

THE PLOT TO RUIN A SCHOOLBOY!

(See the gripping school story of Harry Wharton & Co. inside.)



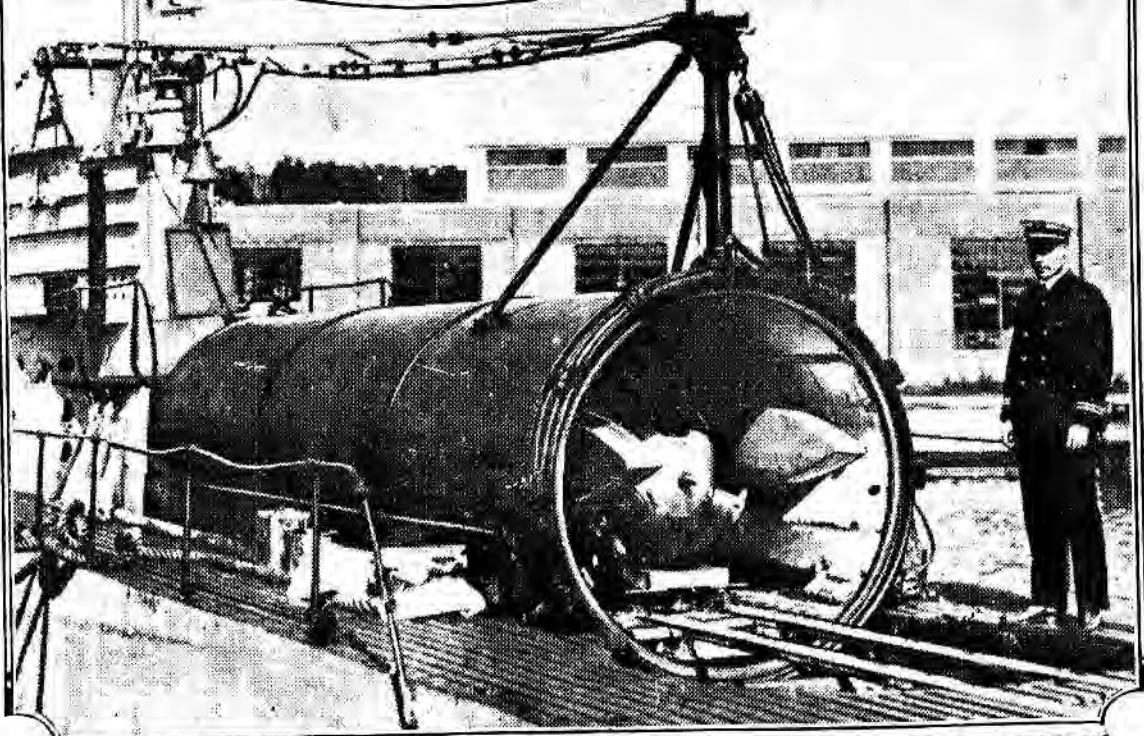
BUNTER'S BOAT TRIP—POSTPONED!

(An "arresting" incident from the grand school story of Grenfriars—inside.)

News Pars and Pictures.

UNSINKABLE!

It is claimed that the Gaskin lifeboat is unsinkable, self-emptying, and cannot be capsized. Our photo shows the Gaskin undergoing a test at the London Docks. The sandbags represent sixty persons. In addition $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons of water is being pumped into the boat. The ordinary ship's lifeboat does not stand this test, so the Gaskin model is a distinct acquisition to shipping.



WINGS UNDER WATER!

Here's a picture of the first aeroplane ever carried in a submarine—you can see it, with wings folded back, in its cylindrical "hangar." The weight of this tiny plane, which can be assembled ready for a flight within nine minutes of the submarine's coming to the surface, is 1,000 lb. This is another great advance in mechanical science, and one trembles to think what the next war will be like.

BASE INGRATITUDE! In helping a new fellow to settle down at Greyfriars, Harry Wharton little realises that he is befriending a treacherous foe—a boy who has been sent to the school for the express purpose of disgracing and ruining him. Yet such is the evil mission of Da Costa—the boy from the East!

Friend or Foe?



A Grand New Long
Complete Story of
Harry Wharton &
Co., the Chums of
Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows!

"**H**E, he, he!" Billy Bunter gave utterance to that fat cackinnation. Bunter seemed amused. The Remove fellows grouped before the pavilion, however, did not seem amused—not in the least.

Harry Wharton was frowning. It was the day of the Highcliffe match; and the Highcliffe cricketers had arrived on the Greyfriars ground. The Greyfriars men were ready for them; with one exception. One member of the team—an important member, as it happened—was conspicuous by his absence.

Which was not likely to appear amusing to Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove: however entertaining it might seem to Bunter.

"Hasn't anybody seen that chap Da Costa?" asked Harry, looking round.

There was a general shaking of heads. Nobody had.

Billy Bunter chuckled again: but Bunter was not heeded. Bunter was no cricketer; and his presence there was quite superfluous: his fat chuckle more superfluous still.

"It's jolly odd," said Wharton, knitting his brows, "Da Costa knows the time quite well—I can't understand his not turning up. Couldn't you see him anywhere in the House, Franky?"

"No," answered Nugent, "I've looked for him everywhere."

"Leave him out," suggested Johnny Bull.

"That's easy enough—only we want him. We're leaving out Mark Linley, and we want Da Costa in his place."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter."

"But I say—"

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry, with a threatening motion of his bat, which made the Owl of the Remove jump back suddenly. Remarks from William George Bunter were not wanted just then.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

"He can't have forgotten," said Wharton. "He can't have gone out and left us in the lurch, for no reason at all. What on earth has become of the chap?"

"The whatfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "It is a terrific honour for a new fellow to play in this esteemed match."

"I should jolly well think so," growled Johnny Bull. "Look here, Wharton, if the silly ass doesn't choose to turn up, he will have to be chucked! Like his cheek, I think, to keep us waiting for him."

"He must be kept away, somehow," said Harry, greatly puzzled. "He's a jolly keen cricketer, and it's a big chance for a new chap to play in a School match. I can't understand it."

None of the fellows could understand it.

Arthur Da Costa, the boy from the East, had been only a week at Greyfriars, but in that time he had proved, beyond doubt, that he was a first-class man at the summer game: equal to the best in the Remove. Even Harry Wharton and Squiff were not better men at the wickets than the olive-skinned junior of mixed blood. The captain of the Remove had looked on him as a rod in pickle for the High-clubians: and Da Costa's name had been posted up in the list in the Rag, as a member of the team. To play for the school, in his second week at Greyfriars, was a distinction that fell to few fellows: yet Da Costa was apparently throwing it aside as a thing of no value.

"He, he, he!"

Another fat chuckle from William George Bunter intimated that he found something very entertaining in the situation.

Bob Cherry glared at him.

"Will you shut up, Bunter?" he roared.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Dry up, you cackling chump!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"He, he, he!"

Bob Cherry gripped the cane handle of his bat, with the evident intention of lunging at Bunter.

Bunter jumped back again.

"Look here, you beast—"

"Buzz off, if you don't want this bat in your fat ribs!" snapped Bob.

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "I jolly well won't tell you, then. You can go and eat coke."

Harry Wharton looked round quickly. "Do you know where Da Costa is, Bunter?" he exclaimed.

"He, he, he!"

"Chuck that cackling, you fat chump, and tell me where the fellow is, if you know," exclaimed Harry angrily.

Bunter grinned a fat grin.

"He's hooked it," he said.

"Hooked it?"

"Just that! Gone out on his bike!"

"Gone out on his bike—when we're just going to begin!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"He, he, he! Yes!" chuckled Bunter. "He doesn't want to play, you know. But I'll tell you what! Don't you worry about that darkey. I'll play, if you like."

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"The fellow must be potty, if he's gone out on his bike just before a cricket match," said Bob. "What is he letting us down for?"

"The esteemed Eurasian is not terrifically reliable," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Let him rip."

But Harry Wharton was not disposed to let the new recruit rip.

Da Costa was wanted in the game. Mark Linley, one of the best bats in the Remove, was giving cricket a miss of late, owing to work for an exam. His place had to be filled: and Da Costa had arrived at Greyfriars most fortunately to fill it. There were plenty of other men on the ground who would have been glad enough to jump into their flannels at a moment's notice, to play in the Highcliffe match. But the captain of the Remove naturally

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wanted the best material he could get: and there was no doubt that Arthur Da Costa was worth twice as much as any Remove man not already in the eleven.

Certainly, if the fellow had gone out deliberately to let the cricketers down, Wharton did not want him. But he could not believe that Da Costa had done such a thing, without any conceivable motive.

"I can't understand it," repeated Wharton. "But I'm not chucking the man if I can help it. He must have forgotten, or something. Did you see him go out, Bunter?"

"He, he, he! Yes—not five minutes ago."

"He must have been at the bike shed when I was looking for him in the House, then," said Nugent.

"Which way did he go, Bunter?"

"On the Courtfield road."

Wharton thought it out rapidly.

"Look here, you men," he said, "I can't catch on to this: but we're giving the man a chance. He may have forgotten—"

"Rot!" interjected Johnny Bull.

"The rotfulness is terrific."

"Well, I know it sounds rather thick, but that's the only way of accounting for it—the chap can't want to let us down, without a word—that's not sense. If he's been gone only a few minutes I can get after him and see what's up. The Highcliffe men won't mind waiting a few minutes."

"Lot of bother about a new kid!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"New kid or not, he's one of the best, at cricket at least. I want to give him a chance."

"Go ahead!" said Bob Cherry. "I'll speak to Courtenay—he won't mind. You cut off—if you're going."

"And leaving the Remove cricketers in rather excited and angry discussion, Harry Wharton cut off."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Wharton's Way!

"O H, here you are!" Harry Wharton pushed hard at his pedals on the Courtfield road.

His brows were knitted darkly as he raced on. He was utterly puzzled and perplexed by Da Costa's action. Even if the fellow had forgotten the match that was no excuse for him. He ought not to have forgotten.

Still, it was possible that there was a mistake of some kind, and Wharton wanted to give him every possible chance. Arthur da Costa was too good a man to be dropped if it could be helped.

In cricket, at least, there was a good deal in common between the captain of the Remove and the new fellow. In other matters they often came in contact, Da Costa having been placed in Study No. 1 in the Remove with Wharton and Frank Nugent. Outside games, Wharton did not give him much heed, though he was always civil and friendly enough to his new study-mate. The Eurasian seemed a well-mannered and unoffending fellow. He had quarrelled with nobody in the Remove so far, and he seemed to like his study-mates. Of the Famous Five, only Hurree Jamset Ram Singh did not seem to care for his company; but the nabob was so polite and tactful that the other fellows hardly observed it.

That Da Costa was of mixed blood—a mixture of Portuguese, English, and Hindu—mattered nothing to Wharton. He did not care whence any fellow

derived his descent; it was what the fellow was himself that mattered, and Da Costa seemed all right to him. That he was a brilliant cricketer admitted of no doubt—that he was keen on the game, and a thorough sportsman so far as cricket was concerned, was certain.

Once or twice he had given signs of a passionate Southern temper, but always his temper was kept in strict control. Once it had broken out, strangely enough, when he had told Wharton that he would not play cricket at Greyfriars, and that he did not want a place in the matches. Wharton had been puzzled, and he remembered that strange outburst now. Da Costa, however, seemed to have forgotten his wild words, for he had taken to Remove cricket like a duck to water, and he had been obviously elated when his name was posted in the Highcliffe match list.

Harry Wharton came suddenly upon him less than a quarter of a mile from the school.

A bicycle was leaning idly against a tree by the wayside, and the Eurasian was sitting in the grass on a sloping bank, staring moodily before him across the green expanse of Courtfield common.

Wharton came up with a rush, jammed on his brakes, and jumped down.

Da Costa gave him a startled look.

"Oh, you!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. I came after you," said Harry, rather breathlessly.

"But the cricket—"

"Waiting."

"But how did you know?"

"Bunter saw you come out, luckily."

Da Costa's eyes gleamed.

"Bunter! That fat fool sees everything!"

"It was lucky in this case. Had you forgotten the match?" asked the captain of the Remove.

Da Costa shook his head.

"No," he answered coolly.

"You hadn't!" exclaimed Wharton, his temper rising.

"No."

"Then what the thump do you mean by this?" exclaimed Harry hotly.

"You should be able to see. I am not playing in the match."

"And why not?"

Da Costa made no answer.

"I think you must be out of your senses!" exclaimed Wharton, angry, but more perplexed than angry. "Don't you feel fit? If so, you could have told me."

"I am quite fit."

"Then you were letting us down for no reason at all?"

"Yes."

Wharton stared at him blankly. If the fellow was in his right senses, his words and actions were equally incomprehensible.

"You haven't gone potty, I suppose?"

Da Costa smiled faintly.

"I hope not."

"Then what does this mean? Do you think you can play a trick on us like this, Da Costa?"

"Yes," answered Da Costa, with the soft, lisping accent of the Eurasian. Harry Wharton clenched his hands.

Da Costa rose to his feet. Apparently he was in a mood for a quarrel with his Form captain, even to the extent of a fight, though the slim Eurasian was nothing like a match for the sturdy captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

Wharton breathed hard.

"Well, if you want to stand out of the cricket, stand out," he said savagely.

"You'll never have another chance of playing for the Remove so long as I am captain of the Form. A fellow who

plays a dirty trick like this won't be trusted again."

"I know."

Wharton turned to his bike again. He was crimson with anger, but there was no anger in the olive face of the new fellow. His brow was clouded, and Wharton, angry as he was, noted a strangely wistful look in the olive face.

He turned back again to the new junior.

"Look here, Da Costa," he said, more quietly, "I can't understand this. You're a keen cricketer—you're really keen on the game. You know that we want you in this match. You don't want to be left out of the cricket for the rest of the season. If you've got some queer idea in your silly head—if you've taken offence at something—cough it up. You're rather different from the rest of us in some ways—"

"A Eurasian!" said Da Costa, in a low, bitter voice. "In India, despised by the white man."

"That's all rot! And Greyfriars isn't India, anyhow," said Harry. "If you were a black from Africa, it would make no difference here, so long as you played the game. You can't say you've been treated differently from any other fellow—in my study, at least."

"Yes, that is true."

"If I've trod on your corns somehow without knowing it, what's the good of taking offence where none was meant?" asked Wharton. "If I've hurt you in any way, I'm sorry."

Da Costa's lip trembled.

"You have not," he said. "You have treated me very kindly. It is very different from the school at Lucknow."

"Well, if I've treated you kindly, as you say, is this the way to treat me? Come!"

