, the Jam Bahadur, will lead my soldiers to the rescue. The colonel sahib will never rest till he has found me. My shikarees will be seeking me even now."

"But they who seek you will not find you, huzoor," said Nally Das. "But we waste time in words. The orders of Baji Rao are to treat you with respect due to your rank, huzoor—are you not of his blood and kindred. The huzoor will be blindfolded—but if he will promise not to resist, or to call out for help, he shall be spared the bonds."

"Never!"

"As the huzoor pleases!" said Nally Das indifferently.

He signed to his men, and a dhooly was brought out from a hiding-place under the trees, where evidently it had been in readiness. It was a sort of box supported on a single pole. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was lifted into the dhooly, his hands and feet still bound, and the linen cloth was wound about his head again, serving the purpose both of a blindfold and a gag.

Two of the dusky kidnappers lifted the pole of the dhooly to their shoulders.

A word from Nally Das, and the party moved on again.

Within the dhooly, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh lay silent, still, as he was borne along through the darkness.

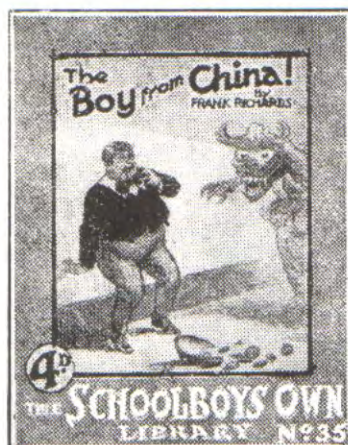
That his friends were seeking him, that all Bhanipur would turn out to the search, he knew. It seemed impossible that Nally Das and his men would succeed in getting clear with him. Night would have given place to day before they could hope to pass the borders of his kingdom; and in the daylight they would be stopped—no dhooly, no palanquin, no car or carriage, would pass on any road or path, or pass unquestioned and unsearched. Every mountain pass, every forest path, every lane through the paddy-fields would be watched and beset by eager searchers. They could

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not be thinking of attempting to take him outside the borders of his kingdom. Beyond, too, lay the territory of the British, where they would be still less secure, if they could reach it. But where, within the borders of Bhanipur, could they hope to keep the nabob a secure prisoner?

The castle of Baji Rao was a strong place, manned by his own retainers, but it could never hold out against the forces of the Jam Bahadur. Baji Rao's castle would be invested and searched; it was suspected, if it was not known by proof, that the ambitious rajah was the prime mover in the plot against the schoolboy nabob. It could not be in his own castle that the rajah hoped to keep his prisoner.

It was a strange puzzle, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh thought it over and over, as he was borne along in the dhooly under the forest trees.

The progress of the bearers was slow.

They were keeping to the thick forest, avoiding all paths, taking every care to elude possible observation. The dhooly brushed by tangled thickets and swishing branches. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh could not see, but he could hear. And all through the strange journey of the kidnapped nabob, he heard sounds that told him that they were still in the forest; that not for a moment did they emerge into a path or a road.

The dhooly stopped at last.

He heard muttering of voices, and then the dhooly moved on again, and his straining ears detected that the bearers were no longer treading the forest; their footsteps were on hard stone. The swishing branches were left behind, he was out of the forest at last. The dhooly was suddenly set down with a bump on stone.

He was in a building of some kind, or at least a paved court. It could not be the castle of Baji Rao, there were many miles of open country between the rajah's castle and the forest where Hurree Singh had been seized. The remembrance came into his mind of the ruined temple of Shiva in the forest, where he had picnicked with his Greyfriars chums. He remembered the face of Nally Das looking from a fissure in the old wall, and the strange disappearance of the Hindu when the ruins were searched for him. And it flashed into his mind that it was to the old, deserted temple of Shiva that he had been brought.

Could they hope to hide him there—within twenty miles of the city of Bhanipur? He heard a dull, grinding sound, as of a heavy stone moving.

Hands reached into the dhooly and lifted him out.

Once more he was lifted on men's shoulders, and he felt himself being carried downward—down a flight of steps.

Above his head, there came the dull, heavy sound again; the sound of a great stone that rolled back into its place.

And now he understood.

Beneath the ruined temple, there was some secret place—doubtless a hiding-place for the treasure of the old priests, who had been slain in the Afghan raid of a hundred years before. The old temple, haunted, as the ryots believed, by the spirits of the murdered priests of Shiva, was avoided by all who dwelt in the region; probably it was years since a footstep had awakened the echoes of the ancient ruins, until the day the Greyfriars fellows came there. It was a safe place for Nally Das and his gang, and Nally Das evidently knew the secret hiding-place of the old priests.

The heart of the kidnapped nabob was heavy.

Here he was safe from discovery. Even if the old temple of Shiva was visited by those who searched for him, they knew nothing of the secret of the moving stone, nothing of the hidden recesses beneath the cracked pavement of the floor.

For the first time, something like despair came to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, as he was borne down the steps into the darkness below. The dull echo of the great slab falling into its place, struck upon his ears like a knell, shutting him off from light and liberty, and from the hope of rescue.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Castle of Baji Rao!

THE Rajah Baji Rao stood at a high window in a tower of his castle and looked towards the east.

Far in the distance, beyond forest and plain, there was a glimpse of the white-walled city of Bhanipur, many a long mile distant.

The rajah's black, glittering eyes
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were turned incessantly in the direction of the city.

The morning sun was rising higher in the blue sky. For hours the rajah had stood at that high window, gazing to the east, waiting and watching for what he knew must come.

And now it was coming.

On the road to the castle there was a flashing of lances, a glow of gorgeous uniforms.

High over the horsemen towered a gigantic elephant, with a curtained howdah on its back; and in that howdah, the rajah knew, was the Jam Bahadur, the uncle and guardian of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Five hundred horsemen were riding with the Jam Bahadur, and among the many brown faces the rajah discerned several that were white, though browned by the torrid sun of India.

His eyes glittered as he recognised Colonel Wharton. With the Colonel rode four young sahibs, the school-fellows—as he knew of Hurree Singh at Greyfriars, in far-off England.

Baji Rao's eyes fixed grimly on the brilliant cavalcade.

The Indian rajah, ambitious, hard, ruthless in the pursuit of his ambition, was no coward. But his heart beat faster as he watched the advancing troopers. In the next hour his fate might be decided.

In his castle-palace, and over the few square miles it commanded, he was lord and master. The tiny Principality had been cut out of the kingdom of Bhanipur by his grandfather—the grandfather also of Hurree Singh—and given to a younger son. Baji Rao had inherited castle and lands and the title of rajah; within his narrow borders he wielded the power of life and death.

The ryots who laboured in the fields, the villagers and traders of his tiny State, knew him for a hard and grasping despot. All that tyranny could wring from his land he wrung from it, to spend in the reckless profusion of an Oriental palace. But for long years, since the last Nabob of Bhanipur had died, the rajah's eyes had been turned greedily on the kingdom of his cousin, a schoolboy in England. Only that schoolboy stood between the lord of a tiny State and the rich kingdom of Bhanipur. And at last the greedy thought had turned to active plotting, and Baji Rao had determined that he would reign in Bhanipur.

But there were spies about him, and he knew it. He knew that the Jam Bahadur more than suspected him. He knew that the British Government of India would have broken him like a reed had it been known at Simla that he had seized his cousin's kingdom by treachery. The way of the plotter was beset by difficulties and dangers.

But the rajah, once he had resolved upon his purpose, had taken the risks, and he had not turned back. The disappearance of Hurree Singh would leave him heir to the nabob's kingdom; and if the worst came, and the British troops marched into Bhanipur to call him to account, it would always be in his power to produce the nabob alive, and save his worthless neck. While, if he could secure himself in his new possession, it would be easy to change the nabob's imprisonment for the surer custody of death. That had been the rajah's scheme; but his many failures had made it more and more dangerous. Now success was his at last; a messenger from Nally Das had reached him in the night with the news that the nabob was

a hidden prisoner. But his guilt, if not known, was suspected; and he knew he had to face the ordeal of suspicion and search. The Jam Bahadur was coming to his castle, with a force that could not be resisted, to search for the missing nabob.

The Nabob of Bhanipur was not there; he could not be found within Baji Rao's castle walls. There was no proof that he had had a hand in what had befallen the nabob. But the rajah knew the ways of the East; he knew that he would not have waited for proof in the Jam's place. He had taken the risk, and he knew that the risk was terrible. With Hurree Singh gone, he was rightful Nabob of Bhanipur; but the missing nabob's uncle was Regent of the kingdom, and in possession of all its forces. Once in possession of the kingdom, he would have ordered the Jam to execution without hesitating a moment. But he was not yet in possession; it was as yet necessary for him to feign ignorance of what had happened; to act surprise at the news that the schoolboy nabob had disappeared. If the Jam did not believe him, or did not choose to believe him, what measures was he likely to take? The scimitar or the bowstring, perhaps, while the power was yet in his hands.

The rajah's heart beat harder as the tall elephant drew nearer and nearer to the castle gates and the clattering of many hoofs came up from below to his ears.

He descended from the tower at last. The visitors were not to find him on the watch. He had a part to play, which he would play with Oriental cunning.

The rajah was seated upon silken cushions in a gorgeous apartment with tall windows overlooking the castle court, with a silver hookah at his mouth, a picture of Oriental idleness, when there was a clanging at the gates, and a startled officer came to announce the arrival of the Jam Bahadur and his troops.

For a moment the thought was in the rajah's mind to order the gates to be barred, the walls to be manned by his guards, and to bid defiance to the regent of Bhanipur. But such a defiance would have been a confession of his guilt. And in a voice that shook a little, in spite of himself, he ordered the Jam to be admitted.

There was a trampling of many hoofs in the castle court. The tall elephant trod heavily in, and the soldiers crowded the court, looked on grimly by the armed guards of the rajah, a hundred or more in number. The Jam descended from his elephant.

The Rajah Baji Rao came as far as the steps of his palace to greet the visitors, and salaamed low before the Jam.

Harry Wharton & Co., sitting in the saddle, looked curiously at the rajah.

It was the first time they had seen the kinsman of their chum, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

In his dark, hard, cruel face they could trace no resemblance to Inky of the Remove.

"Looks a tough nut to crack!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Inky's not here," he said quietly.

"That's what we're going to find out," said Johnny Bull.

"If he were here, we should never have been admitted," said Harry. "If he is here, we shall release him, and Baji Rao will be arrested, if not executed. He's not here, or that rotter

wouldn't be facing us with so much nerve."

"I wish I could understand what the jolly Jam is saying to him," said Nugent. "He seems to be jolly emphatic."

The juniors listened; but they understood only a word here and there of the flowing Hindustani.

The Jam Bahadur had not returned the rajah's salute. His little brown face was grim, and his eyes were fixed grimly on Baji Rao. His manner made it quite clear that he had not come to the rajah's castle as a friend.

Baji Rao's dusky face flushed as the Jam went on speaking, and his black eyes gleamed. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"What is he saying, uncle?" asked Harry Wharton, as the Jam ceased to speak at last.

"He is telling the rajah that Hurree Singh has been taken, and that the castle is to be searched for him," answered Colonel Wharton.

"And the rajah?"

"He says that he knows nothing of it; that the news astonishes him, and that the Jam is welcome to search his castle stone by stone and brick by brick."

"Some of these johnnies look as if they would like to chip in," remarked Johnny Bull, with a glance at the chaukees of the rajah's guard, who were turning lowering looks on the soldiers from Bhanipur.

"They will not venture to do so, I think," said the colonel. "But the Jam was well-advised to bring a strong force with him."

The juniors realised that that was true. Had the Jam arrived with only a few attendants, it was very probable that a massacre would have taken place in the courtyard. But the force from Bhanipur was overwhelming, and the rajah's chaukees contented themselves with sullen and threatening looks.

Baji Rao, with a sullen brow, stepped back and disappeared from view. The Jam rapped out orders to his troopers.

Two hundred men remained in the great courtyard; the rest of the troopers entered the palace, and the search commenced.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Still Missing!

"NOTHING doing!" That was Bob Cherry's comment when the chums of Greyfriars remounted their horses to ride back to Bhanipur in the cool of the evening.

Harry Wharton nodded, with a clouded brow.

He had had little hope that any trace of the missing nabob would be found in the castle of Baji Rao, and what little hope there had been was gone now.

No sign of the nabob had been discovered.

The Jam Bahadur's face was dark and gloomy as he sat in his howdah and the tall elephant bore him back to the city.

Baji Rao had ordered his retainers to place no obstacle in the way of the search—indeed, the servants of the palace had helped in it. Unless there existed some cunningly-contrived hiding-place that baffled the searchers, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was not there.

But the Jam Bahadur was taking no chances. He had left two hundred men in occupation of the castle, with orders to keep on the search, fruitless as it had been, and to keep the rajah under observation.

That was all that could be done.

The terrible thought that Hurree Singh was perhaps no longer in the land of the living haunted the minds of his comrades and clouded their faces.

But they clung to the belief that he was a prisoner in some secure hiding-place, and it seemed more probable.

While there was hope that the nabob yet lived, and that he would return, the Jam Bahadur still governed Bhanipur in his nephew's name, and all the power of the little kingdom was in his hands. But if Hurree Singh remained absent and undiscovered, his fate unknown, Baji Rao must succeed to his place as Nabob of Bhanipur. If the Jam did not yield place to him, it might mean civil war in the little mountain kingdom, with the inevitable result of intervention by the British to restore peace—after which the independence of Bhanipur would be a thing of the past.

Baji Rao was the last prince of the line of the nabobs of Bhanipur, and for that reason it was probable that there would be a strong party in his favour. Even the Jam Bahadur hesitated to deal with him as he would have wished, now that Hurree Singh was gone; he knew that if the line of the nabobs failed, the annexation of the little kingdom to British India was most likely to follow. While Hurree Singh was safe in his palace at Bhanipur the Jam would have quite cheerfully ordered the rajah's head to be struck off, to save his ward from peril. But circumstances were altered now.

Billy Bunter had, in fact, been quite right in thinking that the position of the Greyfriars fellows was a perilous one now that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had disappeared.

For a time—perhaps for weeks—the Jam would continue to keep the power in his hands, while sedulous search was made for the missing nabob.

But when it became certain that Hurree Singh would not return he could not keep the rajah from realising his ambition. There was no proof of any kind that the rajah had had a hand in Hurree Singh's fate. Suspicion was strong, but it was only suspicion.

"If we don't find old Inky that rascal will score all along the line," Bob Cherry remarked. "What do you think, sir?" He glanced at Colonel Wharton, who was riding with the juniors, with a gloomy brow.

"We must find him," said the colonel. "You don't think that—that—" Bob hesitated.

Colonel Wharton shook his head. "I think the nabob still lives," he answered. "His disappearance answers Baji Rao's purpose. If the rajah succeeds peaceably to the throne, no doubt he will make all secure by ordering



"You are in my hands at last, Hurree Singh," said Baji Rao. "Your life is at my mercy. You will never leave these vaults alive unless it is to leave me in possession of the throne of Bhanipur." Hurree Singh smiled contemptuously. "Never!" he answered. "I am Nabob of Bhanipur, and I will live or die nabob!" (See Chapter 5.)

Hurree Singh's death. But that will not happen yet. In the meantime, we may find Hurree Singh and save him. The rajah has taken long chances in this plot. If the British Government should intervene and call him to account he may have to save himself by producing the nabob alive."

"But is that likely?" asked Harry.

"I think so. Baji Rao is known to be in communication with the Russians, who are very keen to get a footing in these mountains on the Indian frontier. It is quite possible that Bhanipur may be occupied by British troops if the nabob is not found. Baji Rao had to take the chance, and he has taken it; he is like a gambler staking all on a throw of the dice. The outcome is uncertain on all sides; but I think it is fairly certain that the rajah will desire to keep Hurree Singh alive, as a hostage in his hands."

"But where?" said Harry.

The colonel shrugged his shoulders.

"There are a thousand hidden nooks in the hills and forests of Bhanipur where a prisoner might be hidden," he answered. "Perhaps even within a few miles of the city itself. But you may be assured that the Jam will leave no stone unturned to find his nephew."

Dusky night was closing in when the Greyfriars party rode in at the gates of Bhanipur and arrived at the palace.

Billy Bunter met the juniors as they came into their quarters in the palace, with a discontented frown on his fat face.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, bother!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Don't worry, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

"Have you found Inky?" demanded Bunter.

"No, ass!"

"You jolly well won't find him!" said the Owl of the Remove, nodding his head sagely. "That rajah chap will keep him safe enough. Of course, we shall never see him again."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"May as well look facts in the face," argued Bunter. "What's the good of blinking plain facts? We've got to look after ourselves now."

"Look after yourself as much as you like, fathead!" snapped Harry Wharton. "We're going to look for Inky."