"You do not understand."

"Blessed if I do! I've taken you for a decent chap, and treated you as one, and now you play this rotten trick on me!"

Wharton was speaking patiently now. He could only conclude that the half-caste, passionate and quick to take offence, had been wounded by some thoughtless word or incident of which an English boy would have taken no heed. The Remove fellows generally had little use for a touchy and sensitive temperament. A fellow was not expected to wear his heart on his sleeve in the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars. But Wharton was more than willing to make allowance for a fellow from a strange country, who found himself in new and strange surroundings, and who in his own land had probably been made to feel keenly the distinction of colour.

"Look here, kid, don't play the goat," went on the captain of the Remove good-temperedly. "We're not Chesterfields in the Remove, and it's silly, as well as bad form, to sulk."

"It is not that—it is not that!" exclaimed the Eurasian passionately.

"Then what is it?"

Da Costa did not speak.

"Come, come!" said Harry. "Chuck it out of your mind, whatever it is. Jump on your bike and come back with me, and forget all about it. Dash it all, don't you want to handle a bat on a glorious day like this?"

Da Costa's face brightened, as if involuntarily.

"Yes, yes!" he exclaimed.

"Then come on," said Harry.

He dropped a friendly hand on the half-caste's shoulder, and drew him towards his bicycle.

Da Costa resisted for a moment; then he submitted. It seemed as if he could not resist the cheery friendliness of

the Greyfriars fellow. He uttered a sudden, passionate exclamation.

"Yess, yess, I will come! I shall be glad to come! I will let everything else go. I will play the game, as you say in England! I will come. I thank you for having taken this trouble, Wharton!"

"That's the tune," said Harry, with a smile.

What had been the matter with the Eurasian he did not know, and, as a matter of fact, did not care very much. He put it down to some "queerness" of the Oriental, some oddity of the boy from the East that he did not understand, and was not likely to understand if he tried.

Da Costa, at all events, was in a better frame of mind now; and that was all that mattered. A few moments more, and the two juniors were on their bicycles, riding back rapidly to Greyfriars.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Caterpillar Astonishes the Natives!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"Here he is!"

All the Remove cricketers looked at Da Costa, as he came hurrying down to Little Side with Wharton.

Da Costa had changed for cricket with lightning speed, and he looked flushed but very fit, as he came along by the side of the captain of the Remove.

He looked a cricketer, there was no doubt about that. Most of the fellows were glad to see him come, though some of them were feeling rather irritated at the cheek of the new fellow in keeping the game waiting. But, after all, very little time had been lost.

"Where did you dig him up, Wharton?" asked Peter Todd.

"On the common," answered Harry, with a smile. "It's all serene."

"But why—" began Tom Brown.

"Never mind now, old chap. The game's the thing."

"Oh, all right!"

Wharton tossed with Courtenay of Highcliffe, and the choice fell to the visiting captain. Greyfriars were sent into the field.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh went on to bowl the first over, with Courtenay taking the bowling, and the nabob waved to the fieldsmen to field deep. Courtenay was a mighty man with the willow. At the other end of the pitch was De Courcy of the Highcliffe Fourth—more often called the Caterpillar.

The Caterpillar's eyes turned rather curiously on the olive-skinned boy from the East among the fieldsmen. It was his first sight of the half-caste, and he seemed interested in the lithe, sinuous figure of the half-Oriental junior.

"They've got a new man there, Franky," the Caterpillar had remarked to Courtenay when they were going on. "I've heard of him—a Johnny from India, or Cochinchina, or somewhere. They say he is a great man at the game; he looks as if he can move a bit. Eye like a giddy hawk. Don't give him any catches, Franky."

"Not if I can help it," said Courtenay, smiling.

Courtenay faced the bowling, and proceeded to knock it away. The batsmen ran three, and the Caterpillar had the bowling. The first ball was the last for Rupert de Courcy. Perhaps he had forgotten his own warning; or perhaps it could not be helped. A dusky hand shot into the air, and then the ball went up and dropped again into Da Costa's olive palm.



Thwack! Rupert de Courcy's bat met the leather fairly and squarely and sent it soaring high into the air. Arthur da Costa watched its flight, and his dusky hand shot into the air to receive it!
(See Chapter 3.)

"Well caught!"

"Oh, well caught!"

The Greyfriars fellows roared.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured the Caterpillar, in comical dismay. "Dear old umpire, is that out?"

The umpire grinned.

"Out!"

"Alas!" sighed the Caterpillar. He made a grimace at his partner at the wickets, and walked to the pavilion.

"Look out for that twopenny-coloured bloke!" he warned the next man in, and Smithson of Highcliffe grinned and said that he would.

Harry Wharton gave the Eurasian a cheery grin and a nod. Da Costa was showing his quality at the start, and Wharton was more than satisfied at having put him into the team. If the fellow had, as it seemed, some sort of foreign "queerness" about him, it was worth while overlooking that for the sake of his cricket.

Da Costa was a good man in the field; but it was not in the field that he was at his best. It was when he went to the wickets that Wharton expected the Highcliffians to sit up and take notice.

It was a hard-fought innings. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and the Bounder had most of the bowling, but Da Costa, as a change bowler, accounted for one of the Highcliffe wickets. The innings closed with a total of 90 for the visitors.

"You've got a good man there," Frank Courtenay remarked to Wharton, with a nod towards Da Costa.

"One of the best, I think," said Harry cheerily. "He's a new chap here—came last week."

"From India's coral strand, what?" asked the Caterpillar.

"Yes; a Eurasian."

"Sort of mixed bloke! He can play cricket," said the Caterpillar. "Anythin' in the battin' line?"

"Wait till you see him! He handles a bat as if it were part of him—a born batsman."

"Ye gods!" said the Caterpillar. "We shall have to pull up our socks, Franky. I can see we've come over here looking for our Waterloo."

The Caterpillar spoke jestingly; but, as a matter of fact, his remark was well-founded.

Da Costa opened the innings for Greyfriars with Bob Cherry at the other end. Bob, a mighty man with the willow, had the bowling, and Bob generally could be depended upon to hand out a solid total of runs for his side. But the Caterpillar, who had the ball, was at the top of his form, and when the Caterpillar was in form, he was very good indeed. There seemed to be a mysterious twist on the ball that De Courcy sent down, a mystery that Bob Cherry did not elucidate in time. The clatter of a falling wicket followed, and Bob stared at it in some dismay.

"Oh crumbs!" he said.

Bob Cherry tramped back to the pavilion with a red face. Duck's eggs did not often come his way, and Bob

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did not enjoy their flavour when they came. Some of the fellows round the field called out sarcastic remarks as he came off, which deepened Bob's colour considerably.

"What price duck's eggs?" Skinner of the Remove wanted to know. And Bolsover major replied:

"Cheap to-day."

And there was a laugh.

"I say, you fellows, they call that cricket!" said Billy Bunter, with a scornful blink through his big spectacles. "They refused me a place in the team, and that's how they play."

"Fathead!" said Bolsover major.

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"Cheese it!"

"Well, this isn't winning style, is it?" remarked Skinner. "At this rate, Highcliffe won't want to bat again."

Which was, at least, rather previous of Skinner, as it was the first home wicket that had fallen.

"Couldn't help it," said Bob, as he reached Wharton, going in. "That Highcliffe man can bowl, and it seems that I can't bat. Sorry!"

"Rot!" said Wharton cheerfully. "You can bat his head off; but luck can't always run one way. Forget it, old chap."

And Bob grinned a little more cheerfully, and Harry Wharton took his place at the wickets.

Wharton was extremely careful; but he found the Caterpillar's bowling as deadly as Bob had found it. He had played the Caterpillar's bowling before, and always found that it wanted watching; but to-day the Caterpillar seemed to have something new in his style. No doubt his chum Courtenay had been keeping him hard at practice at Highcliffe, in readiness for this match. The balance of wins between the two schools was heavily in favour of Greyfriars,

and it was Courtenay's ambition to set that balance right. With these unexpected powers developing in the lazy Caterpillar, he looked like succeeding, so far as that match was concerned, at least.

How it happened Wharton never knew. But it happened, and he stared down, as Bob had done, at a wrecked wicket.

"How's that?" yawned the Caterpillar.

"Out!"

If Bob Cherry's face had been red, Wharton's was crimson as he walked off. Duck's eggs were uncommon for Bob; they were almost unknown to the captain of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, I fancy I should have done a little better than that!" chortled Billy Bunter.

"Couldn't have done worse!" agreed Skinner.

"It's going to be a procession!" sniggered Snoop. "It's time we made rather a change in cricket arrangements, what?"

"High time!" assented Skinner.

"That bowler's a jolly good man, though," remarked Ogilvy.

"Can't see anything special in his bowling," said Bolsover major, and the Scottish junior smiled and did not reply. What Bolsover major could not see in a cricketer's form was often a very great deal.

"Thus are the mighty fallen!" sighed Skinner. "My beloved 'earers, if you have tears, prepare to shed them now."

Some of the fellows laughed—not a pleasant sound to the ears of the captain of the Remove, as he carried out his bat. Skinner, as a Greyfriars' man, must have wanted to see his side win; but undoubtedly he seemed to enjoy seeing the colours of the great

men of the Remove lowered in this style.

"Look out for that chap, Smithy," said Harry Wharton, to the next man in. "He's got a ball that looks like a wide, but—"

"But isn't, to judge by results!" grinned Smithy.

"You'll want to watch him."

"Oh, leave him to me," said the Bounder. "I fancy I can put paid to that Highcliffe slacker."

Wharton compressed his lips, Vernon-Smith was a good bat; but he was rather gifted to over-estimating his powers, and it was not a vaunting self-confidence that was wanted now.

There was more than a hint of swank about Smithy as he went out to the vacant wicket.

He took up his position, and all eyes were upon him—Wharton's rather anxiously. If the Bounder could "put paid," as he expressed it, to the Caterpillar, nobody would be better pleased than the captain of the Remove. But Wharton entertained strong doubts.

It was rather like Smithy to be arrogant when arrogance might result in covering him with confusion. Had he got away with it, so to speak, his air of being monarch of all he surveyed would not have mattered so much. But arrogance followed by defeat was rather ridiculous.

And it was defeat that followed. Possibly the Bounder was thinking a little more of the figure he cut at the wickets, than of the exceeding care that was required to deal with the Caterpillar's bowling. At all events, the ball that had beaten Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton, beat the Bounder, just as easily; he cut at the leather where he firmly believed it to be, but it certainly was not there, for his bat swept the air, and the fall of his balls was the next item on the programme.

Vernon-Smith stood, as if rooted, blinking at his wicket. He seemed scarcely to believe his eyes. There was a yell from the Greyfriars fellows on the field. Swank followed by a hopeless beating like this was a little too much for them.

Bob Cherry and Wharton had blushed as they went bootless home. The Bounder did not blush; he scowled blackly. Smithy was rather a bad loser.

"My beloved 'earers," chirruped Skinner, "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall! Poor old Smithy!"

"And they call that cricket!" jeered Bunter.

"Rotten!" growled Bolsover major.

"May as well throw up the sponge, and call it a win for Highcliffe," yawned Skinner. "What's the good of going on?"

The Highcliffe men were grinning cheerily, and they cheered the hat trick by the usually lazy Caterpillar.

"Good man, good man!" said Courtenay. "I knew you could do it if you liked, Caterpillar! Aren't you glad you kept to practice now?"

"Enormously!" said the Caterpillar gravely. "No end bucked, old bean. This is life, old chap."

"Keep it up, and give them some more of the same."

"I'll do my humble best—if they let me."

Johnny Bull came out to the wickets. Johnny Bull was great at stone-walling; and there was nothing of the Bounder's swank about Johnny. He knew that he had a hard task before him, and he settled down to it in his stolid, dogged way. And the rest of



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that over was a blank—Johnny Bull, without any swank or fireworks, had stopped the rot, at least.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Da Costa Surprises the Visitors!

HARRY WHARTON'S face was eager, as the field changed over, and Frank Courtenay went on to bowl against Arthur da Costa. His faith was pinned to his new recruit. With Greyfriars three down for nil, something was wanted to put life into the innings, and Wharton hoped that the new recruit would supply that something.

But his hopes were certainly mingled with doubts. Good man as Da Costa was at the wickets, he did not feel sure that he could stand up to the Caterpillar for long, in view of that lazy youth's unexpected and amazing development of form. He was anxious to see him put to the test—for it was clear that De Courcy would do as much bowling for his side as the rules of the game allowed. However, it was Courtenay who was bowling now, and he was a much easier proposition to deal with, though a good man with the round red ball. Courtenay could not have caught Wharton napping as the Caterpillar had done; and Harry did not think that he would catch the new recruit napping. And he was right.

There was, perhaps, just a little "flashiness" in Da Costa's style—rather reminiscent of the Bounder. But the difference was that Da Costa got away with it.

He played every ball with the watchfulness of a cat, and if there was a theatrical touch in his style, that could be forgiven to a man who was knocking the balls away at such a rate.

Two and two, and then four, showed that a change had set in, in the batting. Another four brought a roar of cheering from the Greyfriars crowd.

"That mixed nigger can bat!" commented Bolsover major.

"Flukes!" opined Billy Bunter.

"Shut up, you ass!"

"He can bat," grinned Skinner. "He's rather taking down his Magnificence, the lofty Wharton, a peg or two! Wharton looks rather small beer now."

"Not in it with this man!" agreed Snoot.

"Rot!" said Ogilvy. "Wharton knocked up seventy on his own against Highcliffe in the last match."

"That was before they learned to bowl!" grinned Skinner. "Hallo, Bull will get the bowling again now! I hope he will enjoy it, I'm sure."

A single brought Johnny Bull to the batting end. Whether he enjoyed it or not, the solid and stolid Johnny stopped the next ball dead, quite content to leave the fireworks to his more brilliant partner.

"That man knows something," said Bob Cherry to Wharton, at the pavilion. "He's keeping the bowling; he could have made two, I believe!"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"He's the man to handle the bowling," he said.

"Yes, rather."

"The handlefulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Singh, in genuine admiration. "If they play cricket at his school in Lucknow, they will miss the esteemed and ridiculous Da Costa."

"Jolly glad to have him in this game," said the captain of the Remove.

"What ho!"

"Puts your noses out of joint a bit,

what?" asked Skinner amiably; he had come along specially to make that pleasant remark.

"Oh, shut up, Skinner," said Bob.

"We haven't seen him face the Caterpillar yet," remarked Frank Nugent.

"But I fancy he will stand up to him."