"Look for a needle in a haystack," said Bunter. "There are a thousand niggers or more looking for Inky now. So what good are you going to do? The best thing we can do is to beat it while we've got a chance. If you like to see me safe across the frontier—say, as far as Rawalpindi—you can come back here and let that blinking rajah slice off your silly heads as soon as you like. See?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I shouldn't mind waiting for you at Rawalpindi," said Bunter. "That bungalow we stayed in there was fairly comfortable."

"And that's an important point, I suppose?" said Johnny Bull, with deep sarcasm.

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"Yes. The grub was all right, too," said Bunter, blinking at him. "Once I'm safe at Rawalpindi, you fellows needn't worry about me."

"We're likely to worry about you a lot when Inky's missing—I don't think!" growled Bob Cherry. "Shut up and clear off!"

"But, I say—"

"Buzz off!" roared Bob, making a motion with his boot; and the Owl of the Remove grunted and rolled away.

Bunter retired to his own luxurious apartment, in an extremely discontented frame of mind.

He was not really quite indifferent to the peril of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, but he was chiefly concerned about his own precious skin. Lavish as was the hospitality in the palace of Bhanipur, unlimited as was the tuck, it had ceased to be a happy abode for the Owl of the Remove. The possibility of finding himself at the mercy of the Rajah Baji Rao had a very disturbing effect on William George Bunter's equanimity.

"James!" snorted Bunter as he came into his apartment.

"Salaam, sahib!" murmured Kasi Jee, the naukhar who had the privilege of attending Bunter Sahib.

"Take my boots off, blow you!"

"Han, sahib."

Kasi Jee removed Bunter's boots, and was rewarded by a shove of Bunter's foot. He smiled and salaamed, though there was an unpleasant glitter in his dark eyes. But the Owl of the Remove did not notice it; "niggers" were beneath his lofty notice.

"Mind you keep the punkah going," growled Bunter, as he turned in.

"On my head be it, sahib."

"If I wake up and find it's stopped, I'll buzz a boot at you, mind."

"The sahib honours his servant," said the impassive Kasi Jee.

Bunter grunted, and laid his head on the pillow. The punkah swayed, cooling the hot atmosphere, and Bunter's deep snore was soon heard. In spite of his misgivings, the Owl of the Remove slept soundly enough.

But sleep did not come so easily to Harry Wharton & Co.

Anxiety for their missing chum troubled their slumbers; and at a very early hour in the morning they turned out; while Billy Bunter still snored serenely, spotted by the swaying punkah.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Rivals for a Throne!

"TUM sunte ho, huzoor?"

Hurree Singh started and opened his eyes.

The nabob of Bhanipur had been freed from his bonds; he lay on a thick rug on a stone floor in a little room, or, rather, cell.

Darkness surrounded him.

Through the darkness came the glimmer of a lamp, and in the light of the lamp, as he opened his eyes, he saw the face of Nally Das.

Hurree Singh rose to his feet.

How long he had been a captive in the recesses underneath the old temple of Shiva, he did not know. Day and night were the same, in the darkness of his prison.

But he knew that at least a day must have passed; every hour of it dragging by on leaden feet.

He had lain down to sleep at last, and had slept soundly; the peril in which he lay had not shaken his nerve.

His gorgeous apartments in the THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 969.

palace of Bhanipur had been changed for a bare stone cell; his innumerable attendants and officers for two or three sullen gaolers. His rich attire was soiled and torn. But the nabob was calm and impassive as he looked at the kidnapper in the glimmer of the lamp.

"I hear you," he answered. "Why do you waken me?"

"His highness the rajah desires to speak to you."

"Baji Rao?"

"Han, huzoor."

A gleam shot into Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's dark eyes.

He had known, he had had no doubt, that his ambitious kinsman had been at the bottom of the kidnapping. Now he had proof of it.

"Follow me!" said Nally Das.

The nabob did not stir.

"Tum sunte ho?" snapped Nally Das impatiently. "Do you hear me, huzoor?"

"I hear you," answered Hurree Jamset Ram Singh contemptuously. "But a nabob of Bhanipur does not obey the order of a son of a pig such as you, Nally Das. If the rajah desires to see me, let him come here."

Nally Das eyed him evilly.

But he salaamed, and left the cell; and the nabob stood silent, waiting, in the glimmer of the lamp which Nally Das had set upon the floor.

A murmur of voices came to him from the corridor under the old temple, upon which the cell opened.

Nally Das had left the door open; but Hurree Singh did not think of passing it. He knew that the corridor was guarded.

In a few minutes, Nally Das returned, accompanied by Lazaroff, the Russian. Nally Das was grinning evilly.

"It is the rajah's order that you go to him, huzoor!" he said. "In these vaults you are no longer nabob of Bhanipur; life and death wait at the order of my master, Baji Rao."

The two ruffians pinioned the arms of the schoolboy nabob, and marched him out of the cell.

Between them, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was taken along the dim corridor of which the old stone walls reeked with damp.

In a large vaulted room, bare of all furniture save a few stools, several lamps had been fastened to the walls;

.....

and there the Rajah Baji Rao waited for his prisoner.

The rajah was not dressed in the gorgeous raiment he had worn in his castle. He was clad in the simple uniform of one of the chaukees of the guard.

He was seated when Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was brought before him, and he did not rise.

His black eyes gleamed at the schoolboy nabob.

Hurree Singh faced him calmly. In the shadows of the vault lurked four or five dim figures, and he could discern the gleam of steel. His life was at the mercy of the rajah, and he knew it well enough; the ruffians in Baji Rao's party would have cut him down at a word from their master. But the schoolboy nabob did not falter.

"You are in my hands at last, Hurree Singh," said the rajah, after signing to Nally Das and Lazaroff to stand back, and leave him alone with the prisoner.

"Is that what you have to say to me, Baji Rao?"

"Your life is at my mercy."

"What else?"

The rajah compressed his lips. His scimitar lay bared, across his knees, and his hand was upon the hilt. But if he had expected that the bared weapon, and his gloomy surroundings, would strike terror to the heart of the prisoner, he was disappointed. Not a sign of fear was to be seen in the calm, dusky face of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You know why you are here, Hurree Singh," said the rajah at last. "You will never leave these vaults alive unless it is to leave me in possession of the throne of Bhanipur. It is in your power to resign the place of nabob to me, who am better fitted to fill it. You have lived in England—you are fond of the white sahibs; swear to leave Bhanipur for ever, and never to give me trouble again, and you shall have a princely fortune in that foreign land. What do you say?"

The nabob smiled contemptuously.

"Never!" he answered.

"Your kingdom has shrunk to the size of a small stone cell, hidden under the ruins of a temple in the forest," said the rajah sarcastically. "Do you still cling to it?"

"It is your turn now," said Hurree Singh. "To-morrow, perhaps, it will be my turn. Who knows?"

"You know that your friends are seeking you, and you hope to be rescued," said the rajah. "But the secret of this temple is known only to me and to my servants. It is known to Nally Das, whose father's father was a priest of Shiva in the old days before the Afghan raid laid the temple in the dust. This is where you would have been brought, had my agents succeeded in making you a prisoner in England—had they captured you on your journey out to India. Do you not understand, then, that it is a safe place, where you will never be found?"

The nabob did not answer.

If there was despair in his heart, he did not allow his face to betray it. His eyes met calmly the savage glance of Baji Rao.

"If you gave the oath, you would keep it," said Baji Rao. "I would dictate an oath that no Hindu prince would dare to break. You shall return to England—you shall have a princely fortune there, and hold up your head among the white sahibs. All in return

Boys! You must read—



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for giving up what you no longer possess. "Is it not worth while?"

"I am Nabob of Bhanipur, and I will live or die nabob!" answered Hurree Jamset Ram Singh calmly.

The rajah made a motion with his bared scimitar.

"You will die, then," he said. "I have staked all upon this cast; and if you are obstinate, these vaults will be your tomb."

Hurree Singh's lips curled.

"You will be called to account," he said. "Do you think that your intrigues with the Russians are not known to the English at Simla? They will never permit you to reign in Bhanipur, and open the passes of these mountains to the Russians. Take my place, and the English will advance from Rawalpindi to dethrone you; and my death will be their excuse for sending you into exile or ordering your execution."

"It is a chance," said the rajah gloomily. "I have taken the chance. I will live or die Nabob of Bhanipur. A castle and a zila of land do not suffice for Bajji Rao. And once I have the power of nabob in my hands, the

eyes gleamed at them, but he did not resist.

"Take him to reflect!" said Bajji Rao savagely. "If you change your mind, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, send a message to me by Nally Das. Take the oath of abdication that I will dictate to you, and live. When you come to your senses, boy, send me word."

He waved his hand, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was taken back to his cell.

The schoolboy nabob was thrust into the cell, in the darkness, and the teak-wood door closed on him.

He heard the rusty iron bars rattle into their place.

"He will yield!" muttered Bajji Rao. "A few more days and nights—and he will yield. By his own act, he shall make the way clear for me to reign in Bhanipur—and then—then that old man's head shall be the first to fall; and the colonel sahib shall find that death lurks in the jungles of Bhanipur. He is safe here, as in the tomb; and he will yield."

But the rajah's dark face was gloomy as he emerged from the hidden recesses

that he was alive; that he could and should be found and rescued. But they knew that their opinion was not shared by other occupants of the palace of Bhanipur.

The Jam Bahadur was prosecuting the search with unremitting zeal. From one end of the little kingdom to the other, troops were in motion, and an immense reward was offered for information. But with each day that passed, it was growing clear that the Jam Bahadur was not destined to keep the authority in his hands.

The Rajah Bajji Rao had claimed the right to occupy the palace of Bhanipur, and to direct the search for his missing kinsman; and the Jan's counsellors shook their heads dubiously over the old gentleman's refusal. The situation was growing delicate; for the rajah had friends and emissaries among the palace guards, and his agents were at work among the crowds of the bazaar.

"Not bad news, sir?" asked Bob Cherry, as the colonel sat down.

The juniors eyed the colonel uneasily.

"No!" said Colonel Wharton. "But—" He paused. "Bunter has

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RESULT OF "BOUNDARIES" COMPETITION No. 4.

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Russians have promised me help—I have many friends at Moscow. That I shall take your place is assured—the Jam Bahadur cannot long deny the rights of the next heir, if you do not return. And think you that you will ever return to your palace?"

"Yes—if the English troops occupy Bhanipur, and their commander shall call you to account," said Hurree Singh. "Then to save your worthless life, you will tell them that the nabob still lives."

Bajji Rao gritted his teeth.

"But if the English do not come?" he said. "If I am left in peace to reign in Bhanipur—what then? It is not certain, but it is more than likely. What then, Hurree Singh?"

Again the nabob was silent. He knew what would happen in that case, the bowstring, and a grave in the recess of the old temple.

"Is it not better to accept my offer, than to take such a chance, boy?" said the rajah harshly.

"I will live and die nabob!" said Hurree Singh.

"Then you will never see the light of day again. Take him away, Nally Das!" said the rajah.

Nally Das and Lazaroff advanced and seized the nabob by the arms. His

of the temple of Shiva, and took his way through the forest. His plans had gone well; but he knew that success was uncertain, and that his way was full of peril. But not for a moment did he think of turning back; the prize was worth the risk. And even if the worst came to the worst, he could always save himself by producing the nabob alive. In his disguise of a common chaukee, the rajah stole back into his castle in the shadows of the night—leaving his rival to imprisonment, to darkness—perhaps to despair.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

What Bunter Knew!

"A NY news, uncle?"

Harry Wharton asked the question eagerly.

But the gloomy frown on the bronzed face of Colonel Wharton was a sufficient answer, without his shake of the head.

There was no news.

Two more days had passed, and the search for the missing nabob was still going on; but hope of discovering him was fading.

His comrades still clung to the belief

told me that he is anxious to return to British territory."

"Let him!" said Harry. "Bunter doesn't matter."

Colonel Wharton smiled faintly.

"But I think Bunter is right," he said. "I think it would be wise for all of you to return to Rawalpindi."

"Not before Inky is found!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"We can't go and leave him missing, sir!" said Bob.

"You must look at the facts as they stand," said the colonel quietly. "Had Hurree Singh been found at once, or within a couple of days, all would have been well. But he has not been found."

"We shall find him yet," said Johnny Bull.

"With Hurree Singh missing, possibly never to return, the situation here has changed," said the colonel quietly.

"Already the Jan's orders are no longer obeyed without hesitation. As Regent of the kingdom, he governed in Hurree Singh's name—while Hurree Singh was at Greyfriars, and known to be alive. But it is different now. Already many in Bhanipur are looking to Bajji Rao—many of the officials of the government, and the officers in Hurree Singh's troops, are in communication

with him—making their peace with him, in the belief that he will reign as nabob."

"Oh!" said Harry.

This was news to the Greyfriars fellows.

"They have little choice," said the colonel. "They are all devoted to Hurree Singh; but if the rajah succeeds him here, they must make their peace with the new ruler. Any one who opposes him will be sure to be marked out for his vengeance. Many members of the Jam's council are in favour of calling him to the palace, and placing the power in his hands until it is definitely known what has become of Hurree Singh."

"And he is at the bottom of it, all the time, and could produce Inky if he liked!" exclaimed Bob.

"I believe so, and so does the Jam; but others do not think so, and you must remember that there is no proof," said the colonel. "As matters stand, Baji Rao is heir to a vacant throne, and the people and the soldiers will acknowledge him. The utmost the Jam can do, is to delay matters for a time, in the hope of discovering Hurree Singh and rescuing him. He is risking his life for it; for if Baji Rao is once installed here as master, the Jam has not long to live. If the rajah does not dare to order his death, there are many other ways known to such a man—the poison or the bow-string at the dead of night. It is my duty to remain here, and help the Jam to the last extremity. But you boys—"

"It's our duty, too!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"We can't desert old Inky, uncle!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We're more than willing to take the risk."

Colonel Wharton shook his head.

"It is not a risk—it is a certainty, if Baji Rao obtains power in Bhanipur," he said, "even those who suspect him of complicity in Hurree Singh's fate, will keep silent, knowing they will be at his mercy. But he is not generally suspected. There are rumours in the bazaar—undoubtedly started by his agents—that the Jam himself is responsible for Hurree Singh's disappearance. It is said to be the rajah's intention to accuse him of making away with his nephew."

"Oh, my hat!"

"That is part of the plot, of course," said the colonel, "and unless Hurree Singh is found, and found soon, I do not see how the rajah is to be kept out. Already the soldiers who occupied his palace have been withdrawn, and he is again master in his own household. It is only a question of a few days, at most, before he is master here also."

The juniors looked at one another in dismay.

"If no news is received of the nabob to-morrow, I must send you to safety," said the colonel, rising. "That is what I came to tell you. I am responsible for bringing you boys here; and I cannot allow you to remain at the danger of your lives."

"But, sir—" exclaimed Bob, in dismay. "But—you will be staying on—"

"That is my duty," said the colonel quietly. "With you boys it is different. If you fall into the power of Baji Rao, I do not think he will spare the friends of Hurree Singh. Once he is in power, he will glut his vengeance upon all whom he regards as his enemies."

The juniors looked at one another

when the colonel was gone; and Bob Cherry whistled softly.

"We seem to be in a bit of a hornet's nest," he remarked. "I—I suppose your uncle's right, Harry. But we're jolly well not going to leave Inky in the lurch, all the same."

"I say, you fellows," Bunter rolled in. "I suppose old Wharton—"

"What?"

"I mean Colonel Wharton," Bunter said hastily. "I suppose he's told you we're going to-morrow. I say, you fellows, if you put it to him, he would make it to-day instead of to-morrow. I can jolly well tell you I'm fed-up with Bhanipur. Blessed if I expect to find my head on my shoulders from one day to another here."

"Blow your silly head!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"We're not going," said Johnny Bull determinedly. "That fat funk can be carted off, but we're not going."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"We've got to find old Inky somehow," said Bob Cherry desperately. "If a fellow only had a clue—"

"They've got him safe enough," said Johnny Bull. "This has been planned a long time ago, and, of course, they had the hiding-place all ready. It was ready for him when that villain Nally Das tried to kidnap him at Greyfriars. Somewhere in Bhanipur—"

"But where?" said Nugent.

"Goodness knows."

Billy Bunter started a little, and blinked at the chums of the Remove through his big spectacles.

A sudden thought had flashed into the fat, obtuse brain of the Owl of the Remove.

"I—I say, you fellows!" he ejaculated.

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"But, I say—"

"You talk too much, Bunter! Give your chin a rest!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I never told you fellows—"

"Bow-wow!"

"That day you picnicked at the haunted temple in the forest," exclaimed Bunter excitedly. "You left me behind—"

"Bother you!"

"My palanquin broke down, you remember—"

"You fell through the bottom of it, you fat walrus," growled Bob Cherry. "Don't tell us about it now—we're not feeling inclined to laugh just at present."

"I came after you—"

"Did you?" grunted Bob. "Well, never mind whether you did or not. Run away and play—"

"I've never told you fellows what happened that day," said Bunter. "You know what you are—always jawing, and never giving a chap a chance to speak. I came after you, and missed you at the old temple, and—"

"Miss us now!" suggested Nugent.