Da Costa had the bowling for the next over, and as the Greyfriars men expected, the Caterpillar was put on to bowl. Highcliffe could see very easily that they had a hard nut to crack in the olive-skinned junior; and their best man went on to deal with him.

Da Costa's dark eyes gleamed with watchfulness. There was, indeed, something almost cat-like in his look. He had watched the Caterpillar's bowling all the time, and taken its measure, as it seemed. He did not hit out now as he had done with Courtenay. He played ball after ball with the greatest care; Wharton was watching him with rising hopes. This did not look like coming to a duck's egg.

It was not till the last ball of the over that Da Costa let himself go; and then he ran two with Johnny Bull.

"Not a duck's egg, anyhow," said Nugent.

Wharton's eyes danced.

"You wait a bit—wait till he gets set," he said. "The Caterpillar's a good man—but Da Costa has got his bowling by heart now. Believe me."

And Wharton, if he had had a disaster at the wickets, was not likely to fail in his judgment of another batsman. He was right.

De Courcy made a grimace to his captain, as he came off after the over.

"Sorry, Franky—did my little best! That man is just mustard—keen as a razor! He's got me beat."

"You'll beat him later," said Courtenay.

"I hope so," assented the Caterpillar, but he did not speak very hopefully. He was well aware that there were breakers ahead for Highcliffe.

The innings went on, watched now with the keenest interest by a thickening crowd of Greyfriars fellows. Even some seniors had joined the crowd of juniors round the field. Blundell of the Fifth could be seen there, with Bland and Tomlinson, looking on quite keenly. Later, Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of the school, came along, and stopped to watch. The innings was undoubtedly well worth watching, even by mighty men of the First Eleven.

Harry Wharton had hoped much of his new recruit, and expected much. But Da Costa far exceeded his hopes and expectations.

There was no doubt whatever that he was a wonderful bat. The Highcliffe bowlers tested him with every kind of ball; and every one seemed the same to him. His wicket was impregnable. In over after over the Caterpillar put in his very best; and his very best had no more effect than the work of the change bowlers. Da Costa was "set" at the wickets now, and looked as if he could stay there all day.

Johnny Bull, with all his caution, was clean bowled at last, and Peter Todd took his place. Toddy did well against a Highcliffe change bowler, but a little later he fell to the deadly Caterpillar, and Squiff, who followed him in, was caught by Courtenay. Tom Brown partnered the new recruit next, and the New Zealand junior put up a good game, but he fell at last, with the new man still going strong.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was next man in, and the nabob stood up well to the bowling. By that time Da Costa's own score stood at fifty-five, and the

Greyfriars total was over ninety. Evidently it was not going to be the "procession" that Snoot had predicted.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh fell at last, and Penfold went in. But Skinner & Co. had another chance for derisive remarks when Pen came out with a duck's egg to his credit. Hazeldene came in next, and added two to the total before he was beaten.

"Last man in!"

"Pull up your socks, old chaps!" said the captain of the Remove to Nugent. "For goodness' sake keep the game alive for Da Costa."

Nugent grinned.

"I'll try. I won't hand out any fireworks, anyhow. I'll leave the pyrotechnics to the pyrotechnic merchant."

A remark that made the Bounder scowl as Nugent went on.

Frank Nugent was a good man in his way, but it was only by excessive caution and a stern self-denial that he was able to stand up to the bowling. More than one ball tempted him to make the fur fly, and every time he resisted the temptation. Plenty of pyrotechnics came from Arthur da Costa. A long, hard innings did not seem to have tired the wiry half-caste, though many fellows wondered where the "beef" came from that he put into some of his hefty drives.

Nugent kept his end up gallantly, sometimes stealing a run, but leaving the game to Da Costa.

Da Costa played with the bowling. The theatrical touch in his manner was perhaps a little more pronounced now, but he did not carry "side" to the extent of losing caution. Never was there a more careful bat; and never a more fortunate one. The Highcliffe bowlers gave him up in despair; they took it for granted that he would be "not out" at the finish, and only hoped to wear down the side and leave him "not out." Meanwhile, with Nugent keeping the game alive manfully at his end, the Eurasian scored and scored, his figures going up by jumps. There was a terrific roar on the field when he topped his century. Centuries were uncommon enough in junior matches, and Da Costa was still going strong.

The finish came suddenly, Nugent going down to a deadly ball from the Caterpillar. Greyfriars' score stood at 160, and of that total 105 belonged to the new recruit. Figures like that were seldom seen on the board, and the Remove men shouted themselves hoarse in cheering the man who had pulled the game out of the fire.

"Makes our little 90 look rather small and lonely, Franky," the Caterpillar remarked to Courtenay.

"A game's never lost till it's won," answered the Highcliffe captain.

"Nunno, but I seem to feel a breeze."

The breeze that the Caterpillar felt developed into a gale, as it were, in the Highcliffe second innings. They were all out for sixty, and the home team did not have to bat again.

"An innings, my children!" said Bob Cherry blissfully. "Never mind the odd runs. An innings—a whole innings—a jolly old innings! Do you catch on, my beloved infants? We've beaten those merchants by an innings, with runs to spare! Chew on it, dear men!"

"Da Costa has, you mean!" interjected Skinner.

Bob nodded approval.

"That's exactly what I mean," he said. "You never said a truer word in your life."

And Bob gave Skinner an appreciative smack on the shoulder—a smack

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that was perhaps more hefty than appreciative, for it sent Harold Skinner rolling along the grass with a wild howl. Wharton clapped Da Costa on the shoulder—not so heavily.

"Good man!" he said. "Glad you played—that?"

Da Costa laughed, his flushed face very bright.

"Glad? Yess, yess! I am very glad! You think that I have put up a good game?"

"You've won the match for us, old bean."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Bravo, Da Costa!"

"Hurrah!"

There was a celebration of the victory in the Rag afterwards, and Arthur da Costa was the most honoured member of the company. A fellow who played cricket as he played it was a fellow whom the Removites delighted to honour. After the celebration in the Rag Arthur da Costa was seen walking with his arm linked in that of the captain of the Remove; and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gazed after them with a curious doubt in his dusky face. It seemed that even the nabob's lingering distrust of the Eurasian had been laid to rest at last.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

East and West!

ARTHUR DA COSTA moved restlessly about Study No. 1. It was Saturday afternoon, and a brilliant sunshine streamed down on Greyfriars School.

There were few fellows at Greyfriars who did not anticipate enjoying the half-holiday that day.

Da Costa, judging by his looks, was one of the few.

There was a letter crumpled in his hand as he wandered about the study, apparently unable to keep still. He had read that letter twice, and then crumpled it savagely in his grasp. The crabbed handwriting of Mr. Gedge, the Chancery Lane solicitor, did not seem to have afforded him any satisfaction.

He heard the sound of cheery voices in the Remove passage.

The Famous Five were chatting there. The chums of the Remove intended to take out a boat that afternoon, and Wharton had asked Da Costa to accompany them, partly because he was a member of Study No. 1, and partly because, since the Highcliffe match, Wharton had felt friendly towards the half-caste. There was, perhaps, something about Da Costa that was not quite in accord with Wharton's own nature, and he felt it, rather than knew it. But he was willing to set that down to the foreign "queerness" of the half-caste from India. Though, as a matter of fact, he never felt anything of the kind in company with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who, Indian as he was, was in the completest harmony of thought and feeling with his comrades of the Lower Fourth.

Da Costa had declined to go in the boat, without giving any reason, but Wharton did not think of inquiring a reason. Fellows were their own masters, and were supposed to know what they wanted, or did not want.

But, talking with his chums in the Remove passage, it occurred to Wharton to speak to the Eurasian again. He remembered the incident that had preceded the Highcliffe match, and considered it possible that the Eurasian's sensitive temperament was "on the go"

again. He would not willingly have wounded the feelings even of a touchy fellow on the watch for offences, and he decided to look into the study again, while his comrades went down to the Sark to get out the boat.

Da Costa ceased his restless pacing of the study as the door opened, and the cheery face of the captain of the Remove looked in.

Wharton glanced at him rather curiously.

Something was amiss with the fellow, that was evident. His olive face was darkly clouded.

"We're just going, old bean," said Harry. "Sure you won't come? It's simply ripping up the Sark in this weather."

Da Costa shook his head.

"Thank you, no; I cannot come," he said.

"You haven't been up the river yet since you've been here?"

"No."

"It's topping! There's a jolly old island where we're going to land and have tea."

"I would like to come. But—There is something else." Da Costa made a gesture with his hand that held the crumpled letter. "I have to see Mr. Gedge to-day."

"Mr. Gedge?" repeated Wharton. "That's the legal johnny who brought you to Greyfriars, isn't it?"

"Yes. He wishes to see me."

"That does it, then," said Harry. "I suppose you can't come, in that case. Rather rotten to be dishd for a half-holiday like this. You'd better tell the Gedge man to come next time when classes are on. You can point out to him that holidays are too valuable to be wasted on legal johnnies."

Da Costa laughed.

"He is not coming here. I am going to see him," he said.

"Bound to go?" asked Harry, who easily read hesitation in the Eurasian's looks. "If it's not a fixture—"

"I must do as I am told," said Da Costa moodily.

"I suppose so. But perhaps the Gedge man doesn't care whether you call on him to-day or another day. Make it Monday, and you can cut classes for it—see?"

"I have to see him to-day," Da Costa gave the captain of the Remove a very curious look. "He is the legal representative, you know, of Captain Marker, the gentleman in India who sent me here."

Wharton did not answer for a moment.

The name of Captain Marker struck a chord in his memory. It brought back to him the strange story Billy Bunter had told—of the talk he had overheard between the new fellow and Mr. Gedge.

Not that Wharton believed a word of that story, or even remembered it clearly by this time. He had no doubt that the Owl of the Remove, eavesdropping, as usual, had overheard some harmless conversation, and had muddled it in his obtuse mind—adding two and two together, and making six or seven of them, as it were.

But the name of Captain Marker struck him. Bunter had mentioned that name. And, as he had never heard of the captain otherwise, it proved that he must have heard him mentioned by Mr. Gedge, as he had stated.

"You have perhaps heard your uncle, Colonel Wharton, speak of Captain Marker?" asked Da Costa, with his dark eyes on Harry's face. "They were acquainted in India. That is why

Captain Marker advised me to make a friend of you here, if I could."

Wharton smiled.

"Well, that's easy enough," he said. "When you write to the jolly old captain, tell him you've taken his advice, and it's worked all right."

"I shall tell Mr. Gedge so," said Da Costa slowly. "I shall tell him that we are friends. I did not expect that it would be so."

"Why not?"

"If we were in India, you would not need to ask. In India I am called a half-caste—a hateful word. It is not my fault that Senhor da Costa, two hundred years ago, married a native lady of Goa."

"Well, hardly," said Wharton. "I daresay you're better off of India, in the circumstances. But India isn't the only country where that sort of rot makes people uncomfortable. I've heard that the darkies in the United States get the same stuff, only much worse. Anyhow, we don't bother our heads about such piffle in this little island. A fellow's taken for what he's worth, not for the shade of his giddy complexion."

"He is all right, if he plays the game, as you call it," said Da Costa.

"That's it."

"But suppose he does not?"

"Well, if he doesn't he's an outsider, whether he's white or black or brown."

"It may be harder for an Oriental to play the game than for you in this country," said Da Costa. "It is not in our line, as you would say. In the East duplicity is not despised as it is in England. In this country you pride yourselves upon strength and courage. The man of the East prides himself upon his astuteness. If he has an enemy he would rather beat him by a false accusation than by knocking him down."

"A difference in the point of view, I suppose," said Harry, rather slowly. "I think I prefer the style of this country."

"And I also," said Da Costa, "since I have been here, I have changed many of my ideas. I do not feel now that I could win a man's friendship for the purpose of betraying him."

Wharton started.

"Great Scott! Did you ever feel that you could?"

"You do not know India," said Da Costa. "You do not know the East. The English are—excuse me—fools; but they are brave and strong. The man of the East is anything but a fool. But he cannot understand you, any more than you can understand him. The Eastern mind is logical. We all have our way to make in the world. The Englishman strides on his way. If the man of the East cannot stride he will creep, or he will crawl. After all, he is more likely to reach the goal, and it is only a difference of method."

Da Costa seemed to be rather arguing with himself than talking to Wharton. The captain of the Remove had a distinct feeling of discomfort. He seemed to see, at that moment, the immense gulf that separates the East from the West.

"But it's not always so," he said, after a pause. "Look at old Inky—one of the best! Jolly good fellow as any man at Greyfriars!"

"You do not know him."

"Oh, don't I!" exclaimed Wharton, rather nettled. "I think I do, and better than you do, Da Costa."

"You do not know anything in England," answered Da Costa. "You do not even know when you are beaten. A few thousand of you hold my country



"My beloved infants," said Bob Cherry, "we've beaten those Highellife merchants by an innings with runs to spare." "Da Costa has, you mean!" interjected Skinner. Bob nodded approval. "You never said a truer word in your life," he remarked, giving Skinner an appreciative smack on the shoulder. (See Chapter 4.)

in subjection—millions of men—because you are too stupid to know that such odds cannot possibly be overcome and subjected. You get away with it, as the American says, simply because you do not know what you are doing. You take the most terrible risks, because you do not know that they are there."

"Still, we do get away with it," said Harry, with a smile.

"You think you understand Hurree Singh." Da Costa laughed. "I understand him better in a few days than you ever could in a hundred years, because I also am from the East. He has learned English ways, and he is a good fellow—what you call a good fellow. He plays the game in the English way. Why should not I do the same?"

"Jolly good idea!" said Harry, hardly knowing what to say.

"But he is still of the East," went on Da Costa. "He is astute. He suspects where others here wouldn't suspect. He watches where you would never dream of watching. And he watches as you could not watch—without a sign, and with a smiling face."

"Oh, rot!" said Harry uneasily. "Look here, Da Costa, your trouble is that you think too much. You want to exercise your limbs more, and your jolly old astute intellect less."

"That is what is wanted all through the East," answered the Eurasian. "The healthy mind in the healthy body—what? Take your chances like a man, and let cunning and wiliness go to the dogs. It is better to die like a man than to live like a cur. Is not that the English idea?"

"That's just about it," said Harry.

"If you're learning that at Greyfriars, Da Costa, the school is doing you good."

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo!" came Bob Cherry's powerful voice from the Remove staircase. "You men coming?"

"I will walk as far as the river with you, if you would like," said the Eurasian.

"Good! Come on!"

Da Costa walked down to the shining Sark with the captain of the Remove and Bob Cherry. On the towpath he parted with them, and walked away down the stream towards Friardale. The Famous Five floated out on the water, and pulled up the Sark.