"That was the day we saw Nally Das," remarked Harry Wharton. "You fellows remember he was hiding in the old temple, and when we looked for him, he had disappeared somehow. If we'd only collared him there—"

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

"You silly owl!" roared Bob Cherry in great exasperation. "What are you cackling at now? Is this a time for cackling?"

Bunter chuckled, a fat chuckle.

Back into his fat mind had come the recollection of what had happened at the old temple of Shiva, where he had followed the Famous Five, and missed them. He remembered how he had crouched behind the tamarinds, and watched Nally Das emerge from the hidden recess under the temple, watch-

ing the great slab of stone rise and fall. Other matters had filled Bunter's fat mind since—but now, like a flash, it had come into his fat brain that he held the clue to the mystery. Nally Das, the kidnapper, had been hidden beneath the haunted temple in the forest; the moving slab of stone gave access to the hiding-place. And it came into Bunter's mind that the hiding-place of the kidnapper was also the hiding-place of the kidnapped nabob.

Certainly, it would have occurred to Bunter before, had he given the matter much thought—or any thought.

But Bunter's fat thoughts were so entirely occupied by himself, that he had not considered the matter at all; indeed, he would not have thought about it now, had not the words of the juniors brought it into his mind.

He chuckled.

He, William George Bunter, alone in Bhanipur, held the clue to the disappearance of the nabob!

He was certain of it. He was absolutely assured that he could have guided a rescue-party to the prison of the missing Nabob of Bhanipur!

No wonder he chuckled! It was a case of the "hour and the man" once more; Billy Bunter the right man in the right place.

But Harry Wharton & Co., naturally, did not understand. They had no idea of what Bunter knew, and they stared at him in great exasperation as he chuckled.

"He, he, he! If you fellows knew!" chortled Bunter.

"You fat idiot!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Cheese it, and roll away, you podgy image!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, kick him!" said Nugent.

"You cheeky asses!" roared Bunter.

"Look here, if you fellows like to follow my lead, and back me up, I'll do my best to rescue Inky. What do you say to that?"

"Fathead!"

"Ring off!"

"You silly cuckoos think a lot of yourselves," said the Owl of the Remove contemptuously. "But I can jolly well tell you that I'm the man that's wanted now. I could tell you—"

"Give your silly chin a rest!"

Bunter blinked at the juniors through his big spectacles indignantly. He was certain that he held the clue—that he was the only fellow in Bhanipur who held it. He was, as he said, the man who was wanted; and the chums of the Remove would not even listen to him! That was not to be wondered at, worried and troubled as they were about their missing chum, and more than fed-up with Bunter and his "gas." The Owl of the Remove breathed hard.

"All right then," he said. "Go and eat coke! If you fellows think you can find Inky, go and find him! When you want my help, come and ask for it!"

"That's likely to be a long time, you silly owl!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled away. The captain of the Remove glanced after him rather curiously.

"That fat idiot can't have thought of anything, I suppose?" Wharton remarked.

"Of course not—only his silly gas, as usual," said Johnny Bull. "Shall I go after him and kick him?"

"We're likely to want his help—I don't think!" growled Bob Cherry. "Oh, bother Bunter. Never mind Bunter! What are we going to do about poor old Inky?"

The juniors resumed their discussions,

little dreaming of what Bunter could have told them. The discussion was interrupted, by the sound of the trampling of hoofs, the blare of a trumpet, and a rising hubbub of voices from the city.

"Something's up!" exclaimed Bob, jumping from his seat. "If—if it's news of Inky—"

The chums of the Remove ran out eagerly on the balcony. Below, in the court of the palace, was a swarming, excited throng—the whole palace seemed to be in a state of excitement. Wharton caught sight of Pandey Din, the colonel's khitmutghar, below, and called to him:

"Pandey Din! What has happened?"

The khitmutghar looked up. His brown face was very grave.

"The Rajah Baji Rao has entered the city with his guards!" he answered.

"Great Scott!"

"He demands to be admitted to the palace," said Pandey Din. "The Jam Bahadur refusing."

Wharton set his lips.

"This may mean scrapping, you fellows," he said.

The juniors hurried down to the courtyard. The gates of the palace were closed; the guards were at their stations, but the juniors could see that doubt and uncertainty reigned on all sides. They found Colonel Wharton at last; and they found him looking grim.

"Baji Rao is in the city?" asked Harry.

The colonel nodded.

"Yes—he has made a bold stroke," he answered. "It looks as if the tables may be turned on the Jam Bahadur. Baji Rao demands his rights as Nabob of Bhanipur, in the absence of Hurree

Singh—and he openly accuses the Jam of having made away with his nephew."

"The awful rotter!" said Bob.

"I doubt very much whether the guards will resist him," said the colonel.

"The Jam has ordered them to fire, if the rajah attempts to force an entrance. But—" He shrugged his shoulders.

"Where is the rajah now?"

"He has taken up his quarters at the serai, a hundred yards from the palace," said the colonel. "He has given the Jam until this hour to-morrow to yield the palace to him. If Hurree Singh is not found before then, Baji Rao will be master in Bhanipur—the soldiers will not resist the man whom they regard as the rightful heir to the throne. We have twenty-four hours—and if Hurree Singh does not return by then—"

The colonel did not finish; but the juniors knew what he would have said.

If Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was not found, and at once, the rascally rajah would take his place as Nabob of Bhanipur—the power of the Jam Bahadur was breaking like a reed in his hands.

And where was Hurree Singh?

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Moonshree!

"JAMES!"

Kasi Jee, the naukhar, whom Bunter preferred to call James,

came up at his master's call.

He did not salaam submissively, as usual.

There was a mocking gleam in the eyes of the naukhar. Billy Bunter had not been a pleasant or considerate

master. The naukhar had received more kicks than halfpence, so to speak, from the Owl of the Remove. Bunter's view apparently was that a mere "nigger" ought to feel honoured by a kick from Bunter's aristocratic foot. Probably Kasi Jee took a different view—quite a different view. Probably, in the uncertain state of affairs that now reigned in the palace of Bhanipur, the naukhar was looking forward to "getting his own back," as it were, upon the fat little sahib. Certainly the respectful humility had dropped from him like a cloak.

Bunter was not observant; but he could not help seeing that there was a difference in the naukhar's manner.

He blinked suspiciously at the naukhar.

"What's that row going on outside the palace?" he asked.

Kasi Jee grinned.

"It is the rajah's coming, sahib," he answered.

Bunter jumped.

"That villain Baji Rao?" he exclaimed.

"The great and powerful rajah Baji Rao!" said Kasi Jee. "He has demanded that the palace be given up to him by the Jam, sahib."

"Oh, my hat!"

Bunter stared at the grinning naukhar in dismay.

"They're not letting him in?" he exclaimed.

"Not yet, sahib," said Kasi Jee. "But the soldiers are in favour of the rajah, who is now Nabob of Bhanipur, and to-morrow he will be taking possession of palace."

"And what will happen to us?" asked Bunter, with a tremor.



"The great and powerful rajah Baji Rao has demanded that the palace be given up to him by the Jam, sahib," said Kasi Jee, with a grin. "And what will happen to us?" asked Bunter with a tremor. "I thinking the rajah will order execution of white sahibs," said Kasi Jee, with great relish. "Little fat sahib tremble." (See Chapter 7.)

"I thinking the rajah will order execution of white sahibs," said Kasi Jee, with great relish. "Little fat sahib tremble."

Bunter blinked at him. This was quite new language from the naukhar, and Bunter realised that the kicks he had bestowed on Kasi Jee had lingered in the black man's memory.

"You cheeky nigger!" exclaimed Bunter.

Kasi Jee grinned derisively.

"To-morrow Baji Rao being master here," he said. "Already he being master in the city. Little fat sahib see."

Bunter lifted his foot—but dropped it again. The time was past for kicking Kasi Jee.

On the morrow, if Baji Rao became master of the palace, it was probable that the naukhar would do the kicking! Bunter, indeed, would have cause to be thankful if nothing worse than kicking came his way. He did not like the look in the naukhar's black eyes at all.

"Hurree Singh will be back before to-morrow, though," said Bunter.

"The Huzoor never come back," said Kasi Jee. "They saying in the bazaar that the Jam poison the Nabob. I knowing nothing; but knowing that Baji Rao will be Nabob of Bhanipur." He grinned. "Baji Rao stay now in the serai with his guards—Jam being master of the palace to-day; but to-morrow—all is ended. Already many officers have gone over to the rajah. Little fat sahib see."

From the fact that Kasi Jee ventured to call Bunter a little fat sahib to his face, it was clear that the naukhar regarded the game as being up, so to speak, for the friends of Hurree Singh. "Go and tell the Jam that I want to speak to him!" said Bunter.

"No can see Jam," answered the naukhar.

"Take my message to him!" roared Bunter.

The naukhar sneered.

"Little fat sahib take him own message," he answered. "I not caring one anna for little fat sahib."

And the naukhar walked out of the room, grinning. Evidently his allegiance was at an end.

"My hat!" murmured Bunter.

If the naukhar was a fair sample, it was not likely to be long before Baji Rao was acknowledged as master by all the swarming attendants of the palace of Bhanipur. The Jam was still holding his own, but desertion was imminent on all sides.

"If those silly chumps would have listened to me, and gone while the going was good, we might have been safe in British territory by now!" growled Bunter. "All the same, it will be all right if Hurree Singh comes back in time—and I jolly well know where to find him."

Bunter rolled out of his room.

He realised that there was no time to lose; matters were very close on a crisis now.

He looked for the juniors; but they were not to be found in the palace. Then he made his way towards the Jam's apartments in another wing of the palace; but he found guards posted there, and they refused to allow him to pass. As Bunter did not understand a word of their language, it was impossible for him to make himself understood; and when he attempted to push by, a scimitar flashed under his fat

little nose, and he jumped back and retreated in a great hurry.

Bunter was almost spluttering with dismay by this time. He was certain that he held the clue to the Nabob's hidden prison; but it looked as if his knowledge had come too late.

From a window he caught sight of Colonel Wharton and the juniors in the courtyard. They were mounting their horses, with Pandi Din. Bunter shouted to them.

"I say, you fellows!"

Harry Wharton glanced up.

"Wharton, I say—"

"You had better keep in the palace, Bunter," called back the captain of the Remove. "It may not be safe for you outside the gates now."

"Where are you going?" shouted Bunter. "Don't leave me alone here, you beasts, among all these beastly niggers."

"We're going to hunt for Hurree Singh," answered Wharton.

"Wait for me—"

"Fathead!"

"I tell you—" shrieked Bunter.

With a clattering of hoofs, the colonel and the juniors rode out of the gates, which were immediately closed behind them. Bunter blinked after them in utter dismay.

Harry Wharton & Co. were gone—to make one more desperate effort while there was yet time to discover the missing nabob.

Bunter was left alone with his useless knowledge. He looked round for Kasi Jee, but the naukhar—once in incessant and obsequious attendance—was not to be seen. If Bunter could have obtained a word with the Jam Bahadur all might yet have been well; but the Jam was unapproachable.

"If there was just one of these black beasts that could speak English!" groaned Bunter. "My hat! The moonshee!"

Bunter remembered the moonshee—the wise old man from whom Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had learned his remarkable English in the days before the nabob had come to Greyfriars.

The moonshee had his quarters in the palace somewhere; Bunter had seen him once or twice.

Bunter's fat wits were working at unaccustomed pressure now. Under the spur of danger, even Bunter could do some hard thinking. His fat face cleared as he remembered the moonshee, whose name, he also remembered, was Mook Mookerjee.

He grabbed at the flowing linen garment of a passing Hindu. The man looked at him and shook his arm free. Respect for the white sahibs was failing now; all the palace knew that the new Nabob was no friend of the friends of the missing nabob. This man wore the garb of a jamadar, and belonged to the palace guard.

"I say!" gasped Bunter.

The man stopped.

"Moonshee!" gasped Bunter. "Mook Mookerjee—moonshee!"

"Is taraf!" said the jamadar, understanding that the little fat sahib wished to see the moonshee Mook Mookerjee.

And he led the way.

"Thank goodness!" murmured Bunter, in great relief, as he followed the jamadar. "That old ass Mooker-

jee can speak English—what he can English—and he can go and tell the Jam. Oh, dear, I wish I was back at Greyfriars!"

The jamadar led the Owl of the F move to a large apartment, windows looking on the palace garden. He spoke to a servant in his own tongue, and Bunter was taken into the room where, to his great relief, he found himself in the presence of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's old tutor.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter to the Rescue!

MOOK MOOKERJEE rose and salaamed respectfully to the sahib.

He was an ancient gentleman, with a flowing white beard and wrinkled and benevolent brown face.

"The honourfulness of white sahib visit is terrific!" he said, and Bunter could not help grinning, in spite of his anxious frame of mind. The old moonshee's English was remarkably like that of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; it was easy to see whence the schoolboy nabob had derived his remarkable knowledge of the language.

"May I offer the esteemed seatfulness to the sahib?" went on the moonshee.

Bunter sat down.

"I regret terrifically to state that there is at present no newfulness of the esteemed and absent nabob!" said Mook Mookerjee sadly. "The sadness of my esteemed self is great!"

Evidently the moonshee supposed that Bunter had come to him in search of news of the missing nabob.

"I want to speak to the Jam," said Bunter. "It's important."

The moonshee shook his head.

"His esteemed Highness the Jam Bahadur is in his apartments," he said.

"He is much troubled with the present terrific state of affairs, and taking counsel with wise and ridiculous counsellors. The disturbfulness of esteemed Jam is not within bounds of possible."

Bunter snorted.

"I know where to find the nabob!" he snapped.

The moonshee gave a jump.

"The knowfulness of the little sahib cannot be great!" he said. "This is not subject-matter for ridiculous jokefulness."

"I'm not joking!" howled Bunter.

"I tell you I jolly well know where they've hidden Inky—I mean, Hurree Singh! Take me to the Jam and let me tell him before it's too late!"

The moonshee gazed long and earnestly at Bunter.

He could see that the fat junior was in earnest, as well as greatly excited. But he hesitated.

"Can't you understand that we're wasting time?" exclaimed Bunter.

"But howfulness does the little sahib know?" asked Mook Mookerjee. "The surprisefulness of the statement is terrific!"

"Well, I do know," growled Bunter. "And I'm jolly well the only chap in Bhanipur who does! If those beasts had been civil I'd have told them. Take my message to the Jam!"

The moonshee rose.

"If the little sahib saying with terrific seriousness that he has valued information to impart to Jam—" he said.

"I tell you that I can lay my finger on Hurree Singh!"

"Let the little sahib follow Mook Mookerjee," said the moonshee. "The (Continued on page 17.)"

ANSWERS
Every Saturday — PRICE 2:

HARRY WHARTON'S Football Supplement



No trouble or expense has been spared to make this supplement interesting and informative. In all phases of football will be discussed by writers chosen from the foremost football 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.**

No. 2. Vol. 3 (New Series).

Week Ending September 11th, 1926.

WHEN *the* BOSS BLUNDERS!

The biggest of all is that they don't always insist on "Bossing."
By **FRANK BARSON.**

(The Famous International Centre-half-back of Manchester United.)

SOME years ago the directors of a certain first-class club appointed a paid manager to the team for the first time. Soon after this departure, I happened to meet one of the directors of the club, and I asked him why this step had been taken. "It is like this, Frank," was the reply, "we directors got rather tired of all the criticism which was levelled at us at the annual meetings and other times, so we decided to have a manager at whom our supporters could throw bricks if they felt so disposed."

That candid confession was rather an eye-opener, because I had not previously thought of the manager as being the specially-appointed target for all those with bricks to throw. But it is undoubtedly a fact that the manager is, in many clubs at any rate, the fellow to be shot at, and I can assure you that I know several very good chaps in managers' jobs with whom I wouldn't change places for a fortune.

MUST MEND THEIR WAYS!

Realising the difficulties of the position, the sleepless nights which some of them pass through when they can't find a winning team, and that sort of thing, I am not going to stand by a pile of bricks and hurl them at the various managers as they pass. But there can be no harm in a player of considerable experience writing of the manager's job as he sees it. We all make mistakes, and the man who never made a mistake never made anything. There are some vital ways though, in which I think managers go wrong; ways which must be mended before their managerial efforts meet with the success which they themselves so much desire.

AN ALL-IMPORTANT DECISION.

One of the mistakes made by several managers is that they are lacking in what might be called a definite policy. They spend too much time, money and energy in getting together a miscellaneous bunch of footballers and far too little time on what I might call real team-building. Perhaps it is much easier to write of these things than to carry them out, but I think if I were to take on a manager's job I should first of all sit down and have a quiet talk with myself on these lines. "Now

look here, my lad, you have got to decide first of all what sort of a side you are going to have. Are you going to try and build up a really scientific team; playing what is called the real football? Or are you going to have a fast team playing the open game?"