"You had a jolly long chin with Da Costa," Bob Cherry remarked, as he pulled at his oar.

Wharton nodded.

"Yes; he's rather a queer fish. But I believe he's a good sort in his way. He thinks he knows you better than I do, Inky, because he comes from your jolly old country."

"The knowfulness is probably terrific," assented the nabob. "The esteemed Da Costa is no fool."

"Well, judging by his talk your country needs a little more of the open air," said the captain of the Remove, with a laugh. "He makes a fellow think that there are too many shut doors and shut windows in India."

"India is the land of closed shutters," answered the nabob.

"I say, you fellows!" howled a fat voice, from the grassy bank of the Sark.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that Bunter, or a porpoise escaped from the Zoo?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Good-bye, old fat man!"

"I say, you fellows, pull in!" yelled Bunter. "I'm coming! I'm going to steer for you, old chappies!"

"Oh, bow-wow!"

"This way, old fellow. I'd really like to come."

"Br-r-r-r!"

The pleasure of Bunter's company in the boat did not seem enticing to the chums of the Remove. But they good-naturedly pulled into the bank to let the Owl of the Remove jump in. Bob Cherry held on with a boathook.

"Buck up, Fatty!"

"I say, you fellows, keep that boat close in. I don't want to land in the water!" squeaked Bunter. "And look sharp! I believe that old brute Quelch has his eye on me. Just like him to ask for my lines now if he spotted me."

"Look here, if you've got lines—"

said Harry.

"Better cut in and do them," said Nugent.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter peevishly. "That's why I want to get up the river—because I've got lines. I can tell Quelch that I forgot them; but it's no good telling him that if he spots me about the school, is it?"

"You fat fibber!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Besides, it's only a hundred lines—and all you fellows can help when we get in. Only twenty each if you whack them out fairly."

"Twenty each!" said Johnny Bull. "And what will you be doing?"

"Well, I'll take them to Quelch."

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when they're done," said Bunter generously. "I never was a fellow to shirk my share of a job."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bunter!" Loder of the Sixth came striding across the school raft. "Bunter! You young rascal! Get back out of that boat!"

"Oh, really, Loder—"

"You're to go in at once! Do you hear?"

"I say, you fellows, push off—quick!" whispered Bunter. "Quelch must have told that beast to send me in. I'm not going!"

"Pathhead!"

"Bunter!" rapped out Loder angrily. He came along the bank 'and took Bunter by a fat ear. "Now, then—"

"Yaroooooh!"

The Famous Five pulled up the Sark without the distinguished company of William George Bunter. That unfortunate youth, dimly rubbing a burning ear, rolled back dolefully to the school—and lines!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Mr. Gedge!

THERE was a squeak of elastic-sided boots, as Mr. Gedge rose from a grassy seat by the towpath. Mr. Gedge blinked rather crossly at the lithe Eurasian as he came up. The gentleman from Chancery Lane was not enjoying that glorious summer's afternoon in the country. It was a warm afternoon, and silk hat and buttoned frock-coat did not conduce to ease and comfort. Flies had annoyed Mr. Gedge; ants had crept over him as he sat on the grassy bank. He was warm and moist and uncomfortable.

Even the aspect of the country, with its green fields, its shady woods, the shining river, the sunny towpath, the great glorious downs in the distance was dismal to Mr. Gedge. He missed the hard, unyielding pavement under his feet, he missed the roar of traffic—perhaps he missed even the smell of petrol.

Mr. Gedge was a townsman born and bred, and if ever his heart expanded it was in the dusky, stuffy office, where the hum of traffic always penetrated, where the air tasted as if it had been breathed half a dozen times before, and where he sat like a spider in its web, spinning meshes for the undoing of his fellow-men. A day in the country was a painful experience for Mr. Gedge.

"You are late!" he rasped, as Da Costa came to a stop before him and stood looking at him.

"Yess!" said Da Costa.

"I have been waiting for you in this uncomfortable place."

"Yess."

"You had better not keep me waiting again, Arthur," said Mr. Gedge, his voice more rasping than ever. "I do not like it!"

"I shall never keep you waiting again, Mr. Gedge."

"Very good, then!"

"Because I shall never see you again, I think," added Da Costa.

The "legal Johnny" stared at him.

"What do you mean?" he demanded harshly. "What nonsense is this?"

A dogged look came over Da Costa's face.

"I mean what I say," he answered steadily. "You need not repeat why you and Captain Marker sent me to Greyfriars. You need not tell me that my expenses are paid and a reward promised me to ruin Harry Wharton and drive him in disgrace from his

school—to serve some purpose of Captain Marker's that I do not know. You need say nothing, Mr. Gedge; it is for me to speak now, and I tell you I will not do it."

"You will not?" breathed Mr. Gedge.

"I will not!"

"Are you mad?"

The Eurasian smiled bitterly.

"Captain Marker is a clever man," he said. "He has lived so long in the East that he has learned the wiles of the East. He took me from the school at Lucknao, where I was a despised hanger-on, and offered me what seemed a great thing. But he forgot something."

"What do you mean?"

"At Lucknao I was ready to carry out his orders—to play any dirty trick that he asked. At Greyfriars it is different. I have seen the boy Wharton; I am his friend, more or less."

"That is well."

"Not so well as you may think, Mr. Gedge. Captain Marker picked out a cunning, despised half-caste for his purpose. But he forgot—even the despised half-caste might learn new ways, new modes of thought, in new surroundings. At Lucknao I hated the sons of the white officers, because they despised me. I was a pariah in their eyes. This boy Wharton does not despise me; he does not look on me as a pariah. If he did I would do your work gladly. But he has treated me, as he would call it, decently; he has taken me on trust. I will not betray him."

"You fool!"

Da Costa laughed mockingly.

"That is the word," he said. "That is the right word! I am learning to be a fool—what I should have called a fool when I was at Lucknao. Let me be a fool rather than a rascal. If I have an enemy I will be a rascal to him. But I will not be a rascal to a friend."

Mr. Gedge stood quite still staring at the strange lad from the East. That the half-caste was anything but a pliable tool in his hands had never occurred to him before.

"You want to go back to Lucknao?" he asked at last.

"I shall not go back to Lucknao."

"You must leave Greyfriars School if you displease Captain Marker!" rasped Mr. Gedge. "Do you think he will pay your fees there for nothing?"

"My fees are paid for this term, at least," answered the Eurasian coolly. "That cannot be altered by Captain Marker or by you."

"You young rascal!"

"After this term, I suppose I must leave," said Da Costa. "Well, then, I will leave. But this is a free country; I will do as I like. I will find something to keep me in bread, and I will not return to India. You may wash your hands of me, Mr. Gedge. I am done with treachery."

"Good gad!" muttered Mr. Gedge.

He sat down on the grassy bank again, heedless of the ants. The Eurasian stood looking at him, with a mocking smile.

"It is finished," he said. "You need not make another journey to see me, Mr. Gedge. You are done with me."

"You had better think a little, Arthur," said Mr. Gedge at last. "You are giving up all your prospects if you play the fool like this. You have before you a career at a public school, at a University afterwards; you will study law, and go back to your own country a barrister. Will you throw up such a prospect, to beg your bread in a foreign country?"

The Eurasian winced.

"I have resolved," he said stubbornly. "If Wharton had made himself my

enemy, if he had despised me, if he had even treated me coldly or unkindly—But he has been kindness itself. He has even gone out of his way to be kind, because he feared that I was sensitive and touchy. I tell you I will not harm him."

Mr. Gedge breathed hard.

"There is a large fortune at stake, Arthur—a larger sum of money than you dream of. All depends upon Wharton being turned out of his school in disgrace—a public expulsion. You cannot let down Captain Marker at this stage. You will suffer if you do!"

"I will suffer, then. I have tried—but I cannot do what you ask. I have played cricket with Wharton—"

"What difference does that make?" asked Mr. Gedge, with a stare.

"None, to you, I suppose. I have not readily changed my mind. Listen—only a few days ago I resolved to play Wharton what he called a dirty trick—to let him down in a cricket match. That, I thought, would rouse his anger and resentment—he would quarrel with me—turn me down. Then my way would have been clear! I thought, perhaps, that he would have struck me. If he had struck me, all would have been well—for you, Mr. Gedge. But—oh, it is useless to talk! It did not happen as I supposed it would—as I indeed hoped it would. He was patient and kind—he treated me as a friend and an equal—I, the despised Eurasian of the school at Lucknao. It was then that I resolved to have nothing more to do with this scheme. I resolved that I would play the game—and I will play it. Make the best of it."

Mr. Gedge clenched his bony hands.

But he restrained his rage.

"You will think better of this, Arthur," he said. "You have some fancy in your foolish head—some influence in the school that I did not look for. But you will think better of it. You are not the person to give up great advantages for the sake of a fancy. Your resolve, as you call it, will fade away when you realise all that you will lose."

Da Costa set his lips hard. Perhaps the lawyer's words found some echo in his own heart.

"Say no more," he muttered. "I tell you I have made up my mind. If Wharton become my enemy, well and good. But unless he gives the first offence, I will not harm him."

Mr. Gedge rose from the bank again.

"You will think it over, and think better of it," he said. "I will see you again a week from to-day, and you will report progress."

"You need not come."

"I shall see you here next Saturday."

"I shall not come."

"I think you will!" answered Mr. Gedge.

With that, the lawyer turned and walked away towards the village. Da Costa stood looking after him, with a black and lowering brow. When he moved at last in the direction of the school, his eyes were on the ground moodily, gloomily. The influence of Study No. 1 had wrought a change in him, in so short a time that amazed himself. Yet it was real—real for the time, at least. How deep such a change could go was another matter—whether it would last was a question that even Da Costa could not answer. After all, for what was he sacrificing the reward of treachery? A kind word—a cheery glance—a friendly smack on the shoulder! Trifles light as air in Mr. Gedge's estimation—and in Da Costa's own estimation only a short time ago.

There was doubt in Da Costa's

mind as he walked back to the school—doubt, and yet his resolve held firm. And yet, while he told himself passionately that he would keep his resolve, and play the game, he knew, with the cynical clearness of mind that belonged to the East, that a feather's weight might turn the scale, and make him once more the tool of the plotter in far-off India.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Brainy Bunter!

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER rolled into the House with an extremely dissatisfied expression on his fat face.

Bunter was feeling injured.

In the first place, Mr. Quelch ought not to have given him lines. A hundred lines for eating toffee in class was altogether too thick. In the second place, some fellow might have done those lines for Bunter—there were plenty of fellows in the Remove who could have found the time easily enough. In the third place, Bunter had very nearly escaped being called to book—only that beast, Loder of the Sixth, had had an eye on him.

Altogether, the Owl of the Remove felt that luck was against him that afternoon; and he frowned a podgy frown as he rolled into the House. Having received a direct order from a prefect to report himself to Mr. Quelch, Bunter dared not disregard it—Loder, it was true, might never know; but again, he might—and if he did, his ashlant would come into action. Bunter knew the weight of Loder's ashlant; he had been there before. So with a dissatisfied fat face, Bunter rolled in, and rolled along Masters' passage to Mr. Quelch's study.

He was just in time to catch a glimpse of Henry Samuel Quelch's angular form disappearing round the farther end of the passage, side by side with Mr. Wiggins, the master of the Third. Quelch, apparently had gone off for a chat with the Third Form master—perhaps for a game of chess in the latter's study. But the master of the Remove seemed to have eyes in the back of his head, for he turned back and looked at Bunter.

He beckoned to the fat junior to approach, and Bunter rolled up unwillingly.

"Your lines, Bunter?"

"Please I haven't done them, sir."

"Quite so," agreed Mr. Quelch. "I asked Loder to send you in for that reason. Why have you not written out your imposition, Bunter?"

"I—I forgot, sir."

"You must try to cultivate a better memory, Bunter."

"Yes, sir—with—with pleasure, sir."

"In order to assist you to do so, I will impress this matter on your mind by doubling your task," said Mr. Quelch, with grim humour.

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I think I—I could remember all right, sir, without that. As—as a matter of fact, sir, I—I hadn't forgotten my lines, now I come to think of it."

"Then you were speaking untruthfully, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all! I—I mean—"

"You will write out two hundred lines of the *Æneid*, and bring them to my study before tea, Bunter."

"If—if you please, sir—"

"Enough!"

Mr. Quelch walked away with the Third Form master.

Billy Bunter groaned.

Two hundred lines was likely to keep

him occupied for quite a long time—especially at his rate of speed. When Bunter was writing lines, it was his custom to write one line, and pause for a rest—write another, and pause for another rest. At that rate, two hundred lines were not likely to be finished much before tea-time. Bunter's half-holiday was gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream.

Shakespeare has told us that desperate diseases require desperate remedies. Bunter, instead of setting to work on his lines, set his fat wits to work to discover

of good fortune, had been able to use his impot over again. Quelch, somehow, had left it about his study unmarked. The happy junior had spotted it, retrieved it, and saved it up for a rainy day. Now, only the previous day Bunter had had to hand in lines. Suppose there were a chance of recovering them unimpaired, as had happened at least once in the history of the Remove?

The coast was clear, at all events. Quelch had gone off with Wiggly, and his study was empty, and he seldom or never locked his door. It was worth the



Pained!



On the Prowl!



Perplexed!

PIECOMBE THE PRICELESS!

You ought to meet Ulysses Piecombe, the cranky manager of the Blue Crusaders. He used to be a schoolmaster and he's always up to some queer game. The Crusaders are a jolly lot of lads. There's Fatty Fowkes, the genial, sixteen-stone goalie. Between the posts, in a scrap or sitting down to a good feed, you can't beat him. His great pals, Ben Gillingham, the fierce-faced, bowlegged back and "Tich" Harborough, the midget schoolboy winger, are real good sorts, too. Why not meet them this week in the corking close-season yarn of footer and thrilling adventure—

"FATTY FOR THE POT!"

By Charles Wentworth.

There's a crowd of other winning features in the **BOYS' REALM**. A splendid serial of open-air and adventure, a page of topical sports gossip, a side-splitting set of cartoons introducing Mr. EDISON GADGETS, the most amazing sporting inventor in the world. Also a special complete yarn of the Derby and T. T. races entitled "The Double Derby!"

Out this week in—

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a way of dodging that weary task. Losing a half-holiday, just for eating toffee in class, and then dodging his impot, was altogether too intolerable. It is said that a lazy man will take more trouble to dodge work than he need take to get it done. That was the case with Bunter. He sat in the window in Masters' passage and thought it out. He might have written fifty of his lines, at least, by the time he decided what he was going to do.

When lines were handed in to Mr. Quelch they were cancelled, generally by the effective method of tearing the sheets across. But it had been known to happen that a fellow, by a rare stroke

trouble of looking. Bunter blinked cautiously up and down the passage. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way; and there was no man. He rolled into his Form master's study.

Having shut the door, Bunter proceeded to root through the study in search of the impot of the day before. But it is said that lightning never strikes twice in the same place. If Mr. Quelch had been careless once, he was not careless again. Nothing was to be seen of any impot in the study, Bunter's or anybody else's. There were plenty of papers on the table, among them a stack of typed sheets, which belonged to Mr.

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In Play!



In a Paddy!

Quelch's celebrated "History of Greyfriars."

Bunter gave a sniff of contempt at that. He opened the table-drawer, and found more and more papers within. There was a letter, there from Mr. Quelch's nephew Roger, a fellow at another school, and Bunter wasted a couple of minutes reading it. This was one of Bunter's nice little ways, which did not endear him to his schoolfellows. As he put the letter back, Bunter noticed a small box in the drawer, such as jewellers use to pack jewellery in. With his usual inquisitive curiosity, Bunter opened the little box, and blinked at a handsome gold watch that reposed therein.

He blinked at it in surprise. It was not Mr. Quelch's own watch, he knew; it looked an absolutely new watch; and the box, too, bore the style and title of a Courtfield jeweller. Apparently Mr. Quelch had very recently purchased that new gold watch, and—taking it in conjunction with the letter from Roger, Bunter surmised that it had been purchased to send as a present to the Remove master's nephew.

Bunter closed the box again and replaced it in the drawer.

As he was about to close the drawer he paused and grinned.

"Beast!" he murmured. "Serve him right."

He picked the watch out again and slipped it into his pocket. He had, of course, no idea of stealing the watch—such a thought never even crossed his fat mind. His intention was to give Mr. Quelch a Roland for an Oliver. Quelch had given him lines to use up his half-holiday. Bunter was going to give Quelch a scare about his watch and a hunt for it. There would be nothing to connect him with the matter. Nobody knew that he had been in the study. The watch could be hidden somewhere, to be found in a day or two, and in the meantime old Quelch would be in a rare baste.

Bunter chuckled over the wonderful scheme. This was exactly what Quelch deserved for detaining a fellow on a summer's afternoon!

Bunter rolled out of the study with the watch in his pocket. He was extremely careful not to be seen, though he did not think for a moment that if he was discovered with the watch he might—in fact, he would—be suspected of purloining it. He did not mean to purloin it, and he did not surmise that anybody might suppose such a thing. Thinking of any sort was not in Billy Bunter's line. Having acted on a fatuous impulse, the Owl of the Remove proceeded on his way with fatuous satisfaction.

Bunter rolled out of Masters' passage and paused at the stairs, debating where he should hide the watch. Two or three fellows were in sight there, and Bunter did not want to show his plunder. So he mounted the stairs and arrived in the Remove passage. Peter Todd was in Study No. 7, occupied with what he was pleased to call his legal studies, Peter being a solicitor's son, and desirous of following some day in the parental footsteps.

"Don't come in, fatty," he said.

"I've got lines to do," grunted Bunter.

"Both of you! Why haven't you done them?"

"I say, Peter, suppose you do half? Quelch wouldn't spot the difference in our fists if you're careful."

"Fathead!"

"Beast! I say, Peter, suppose you had something to hide—"

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"Eh?"

"Suppose you were hiding something for a lark," said Bunter, while Peter stared at him, "where would you hide it? Suppose I were going to hide a—cricket bat, for instance, as a joke on Bob Cherry?"

"I'd advise you to leave it alone. Bob's boots are number elevens."

"I mean, suppose I was going to hide Wharton's Sunday topper, where do you think would be a safe place?"

"Are you asking my advice as a lawyer?" asked Peter.

"Eh? You silly ass—I mean, yes, old chap!"

"Then I advise you to leave Wharton's Sunday topper alone. I also advise you to shut up, as I shall leave a book at you if you jaw while I'm working."

"Beast!"

"What is it you've got to hide?" demanded Peter.

"Oh, nothing! I was only putting a case, you know."

"You silly owl, dry up!"

"Yah!"

Bunter rolled out of the study again. He had thought of poking the watch up the chimney as a safe place, but evidently he could not do so in Peter Todd's presence. The door of Study No. 1 stood wide open, and Bunter knew there was no one in that study. Wharton and Nugent had gone up the river with their friends, and Da Costa had started to walk along the towpath to Friarale. Bunter rolled into Study No. 1. That was a safe place for the watch until he could think of a safer. While it lay in repose in some recess in that study, Mr. Quelch could raise Cain, if he liked, about the missing article, and tear his scanty locks with wrath. Bunter grinned at the idea. His only regret was that he couldn't tell Quelch how he had paid him out for the detention. But evidently he could not do that.

Bunter blinked round the study. In one corner stood an old oak desk that belonged to Harry Wharton. There were numberless drawers and recesses in that old desk, and Wharton did not use half of them. Billy Bunter opened a drawer which was stuffed with old letters, exercises, dog-eared books, and all sorts of odds-and-ends, evidently the result of a hasty clearing-up of the study when the juniors had got wind of a coming Head's inspection—an occasion when studies had to present a newly-swept and garnished aspect. Doubtless Wharton had intended to clear out that lumber some day; but, as he did not need to use the drawer, some day had never come.

Bunter groped under the old papers, and thrust the watch beneath them. There it was hidden from sight, and was not likely to be found, unless the captain of the Remove turned out the drawer—a thing that was not likely to happen before the end of the term, if then.

Feeling greatly satisfied with his astuteness, William George Bunter rolled away to his own study.

He had his lines to do, but it was a great satisfaction to reflect that he was going to make Quelch sit up.

The fat junior grinned over his lines as he scrawled them on one side of the table in Study No. 7, Peter Todd at work on the other. Peter glanced at him curiously several times.

"You seem to be enjoying Virgil today, Bunter," he remarked.

"Eh? Oh, rot! Like to do some lines for me, Peter, old chap?"

"Thanks, no! What are you grinning at?"

"Grinning?" repeated Bunter.

"Yes, like a Cheshire cat."

"Your face, old man," answered Bunter brightly. "It has that effect on a fellow, you know. He, he, he!"

Peter asked no more questions, and Bunter grinned over his impot till it was finished.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

In Suspense!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came in cheerily for call-over, after a happy afternoon on the river. They came on Arthur da Costa as they went to Hall. The new junior was standing alone, staring from a window, with a darkly thoughtful expression on his olive face. He did not look as if he had been enjoying his half-holiday; and Wharton, remembering that he had had to meet the "legal johnny" that afternoon, thought that the chap had had rather hard measure. Certainly, talking to a legal johnny was nothing like so enjoyable as pulling up the river and having tea on Popper's Island. So he linked his arm in Da Costa's as he passed him, and drew him on, with genial friendliness. Da Costa gave him a sudden, quick look, and then he smiled, and went along with the chums of the Remove.

"You have had a pleasant afternoon—yess?" he asked.

"Ripping!" said Harry. "I wish you could have come."

"If you will be so kind, I will come another time."

"Next Saturday, then?"

"Yess, with pleasure."

"I say, you fellows," Bunter whispered to the Famous Five as they lined up in Hall, "old Quelch is taking the roll."

"What about it, fatty?"

"Does he look upset at all?"

Billy Bunter's range of vision was short, even with the aid of his big spectacles. At the distance, Mr. Quelch was a blur to him.

Harry Wharton looked across at the Remove master.

"Quelch looks much the same as usual," he answered.

"So he did when I took in my lines," said Bunter.

"Well, why shouldn't he?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Ass!"

"Of course, there's no reason why he should be upset, or disturbed, or in a tantrum, of course," said Bunter hastily. "Nothing of the sort. Only I thought he might be, you know."

This was rather mysterious, and Bunter perhaps expected the captain of the Remove to inquire further. But there was no inquiry. Bunter could be as mysterious as he liked without exciting much interest. No doubt he was driving at something, but the captain of the Remove did not want to know what he was driving at.

Mr. Quelch apparently had not yet discovered that the watch was missing from his table drawer. His manner was quite normal as he took the roll. There was no sign of perturbation, and no sign of a tantrum. When the Remove fellows walked out of Hall, Bunter remarked to Peter Todd:

"Quelch doesn't seem excited."

"What is there for him to get excited about?" asked Peter.

"Oh, nothing!"

"Fathead!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, grinning. Mr. Quelch was not excited yet; but the excitement was to come when he missed that gold watch which he had intended to send as a present to his nephew Roger.



Da Costa faced Mr. Gedge with a glint in his eyes. "Wharton has treated me, as he would call it, decently," he said, "he has taken me on trust. I will not betray him." "You fool!" rasped Mr. Gedge. "Let me be a fool rather than a rascal," retorted Da Costa. "If I have an enemy, I will be a rascal to him. But I will not be a rascal to a friend!" (See Chapter 6.)

Bunter grinned at the anticipation. Worrying old Quelch seemed a rare sport to the Owl of the Remove.

But he realised that the less he said about his exploit the better. Worrying old Quelch might be entertaining; but the consequences were likely to be painful if Mr. Quelch discovered who had worried him. The Remove master doubtless had a sense of humour, but it was not likely to be appealed to by such a jest as hiding a gold watch.

Bunter was quite well aware of that. After old Quelch had been worried for a day or two the watch was to come to light again, but in such a way as would cast no suspicion on Bunter as the practical joker.

Even yet it had not occurred to Bunter that when the watch was missed the Remove master might not think that it was a practical joke, but a theft. Certainly there was no other fellow at Greyfriars fatuous enough to play practical jokes with articles of value.

Mr. Quelch was a busy gentleman, his time fully occupied by his many duties, and perhaps the matter of the watch had slipped his memory for a time. Or perhaps he was leaving it till he had time to write a letter to accompany the gift. At all events, the discovery of the loss did not come in a hurry. The next day was Sunday; and that day there was no sign on the part of Mr. Quelch that he had discovered his loss.

On Monday morning Billy Bunter blinked curiously at his Form master in class.

Mr. Quelch was a little acid, as he sometimes was in the morning, but nothing out of the common.

Bunter felt that his masterly practical joke on Quelch was falling rather flat. He was waiting a long time for the climax, at all events. In second lesson that morning maps were required; and Mr. Quelch called on Wharton to fetch a map from his study. Little duties fell to the head boy of the Form;

Harry Wharton went cheerfully enough. A few minutes out of the Form-room were never unwelcome.

No fellow sent out of the Form-room when class was on was ever known to hurry to return. Wharton did not exactly loiter on the way; but he paused at the notices on the board; and when he finally arrived in the Form-room again with the required map, Mr. Quelch gave him a frown.

"You have kept me waiting, Wharton!"

"Oh, sir! Sorry!"

"You appear to have taken much more time, Wharton, than was necessary to go to my study and return."

"I—I hope not, sir!" murmured Wharton, inwardly wondering whether Mr. Quelch really expected a fellow to hurry back to class.

"It is useless to hope not, Wharton, when you must be aware that such is the case," barked Mr. Quelch.

"I'm really sorry, sir!" said Harry, colouring. "I suppose I might have hurried a bit."

The soft answer turned away wrath. Mr. Quelch was placated, and he signed to the junior to go to his place.

Second lesson over, the Removes were dismissed for morning break. Harry Wharton & Co. went to look for letters. Letters for the juniors were generally placed in the rack to be taken in morning break.

"One for you, old bean!" said Bob Cherry. "That's your uncle's fist!"

He tossed a letter over to Wharton.

Da Costa was standing near, though he was not looking at the letters; he was expecting nothing. But his dark eyes turned keenly and sharply on Harry Wharton as Harry caught the letter Bob tossed to him. Wharton's back was to him, and he did not notice the Eurasian.

"Tip from the jolly old colonel—what?" asked Bob.

"No, I think not," answered Harry, with a smile. "It's an answer to a

letter I wrote last week. I asked him about Captain Marker."

"Who's Captain Marker?"

"The man in India who sent Da Costa here. It seems he's an old acquaintance of my uncle's, but uncle has never mentioned him to me, so I asked about him. I've told uncle about the new chap, you know."

"About me?" exclaimed Da Costa.

Wharton turned quickly at his voice.

"I didn't see you there, Da Costa. Yes, I mentioned you to my uncle—told him what a topping cricketer we've got in the Remove, and how you helped us beat Highcliffe."

"Oh!" said Da Costa.

Wharton looked at him rather hard. The sharp suspicion of a suspicious nature had leaped into Da Costa's face.

"My dear chap," said Wharton quietly, "surely you didn't think that I'd said anything about you that wasn't to your credit? What the dickens have you got into your noodle now?"

Da Costa flushed.

"Nothing," he answered—"nothing! You told Colonel Wharton about my cricket—yess?"

"There was nothing else to tell him about you, was there?" said Harry.

"Except that you were a new man here, and had been sent here by Captain Marker—an old friend of my uncle's, as I'm told."

"Yess, yess!" muttered Da Costa.

He walked away, Wharton glancing after him with a rather ruffled brow. But he forgot Da Costa in a minute or two, as he proceeded to read his uncle's letter.

"Well, what about the jolly old Marker man?" asked Bob, as Wharton finished the brief letter from the colonel.

"Little enough," answered Harry.

"He says he knew a Captain Marker once in India, and that's all. Let's get out."

(Continued on page 16.)

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BRIGHT'S AUCTION SAIL!

By DICKY NUGENT



Funds are low with Jack Jolly, Merry, and Bright, and an auction sale—a wheeze for which Bright is responsible—is hailed with great enthusiasm. But the proceeds of the auction sale are anything but bright for the cheeky young scamps of the Fourth Form at St. Sam's!

IN the midst of life we are in debt!" said Dr. Birchmell mournfully.

"Quite trite—and quite right!" said Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth. "What's the trouble now, sir?"

Dr. Birchmell turned a pail, haggard face upon the Form master.

"Lickham," he said, "I am up against it! I have got my back to the wall!"

"So I perceive," said Mr. Lickham. "Some of the plaster has attached itself to your gown."

The Head glared.

"I don't mean this wall, fatted! What I mean is, I am in a corner."

"Yes, but why stand in the corner, sir? Why not come and sit down in your chair?"

Dr. Birchmell snorted.

"Lickham, you are as dense as they make 'em! When I say that I am in a corner, and have my back to the wall, I am using figures of speech."

"Oh!"

"I happen to be in low water—"

"Yes. I perceive there is a pool where you are standing, caused by the ginary upsetting its water," said Mr. Lickham.

Dr. Birchmell snorted fiercer than ever.