FOR THE GOOD OF THE GAME!

Having decided on the sort of team he wants, I think the manager who hopes to succeed must ever keep the idea in the forefront with every ready-made player for whom a transfer fee is paid, and the idea should also be behind the training of the youngsters. One of the things which surprises a lot of people in football is that clubs do not always reap the reward of what is called their enterprise in paying big transfer fees for players. The reason for this is not necessarily that the purchased men are not good footballers, but that the purchasing is done in a haphazard sort of way without due consideration to the question of whether the men will fit in with this general

idea of the sort of team which is required. You don't get a football team merely by purchasing eleven good players. You build a team by finding the men who fit; whose styles blend to make an effective whole. I think if more managers bore this idea ever in mind our football as a whole would be better.

TOO MANY COOKS!

The longer I stay in football the more am I convinced that one of the biggest mistakes which managers make is that they don't really manage. I know I am treading on thin ice here, because directors who put much money into a club, and spend much time working in the interests of that club, will say that they have a right to a hand in the management of the men. Now I don't want to deny them that right, but I do think that many directors would be better advised to leave a little more of the managing to the manager.

THE WRONG TEST.

Only the other day I asked a director of a certain club why a particular player was in the team. The reply rather amazed me: "Well," he said, "we have two or three men for the position, but so and so is such an awfully nice fellow. We all like him." I am quite prepared to encourage the nice fellow, and like to think that all footballers are nice fellows, but the remark quoted above seemed to me to suggest that the player in question was chosen first of all because he was a nice fellow and for his football ability second. I repeat that if you have several directors with a finger in the pie you will get outside considerations affecting the final choice.

REMEMBER THE RESERVES.

It is my opinion, too, that many managers would be well repaid for giving a little more attention to the reserve team—the second stringers. I know that there is a temptation to put all the managerial weight into the scales for the first eleven; to think that this is the all-important consideration. But the reserves should be watched all the same. They should be made to feel that their doings are of real interest, because the manager who makes them feel like this is also encouraging his reserves to improve their game. And the manager who is wise looks on the reserve player as his first team man of to-morrow.



FRANK BARSON.

Frank Barson

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 969.

The HOPES OF THEIR SIDES!

Big Men who have moved and from whom great things are expected by their new clubs.

AS I have told you in a previous article, there have been comparatively few important transfers of footballers during the close season. A few big men have moved, however, and the officials and supporters of the clubs which have secured them are looking to these men to make a lot of difference. They are the hopes of their sides.

One of the most interesting transfers, because it is the sort of thing which so seldom happens, is the return of Tom Roberts to Preston North End. This go-ahead centre-forward used to play for Preston North End, but nearly two years ago he was transferred to Burnley, who paid £4,600 to obtain his services. Now he has gone back to the North End, and the fee paid is said to be only £1,500. But although Roberts was not quite the success at Burnley which it was expected he would be, the supporters of Proud Preston are hoping that Tom will bang the ball in the net a sufficient number of times during the present season to take the club back to the first class.

WHERE EXPERTS DIFFER!

I think we shall all be interested to see the effects of an exchange between Cardiff City and Aston Villa. Cardiff have secured from the Villa a right half-back named George Blackburn, and the Villa have taken from Cardiff Jack Nicholson. The latter player used to be a half-back with Clapton Orient, but at Cardiff he became a successful centre-forward and led their attack in the Cup Final of 1925. I wonder where the Villa will play him? It is rather strange to find two First Division clubs exchanging players in this fashion, but such a "sweeping" only serves to show that experts differ on the question of players' merits.

I shall find it strange to watch a Southampton team which does not contain Arthur Dominy, but this famous forward has now left the "Saints" to play for the Toffees. It is expected that Dominy's experience will prove extremely valuable to the Everton team. For a long time Dominy cap-

tained Southampton, and for thirteen years he has been regarded as the brains of the attack.

A PICTURESQUE FIGURE!

It was a sad blow for Manchester City, after getting to the Cup Final to be relegated to the Second Division, but they mean to yet rejoin the elite at the end of the present season. Their most important capture is Billy Cowan, an inside-forward from Newcastle United. Cowan is a typical Scot who joined Newcastle United some time ago from Dundee, and he is one of the few players who have had the honour of playing at Wembley twice in a month.



ARTHUR DOMINY.

In the spring of 1925 he played for Scotland against England at the Stadium, and a fortnight later he played for Newcastle United in a Cup Final on the same ground.

Notts County have parted with one of the most picturesque figures in modern football in goalkeeper Albert Iremonger, who is so tall that he has to be careful not to bump his head against the cross-bar. Iremonger has gone to Lincoln City. On his day there is no better goalkeeper than Albert, and no player who provides the on-lookers with so much amusement.

GOAL KICKS!

During the tour of the English football team in Canada, Cross, the Burnley inside-right, was very successful in the centre. When you come to think of it, though, he ought really to be kept on the wing because from there he can put the ball a-Cross.

Coventry City are in rather a bad way financially, and before the start of the

season an urgent appeal to tradesmen of the town was made by the mayor. In fact it can be said that the club tried to establish a sinking fund in order to save the club from sinking.

Having built up a team good enough to win the championship of the First Division for three successive seasons, Huddersfield Town have a scheme to build a wall right round the ground at Leeds Road. If the wall is built as soundly as the team has been built not many people will be able to see through it.

Five members of the Bolton Wanderers team are to have benefits this season, which means that they have been with the club for at least five years. Obviously the team should be called Bolton Stayers—not Wanderers.

Recent alterations in the Derby County ground have necessitated the removal of the players' dressing-rooms for the third time in a very short period. We understand that whenever the men go out to play a match nowadays they entertain doubts as to whether their room will be in the same place at half-time.

Our office-boy says that he always describes the football team which is at the bottom of the League as the strongest, because they hold all the others up.

"We are getting tired of winning the Cup, and are now anxious to win the League Championship," says an official of Bolton Wanderers. We have known plenty of clubs tired of failure to win the Cup, but the Bolton idea is a new one.

During the recent tour in Canada Joe Smith, the captain of Bolton Wanderers, was introduced to the game of golf. In one round he lost ten balls, and is understood to have expressed the opinion that there ought to be nets to hold golf shots like there are in foot ball.

"WHAT PRICE—HALF PRICE!"

"Fanny" Walden, who has gone back to his native Northampton after a fairly long spell with Tottenham Hotspur, is the midget of the football field. He stands only five feet two inches in his socks, and being small in other directions has quite a boyish appearance. "Fanny" himself tells of the following incident:

The Tottenham players were travelling to the North country, and the man who bought the tickets at the railway station, having his little joke on the "boy" bought ten ordinary tickets and a "half"—or children's ticket—for "Fanny."

This child's ticket was duly handed to Walden, and the rest of the players lined up as he approached the ticket-collector at the barrier to see "Fanny's" face when he was sent back. But the laugh was on Walden's side, for he actually got through with his half-fare ticket, which he had noticed when it was handed to him. And in the train he was duly paid the difference between the ordinary fare and the half-fares. It was a good win for the boy.



G. BLACKBURN.

The TEAM which HOLDS the RECORDS!

Behind the Scenes
Consistent



of Football's most
Team

By BILLY WALKER

(England's inside-left, who should know.)

THE real secret of success in the Cup Competition is the thing which the players and officials of all the clubs have been trying to find for years. Some of the most famous teams in the country have been struggling after the trophy ever since they got to the top class, and always has success eluded them at the finish—or long before the finish in some years. Other clubs have met with a considerable amount of success—enough, at any rate, to earn for them the reputation of being good Cup fighters. And as it so happens that the club with which I am connected—the Villa—have won the Cup more times than any other in the country, it naturally follows that the question as to the secret of our success is often flung at us.

DIFFERENT PLAYERS—SAME METHODS.

Not only have the Villa won the Cup more times than any other club, but even in the seasons when the side has been knocked out prior to the last round they have almost invariably made a good show, and I take it the average man in the street would be amazed to notice, one of these days, that the Villa had been knocked out in the very first round. That, as my readers are well aware, is not a fate which has often come the way of the Aston Villa club. Another noticeable thing about the Cup successes of the Villa is that they have spread pretty evenly over the years. The players have changed, but the claret-and-blue jerseys have still played a prominent part. It is these things which suggest that somebody at Villa Park must have discovered the secret of Cup success. Has the secret been discovered, and, if so, what is it?

ALL SORTS OF WINNERS.

Now I am not going to say that the secret of success in every Cup-tie has been discovered by anybody connected with the Aston Villa club. But there are certain broad principles upon which we have always gone in my time, and which no doubt held sway in the years before I was associated with the Aston Villa club. My first idea is that there are some clubs which have never won the Cup because they have the wrong idea of what they call Cup-tie football.

There are a lot of players individually, and a lot of clubs generally, who seem to think that some definite style of play is necessary to carry off the honours of the knock-out competition. With this view I do not agree. Rather would I say that any style of football is good enough to win the Cup, other things being equal, provided that style of football is played well enough. If you look down the list of clubs which have won the Cup in the past you will find thereon the names of teams which have had little or no pretence to the

artistic, and between these two extremes you will find winners of all grades. So in that respect I consider it bordering on the silly to talk about a Cup-winning style.

PLAY YOUR OWN GAME!

There is, however, a style of football which, in my view, is best for Cup-ties, and that is the style to which the players of the club are best suited. The one big thing which we always try to do is to play our ordinary game in Cup-ties. Nay, special efforts are made to assist us in forgetting that the Cup games are different, and it is the stock



BILLY WALKER.

advice of more than one director of the Aston Villa club to "play your natural game, boys." The team which throws aside its ordinary game the minute Cup-ties are mentioned is asking for trouble, and as likely as not gets what it asked for.

A CUP FINAL STORY.

To give an illustration which will drive home my meaning, I may refer to the Cup Final of 1913. I was not, of course, a member of the Aston Villa team in those days, but it was a historic game about which many people in Birmingham and elsewhere still talk a lot. A friend of mine—and a player who was in that final—was telling me about it only the other day. This player declared that Sunderland would have won that match if they had played their normal game. However, very early in the contest Charlie Thomson, the Sunderland centre-half, seemed to make up his mind that he ought to shadow Hampton specially. The result, according to my player friend, was that Thomson became a policeman almost entirely, and instead of helping his forwards in the way he had usually done, he concentrated on watching Hampton and his own forwards suffered in consequence. Too many clubs are obsessed by the necessity of doing something special in the Cup, and with this obsession they forget that so long as your side is scoring goals it doesn't matter very much what the other fellows are doing.

PAYING THE PRICE.

There is also another way in which the Villa try to carry out this idea of playing a natural game, and that is to play a clean game. The idea that you could win Cup-ties by stopping the other fellows is one which is held by many people, but stop at any price tactics don't pay any more in the Cup than in the League. Indiscretions have to be paid for in all classes of football, and the men who give away a succession of free kicks are helping their side to defeat, not to victory.

THE "CONFIDENCE TRICK!"

Perhaps, when we get right down to it, the biggest reason of all why the Villa generally do well in the Cup-ties is the mere fact that we have a reputation. I have heard opponents of the Villa say, that we are a lucky lot because so many of our opponents are beaten before they go on the field. We can't be blamed for this even if it is true. But I suppose it does count for something to have a reputation, because if you think you are going to win, well the first step towards victory has been taken. Just one word in this connection. Confidence is a good thing, but always there is a danger of the players of a team getting too confident. We have been knocked out more than once when we have never even dreamt of defeat. Against the Arsenal last season we conceded two quick goals. Then, when the red light was shining clearly and we made our big effort, things wouldn't go right. But we can't always win—nor would it be good for the game if we did.

Billy Walker

TRICKS of the TRADE!

No. 2—Ted Taylor, Huddersfield Town's Clever Goalkeeper.

A new series of articles showing how the experts do their job.

SOMEbody once said that all goalkeepers are mad, and for years and years people have gone on repeating the phrase. Of course, it isn't true. Goalkeepers are no more mad than the players who appear in other positions. If I were asked to provide evidence that goalkeepers are not mad, I should immediately produce "Ted" Taylor, the popular 'keeper of Huddersfield Town. Here is a fellow who is certainly not mad. On the contrary, he is of the very finest type of professional footballer. He gets paid for keeping goal for Huddersfield Town and for England, but goalkeeping is not his only profession. During the week he can be seen hard at work on the Manchester Stock Exchange, doing business with the heads of the biggest businesses in his line. To do this it is necessary for a man to have brains, and Taylor has the brains. It can be said of him that he mixes his football like the artist mixes his paints—with brains.

THE WILL TO WIN!

There is none of the purely instinctive, don't know how I do it business about Taylor. He has thought out every move; spent hours in quiet contemplation of his weak points, and wondering and practising to make them into his strong points.

He once told me that as a boy he was left-handed. There is nothing remarkable in that, of course. But quite early in life he decided that it would be a mistake for him to go through life able to use one hand much better than the other, so he started doing things with his right hand. And now he can punch a ball, and write an article as well with his right hand as with his left.

TAKING RISKS!

Talking about punching a ball reminds me that Taylor is in this respect a 'keeper of what might be called the old school. He doesn't believe in catching a shot when opponents are rushing towards him and threatening to send him crashing into the net. He hits it with his fist, and away it goes down the field as far as most of us could kick it. I don't think Taylor has ever subscribed to the view that the goalkeeper is a man who sha'n't take risks. I have seen him run out and kick the ball from the toe of an opponent, and in these days a goalkeeper has to be ready to run out.

A TIP WORTH REMEMBERING!

Now let me tell you how he perfected himself in the art of catching the ball, for in his method there is a tip for every young goalkeeper who wants to get on. Some years ago he systematically spent a certain portion of each day in the quiet of the gymnasium. He was hard at work with the punch-ball. The object of this practice, as he explained it to me, was two-fold. In the first place it enabled him to perfect himself in the art of catching the ball, and in the second place of timing it properly. If you don't time a punch-ball properly you are likely to get it on your nose, which is a painful way of stopping it.

THE FACULTY OF ANTICIPATION!

And just as Taylor taught himself the art of catching the ball in his fingers so THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 969.

matter how hard it was travelling, so he practised the leap through the air which is so characteristic of him. Scores of times have I seen him make this flying leap and turn round the post shots which have been so far wide of him that goals seemed certain. Indeed, I have seen him make saves when thousands of spectators have been yelling "goal!"

He is always watching most closely his opponent who is going to shoot; trying to find out towards which part of the goal the ball is likely to be kicked. Having discovered the intention of the "shooter" he makes his move accordingly, and that is why so many would-be goalkeepers swear that Taylor has magnetic hands—hands which pull the ball towards him.

LIVERPOOL'S LOSS!

Taylor has also taught his backs to trust him—to put the ball back when



An impression of Huddersfield's "live" goalie—Ted Taylor—by Jimmy Seed, of the 'Spurs.

they are in difficulties. I think he has always one regret about his football—that he wasn't appreciated or given a real chance by the two big clubs of his native place—Liverpool. He used to play in amateur football in Liverpool, but neither Everton or Liverpool thought that he would develop into England's greatest, safest and bravest goalkeeper since Sam Hardy.

A CRICKET QUERY ANSWERED.

F. Tonge (Cardiff).—County captains have funny little ways of showing what they will do after winning the toss. Carr, for instance, plays an imaginary ball with an imaginary bat, to indicate that his side will bat first. Percy Fender puts his hands on his hips and gazes all round the sky, as if seeking inspiration, though he has made his mind up what to do long ago. Arthur Gilligan, on winning the toss, always condones with his defeated rival, patting him on the shoulder and saying, "Bad luck, old fellow!"

'CROCKED!'

Why we ought to allow substitutes for injured players.

WHENEVER anybody mentions the idea of allowing substitutes for footballers injured in the course of a game, the rule-makers hold up their hands in horror. "No, no!" they say; and then they go on to point to all the possible abuses. They paint a terrible picture of a manager of a football team having eleven men waiting to go on the field, at any minute to take the place of the eleven which have started the match. The rule-makers also imagine fellows going off—shamming injury—when they are merely tired, or if they are out of form.

A PROPHECY!

But in spite of all the shrieking about the possible abuse of a rule which permitted a substitute for an injured player, I am going to tell the rule-makers that sooner or later they will have to change their opinions. We are going to have substitutes, because popular opinion will eventually be too strong to be resisted. The first big reason why they should be allowed is that to prevent a team putting a substitute in the field for a man who is injured is not fair.

NOT SPORTING!

Where is our so-called sporting spirit when the rules are so framed that a team may have to struggle through a very important match with ten players, or perhaps only nine, against eleven. I saw Aston Villa beat Burnley by ten goals last season, mainly because Burnley had to play a man short for the greater part of the game, their centre-half being injured. I also saw Tottenham Hotspur defeated in a match in which Tom Clay, the 'Spurs famous full-back, was hurt the very first time he went to touch the ball. He hadn't actually kicked it before he got a kick in the head and had to be carried off. I repeat that it isn't fair—it isn't cricket if I may use the word—for a team to be handicapped through no fault of its own. Nay, often the handicap is imposed by reckless play on the part of some member of the opposition.

SETTING THE EXAMPLE!

In regard to this permission to play substitutes for injured players it is rather funny that other countries should be setting the British Isles an example. In Australia they allow a substitute for a man who is crocked. They do the same in American football, in Canadian football, and also in football on the Continent.

Most of the talk about the possible abuse of a rule which would permit a substitute for an injured player is so much moonshine. Do you think any player is going to go off the field if he isn't hurt? Moreover, have we so lost all our sense of sportsmanship that managers would compel players to sham injury so that a new and fresh player could be substituted? Of course we haven't.

On this point of substitutes I am like the boy who wants a thing and won't be happy until he gets it.

THE NABOB'S RIVAL!

(Continued from page 12.)

understandfulness is not great, but if there is information, the noble and ludicrous Jam will gladly hear it."

"Buck up, then!" growled Bunter.

The moonshee led the way by the palace corridors, to the entrance to the Jam Bahadur's apartments. There he was stopped by the guards; but he proceeded to explain in flowing Hindustani, which was probably rather better than his English, and was allowed to pass. Bunter, however, was pushed back by the soldiers.

"Little sahib waitfully attend till my esteemed returnfulness," said the moonshee.

And Bunter waited.

In a few minutes the moonshee came back, with the subadar of the Jam's guard, and Bunter was beckoned in. The subadar, Lal Chundar, eyed him very curiously. The bared tulwar in the subadar's dusky hand made Bunter jump, but he followed on into the Jam's apartments.

The Jam Bahadur was alone.

He had dismissed the counsellors with whom he had been engaged in discussion. His old brown face was deeply wrinkled with care. As yet, the Jam's own guards were faithful, but he knew that the contest with the rajah was going against him, and that his power and his life were at hazard.

That did not trouble the old Jam so much as the knowledge that once Baji Rao was in power in Bhanipur the missing nabob's fate was sealed. Only the doubtful chance of the intervention of the British remained; and if the rajah's cunning could contrive to avert that danger, it was certain that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh would never be seen alive again.

The Jam glanced at Bunter, but with little interest.

He had consented to see him; but he had no hope whatever that the fat junior could tell him anything of the missing nabob. Bunter had not stirred from the palace since the disappearance of the nabob on the day of the tiger-hunt.

"Here is the little sahib," said the moonshee, in Hindustani.

The Jam signed to Bunter to come forward.

"What you having to tell me?" he asked, in his own peculiar variation of the English language.

"I know where Hurree Singh is," said Bunter.

The Jam shook his head impatiently.

"You cannot be knowing," he answered. "What is this all meaning?"

"I suppose you know about a ruined temple in the forest, about twenty miles from the city?" said Bunter.

"The old temple of Shiva," said the Jam.

"That's it."

"The temple has been searched, like all other places," said the Jam. "Why you thinking the Huzoor there?"

"There was a picnic, the day before the tiger-hunt," said Bunter. "Those beasts—I mean, my friends—left me behind, and I went after them. They were gone before I got there."

The Jam regarded Bunter a little more attentively.

"That day they seeing Nally Das in the temple," he said. "But he escaped. The Huzoor told me of it."

"Well, he was jolly well there all the time!" said Bunter. "Those rotters—I mean, my friends—were gone, and my naukars were behind with the grub, and I

sat down behind some trees in a sort of paved court to rest and wait for him. Then I heard a queer noise."

The Jam nodded.

"The old Temple of Shiva is haunted," he said, "the spirits of the priests slain by the Afghan raiders lingering there."

"It jolly well wasn't a spirit that I saw!" grunted Bunter. "It was Nally Das, the same blackguard who tried to kidnap Inky at Greyfriars. He came up from under the floor of the temple!"

The Jam Bahadur started.

"What you saying?" he exclaimed.

"There's an old statue—a bronze something-or-other—lying there," explained Bunter; "close by it there's a big slab of stone that moved in the floor. It was lifted, and Nally Das came up. There's a secret hiding-place under the old temple. That's why they couldn't find Nally Das, after seeing him there—see? He must have dodged into the vault, or cellar, or whatever it is, and lain doggo. He didn't come out till after they were gone—and I was there, though he jolly well didn't see me."

The Jam gazed at Bunter in deep silence for a moment or two. Then he began to question the fat junior closely.

When he had finished he drew a deep breath.

His old brown face had lighted up.

The existence of the secret recess under the Temple of Shiva was utterly unknown in Bhanipur. But now that the Jam knew of it, he knew where to look for the missing nabob. He had heard from the nabob that Nally Das, the kidnapper, had been seen at the haunted temple, and had vanished and escaped all search. His business there was clear now. If the hiding-place existed under the old temple, unsuspected and unseen, but known to the kidnappers, it was fairly certain that that was the hidden spot to which the kidnapped nabob had been taken.

"It is well!" said the Jam at last. He turned to the waiting subadar, and gave him a rapid order. Then he dropped his old brown hand kindly on the fat shoulder of the Owl of the Remove. "It is well, sahib! It is you who saving the Nabob of Bhanipur. You shall be coming with me and my soldiers to save him, and pointing out to me where to seek."

Bunter grinned cheerfully.

Harry Wharton & Co. were seeking the missing nabob with little hope. While they were engaged on their vain search, Bunter was to lead the rescue-party to the right spot. There was much satisfaction in that thought for the Owl of Greyfriars.

"I'm your man!" he said.

"Mook Mookerjee, you order a palkee for the little sahib," said the Jam.

Bunter hurried away with the moonshee, and the Jam made his preparations in haste. No time was lost; in ten minutes the Jam Bahadur was riding out of Bhanipur at the head of a hundred horsemen, and with the horsemen went a palanquin in which sat Billy Bunter.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"It's the jolly old Jam!"

"And Bunter!"

Harry Wharton & Co. drew

rein.

The juniors were riding, with the colonel and Pandey Din, by a path

through the paddy-fields, when they sighted the cavalcade. The tall elephant of the Jam Bahadur was recognisable at a great distance, and among the horsemen who escorted the elephant and its rider the juniors discerned a palkee borne on the shoulders of four stalwart, dusky bearers. From the curtains of the palkee looked the fat face and glimmering spectacles of William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove.

The sight of the Jam and a hundred troopers, riding towards the forest, naturally drew the attention of the Greyfriars fellows at once. It looked as if some news had been received of the missing nabob; it was unlikely that anything else could have drawn the Jam from the city at such a time of crisis. What Bunter was doing with the party was rather a mystery. But the colonel turned his horse at once to intercept the cavalcade, and the juniors followed him.

"Looks like news of Inky!" said Bob Cherry eagerly.

"What ripping luck if that's so!" said Harry Wharton, with a deep breath.

The Jam Bahadur looked from the silken curtains of his howdah and waved a brown hand to the colonel. From the distance the juniors could see the excitement in his old brown face.

Colonel Wharton ranged up beside the tall elephant, and began to speak to the Jam in Hindustani. The juniors fell into pace with the palanquin, Bunter eyeing them very morosely. They were not specially glad to see Bunter, and he was the very reverse of glad to see them.

It was Bunter's idea to rescue the imprisoned nabob while the chums of the Remove were away on a futile quest, and he was not at all keen for them to accompany the rescue-party. He wanted them to find the nabob safe and sound at his palace when they came back, tired and unsuccessful. Bunter was going to produce the missing prince, as it were, like a conjurer producing a rabbit out of a hat. This unfortunate meeting knocked that little scheme on the head.

"I say, you fellows, what do you want?" asked Bunter peevishly. "Aren't you hunting for Inky?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Well, go and hunt for him! You can't expect me to help you, after your cheek and ingratitude!"

"You silly owl!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Where is the Jam going?" asked Wharton. "And where are you going with him, Bunter? Is he taking you back to Rawalpindi?"

"No—yes! Yes! Exactly!" said Bunter. "Just so! It's an escort—see! The Jam is seeing me off. You fellows don't want to come."

"No fear!"

"Well, then, hike off and leave me alone," said Bunter anxiously. "I'm not going to tell you anything."

"What is there to tell, fathead?"

"Nothing, of course," said Bunter. "Nothing at all! I don't know anything about Inky."

"Eh?"

"I can't put my finger on him, you know," said Bunter fatuously. "Nothing of the kind, of course. Don't run away with that idea."

The Co. stared at Bunter. That he was, as usual, lying, was obvious; but why he was lying was not so clear.

"What is the fat idiot driving at?" asked Johnny Bull, in wonder.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

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"Where are you going?" demanded Nugent. "The Jam wouldn't be escorting you to the frontier at a time like this. That's all rot. Is the Jam hunting for Inky? I suppose that's so; but what the thump are you doing with the party?"

Bunter sniffed. "I could tell you something if I liked," he answered loftily.

"Well, cough it up then, fathead!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"It's impossible that that fat idiot knows anything about Inky," said Harry Wharton; "but what—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! If you think you're going to bag the credit of rescuing Inky—"

"What?"

"You're jolly well not!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "You jolly well clear off, and leave the job to me. You're no good, as I've often told you before. You clear off. This is my bizney!"

"Wandering in your mind?" asked Wharton, in amazement.

"The question is, has he any to wander in?" grunted Johnny Bull.

Colonel Wharton backed his horse and joined the juniors, and rode with them. His bronze face was bright.

"News at last!" he said. "It is amazing that it should have been received by means of Bunter—"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Bunter!" exclaimed the juniors, in astonishment.

"Yes, strangely enough, it was Bunter who gave the Jam Bahadur the clue," said Colonel Wharton. "From what the Jam has just told me, it appears extremely probable that we shall find Hurree Singh hidden at the haunted temple in the forest."

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, how jolly!" exclaimed Bob.

"But what on earth did Bunter know about it, and why didn't he tell us before, if he knew?" exclaimed Wharton.

"It appears to have been by chance that Bunter made a discovery, and he was so obtuse as not to think of it until to-day, in connection with the disappearance of Hurree Singh," said the colonel. "There is every hope now that Hurree Singh will be found and rescued."

Colonel Wharton pushed on his horse again, to ride beside the Jam's elephant. The juniors remained with the palanquin, staring at the fat face of William George Bunter. They were astonished, or rather, utterly amazed.

"I say, you fellows, it's up to you to clear off!" said the Owl of the Remove peevishly.

"Clear off, when we're on old Inky's track!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Well, it's me that's found him, isn't it?" demanded Bunter warmly. "You're jolly well dead in this act. You're jolly well not going to bag the credit, I can tell you."

"You silly ass!" said Harry. "Do you think we're thinking about bagging anything except old Inky himself. Tell us how you knew?"

Billy Bunter proceeded to tell once more of what happened on the day the nabob and his chums had picnicked at the haunted temple of Shiva.

"If that fat idiot had only told us all that before—" said Johnny Bull, when the Owl of the Remove had finished.

"Did you give me a chance to tell you?" hooted Bunter. "Would you listen to a chap?"

"Yes; if you weren't all jaw, like a

sheep's head. How was any fellow to know that you could have talked sense for once?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"By Jove! It looks as if we're all right," chuckled Bob Cherry. "We shall bag old Inky, and perhaps the kidnappers, too. Hurrah!"

"Mind, I'm the chap that did it!" said Bunter.

"Bow-wow!"

"I say, you fellows—"

But the juniors were finished with Bunter now. They rode on ahead with the colonel, and the Owl of the Remove was left to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

But Billy Bunter came into his own again, as it were, when the old temple of Shiva was reached.

The party dismounted and entered the ruined temple, which lay silent and still, seemingly utterly deserted in the heat of the afternoon Indian sunshine.

Bunter rolled out of the palanquin and rolled ahead into the paved court, where the fallen statue of Buddha lay on the cracked flags.

The Jam Bahadur had descended from his elephant in his eagerness in the quest. But the task of descending into the recesses beneath the temple was left to more active persons. Colonel Wharton took the lead. Billy Bunter blinked round him, and stopped beside the bronze Buddha.

"It was just here!" he said.

"Pick out the exact stone, if you can, Bunter," said the colonel.

"I'll jolly soon do that!"

Bunter blinked to and fro, watched impatiently by the juniors. The Owl of the Remove was in no great hurry. He was the important person now; the colonel, even the great Jam himself, were waiting for Bunter to indicate the way. Bunter was not in a hurry to part with his importance.

But he stopped at last at the great slab of stone which he had seen rise from its place on the day he had watched Nally Das emerge from the hiding-place under the temple of Shiva. "Here it is!" he announced.

"You are sure that is the stone?"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Are you sure?" rapped out the colonel. He did not seem to notice how important Bunter was, or perhaps he noticed it and did not like it.

"Yes, I am!" grunted Bunter sulkily.

"Stand aside, then!"

Bunter rolled aside, and the colonel bent and examined the stone. At a casual view, it looked like the other stones by which it was surrounded; but as he examined it, the colonel gave a nod. A close inspection showed that, although it touched the adjoining stones, there was no trace of cement between them.

"This slab is detached," said the colonel quietly. "Doubtless there is some hidden mechanism for raising it from below; but of that we know nothing. But we have other means."

He spoke to the subadar, Lal Chundar, who called forward a couple of sturdy chaukees, who carried crowbars. A score of men had gathered in the paved court, and at the Jam's order, the rest of the party scattered about the temple, within the ruins, and round the old shattered walls, to keep watch lest there should be another exit from the hiding-place below. Now that the Jam was on the track of the missing nabob, he was leaving nothing to chance.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on with bated breath while the crowbars were

driven in between the great slab and the adjoining stones. Loud blows rang and echoed through the stillness as the crowbars were driven home, and then strong muscles bent to their task, and the great slab was wrenched out of its place—and the hot sun shone into a deep opening, and upon a flight of steps that wound downwards into deep darkness.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Rescue!

THUD! Hurree Jamset Ram Singh heard the dull, heavy sound that echoed through the gloom, but without heeding it.

The schoolboy nabob sat on the rug in his prison cell in deep darkness.

The teak door was closed and barred on him; only twice a day did it open to give admittance to his gaolers—Nally Das, or Lazaroff, or some other of the rajah's servants.

Then a lamp would glimmer in his cell, and the nabob would eat his spare meal, again to be left in silence, solitude, and darkness.

It was a form of torture that might well have broken down the prisoner's resistance.

But it had no effect on the Nabob of Bhanipur.

With Oriental impassiveness, the prisoner endured the solitude, the deep, chilling silence, the darkness that was like a suffocating cloak.

How many days and nights he had spent in the lonely stone cell, he did not know. He could not follow the passage of time, day and night, sunshine and starlight, were all the same to him, buried from the light of day and the light of the stars. It seemed to him that long years had elapsed since the day of the tiger hunt, when he had ridden into the jungle so cheerily with his friends.

Despair was in his heart now.

He knew that his friends must be seeking him, that the Jam was striving hard to discover him; that no stone was left unturned. And yet they had failed.

The secret of the temple was unknown—known only to Nally Das, the descendant of the ancient priests of Shiva, and to the kidnapping gang to whom he had confided it. And Hurree Singh did not doubt now that the secret would remain unknown; that he would remain a helpless prisoner at the mercy of his rival.

Still he did not falter in his resolution.

Not by act or word would he help the rajah to realise his ambition; not to save himself from perpetual imprisonment; not to save himself from secret assassination in the dungeon.

When the gaolers visited him, they found him calm and self-possessed, giving no sign.

He knew that his hard usage was intended to break down his resolution, and that if it failed, more active tortures might follow. But his resolution remained like iron.

He saw changed faces among his gaolers; the weariness of the imprisonment under the ancient temple told upon them; one day it was Nally Das, another day the Russian, Lazaroff, and there were others in turn. But the weariness of the gaolers was as nothing to the weariness of the hapless prisoner. Yet every time that he was asked if he had a message to send to the rajah, he shook his head in silence.

Save when his gaolers came in with food, he received no visit and heard no sound. But now, in the deep tomb-like silence of his prison, strange new sounds came to his ears. Faintly through the subterranean spaces came the echoes of distant blows, as though someone were clanging at a distant door.

For some time the nabob did not heed.

But he heard other sounds—a hurrying of feet outside his door, a mutter of voices, in alarm.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh felt a sudden thrill, and he leaped to his feet.

Was it help at last—help and rescue?

Thud, thud, thud!

Heavy blows, with a metallic clang to them. He thought of the great slab of stone that closed in his subterranean prison. Was it someone who was forcing admittance there? Had his prison been discovered at last by his friends?

His heart throbbed almost to suffocation. For some moments his brain was dizzy with sudden hope, with the thought of rescue and release. But he pulled himself together.

In the cloaking darkness he groped to the door of his cell and placed his ear against the wood, listening.

Thud, thud, thud!

More loudly the blows rang. The sounds, as he judged, came from above; the blows were being struck at the slab of stone.

"Shabash!" murmured the nabob, his eyes gleaming in the darkness of the cell. "Friends at last! Shabash!"

His heart was thumping.