"Dolt! Dunderhead!" he roared.

"Can't you get me?"

"Eh? Get what, sir?"

"Can't you grasp my meaning, Lickham? I am in a most dire and despit predicament. I am without a bean!"

"What rot!" said Mr. Lickham.

"There are rows and rows of beans in your garden—"

"Oh, you—you—" spluttered the Head. "Can't you understand plane English? I'm broke—broke to the wide! And I'm in debt into the bargain. I have not paid my rates for a month, and the local authorities have

threatened to soo me, and pursoo me, and put the brokers in, and goodness nose what else! I am in distress, Lickham; and my goods and chattles will shortly be in distress, also."

"I am deeply distressed to hear it, sir," said Mr. Lickham. There was a catch in his voice, for he was sorry the Head was stumped. He would have helped him keep his end up, but his own funds had run out, and he had no extras. It was not cricket, he reflected, for the local authorities to persecute the Head in this way.

"Are they going to seeze your furniture, sir?" asked Mr. Lickham.

"Eggsactly!" said Dr. Birchmell, with a rye face. "They have just tellyfoned to say they are sending a couple of men up to St. Sam's to seeze all my goods and chattles, in default of payment."

"Hard cheddar!" said Mr. Lickham consolingly.

"All my priceless trezzures," said the Head, indicating his study furniture with a wave of the hand, "will have to go! Boo-hoo!"

And he laid his head on Mr. Lickham's sholder and cried like a child.

"It's pathetick; and I'm simpathtick," mormered Mr. Lickham. "But dry those tears, sir, and lend me your cars! Why should you permit your priceless trezzures to fall into the clutches of these sharx?"

"Bub-bub—because I can't help myself!" blubbered the Head. "At any minnit now the brokers will be here and—"

"Then we must lose no time, sir! Give me a hand, and we'll shift all your belongings into one of the old lumber-rooms. Then, when the brokers arrive, your study will be stripped bear, and you can point out that you possess no personal property. There will be nothing for them to seeze, and they will be balked, baffled, and bewildered!"

Instantly the Head brightened up.

He fetched a couple of sacks from the woodshed, and the Head's ornaments were crammed into them.

The sacks were dragged along to the lumber-room, and Dr. Birchmell's study was now as bear as Mother Hubberd's cubbard.

These mancovers had been carried out while the St. Sam's fellows were at dinner, so that nobody was any the wiser.

When the Head and Mr. Lickham returned to the study, mopping the inspiration from their browse, two stern-faced men were awaiting them. They were very strong men fizically, and they eyed the Head quizzically.

"Doctor Birchmell?" queried one of the men.

"That's me!" said the Head cheerily.

"I'm a broke man, and you're a broker's man—what?"

The man nodded grimly.

"We've come 'ere to take possession of your furniture—lock, stock, an' barrel!" he said.

Dr. Birchmell grinned.

"Lock, stock, and barrel, eh? Well, you can take the lock from the door, and you'll find an old barrel in the yard; but as for stock, I'm afraid you'll be unlucky! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!" chortled Mr. Lickham.

The broker's man scowled.

"Where's all yer goods an' chattles?" he demanded.

"Serch me!" said the Head, shrugging his sholders. "Fact is, jentlemen, I have been stripped of all my belongings, eggsept the clothes I stand up in. And you can't touch those."

"We was ordered to come 'ere an' restrain your furniture—"

"Restrain it? Why? Did you think it was likely to become violent? Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you, jents, but I've no furniture to restrain. So you can go back to the Inspector of Rates and Taxes, and tell him that I've had to sell up."

"My dear Licky! What an awfully cute wheeze!" he eggscclaimed, grinning through his tears. "It's just the sly sort of subterfuge that might have occurred to my own mind, but it didn't. We'll move my goods and chattles right away! Gimme a hand with this desk!"

Mr. Lickham peeled off his coat and rolled up his sleeves. Then he took one end of the desk, while the Head took the other. Gasping and grunting, and panting and puffing, they staggered away to the nearest lumber-room, where a large collection of rubbish was already stored.

The Head's desk was dumped among the rest of the rubbish, and then the two furniture-removers went back and fetched the chairs, the carpets, the cushions, and the curtains. Then Mr. Lickham

So saying, Dr. Birchmall opened the door, and ushered the astonished broker's men into the passidge.

"Orry-vore!" he said, for he always liked to air his French when conversing with vulgar people. "Bong joor, my pippins!"

"Toodle-oo!" added Mr. Lickham in modern English.

And the broker's men—balked, baffled, and bewildered, as Mr. Lickham had predicted they would be—slouched away with scowling faces.

The Head had saved his goods and chattles from being restrained!

II.

"NOTISS!

A SAIL BY AUGTTON

of vaeleable goods and chattles, inelooding,

AN ENTIRE SWEET OF FERNITURE

(desk, chairs, sofer, and seterer, and seterer), will take place in the Junior Common-room at 7 o'clock sharp. Lots and lots of lots will be sold under the hammer. Wonderful bargains! The chance of a lifetime to furnish your studies cheaply and tastefully!

ROLL UP! ROLL UP! ROLL UP!

Catalogs of the sail may be obtained from the Auctioneer, BILLY BRIGHT, Study No. 1, Fourth Form Passidge."

Needless to say, this announcement, which had been posted up on the notis-board in the Hall, made a grate sensation at St. Sam's.

The auction sail was Billy Bright's idea—another of his skeems for getting rich quick.

As a rule, Bright's bright ideas had a way of coming unstuck, and landing him and his chums, Jack Jolly and Merry, in the soup. First there had been the barber's business, when Dr. Birchmall's beard had been shaved off, with paneful rezults. Then there had been the insurance skeem, which had ended in dire disaster.

But it really seemed that Billy Bright was on a winner this time.

It was Bright who had discovered the "vaeleable goods and chattles." After dinner, he had been chased by Bounder of the Sixth, and had taken refuge in the lumber-room.

Usually the lumber-room contained nothing but worthless rubbish. And Bright had been astonished to find other rubbish there which was not quite so worthless.

There was a roll-top desk, covered with the inkstains of generations; a horse-hare sofer, which was shedding a lot of its stuffing; and some occasional chairs which didn't match, and which had lost some of their legs in study warfare.

Also, there were some carpets which had been worn threadbare, and some curtans which had been died yellow originally, but which were now a dingy grey. There were also some portraits of Dr. Birchmall's ansestors, inelooding Sweeney Todd, Charles Peace, Bill Sikes, and other unsavory rough 'uns.

Then there were a cupple of sacks full of ornymnts and trinkets, inelooding an eighteen-carrot gold watch. And, to complement the weerd and wonderful assortment, there were a bundle of canes and a birch rod.

Billy Bright argewd, and quite reezonably, that all this property didn't belong to anybody, or it would not have

been dumped in the lumber-room with the rest of the rubbish. The shrood Fourth-Former had therefore conceived the notion of taking possession of the goods and selling them by public auction.

After tea, Jack Jolly and Merry helped their chum to shift all the goods and chattles to the Junior Common-room. And by seven o'clock—the time fixed for the auction sail—the place was packed to suffocation.

Billy Bright stood on one of the occasional chairs, which happened to have all its legs intacked. He flurried a hammer in his hand, and Jack Jolly and Merry, his assistants, were standing beside him.

"Sail now on!" shouted Bright. "Jentlemen, chaps, and fellows! Here's your chance to secure the bargains of a lifetime! Lot No. 1—a magniffiscent roll-top desk, made of sollid mahogany, and worth fifty pounds of anybody's munny! What am I bid for this desk, jentlemen?"

"Half-a-crown!" said Burleigh of the Sixth, with a grin. "Is it a deal?"

"No, it's mahoggany, I tell you!" snorted Bright. "Catch me selling a mahoggany desk for half-a-crown. Try again, Burleigh!"

"Two-and-nine," said the kaptin of St. Sam's.



Dr. Birchmall laid his head on Mr. Lickham's sholder and cried like a child.

"Two pounds nine shillings?" said Bright eagerly.

"No. Two shillings and ninepence!" The auctioneer gave a snort.

"This desk is a good deal—"

"You said it was mahoggany!"

"A good deal more vaeleable than two-and-ninepence!" said Bright. "Did I hear you bid a fiver, Fearless?"

"No, you didn't!" said Frank Fearless, larling.

"Did you say seven pounds six, Stedfast?"

"No. Seven-and-six," said Stedfast of the Fourth, with a chuckle.

Bright flurried the hammer.

"Going at seven-and-six! Going—going—"

"Here, hold on!" cried Stedfast, in alarm. "I don't want to buy the blessed desk! I was only rotting—"

"Gone!" said Bright, bringing down the hammer with a crash. "Sold to Mr. Stedfast for seven-and-six—and dirt cheap at the price! Now for Lot No. 2—a magniffiscent eighteen-carrot gold watch, stamped in every link, jooled in every movement. A tip-top timepeace, jentlemen, made in Jermanny, and with the letter 'A. B.' engraved on the case. I don't know what that stands for—"

"All Brass!" suggested Burleigh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Alfred Birchmall!" cried Tallboy of the Sixth. "That's the Head's gold watch, you young duffer! How did you come by it?"

Bright looked quite scared for a minnit; then he larfed.

"It can't possibly be the Head's," he said, "bekawse I found it in the lumber-room with the rest of the stuff. Come, jents! What am I bid for this hansom gold ticker?"

"Three-ha'pence!" squeaked Midgett minor.

"Ratts!"

"Fourpence!" said Frank Fearless.

"Fourpence I am bid," said Bright, in tones of contempt, "for this magniffiscent eighteen-carrot gold watch! Four paltry pence for a watch that is worth a fiver! Going—going—"

"You're quite sure it's going, Bright?" said Frank Fearless. "I shan't buy it if it isn't."

"Gone!" said the auctioneer, bringing down the hammer with a sickening thud on Jack Jolly's head.

"Yaroooo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lot No. 3!" announced Bright.

"Here, jentlemen, we have a collection of portraits of famus men, inelooding Sweeney Todd, Charles Peace, and Bill Sikes. They were all hung in the Royal Academy—"

"You're wrong there," said Fearless. "Sweeney Todd was hung at Newgate."

"Don't interrupt," said the auctioneer sternly. "These are wonderful portraits, jentlemen! Dr. Birchmall has the same collection hung in his study, but those are only worthless imitations, whereas these are the originals. I am selling the portraits in one lot. What offers?"

The bidding was brisk on this occasion, for the St. Sam's fellows were keen collectors of the portraits of famus criminals.

Dr. Birchmall arrived in the Junior Common-room just in time to see his ansestors knocked down to Tallboy of the Sixth for five bob.

The Head stood speechless in the doorway. A torrent of angry words burst from his lips.

"My trezzures!" he cried. "My priceless trezzures being hawked and touted for sail at a publick auction! This is disgraceful! Gimme back my ansestors, Tallboy!"

"Certainly, sir—if Bright gives me back my five bob!" said Tallboy, who had Scottish blud in his vanes.

"One minnit!" said Dr. Birchmall, who saw a chance of making some munny. "I'll take the five bob, and you can keep my ansestors, Tallboy. Guard the portraits jellusly, bekawse they will be worth thousands some day. What other articles have you sold, Bright, you young rascal?"

"Your desk went for seven-and-six, sir, and your gold watch for fourpence."

"Good! Hand over the dibbs. And the purchasers can keep my desk and ticker until I happen to want them again. You needn't hurry, but I shall want all my property inside five minutes. You will now follow me to my study, Bright, and I'll birch you black and blew!"

"W-w-what for, sir?"

"Theevely!" said the Head sternly.

"Pinching my personal property, and putting it up to auction."

"But—but I didn't know the stuff was yours, sir."

"Tell that to the Maroons!" was the skornful reply. "Come with me, you young welp!"

And Billy Bright, with yet another of his wonderful skeems having come unstuck, crawled away to his doom.

THE END.

(Look out for another rollicking fine yarn of St. Sam's next week, entitled:

"THE OLD BOYS' DINNER!" It's a peach of a yarn, chums!)

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(Continued from page 13.)

And the chums of the Remove went into the quad. In third lesson Billy Bunter blinked anxiously at his Form-master. But Mr. Quelch's august countenance was still "set fair"; evidently he had not yet missed the watch. Billy Bunter, with great disgust, wondered whether he ever would miss it. He was destined to be enlightened on that point before long—and in a way he did not anticipate.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

BILLY BUNTER chuckled. He was at tea in Study No. 7, with Peter Todd and Tom Dutton. Something, evidently, had struck the Owl of the Remove as amusing to elicit that sudden fat chuckle.

Peter glanced at him. "Something gone wrong inside, fatty?" he asked.

"Eh! No."
"Then what are you making that row for?"

"Find out!"
"Not worth the trouble!" said Peter. "Only don't do it any more, old chap. If you're under the impression that it's musical, you're making a mistake—a serious mistake."

"Yah!" was Bunter's elegant rejoinder. Then he went on: "I could tell you something if I liked, Toddy!"

"Whoppers?" asked Toddy.
"No, you beast! The joke of the term!" said Bunter, grinning.

"Well, cough it up!"
"Oh, I'm not going to tell you!" said Bunter. "I'm keeping it jolly dark! Can't be too careful!"

"Fathead!" said Toddy politely.
"Beast!"

Had Peter displayed keen curiosity and urged Bunter to reveal the great secret, probably Bunter's desire to wag his podgy chin would have been too much for him. But Peter did nothing of the sort. He seemed to have a plentiful lack of interest in the fat thoughts that were passing through the Owl's mind.

Bunter rolled out of Study No. 7 when tea was over, and directed his footsteps towards Wharton's study.

Wharton and Nugent, as he knew—Bunter knew everything that went on in the Remove passage—were teeing with Bob Cherry that day in Study No. 13. Therefore, they would not be in Study No. 1.

A great wheeze came into Bunter's fat brain. The hidden watch had been placed in Wharton's desk as a temporary measure, till the Owl of the Remove could think of a better place. Now he had thought of a better one—which appealed to his sense of humour. That was to conceal the watch in Mr. Quelch's Sunday hat!

That very special topper, which Mr. Quelch wore only on Sundays and on

very great occasions, was kept in a hat-box in Mr. Quelch's room. Access to that hat box was easy enough—for any fellow who had the nerve to meddle with the Remove master's best hat.

Most fellows would have hesitated to carry a practical joke to the extent of meddling with that very special article. But Bunter's mission in life often seemed to be to demonstrate the truth of the adage that fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

In that Sunday hat, in the hat-box, the watch would be hidden with absolute security—till the following Sunday. That would give Mr. Quelch a whole week of worry on the subject. After which he would infallibly discover the missing watch himself as soon as he removed the topper from the hat-box. The expression on Quelch's face when that happened would be worth seeing, Bunter considered. He would not be able to see it, but he could fancy it, and the mental picture made him chuckle.