There was a sound outside the teak-wood door—the bars were being taken down. Evidently his gaolers were alarmed. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh stepped back from the door; it was thrown open, and the light of a smoky lamp gleamed in.

Lazaroff, the Russian, looked in at him with a startled face. Behind the Russian was a dusky Hindu—a chaukee of the rajah's guard. Nally Das was not to be seen. Although Hurree Singh did not know it, the Rajah Baji Rao had that day ridden into the city of Bhanipur, and Nally Das, his confidential kamdar, was with him there. Lazaroff and the chaukee were in charge of the imprisoned nabob, and both of them were obviously thrown into utter dismay by the attack on the stone slab above.

Hurree Singh faced the two men quietly, calmly, in the light of the smoky lamp.

Rescue was at hand, that was certain now. But he was still at the mercy of his guards, and it was more than possible that the rajah had left orders for his death should there be danger of his escape. So long as he lived a prisoner, the nabob was a hostage in the rajah's hands; but once he was free Baji Rao was a lost man.

The Russian gave him a bitter look.

"You hear?" he muttered.

"I hear!" said Hurree Singh.

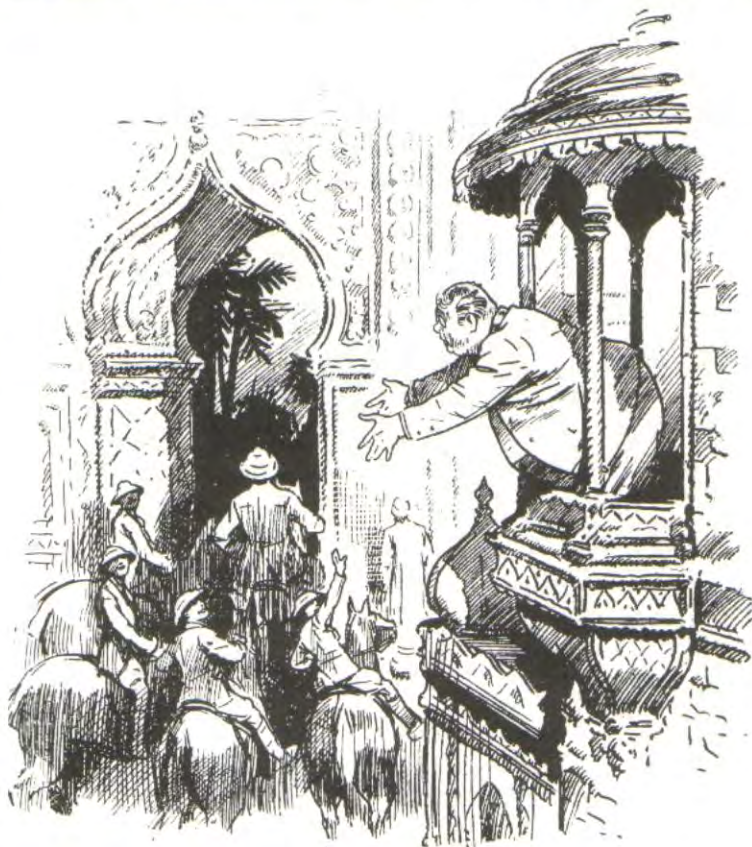
"They are there—at the stone. Do you know who they are? Did you expect this?"

"They are my friends," said Hurree Singh; "and if you value your life you will hand me over to them in safety."

The Russian made no reply. He bent his head to listen. The thudding blows had ceased; a long, heavy, grinding sound told that the slab had been wrenched from its place. It was a matter of minutes now.

The rajah's chaukee touched the arm of the Russian. His bared tulwar was in his hand, his eyes glittered at the nabob. He spoke quickly in his own tongue, but the Russian seemed to hesitate.

Hurree Singh, his hands clenched



"Where are you going?" shouted Bunter. "Don't leave me alone here, you beasts, among all these beastly niggers!" "We're going to hunt for Hurree Singh," answered Wharton. "Wait for me—" began Bunter. "Fathead!" was the reply; and the cavalcade rode out through the gates. (See Chapter 7.)

hard, waited and watched. It was clear that Baji Rao had left orders that he should be slain if rescue came; and the Hindu soldier was ready to carry out the savage order. But the European hesitated.

Lazaroff, the emissary of the Bolshevik plotters of Moscow, was keen enough to carry out the orders of his master, to place Baji Rao on the throne of Hurree Singh, to range Bhanipur on the side of Russia. But life was dear to him; and he knew what to expect from the Jam Bahadur if he carried out the order of Baji Rao. He did not share the slavish obedience of the Hindu.

Footsteps rang in the subterranean corridors; there was a flashing of lights, a shouting of voices. Echoing from the distance came a voice that Hurree Singh knew well—a voice that made his heart beat.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you, Inky?"

The voice of Bob Cherry!

"Here!" shouted the nabob. "Help! Help!"

"This way!" shouted Bob.

"Inky, old man—"

The rajah's chaukee thrust the Russian savagely aside as he hesitated. He turned on Hurree Singh like a tiger, his tulwar flashing aloft, the clear steel shining in the lamplight.

Lights flashed and hurried footsteps echoed; the rescuers were close at hand now. But the gleaming tulwar was over the head of the schoolboy nabob.

Hurree Singh leaped back, and the slash of the sword missed him by an

inch. A revolver was in the Russian's hand; he raised it, and lowered it again. The rajah's soldier followed up the nabob, his tulwar rising for another savage slash.

Crack!

The Russian fired—but not at Hurree Singh. It was the rajah's chaukee who received the bullet at close range, and he rolled over on the floor of the cell, his tulwar falling with a crash.

A tall figure and a bronzed face appeared in the doorway of the cell. Lazaroff's grasp was on the nabob; his revolver was pressed to the side of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. His desperate eyes glared defiance at Colonel Wharton.

"Stand back!"

"Death if you harm him!" said the colonel between his teeth. "Death by all the tortures known in the East!"

"Life and freedom for his life!" said the Russian, his finger on the trigger.

"You shall go in peace."

"On the word of a sahib?"

"On the word of a sahib!" said the colonel.

The Russian threw down the revolver.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Not Satisfied!

"MY esteemed chums—"

"Good old Inky!"

"The pleasuredfulness of this excellent moment is terrific."

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled in THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 969.

sheer enjoyment. Never had they been so glad to hear the remarkable English which Hurree Singh had learned from the moonshee Mook Mookerjee.

Hurree Singh was above ground now. In the midst of his elated chums, he had been borne up from the subterranean prison. The chums of the Remove almost hugged him.

The nabob looked worn, almost haggard. His terrible imprisonment had told upon him. But his worn, dusky face was beaming with delight. It was good to see the sunshine again, to breathe the air from the forest.

"Safe again—safe and sound!" said Bob Cherry, smacking the rescued nabob on the back. "Good old Inky!"

"The hopefulness had almost departed," said Hurree Singh. "My esteemed heart was heavy. But now everything in the excellent garden is lovely, and the rejoicings are great."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The jolly old Jam's waiting for you," said Nugent. "This way, Inky, old chap!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh ran to the Jam Bahadur. With tears in his eyes the old brown gentleman embraced his nephew. A flood of Hindustani poured from his lips, of which the Greyfriars juniors understood hardly a word, but which evidently expressed the Jam's rejoicing.

"I say, you fellows—"

Bunter, much to his indignation, was unheeded.

Bunter, the right man in the right place, the fellow who had done it all, seemed to be overlooked, in the general rejoicing at the rescue of the schoolboy nabob.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter!" chuckled Bob Cherry, and he gave the fat junior a terrific smack on the back.

"Yaroooooh!"

"What's the row now?" asked Bob.

"Yow-ow! You've broken my back!" roared Bunter. "Whooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Lazaroff, the Russian, came up from the subterranean depths, in charge of Colonel Wharton. The Jam's eyes glittered at him; but the Colonel spoke a few words, and the Jam nodded

assent. The Russian was allowed to go; and he lost no time. He vanished at once into the forest, with the warning that if he was found again in Bhanipur his life would be forfeit. But the Bolshevik was not likely to linger long in Hurree Singh's kingdom. The game was up for Baji Rao now—the end was in sight; and the man from Moscow intended to go while the going was good.

The Jam, holding on to Hurree Singh's arm, as if afraid of losing the nabob again, marched him away to the waiting elephant.

"I say, Inky—" bawled Bunter.

But Hurree Singh did not hear, at least, he did not heed.

He mounted into the howdah with the Jam; and the troopers remounted their horses to escort the rescued nabob back to Bhanipur.

Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove, his very spectacles gleaming with indignation.

"Call this gratitude!" he hooted.

"Can it, old bean," said Johnny Bull.

"After what I've done—"

"Give us a rest!"

"Look here, you fellows—"

But the fellows mounted their horses, and rode after the Jam's elephant, heedless of the indignant Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove rolled to his palanquin, and rolled into it, and the patient bearers lifted him, and followed on.

It was a joyous procession that took the road to the city.

Ahead of it went the subadar and a dozen men, at full gallop, with news that the nabob was returning, and orders to arrest Baji Rao at the serai in Bhanipur.

"The game's up for that rotter!" Bob Cherry remarked, as the juniors trotted cheerily along under the setting sun. "It was a close thing; but we've jolly well trumped the last trick. What a giddy surprise for him when Inky comes marching in."

"I say, you fellows—" came a fat voice from the palanquin.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Bunter again. Do you know that you've come in useful for once, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You'll never be ornamental, old

chap, but you can be useful at times," said Bob. "You're no end of a nuisance, old fat man, but I'm not sorry you came out to India with us, after all."

"Fancy Bunter being anything but a nuisance and a beastly worry!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Queer, ain't it?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Wonders will never cease!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We'll stand you a study spread for this, Bunter, when we get back to Greyfriars."

"Yah!"

The juniors chuckled and trotted on. Bunter sitting in his palanquin in a state of great indignation. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh did not yet know how much he owed to the fat junior; and nobody seemed to have taken the trouble to tell him. Certainly, it was quite by accident that Bunter had come in useful; but the Owl of the Remove did not look at it in that light. From Bunter's point of view, he was the prime mover in the whole business; he was the fellow that mattered! And somehow or other, the general opinion seemed to be that he did not matter at all. Which was really very hard on a meritorious fellow who was prepared to spread himself as the hero of the hour.

The city of Bhanipur was humming with the news, when the Jam's tall elephant strode in at the gates, and buzzing throngs surrounded the returned nabob as he made his way to his palace. At the gate of the palace waited the subadar with the news that Baji Rao had already fled from the city. No doubt a spy of the rajah's had followed the Jam's party to the temple in the forest, and brought back the news of Hurree Singh's rescue in time for the plotting rajah to make his escape.

Baji Rao had left the city by one gate as the subadar and his men had entered it by another—riding for his life.

He was gone—with his long-planned schemes in ruins, his life forfeit for his crimes; gone in desperate haste, with the emissaries of death on his track.

He had fled to his castle, which was not likely long to protect him. Little hope remained to him of saving his life and his lands; and his dream of reigning as Nabob of Bhanipur was over.

But the Greyfriars fellows, at least, gave little thought to the defeated plotter in their rejoicing at the safe return of their chum. The Nabob of Bhanipur, Inky of the Remove, was safe back in his palace, and that was enough for Harry Wharton and Co.

As the nabob entered the palace, through saluting crowds, Bunter rolled out of his palanquin and shouted to him.

"Inky! I say, Inky!"

The nabob did not even glance round. He disappeared into the palace, leaning on the arm of the old Jam, apparently unconscious of the existence of William George Bunter.

Bunter snorted.

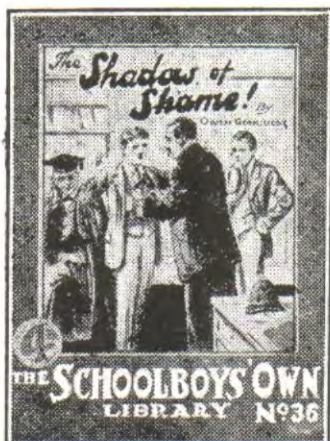
"I say, you fellows—"

But the juniors followed the nabob in, and Bunter turned his big spectacles on Colonel Wharton, who had stopped to speak to Pandi Din.

"I say, sir—"

The colonel, apparently deaf, strode away. Bunter breathed hard with wrath and indignation. He was the hero of the hour—the fellow who mattered—and absolutely no one seemed disposed to take heed of his uncommon merits.

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IN NEXT MONDAY'S "MAGNET."

"Here, you—" said Bunter to the khitmutghar.

Pandy Din glanced at him, saluted, and went out at the gates. Even the khitmutghar did not seem to realise the importance of William George Bunter.

"Well, my hat!" said Bunter, in utter disgust.

He rolled into the palace, and went to his own quarters. Kasi Jee was there; and he greeted Bunter Sahib with his deepest salaam. Matters had changed once more; Baji Rao was now a back number, so to speak; the Nabob Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was once more master in his own palace; and Kasi Jee, for his part, was once more the subservient, bowing naukar.

But Bunter had not forgotten. He fixed his spectacles on Kasi Jee with a wrathful glare.

"James!" he snapped.

"Salaam, sahib!"

"You black beast!"

"The sahib is angry with his slave!" murmured Kasi Jee.

"You cheeky nigger!"

"O, sahib!"

"Turn round!" commanded Bunter.

Kasi Jee eyed him apprehensively; but he obeyed. In the belief that Baji Rao would reign in Bhanipur, and that the white sahibs would have their heads cut off, the naukah had let himself go, as it were. He had allowed himself the pleasure of cheeking Bunter Sahib. Now the tables were turned, and after the feast came the reckoning.

Crash!

Bunter's boot, with all Bunter's weight behind it, smote the hapless naukar, and Kasi Jee fairly flew.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter, as the naukar rolled on the floor.

Kasi Jee picked himself up, and fled gasping; and Bunter, feeling rather better, sat down to rest after his great exertions in rescuing the Nabob of Bhanipur.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Glory for Bunter!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Go!"

"Eh?"

"Go!" repeated Billy Bunter.

The fat junior raised a podgy forefinger, and pointed it at Bob Cherry. His attitude was quite dramatic.

Bob stared at him blankly. He stood in the doorway of Bunter's apartment and stared; and Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull stared also.

"What's this game?" inquired Bob.

"Go!"

"But we've come—"

Bunter rose to his feet. He fixed his spectacles on the chums of the Remove, and looked at their feet, and then allowed his glance to travel up to their surprised faces, then to sink down to their feet again. This was what Bunter called looking a fellow up and down, and the effect was supposed—by Bunter—to be crushing.

The juniors did not look crushed. They grinned.

"Go!" repeated Bunter, "I'm fed up with you! Fed right up to the chin! You lot, and Inky! The whole mob of you! Get out!"

"But—" said Nugent.

"You needn't talk to me, Nugent! I'm sick of you!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Especially Inky! A sickening lot!" said Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. regarded Bunter with growing surprise. The Owl of the Remove was evidently indignant and wrathful. His wrath and his indignation, in fact, knew no bounds.

All the palace, and all the city of Bhanipur, rejoiced over the safe return of the nabob from captivity. In the general rejoicings nobody seemed to remember that Bunter had had anything to do with it. Bunter, who had done it all, according to his own view, was passed over like the idle wind that they regarded not.

Bunter, the fellow whom all Bhanipur ought to have been delighted to honour, was left forgotten in his apartment, comforted only by ample tuck. Tuck was all very well; Bunter did the tuck justice, and more than justice. But tuck, after all, was not everything. Bunter wanted the recognition of his merit, the honour and glory due to his great services. And these details seemed to have been overlooked. Hence the fed-up and indignant state of the Owl of the Remove.

"Sickening!" repeated Bunter emphatically. "An ungrateful lot! I'm accustomed to ingratitude. That's nothing new. But this is the limit! I've travelled all the way to India to protect Inky—"

"Draw it mild!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"I've saved him again and again," said Bunter. "This last time, he was fairly done for, if I hadn't weighed in. What do I receive in return? Not even a word of thanks."

"But—"

"But for me," continued Bunter, with growing indignation, "where would Inky be? Where would that fat old Jam be? Where would all you fellows be? I'm not a fellow to push myself forward in any way—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"But there's a limit!" hooted Bunter. "I'm treated with black ingratitude, rotten ingratitude. I'm fed-up! I'm going!"

"But—" began Wharton.

"That's enough, Wharton! I'm going!" said Bunter with great dignity. "I decline to remain any longer a guest of Hurree Singh! I refuse to stay in this palace. I am going to shake the dust of the place from my feet, and wash my hands of the whole thing."

"Wash your neck at the same time!" suggested Johnny Bull. "It can do with it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't want any cheek!" roared Bunter. "I mean what I say, I'm disgusted with all of you, especially Inky. I'm fed-up with you. I shall require a car to take me away, and an escort, and—and plenty of grub for the journey. After that, I'm done with you. You fellows can stay here among the niggers if you like, and he blowed to you. I'm going!"

Bunter was evidently in earnest. His indignation was deep; he felt that his fat dignity was at stake.

"But—" said Nugent, with a chuckle.

"That's enough, I tell you! Go!"

"But—" roared Bob Cherry.

"Go!" The podgy forefinger pointed to the door. "Tell Inky that I despise him. That's my last message. When we get back to Greyfriars, I'll thank you not to speak to me. I'm turning you down—the lot of you! Got that? Now buzz off!"

And Bunter turned his back on the grinning juniors.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"James!" roared Bunter.

"Salaam, sahib!" Kasi Jee wiggled forward.

"Kick these fellows out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter, you silly ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We came here to tell you—"

"Go!"

"That we've told Inky it was you that spotted the secret of the old temple, and gave us the clue where to find him."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

"Inky wants to see you—" went on the captain of the Remove.

"A reception in state!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Inky on a golden throne, and all the giddy court standing round to admire!" said Nugent.

"No end of kudos!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Public recognition of your wonderful services!"

"Oh!" repeated Bunter.

The lofty frown faded from the face of William George Bunter. He condescended to smile.

"Come along," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "There's a guard of honour waiting to conduct you to the Hall of Audience."

"Oh! Good!"

"And you can swank as much as you jolly well like."

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"You can spread yourself all over the show!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Only mind you don't burst!"

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"Buck up!" said Wharton. "The court is gathered for the reception; only the great man is waited for. You're the great man."

Bunter's eyes danced behind his spectacles. This was what he wanted—what he deserved! For once he was to get his deserts. His uncommon merits were, after all, to receive due recognition.

"If Inky's really grateful, I'm not the fellow to turn him down!" said Bunter. "I'm ready."

Wrath and indignation had passed like a summer cloud. Billy Bunter's fat face beamed as he rolled out of the room with the chums of the Remove. In the wide corridor, twenty men of the palace guard waited, with drawn swords. Bunter blinked rather dubiously at the drawn swords; but it was a guard of honour, and the dusky swordsmen saluted him respectfully, and formed up to escort him to the Hall of Audience.

Bunter rolled along with them, swelling as he rolled. He felt several inches

taller, and his fat chest was puffed out with importance, and his little fat legs strutted. Harry Wharton & Co. followed on, with smiling faces. Bunter was the cynosure of all eyes, and most eyes that regarded him had a glimmer of merriment in them. But Bunter did not notice that. At long last, he was receiving the honour that was his due. He had no doubt that his progress was most impressive; while the chums of the Remove hoped that he would not, in his swollen state, suffer the fate of the frog in the fable.

Dusky guards salaamed to the fat junior, as he arrived at the Hall of Audience, a magnificent apartment, with walls and ceiling decorated with gorgeous arabesques.

At the upper end of the apartment, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in robes of state, sat on a golden throne, the Jam on his right hand, Colonel Wharton on his left. Dusky counsellors and officials and guards were grouped round, in their various degrees.

Bunter advanced up the hall, swelling more and more. Salaams greeted him on all sides.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh rose from his throne, and descended a step to meet Bunter, an unparalleled honour and distinction. In point of fact, the school-boy nabob was quite aware of how much he owed to Bunter. True, it was by chance that the Owl of the Remove had been able to help him out. But the fact remained, that but for Billy Bunter, the nabob would still have languished a captive in his hidden prison, in darkness and the fear of death, while his rival ascended his throne. It was a fact that could not be gainsaid, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was prepared to testify his gratitude in a manner worthy of an Eastern prince.

"My esteemed and ludicrous Bunter!" said the nabob. "I have lately learned the terrific services you have performed in the rescuefulness of my esteemed self. The thankfulness is truly terrific."

Bunter's fat face expanded in a grin. "Ah serene, old chap!" he said. "I've mentioned to you several times, you know, that I was the real goods. I've pointed out to you that those chaps were no good—not an earthly. Haven't I?"

"Modesty, the name is Bunter!" murmured Bob Cherry, and the juniors grinned.

"Now that I am once more upon my

throne, my esteemed and ridiculous Bunter, I would testify my gratitude," said the nabob. "Anything that it is my esteemed power to grant, requires only the askfulness."

"Chance for Bunter to get his postal order cashed!" murmured Johnny Bull, and the solemn proceedings were interrupted, for a moment, by a subdued chuckle.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh made a sign, and the Wazir—a gorgeous official—came forward, and draped an enormous gold chain round the fat neck of Billy Bunter. Bunter gasped. The value of the great chain of gold must have been immense. It was a signal of honour for the Owl of the Remove; but William George Bunter was thinking rather of the intrinsic value than of the distinction. His fat grin grew more expansive.

But the Wazir was not finished yet. A slave brought forward a salver, on which lay a collar of glittering diamonds. The Wazir lifted it, and placed it round Bunter's neck.

"I—I say—" gasped Bunter.

More than once during his stay in Bhanipur, had Bunter's eyes lingered on the bronze doors of the palace treasury. His fat thoughts had often dwelt upon the gold mohurs and precious stones stored up behind the doors of bronze. Evidently the nabob had sought in his treasury for a suitable reward for Bunter—a reward that appealed to the fat junior more—much more—than the deepest gratitude could have done. Bunter was fairly dazzled by the riches of which he found himself the possessor. His fat face beamed unto a full moon.

"I—I say, Inky!" he stuttered. "I—I say, old chap, no larks, you know."

"I do not understand the esteemed fat Bunter. There is no larkfulness," said the nabob.

"These trifling gifts are a small testimony of the terrific thankfulness of my esteemed self."

"You—you mean it?" stuttered Bunter. "Let's have it plain, you know." Bunter was a business-like youth. "You're giving me these things—I'm to take them home with me, what?"

The nabob grinned.

But his dusky face was grave once again.

"My esteemed and ridiculous Bunter, these small gifts are yours, with all my heart!" he answered. "Keep them in remembrance of the service you have rendered to the Nabob of Bhanipur."

He blinked at the glistening gold, the glittering jewels. Visions danced before his eyes of endless spreads in the study at Greyfriars. There was wealth untold in the gorgeous gift of the nabob. Bunter of the Remove was going to be a great man when he was back at Greyfriars. He was going to strut in the old quad, in clothes more expensive than those of Angel of the Fourth; he was going to "chuck" money right and left more lavishly than Lord Mauleverer; he was going to "swank" to the top of his bent. It was a prospect full of joy to the Owl of the Remove.

"I say, old chap, thanks," he gasped. "You're a prince, Inky—the genuine goods, and no mistake!"

"My esteemed Bunter—"

"And I'll tell you what," said Bunter, "when we leave Greyfriars, I'll jolly well come with you to Bhanipur. I'll stick to you, Inky. I'm your pal for life. I'll jolly well be your Prime Minister."

"My worthy and ludicrous Bunter—"

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Lazaroff's grasp was on the nabob, his revolver was pressed into Inky's side, as Colonel Wharton approached. "Stand back!" "Death if you harm him," said the Colonel, between his teeth. "Life and freedom for his life," said the Russian, his finger on the trigger. (See Chapter 10.)

"I'll manage the whole thing for you," said Bunter generously. "Rely on me. I'll run the whole show for you, Inky."

"The thankfulness is terrific," said the nabob. "The generosity of the inestimable Bunter is terrific and unacceptable."

The nabob made a sign, and there was a general movement. The audience was over.

The fat junior rolled away, shining with gold and diamonds, his fat chin held well up, his glance lofty behind his big spectacles.

"Congratters, old fat bean!" said Bob Cherry, grinning in at the door when the guard had gone, and Bunter was left alone in his glory.

Bunter gave a lofty blink. "Halves!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No jolly fear!" said Bunter promptly. "I say, you fellows, Inky's awfully decent. Jolly decent for a blinking nigger, what? He knows how to treat a fellow properly. Not like you chaps."

"You fat idiot!"

"Don't give me any check, Bull. I

say, Wharton, what do you think these things are worth?"

"Trust Bunter to think of that!" chuckled Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"I don't know," said Harry, laughing. "But a good many hundreds of pounds, Bunter."

Bunter grinned gleefully.

"I shall be jolly well rolling in it, when we're back in England," he said. "I say, you fellows, the sooner we start the better. These things will be safer in England than in India. No need to stay here any longer, what?"

"We're staying till Inky has finished with that villain Baji Rao, and then Inky's coming back to Greyfriars with us," said Harry.

"That's all rot, you know," said Bunter. "All very well for you fellows—poverty-stricken bounders like you. It's different with me. I want to start to-morrow morning. Now I'm rich, I'm jolly well going to take care of the stuff. You fellows will have to travel with me, to see it safe home. Mind, we start in the morning."

"Fathead!"

"And I don't want any check!"

roared Bunter. "Mind, I'm in favour here now, and Inky will do anything for me—as he ought, considering what I've done for him. You fellows have got to treat me with respect—or it will be the worse for you."

Bob Cherry winked at his comrades.

"Let's treat Bunter with the respect that is his due!" he said. "Even Bunter ought to have his due."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's better," said Bunter. "I can jolly well tell you—yaroooh—Leggo—wharrer you collaring me for, you silly asses—yoooooooooop!"

Bump!

"Oow, wow, wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. retired, leaving William George Bunter sitting on the floor and roaring.

THE END.

(Make sure you read the final story of this splendid series, entitled: "From India To Greyfriars!" by ordering next week's MAGNET in good time. It shows Frank Richards in better form than ever, chums.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 960.

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN.—No longer is young Tommy Comber afraid to show himself abroad, for his features have been so skilfully "faked" as to defy the closest scrutiny. But for all that he is in the power of two sinister rogues who have only helped the fugitive from the Bellerophon to suit their own nefarious ends!

CURLEW ISLAND



by **David Goodwin**

Concluding Chapters.

A Happy Meeting!

THE first thing Tommy Comber did was to go to an outfitter's and buy himself a strong, useful, smartly-cut, ready-made suit, and a pair of new boots. He could not have done that had he been in Bellerophon uniform. But it was safe enough now, and they ask no questions in a big London shop, if one has the money to pay. It cost him three pounds ten, and he was careful not to show his fifty pounds. He brought Pat Roche's clothes away with him in a parcel, and presently took them to a small pawnbroker's shop near the Thames, and opened the parcel on the counter.

"Where did you get these?" asked the pawnbroker, looking at him suspiciously. "I don't deal mit poys."

"Who are you callin' a boy?" said Tommy. "I'm a gentleman's servant, an' I'm changin' my job. When I do that my clothes are mine to do what I like with. If you don't know that, Ikey, you ain't used to high society. If you don't want 'em, I'll take 'em somewhere else. How much?"

"Ten bob the lot," said the pawnbroker.

Although it was not much, Tommy took it. He was glad to get rid of Pat's clothes at any price, and if Pat or Dr. O'Hara wanted them back they could get them out again with the ticket. He was not going to wear them himself.

Then, feeling hungry, he went to a restaurant and fed himself royally on beefsteak-pudding, custard-pie, jam-tarts, and ginger-beer, and tipped the waiter sixpence for himself. After that he bought a newspaper to see if there was a match on at Tottenham or Fulham.

"Blow!" he said to himself. "I suppose I ought to go to those lodgings of mine first, before I start on the spree? I said I would. Wonder if there's anything queer about them?"

He looked at the address Dr. O'Hara had given him. Somehow, now he was clear of those two men, he felt a stronger dislike and distrust of them than ever. Tommy had plenty of pluck, but a queer thrill of apprehension and almost of fear ran through him at the thought of the mystery and the peril that lay in front

of him, now that he was in their power, and was bound to work to their orders. They were a dangerous, sinister pair. It was almost worse than being on the Bellerophon. How did he know he would not have to go back there? And it was all very well to tell himself that they were in his power as well. They were not.

"There's no help for it, though," he said at last. "I'm in for it. I've spent some of the money, too, and they've got me. Here goes. I don't see any way out of it."

Tommy knew his way about town pretty well, and he took a bus to Waterloo. He made his way down Waterloo Road on foot, and stopped for a moment to look in at a shop window. It was a

gunsmith's shop, and the sight of the rows of double-barrelled guns and smart black rifles drew him like a magnet. He could never resist a gun. The prices were pretty stiff, though, and while wondering whether to buy himself one he glanced aside for a moment, and saw somebody whom he knew walking slowly along the pavement. Tommy's heart gave a bound.

It was Dan Bennett!

There was no doubt about it, there he was as large as life. His old chum Dan Bennett of Gravesend—Dan, who had been with him when arrested, and who had spoken up for him like a brick at the trial. What on earth was he doing here at Waterloo? He was looking uncommonly smart and well-dressed, too, which he never used to be, but his usually cheery, freckled face didn't suit his clothes, and he wore a gloomy, lost sort of air. But still, it was good old Dan.

Tommy stared at him blankly, and Dan, glancing up from the pavement, looked him in the face.

A Bargain!

TOMMY only stared the harder, uncertain whether it would be risky to say or do anything.

And Dan, who always had a quick temper, flushed red. He walked up to Tommy.

"What are you gaping at, you hook-nosed, wall-eyed swab?" said Dan angrily. "What do you want?"

"Nothing," said Tommy.

"Then push off!" replied Dan, "or you'll get a buff on the nose!"

Tommy seldom refused an invitation to a scrap. But he did not want a buff on the nose. He was not sure whether the nose Dr. O'Hara had fitted for him would stand it, for old Dan had a terrific right-hand punch.

"Sorry," said Tommy in his gruffest voice, but as civilly as he could. "No offence, guv'nor, but I had an idea I knew you. Ain't you Dan Bennett?"

"Yes, that's me."

"I met you once when I was with a pal of yours," said Tommy. "And I was lookin' out for you, as I've got a message from him for you."

"Oh, that's all right then," said Dan.

WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

TOMMY COMBER, a bright young lad of fifteen, is falsely charged with the murder, on Curlew Island, of his uncle, **JOSEPH COMBER**, an inventor of a powerful new explosive named "Comberite," the formula of which he passed on to Tommy before he met his tragic end.

"**CHUFFER**" **FOSS**, Tommy's half-cousin and enemy—a suspicious character, and chief witness at the trial.

In spite of the damning evidence put up by Foss, Tommy is acquitted of the grave charge of murder, but of theft he is found guilty and sentenced to three years' detention aboard the reformatory ship Bellerophon, stationed in the Thames estuary.

After a series of thrilling experiences, however, Tommy effects an escape from the ship and seeks sanctuary on shore in the thick woods. Then, overcome by the pangs of hunger, the young fugitive throws all caution to the winds and feloniously enters the premises of Dr. O'HARA. He is discovered, but to his surprise, O'Hara displays great hospitality, feeds him well, and afterwards introduces him to his friend, **MERTON HAYNES**. These two queer individuals listen to Tommy's story, and realising that the lad is in possession of a secret worth a fortune, O'Hara offers to "fake" Tommy's features by means of surgery so that nobody will know him, put up the money for the production of Comberite powder, and allow the youngster a quarter share in all the profits made. Tommy agrees to the bargain, and under the skilled hands of O'Hara the transformation proves a great success. With fifty pounds in his pocket Comber leaves for a few days' holiday in London, where, chucking to himself, he passes through the busy thoroughfares unmolested and with the air of a millionaire.

(Now read on.)

"Sorry I was short with you. A pal of mine? Can't be. I haven't any pals left these days. Who is it?"

"His name's Tommy. And we'd better leave it at that."

"Great guns!" whispered Dan. "Do you know where he is?"

"Yes."

"Here, we can't talk about this in the street," murmured Dan, catching him by the arm and leading him along. "Come along to my place; I've got a bed-sitting-room close by. My aunt—what a go!"

Tommy wondered what Dan was doing with a bed-sitting-room near Waterloo station. But neither of them said a word till they reached it; rather a good room upstairs in a clean lodging-house. Tommy was silent, for he found the effect of the lozenge had worn off. And he was not only overjoyed, but tickled to death to find himself hanging on the arm of the unsuspecting Dan, who was bursting with excitement at the mere mention of his name.

"Half a mo," said Dan, as they entered the room. "I'll lock the door and then we'll be quite private. Where the dickens did I put the key?" he added, turning his back. "Right-ho—here it is—in my pocket."

Then Tommy said in his natural voice, very distinctly:

"You always were a careless young beggar, Danny."

Dan turned round as if he had been shot. He stared at Tommy, open-mouthed, his eyes bulging, and his face quite pale.

"Tommy!" he gasped. "Well, I'm blistered!"

"It's nothing to what you'd have been if you'd hit me on the nose, Dan," said Tommy, cheerfully.

Dan came slowly up to him, unable to believe his eyes.

"My goodness!" he said dazedly. "Is it really you?"

"All that's left of me."

Suddenly Dan gripped him by both hands and shook them till he nearly sprained Tommy's fingers; Dan almost whooped aloud with delight. But he had sense enough not to make a noise.

"What on earth's happened?" he gasped. "What have you done to yourself?"

"I had my face faked up a bit, that's all. How do you like my boko?"