As Wharton and Nugent were teeing up the passage, it was a safe opportunity to remove the watch from Study No. 1. If Bunter remembered the existence of Arthur de Costa, he took it for granted that the new fellow had gone up the passage to tea with his study-mates. Probably, however, he did not think of Da Costa at all. Bunter was not, in many ways, a gifted youth, but he had a marvellous gift for forgetting things.

So he rolled into Study No. 1, opening the door and entering without warning, not doubting that the room was empty.

But the room was not empty. Bunter, rolling in, rolled right across to the old oak desk in the corner, and nearly rolled into Arthur de Costa, who turned suddenly from the desk with a startled, crimson face.

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter. The Eurasian stared at him. Bunter blinked at the Eurasian.

He was startled at being caught going to Wharton's desk, and it did not occur to his fat mind to wonder what Da Costa was doing there. He backed away promptly.

"I—I say, I—I wasn't going to that desk, Da Costa," he stammered.

"You fat fool!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"What do you want?" snarled Da Costa.

"Nothing, old chap. I—I didn't know you were here, you see. I mean, I—I—I thought—"

"Get out!"

"I—I mean, I—I came along to speak to you, old fellow," said Bunter.

"Knowing you were here on your own, I thought I'd drop in for a chat, see?"

"Oh, get out!" said Da Costa. "You are always spying! Were you going to spy in Wharton's desk?"

"Oh, really, you know! I wasn't going to touch that desk! If you think I was going to take away anything from the desk, Da Costa, you're simply making a silly mistake. Nothing of the kind. The—the fact is, I—I was going to the desk to borrow some—some blotting-paper."

Dr. Costa stared at him very hard.

"If it is blotting-paper you want, you can take it," he said. "There is a wad of it there."

Billy Bunter certainly had no use for blotting-paper just then; but he helped himself to a sheet from Wharton's wad—having given that as a reason for his visit to the study, and for his obvious intention of going to the desk.

"I say, Da Costa, why ain't you teeing in No. 13 with the other chaps?" asked Bunter.

"Mind your own business!"
"Won't they have you?" asked Bunter, with a grin.

Da Costa gave him a lowering look. As a matter of fact, he had been asked to tea in Bob Cherry's study, but had declined for reasons of his own.

"Do you want to be kicked out of this study, Bunter?" he asked.

"Eh? No!"

"Then you had better walk out, and sharp!"

"Don't get stuffy, old bean," said Bunter pacifically. "Look here, Da Costa, I've had a measly tea in No. 7—Toddy's frightfully mean over the grub. Not that he's got much money to spend, his people are poor, you know." Bunter gave a sniff. "I'll tell you what. Come down to the shop with me, and we'll have tea there."

"Go and eat coke!"

"I'll stand tea, of course!" said Bunter, with dignity. "And I've no objection to your company, Da Costa. If they don't want you in No. 13, come along to the tuckshop, see? I don't mind teeing with a nigger."

"What?"

"I'm no snob," said Bunter.

"Fellows of really good families never are, you know. I tea with Inky, and he's a real black nigger—blacker than you are by half. I pal with Toddy, and his father is only a solicitor in Bloomsbury. I'm an easy-going chap. It's so often taken advantage of," went on Bunter, with a sorrowful shake of the head. "Fellows stick on to me, you know, because I'm too jolly good-natured to bar them off. Look here, you come along with me to the tuckshop—and I'll tell you what, I don't mind taking your arm in the quad! I mean it! It will do you a lot of good in the school to let the fellows see that you're on such terms with me. See?"

Possibly Bunter expected an outburst of gratitude in return for this generous offer.

There was rather an outburst—but it was not of gratitude.

Da Costa's dark face became darker with angry passion—for what reason Bunter did not understand in the least. It did not occur to him that his remarks might have been offensive to the Eurasian.

Da Costa made a stride towards him, and grasped him by the collar.

"Get out!"

"Yaroooh!"

Bang!

Bunter's bullet head smote the study door.

Bunter's head was hard, but the door was harder. There was no doubt that the door had the best of it.

A fiendish yell rang along the Remove passage.

"Yooooop!"

The Owl of the Remove, yelling wildly, went whirling into the passage. He collapsed there with a terrific roar.

Da Costa glared at him from the doorway for a moment, and then slammed the door on him.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Wow!" howled Bunter.

He scrambled up! He was indignant and wrathful; but he did not open the door of Study No. 1 again. He contented himself with yelling through the keyhole:

"Yah! Beast! Rotter! Yah!"

No reply from the study.

"Yah!", pursued Bunter. "Nigger! Beast! You come out of that room, you funky nigger, and I'll mop up the passage with you."

There was a sound of the door-handle turning within

That was enough for William George Bunter.

He stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once. The arrow in its flight was hardly swifter than the fat figure of the Owl of the Remove as it flew along the passage.

By the time Da Costa had the door open, Bunter had reached No. 7, and dived into that apartment headlong—almost as if he were taking a header into a swimming-pool.

"Ow!" he gasped.

"You fat chump, what are you bolting about like a runaway horse for?" demanded Peter Todd.

"Ow! That nigger's after me!" gasped Bunter.

Peter glanced along the passage. Nobody was to be seen there. Da Costa had closed the door of Study No. 1 again.

"Keep him off, Peter, old chap!" gasped Bunter.

"You burbling bandersnatch, there's nobody after you!"

"Oh!" Bunter recovered his courage immediately. "The rotten funk! He's jolly well afraid! He jolly well knows I'd have mopped up the passage with him! These niggers haven't much pluck, Peter. What are you grinning at, you beast?"

Bunter rubbed his head. There was nothing in it of an intellectual nature to be damaged; but it felt hurt.

"That cheeky nigger banged my head on the door, Peter. I say, old chap, I'd give him a jolly good hiding, only it's a bit beneath a fellow's dignity to touch such a rank outsider. It's rather bad manners to cackle in a fellow's face like that, Toddy. I suppose you wouldn't know any better, but it is. Look here, Peter! If you knew what that chap had been saying about you, you'd go along to his study now and mop him up."

"Oh!" said Peter. "What has he been saying?"

"Horrid things," said Bunter. "He called you a bony freak, Peter."

"He did, did he?"

"Yes; and he said your face was exactly like a Guy Fawkes mask, only uglier—much uglier."

"Anything else?"

"Lots of things. He said he didn't know whether you'd got out of the Zoo, or out of a lunatic asylum, only he knew it must be one or the other. I'd jolly well lick him for saying such things, if I were you, Peter."

Peter Todd looked round the study, and picked up a fives bat.

"Good!" said Bunter. "You're going to lick that cheeky rotter, old chap?"

"I'm going to lick a cheeky rotter, certainly," assented Peter. "Bend over that chair, Bunter."

"What?" roared Bunter.

"Bend over."

"Why, you—you—you—Yaroooh!"

Peter's left hand grasped Bunter's collar and jerked him over. His right wielded the fives bat with vigour and efficiency. Four vigorous licks had been administered by the time William George Bunter jerked himself loose and fled from the study. Bunter had entered Study No. 7 at a great speed. He left it at a greater. Bunter's movements generally resembled those of the tortoise. Now he seemed to be emulating the hare—and getting away with it.

"Come back and have some more!" roared Peter Todd, brandishing the fives bat in the doorway of Study No. 7.

But answer there came none! William George Bunter had vanished into space.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Da Costa Makes a Discovery!

ARTHUR DA COSTA turned the key quietly in the lock of Study No. 1.

Then he crossed over to the oak desk in the corner.

Bunter, whose fat thoughts had been wholly occupied with himself, as usual, had not given any thought to the fact that the Eurasian had been standing at the desk when he rolled in. Had he thought about it, certainly he would have wondered what Da Costa had been doing there. The desk belonged to Harry Wharton; Da Costa had no business with it—or should have had none. Not that Wharton would have objected to either of his study-mates using the desk—property was rather held in common in junior studies.

It was rather a bureau than a desk, and it took up a considerable amount of space; and, naturally, Nugent used it for writing letters, and such things as blotting-paper, sealing-wax, pens, and pencils were kept in it, for the common use of the study—or all the Remove for that matter. Wharton would have thought nothing of it had he come into the study and found Da Costa sitting at the desk, writing, or looking into one of the top drawers for pen nibs or postage stamps. But that was not Da Costa's occupation.

Wharton, assuredly, would have been surprised, and most decidedly angry and indignant, had he seen how Da Costa was now occupied.

The Eurasian was searching the desk.

The top drawers were common property. The lower ones were used by Wharton for personal things, and Nugent would never have thought of opening them. Da Costa was opening one after another, and searching every one with meticulous care.

Obviously, he was looking for some special article. Whatever it was, it was nothing of his own, and nothing at which he had a right to look.

In point of fact, what he was seeking was the letter that Harry had received from his uncle that morning.

Da Costa's interest in that letter was keen. He was mentioned in it, and Captain Marker was mentioned in it. What Colonel Wharton might have had to say about Captain Marker was of keen interest to Da Costa. He was not curious or inquisitive, in the way of Billy Bunter. What he was doing was much worse than Bunter's obtuse prying into other fellow's affairs. Da Costa was not prying—he was spying.

Keen and wily as he was, the Eurasian had never been able to guess, or even surmise, for what cause the man in India had laid that strange plot against a boy he had never even seen, at a school in England.

He knew that Marker's motive must be a strong one; even a bad man would not lay a wicked scheme for no reason. And the scheme, too, was costing Marker a great deal of money, which Da Costa knew he could ill spare; which he knew, indeed, that the captain must have raised from the greedy native

moneylenders at Lucknow. He knew that Marker was a reckless man, a spendthrift; but even a spendthrift would not throw money away for nothing. The Eurasian had been deeply perplexed and irritated by the fact that, with all his keenness, he could not penetrate the plotter's motive.

That such a man as Marker had been on terms of friendship with Colonel Wharton he did not believe. It had suited the captain to say so, and that was all. But evidently he had known the colonel in India—and the colonel had known him.

What the colonel thought of him was of keen interest to the Eurasian; but that was not all. It was possible that Colonel Wharton, knowing the man, might know, or guess, or surmise something concerning his plot against the colonel's nephew.

In that case it was very probable that he would give his nephew some warning on the subject of the half-caste.

Certainly, Wharton's manner had been no different since he had read the letter.

But that amounted to nothing in Da Costa's eyes. He was so accustomed to dissembling, that he trusted nothing to appearances.

To read that letter, to learn whether Colonel Wharton suspected anything, to find out whether he had warned his nephew to keep the half-caste at arm's length—that was Da Costa's object.

He had no scruple whatever. That Wharton would not have done such a thing, for any motive whatsoever, he knew. And it was his desire—with half his heart, at least—to be like Wharton, if he could, and as unlike as possible to the wily, cunning, unscrupulous half-caste of Lucknow. But such a nature was not changed in a day. When he had an end to attain he never scrupled about the means, and he did not scruple now. And though he was anxious that Wharton should never know what he was doing, he could not help feeling a slight contempt for a fellow who left private letters in an unlocked desk, and took it for granted that nobody would look at them. Such unthinking faith in the honour of others he could not help admiring and envying, but at the same time he despised it.

He knew that the colonel's letter was most likely in the desk. Often he had seen Wharton open a drawer, already rather well filled, and toss a letter in—some letter that was to be answered later when time allowed. Never before had he thought of looking at such letters—they had no interest for him, and he was not inquisitive. Now the case was different. This particular letter

(Continued on next page.)

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contained references to himself and to the man who had sent him to Greyfriars; it might affect the footing upon which he stood with the captain of the Remove—knowledge of what was written in that letter might be a useful guide to him. That was enough for the half-caste—he searched for the letter with the intention of reading it from end to end.

His search was long.

If the letter was there it was not easily to be found. If Wharton had tossed it into a drawer he must have sorted the things over since, for some reason, looking for something or other, and so hidden it from sight. But Da Costa was patient—with the patience of the Oriental. Carefully he sorted through the contents of drawer after drawer—coming upon a good many old letters, the existence of which had probably been entirely forgotten by the captain of the Remove. Still, he did not find the letter he sought.

But suddenly a startled exclamation left his lips.

He was turning over the lumber in a large drawer at the bottom of the bureau, when a gleam of gold caught his eye.

In utter amazement, the Eurasian picked up a gold watch, which lay under the old papers.

He stared at it blankly.

He could see that it was quite a new watch—not a single mark was on it to show that it had ever been in a pocket.

Why Wharton should shove a new gold watch away carelessly among the lumber in a drawer was a mystery; it was not like the captain of the Remove to be careless with valuable things.

But as he turned the watch over in his dusky fingers the Eurasian noticed the monogram engraved on the back of the gold case:

"R.Q."

Those initials, certainly, were not Wharton's.

The watch, hidden in Wharton's desk, did not belong to him. It was too

bright and new to have been bought secondhand.

"Q" was an exceedingly uncommon initial for a surname. So far as Da Costa knew, there was only one person at Greyfriars with such an uncommon initial—Mr. Quelch, the Remove master.

It was unimaginable that a watch belonging to Mr. Quelch could be hidden in Wharton's desk. Moreover, the watch was of the solid construction of the timekeepers used by much younger persons than Henry Samuel Quelch. It looked like the kind of watch that might be given as a present to a school-boy when he was considered old enough to take care of a gold watch. It was such a present as Colonel Wharton might, perhaps, have given his nephew on his birthday; but in that case, of course, the initials would have been "H. W."

Da Costa was completely puzzled.

He was not only puzzled, but suspicious. It was so utterly amazing for that watch to be there, that a mind like Da Costa's could not help jumping to suspicion.

How had Harry Wharton come into possession of that gold watch, which obviously did not and could not belong to him? Why was it hidden away so carefully?

A bitter grin came over Da Costa's face.

With all his cunning, all his wily distrust, he had taken Wharton at face value, never doubting that he was what he seemed.

Now he doubted.

A fellow who hid in his desk a gold watch that obviously did not belong to him, was not the fellow Da Costa had believed Wharton to be. The half-caste, accustomed to deceiving others, had been deceived himself—that seemed certain to him now. And yet—If a watch had been stolen, something would have been heard of it. The watch could not have been stolen. Da Costa hardly knew what to think.

He replaced the watch at last, and covered it up with the old papers and books as before, and resumed his search for the colonel's letter.

He did not find that letter.