"My aunt—I should think you had!" Dan felt his chum all over to make sure he was real. "Tommy, old bird. I'm so blessed glad to see you I shall start wrecking the giddy room in a minute. For goodness's sake, tell me what it all means!"

"Squat down on the bed, then," said Tommy. "And I'll put you wise. You wouldn't believe me if I weren't here to prove it. By gum, it's some yarn, Danny."

"I bet it is! Let's have it, or I shall burst!"

Tommy started at the beginning, and told him the whole history of the escape, and his dealings with O'Hara and Haynes. Dan was a good listener. In spite of his amazement, he heard his chum out to the end. Then he got up and faced Tommy.

"By gum, Tommy, it's wonderful!" he exclaimed. "What a time you've had. But do you mean to say you're bound to make Comberite for these two men, under their orders, while they keep mum and stop you from being captured?"

"That's the scheme!"

Dan gripped him by the shoulder.

"You sha'n't do it! That's final."

It'll be the end of you, if you do. You've got to chuck them, Tommy!"

"Chuck them! How can I?"

"Give the whole thing up, I tell you. It's the only way. You can't deal with men like that. Don't you see," said Dan, lowering his voice, "that those two ruffians have been after that secret of yours from the first—and the likeliest thing of the lot is that they did the job at Curlew Island, that you were lagged for!"

Tommy shook his head.

"I don't believe that. I've thought that over. They didn't get here till some time after the job was done. Chuffer Foss was the one who did it—or knows how it was done. What's become of Chuffer?"

"Gone. Left Gravesend; disappeared. I expect he's afraid you'd turn up and look for him. Chuffer may be in with them for all you know. Look here—even if those chaps, O'Hara and Haynes, didn't do the job, there's no doubt you've got into the hands of a pair of scoundrels! They'll rob you of that secret as soon as you've done the work, for they've got you in their power. They'll get you back to prison, or else do you in altogether. You're for it, if you stick to them."

"I don't doubt they'll try. Dare say you're right, all the way. But what else can I do?" said Tommy, desperately. "Go back to the Billy Rough Un?"

"No, I'm blown if you need do that! Why should you? You're innocent," said Dan. "Now, listen! What you ought to do is get right out of

this country, on your own. Go to America; you can be free there in this disguise, and safe. You can get there for a heap less than fifty pounds. And there you can make your powder and sell it—or do any blessed thing you choose; Be a millionaire with any luck. You'd be right on your own. Wouldn't you like that?"

"Yes, by gum, I should!" said Tommy. "but I can't do it on their fifty quid. They trusted me with that."

"Trusted your grandmother! They know they've got you. Send it them back, then."

"I can't—I've spent some of it. And I'd have nothing left."

"Shut your silly mouth and listen to me! I can give you fifty quid, or if you don't like that, I'll lend it you. Make up what you've spent, and post fifty by registered letter to this blighter, O'Hara, and tell him the deal is off. Then you'll be out of debt, and can please yourself. Take the next boat to America with what's left of my fifty—sail to-morrow morning! And I tell you what," said Dan excitedly, "I'll come, too!"

"My dear old bird, how the dickens can you get me fifty quid?" said Tommy, amazed. He had never known Dan to have fifty shillings.

"I'll tell you that in a few words," said Dan, sitting down again. "I've got the stuff!"

"Soon after you were sentenced, my good old dad came into a bit of money. Not a lot; just a few hundreds a year, but very nice. It was left him by a relation in America. Well, he sold up the chemist's shop at Gravesend, because we don't need it any longer, and he had to sail for New York to see about getting this money. He couldn't take me along, so I was fixed up here in London, and I'm studying chemistry at the Polytechnic—that's my game at present; the classes are paid for. But there's a hundred an' twenty quid in my savings bank account that he put in for me, so I could draw anything I wanted while he was away in New York."

"Your dad left you with all that money?"

"Yes; the good old guv'nor knows I won't monkey with it. But in a show like this, he'd be the first to say, 'draw it out and give Tommy a leg-up!' He never believed you were guilty. I can do what I like, anyway. You've got to chuck those scoundrels." Dan pulled Tommy up to his feet. "Don't jolly well argue with me! You get your steamer ticket to America to-day; I'll have the money for you in half an hour. Sail to-morrow. And I'll follow you by the next liner, by gum! That's safer than if I went with you. I don't want your giddy powder—but you can pay me back when you're rich. And you, and I, and my dad will put the whole job through for you—in America. How's that? Don't it sound good?"

Tommy rose in agitation, and walked up and down the room.

"Yes, it does!" he said. "You're a brick, Dan. But can I do it decently? O'Hara and his pal saved me. Can I let them down?"

"If you stick to those scoundrels, you'll either be killed, or go back to the Billy! They get their money back. And if you've got to be so jolly honest—send them a thousand quid when the powder clicks—wish 'em luck and call it square. But get out of their clutches. Tommy—get out of their clutches, or you're a gonner! I'm all for sport an' fun, but they're past the limit. Now's THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 969.

"THE BOY WITH THE MILLION- POUND SECRET!"



That's the title of the amazing sequel to "Curlew Island," by

DAVID GOODWIN

which

STARTS NEXT WEEK!

your chance, and the last you'll get. Take it!"

Tommy gripped the hand that was held out to him.

"I'll do it!" he said. "You're right, Dan!"

"Wait here till I get you the money!" said Dan, and he dashed out of the room.

Left alone, Tommy walked to the window and stood there thinking. He could see the broad river and its swirling tide, leading to Curlew Island and the sea—and the wide lands beyond the sea. Dan was right. He ought to get away. If he stayed behind, there was nothing but mystery, and darkness, and danger; and, worst of all, loss of liberty.

Could he get free from the grip of the smiling Doctor O'Hara, and the sinister Merton Haynes, who knew his secret? He knew that he could. Here was the chance, and in an hour he would be done with them forever. He was right to take it.

In ten minutes, Dan arrived with eighty pounds. Fifty were posted back to O'Hara in the lonely Essex house—to

cancel the debt that hung over Tommy's life.

"I'll send it myself," said Dan, taking the letter. "Take the rest of the money, Tommy; go down to the shipping offices, and book your passage to New York. The ship sails from Tilbury in the morning. I'll see you off at Tilbury station. And in a week, I'll be after you."

A last hand-grip, and they parted. Tommy waited till Dan was well away. He heard the hoot of a steamer's siren on the river, and it was like the call of the wide seas to him.

Half an hour later, Tommy Comber, of the Bellerophon, was on his way to riches—and freedom.

THE END.

(And a magnificent yarn, too, chums, you must agree. But wait until you read the sequel: "The Boy With The Million-Pound Secret!" by David Goodwin. This topping yarn will really hold you spellbound from beginning to end. David Goodwin has scored triumphs galore, but this latest success of his is unparalleled!)

SHOPPING for LODER!

(A Special Contribution from the Pen of an Old Favourite, DICK NUGENT.)

"I WANT you to go to Courtfield for me," said Loder.

I gave an inward groan, because I had badly wanted to go to Courtfield that afternoon.

"Yes, Loder," I said meekly.

"You will go first of all to Chamberley's Stores," said Loder, "and buy a fishing-rod. This is the one I want."

And he handed me a cutting from Chunkley's catalogue.

"You will then proceed to the bookshop, and buy these things. Here is the list."

"I shall want a pantechnicon to fetch all these things," I said.

"Don't talk rubbish! Now, when you've been to the bookshop, I want you to go to the tailor's, and ask if my new suit is ready. If it is, bring it along. You will then proceed to the grocer's—"

"Oh, help—"

I began to wonder whether Loder really wanted me to go shopping, or shipping!

"Off you go!" he said sharply.

There was only one thing to do when I got to Courtfield; and I did it. I hired a taxi for the afternoon.

Shopping for Loder took me the best part of the afternoon. But it was finished at last, and I hopped into the taxi—there was precisely a little room, with all those packages on board—and gave the driver directions to drive me to Greyfriars.

Loder was looking out of his study window when the taxi drove into the Close. He nearly had an apple-plectic fit.

"You young sweep!" he shouted. "Who told you to hire a taxi?"

"I simply had to, in self-defence," I said, pointing to all the packages.

Then the driver had a word to say.

"The fare is twelve-and-sixpence," he said.

And Loder had to pay and look pleased. At any rate, he paid; but as for looking pleased—well, it looks could have killed, I should have expired on the spot!

I kept out of Loder's way for the rest of the day. And he won't send me shopping for him again in a hurry!

GRAND FREE LIMERICK COMPETITION!

"BOUNDARIES"

FIRST PRIZE £2-2-0

AND 6 HANDSOME PRIZES OF 10/6

Are you enjoying this series of simple, fascinating competitions. All you've got to do is to round off the unfinished verse shown on the right. A point to remember is that your last line must scan with the first two. Don't try and be too clever—a simple but forceful line is what is wanted. An example line is given to help you.

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

DIRECTIONS.

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

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

so as to reach that address not later than Thursday, September 16th, 1926.

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

Employees of the proprietors of the MAGNET may not compete.



A. P. F. CHAPMAN (Kent.)

When we watch from pavilion or tent,
The hitting of Chapman of Kent,
We are bound to admire,
His force and his "fire"—

Example last line:—

He's a 'force' that will never be 'spent.'

MAGNET "BOUNDARIES" COMPETITION No. 10.

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

LAST LINE

Name

Address

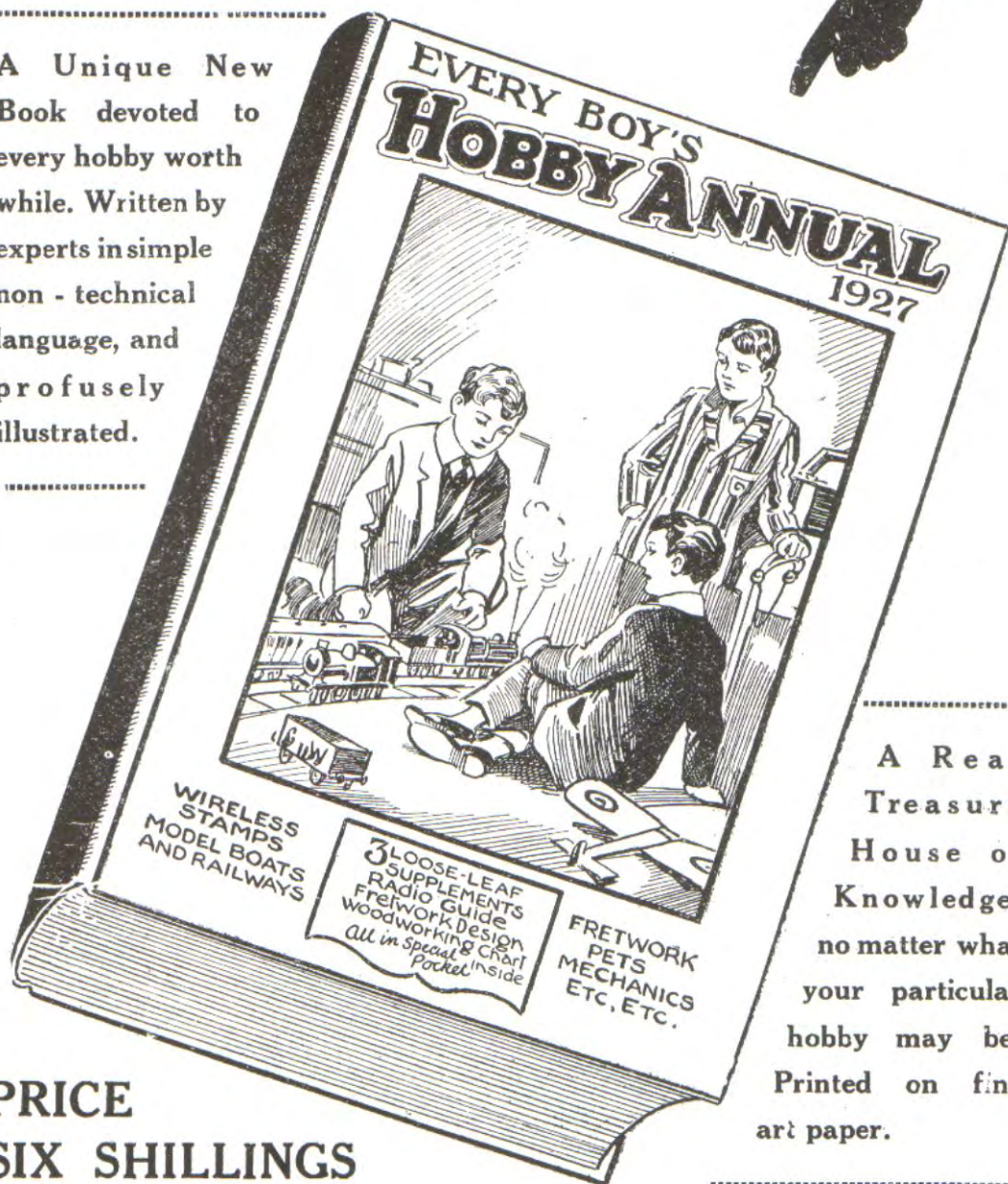
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TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

EVERYBODY'S DOING IT!

The good old English Channel has come in for a heap of publicity just recently, with so many people doing their best to swim across it. It has proved a regular magnet to aspirants after fame and notoriety. In short, Channel swimming is becoming fashionable. But our Channel is not so easily conquered. Against the name of every successful Channel swimmer could be placed the names of scores of disappointed and disillusioned people who, in many cases, have plodded on through turbulent seas, only to give up exhausted in sight of their goal. In a way, that's just as it should be. Our Channel must not be taken too lightly. It has its moods, and I fancy it has derived a certain amount of grim satisfaction in allowing these "endurance" swimmers to swim themselves to a standstill. Failures are necessary to success. They foster and develop the will to win. I won't say that our Channel was in a flirtatious mood when it allowed the plucky American girl, Miss Ederle, to swim across from Cape Gris Nez in record time; still, the luck of the game was on the American girl's side. I don't mean to detract from her wonderful feat by saying that, but it must be remembered that the conditions prevailing when she made her attempt were next door to ideal.

TOMMY, TOO!

In record time did this American girl do the swim, and it was reported that she felt fine when she trod ground again "off-Kingsdown." That makes her effort all the more wonderful. I cannot imagine myself feeling fine after

such a lengthy period of activity in the water. Indeed, were I in training for a fourteen hours' walk in record time, I doubt whether I should be feeling "fine" at the end of it. Still, Miss Ederle felt fine! Now, young Tommy Beasley—a reader of the MAGNET, who has been spending his holiday at Southsea—has been paying a lot of attention to the newspaper reports of Miss Ederle's wonderful swim. Tommy's only thirteen, but he really thinks that it's up to a Britisher to show these Americans that we can swim the Channel in record time and feel fine at the end of it. Tommy's taking this matter very much to heart, so much so that it is now his ambition to swim the Channel in record time. He's a fine swimmer, too, by all accounts, and possesses stamina and determination. But he mustn't feel peeved that an American has shown the way to us in this matter of a long-distance swim done in record time.

INDIFFERENT!

I really think there are scores of Britishers capable of swimming our Channel did they but make up their minds to try. But the average Britisher is not a record hunter. If he's a swimmer he swims for the enjoyment of the thing. It doesn't matter to him if some people can stay in the water for twenty-odd hours. Maybe he could himself if he wanted to. But he doesn't want. In America there are people who make records in the air; they do "stunts" on the wings of an aeroplane travelling thousands of feet above the ground. But the Britisher is not like that. Why, our Air Force could produce hundreds of fellows capable of doing these "stunts" if emergency arose, but to do them for the sake of achieving a doubtful notoriety leaves them cold. We, as a whole, are not a nation of record hunters; we live our lives as tranquilly as circumstances will allow.

us. Therefore, young Tommy, don't you get seeing red over this Channel swimming business. Doubtless your marks are inspired by a mistaken sense of patriotism. If foreigners want to swim our Channel let 'em get on with it. You're none the worse off if they succeed. Later on if, still being of mind to set up another Channel record, you make your attempt, I shall be the first to wish you luck. Don't get upset at your age because someone from another country has done something that no Britisher has yet achieved.

For Next Monday!

"FROM INDIA TO GREYFRIARS"

By Frank Richards.

This story will wind up the wonderful series of Holiday stories dealt with Harry Wharton & Co. in India. Don't miss it, whatever you do.

"THE BOY WITH A MILLION-POUND SECRET!"

By David Goodwin.

The sequel to "Curlew Island" will carry the above title, and as it is due to start next week I must remind you to chaps to order your MAGNET in good time. You liked "Curlew Island" and the hundreds of letters sent in from all over the world tell me that—so you are more than keen to read the sequel. Remember it starts next week.

THE SUPPLEMENT.

Look out for next week's special Football Supplement. In it will be found articles by such celebrities as "Billy" Gillespie, of Sheffield United, and Elisha Scott, of Liverpool.

Cheerio, chums,

Your Editor.

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