Probably Wharton still had it in his pocket. Perhaps—Da Costa's mind flashed to suspicion—perhaps he would not trust that letter where the half-caste might find it if he liked.

There was a sound of footsteps and voices in the Remove passage. Like a flash Da Costa crossed the study and silently unlocked the door.

A few moments later Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent came in.

"Hallo, here you are!" said Harry cheerily. "Coming out for a trot in the quad, Da Costa?"

"Yess."

Wharton was quite unconscious of the Eurasian's searching look. The Eurasian left the study with him and Nugent.

"What about half an hour with the willow?" asked Wharton. "If you keep up your form, old bean, we want you to come over to Rookwood when we go over to play Jimmy Silver's lot. You'd like it?"

"Yess."

"Come on, then."

The juniors went down to cricket. But Da Costa, keen cricketer as he was, was thinking less of cricket now than of the strange discovery he had made in Study No. 1. The recollection of that hidden gold watch haunted his mind.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Startling!

MR. QUELCH finished writing the letter, signed it "Your affectionate uncle, H. S. Quelch," and laid the pen upon his desk.

It was a letter to his nephew Roger, a youth who had once put in a few weeks in the Greyfriars Remove, and was well known to Harry Wharton & Co. Roger had not liked Greyfriars as much as was expected—perhaps the avuncular eye was a little too searching and severe. And Roger had some little manners and customs which did not make his uncle regret that he had not stayed permanently at Greyfriars.

Nevertheless, Mr. Quelch was an affectionate, if not demonstrative, relative, and his nephew having lately passed a difficult examination, Mr. Quelch was weighing in with a handsome present for his birthday—as the reward of merit as well as a testimony of affection. Roger Quelch had not enjoyed his uncle's company at Greyfriars, but he was really sure to think with kind affection of the scholastic gentleman when he received a handsome gold watch with the monogram, "R.Q.," engraved on the back.

The Remove master opened his table drawer and picked up the little box from the jeweller's. As he picked it up he noticed that it weighed very little, which was surprising for a box that had a rather heavily-built watch in it. When he opened the lid the mystery was explained. The watch was not in the box.

Mr. Quelch stared into that little box blankly.

The watch had gone!

Watches, it was true, were made to go, and in one sense Mr. Quelch had naturally expected that watch to go; but it had gone in quite a different sense.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch, apparently addressing the empty box.

He sat for some minutes in astonished thought.

He knew that he had not taken the watch out of the box. Every day since the purchase he had opened that table drawer more than once, and each time he had seen the box there. He had not thought of looking into it, or touching it; indeed, he might not have opened it now had he not noted how lightly it weighed in his hand. But he looked through the drawer with care, and found that the watch was not loose among the other contents. Then he sat for some minutes more, staring into the little velvet-lined box.

Where was the watch?

That it had been deliberately taken out of the box was obvious. Some surreptitious person had removed it.

Why? Mr. Quelch was not a suspicious gentleman. He was severe, but he was not at all suspicious. Had there been any other explanation of the disappearance of the watch, he would never have dreamed of supposing that a theft had been committed. The bare thought of a theft at Greyfriars was distasteful to him—more than distasteful—it was revolting. But of what other explanation was he to think?

That any fellow, however fatuous, could take so valuable an article as a gold watch, secretly and surreptitiously, without intending to steal it, and merely for a practical joke, did not enter his mind.

There were fellows of a jesting turn in the Remove, and in other Forms at Greyfriars, but that sort of jest was quite out of the experience of the

"HI, YOU FELLOWS!"

Great News!

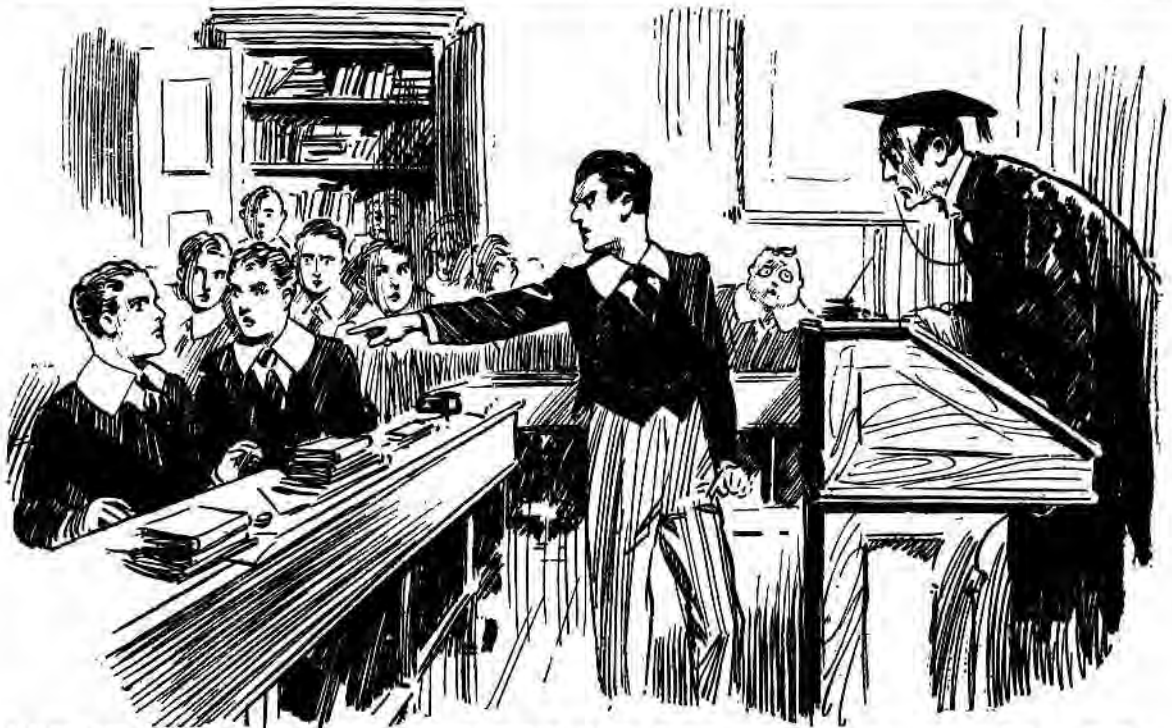


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"If you know who abstracted the watch from my study," said Mr. Quelch, "you will point out the culprit to me." Da Costa raised his hand. "There's the thief!" he said. And with a steady forefinger he pointed at Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove. (See Chapter 12.)

Remove master. Such an idea did not cross his mind; it was not likely to cross anyone's mind.

Only the obtuse mind of William George Bunter could have evolved such a very dangerous sort of a jest. And so far even the crass Owl had not exercised his misdirected gift of practical jokes at the expense of his Form master.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch for a second time.

The Remove master never acted in a hurry.

Something had to be done, and without loss of time; but he considered the matter very carefully first.

It was Monday evening now, and he had purchased that watch in Courtfield on the previous Friday. It had lain in the table drawer since that date—at all events, the box had. At what time the watch had been removed from the box he could not guess. Since Friday, it was certain. Saturday afternoon was a half-holiday, and he remembered that he had played chess with Mr. Wiggins in Masters' Common-room that day. That might have been a thief's opportunity. But Sunday—or Monday—Mr. Quelch stared suddenly as he remembered that he had sent a junior to his study that morning to fetch a map.

He was trying to remember whether any junior had been to the study, when the recollection of that incident came into his mind.

Wharton had been to the study, and he had been censured for taking twice as long as was necessary to fetch the map.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

To suspect Harry Wharton of purloining a watch was practically impossible. Mr. Quelch would almost have suspected himself as soon.

Still, there was the fact! Wharton had been in the study, Wharton had taken much more time than was necessary to fetch the map from the study, and the watch had been taken!

"Impossible!" murmured Mr. Quelch.

It was rather unthinkable that impossible. Mr. Quelch proceeded to reflect further. Sometimes juniors with lines came, and found Mr. Quelch not there to receive them, when they would leave the lines on his table. But he remembered that that had not happened either on Saturday or Monday, and on Sunday there were no lines. Bunter had brought him an impot on Saturday at tea-time, but Mr. Quelch had returned to his study in time to receive that. No junior, so far as he knew, had been to the study at all on Monday, with the exception of Wharton to fetch the map. His brow grew troubled.

He remembered that he had spoken to Bunter in the passage, as he was going away with Mr. Wiggins. But the fat junior had not entered his study so far as he knew. He could not have entered it to steal the watch, for he could not possibly have known that the watch was there. No one had known that excepting Mr. Quelch himself.

And yet, whoever had taken it had found out that it was there. Whoever had taken it had rummaged over the table drawer and found the box, opened it, and taken the watch out.

Bunter had been seen near the study on Saturday afternoon, but there were no grounds for supposing that he had entered. Wharton had actually been in the study on Monday morning—that very morning!

Wharton was above suspicion, so far as any fellow could be, by his reputation and his general conduct. Bunter's reputation was by no means the same; yet stupid and rather unscrupulous as he was, it was difficult to think Bunter a thief. In matters of tuck Bunter had no scruples whatever, and he was prone to keep anything he found by accident, on the ground that findings were keepings. But from that kind of thing to the theft of a valuable article was a very long step indeed—a step that William George Bunter was extremely

unlikely to take. More likely than Wharton, certainly—much more likely than Wharton; nevertheless, extremely unlikely.

Mr. Quelch, like any other Form master, had a natural dislike to finding a serious delinquent in his own Form. He began to consider whether any fellow of another Form might have been to the study.

But he had to give up that line of surmise.

No fellow outside the Remove could be imagined to have any business there at any time. Such a fellow would have ran too much risk. A Remove fellow found in the study always had the excuse to offer that he had come there to see his Form master; a fellow of any other Form would have had no excuse to offer. Mr. Quelch reluctantly dismissed that line of inquiry.

Moreover, if it was a question of deciding what Greyfriars man might have been guilty of so mean a crime as theft, it was as difficult to pick out a man outside the Remove as in it. In all Greyfriars there was no fellow whom Mr. Quelch felt could reasonably be suspected of having purloined a gold watch.

Only—the watch was gone!

If a theft had been committed there was a thief somewhere. As soon as the matter was made public Mr. Quelch knew that all the school would take it for granted that the thief was in the Remove—one of the fellows who went to the study at times, and certainly not one of the fellows who never went to the study at all.

That view would be a reasonable one. Mr. Quelch had to admit it. Indeed, while he hated to think so, he had a feeling of certainty all the time that some Removite was responsible for the watch being missing.

He considered the possibility of the maids, and of Trotter, the page, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,050.

It gave him a wretched feeling of discomfort to be thinking of such things. But they had to be thought of.

Mr. Quelch's face grew more and more harassed.

Willingly he would have sacrificed the value of the lost article to avoid the sensation of searching for a thief.

But that was impossible. If a theft had been committed the matter could not be left where it was. A thief could not be permitted to remain in the school for any consideration whatsoever.

It was possible—barely possible, at least—that the thief had come from below stairs. But Mr. Quelch knew how very improbable it was.

He rang the bell at last for Trotter.

That chubby youth put his face in at the doorway a couple of minutes later. Mr. Quelch scanned that chubby face intently. Certainly Trotter did not look as if he had any guilt on his conscience. "Yessir? You rang, sir?" said Trotter.

"Kindly take a message to Master Wharton, Trotter," said Mr. Quelch, quite satisfied by his scrutiny of the chubby face that Trotter knew nothing of the mysterious occurrence. "Request him to assemble the Remove in the Form-room immediately."

"Yessir!"

Trotter departed, and Mr. Quelch, with a grave face, walked to the Remove-room.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Denounced!

"WHAT'S on?"

"What's his game?"

"Goodness knows!" answered Harry.

The captain of the Remove, having received the message from Trotter, was proceeding to carry out his Form master's instructions.

The Remove fellows had gone into their studies for prep, and most of them were at work when the word was passed along the passage for the Form to assemble in their Form-room.

"First time I've ever known Quelchy to interrupt prep," said Vernon-Smith. "If it's a new custom he's getting up, I hope he'll stick to it!"

"Yes, rather!" grinned Skinner. "I can't say I want to hear Quelchy jaw, but his jaw is a little better than prep. He can't grumble to-morrow if we haven't done any."

"But what's the game?" asked Hazel dene. "Don't you know, Wharton?"

Wharton shook his head.

"Haven't the faintest idea," he answered. "I suppose Quelchy wants to jaw about something."

"The jawfulness is a terrific certainty, at least," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You fellows picnicked on Popper's Island on Saturday, didn't you?" asked Peter Todd. "Has old Popper been here complaining?"

"That's it!" chuckled Skinner. "Sir jolly old Hilton is going to pick out the wicked sinners! If you have tears, prepare to shed them in about ten minutes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rot!" said Bob Cherry. "'Tain't that."

"He, he, he!" came from Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter knows!" exclaimed Bob. "Bunter knows everything, of course! He always will, so long as they make keyholes to doors."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What does Quelchy want us for, Bunter?"

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"Perhaps I can guess and perhaps I can't," grinned Bunter. "I'm not saying anything."

"Fathead!"

"Come on, you men!" said Wharton. "Quelchy doesn't like being kept waiting, and it must be something important to make him call us away from prep."

Da Costa joined Wharton as the Removees trooped down the stairs. His dark eyes were gleaming strangely.

"You do not know what is the matter?" he asked.

"No; but we shall all know soon," said Harry. "Something must be up, of course. This is very unusual."

"Something must have happened," said Da Costa.

"That's a cert."

The Eurasian said no more. He was thinking of the gold watch hidden in Study No. 1, and wondering whether a gold watch, with the initials "R. Q." had been missed. "Q" was the initial of the master who was calling this very unexpected assembly of the Form, and it was obvious that there was something extremely unusual in the wind.

Da Costa was doubtful; but Billy Bunter had no doubts. He was assured that Quelchy had missed the watch at last, and was going to inquire after it. Bunter, certainly, did not mean to tell him anything. Even the obtuse Owl did not surmise that a theft was suspected, and he had not the slightest regret for the wonderful jest he had played on Quelchy. His only regret was that he had not had an opportunity of hiding the watch in Quelchy's Sunday topper. Da Costa's presence in Study No. 1 had prevented that. Quelchy discovering the watch in his Sunday hat would have been a real shriek in Bunter's opinion. Still, there was plenty of time to carry out that screaming joke. The watch was in a safe place, and was not likely to come to light—in Bunter's opinion.

Bunter's fat face wore a grin as he rolled into the Form-room, all the other fellows looking curious and serious. For Mr. Quelch to call his Form away from prep was simply unheard of; and it was clear that something had happened. And every fellow wondered what it was—some of them rather uneasily.

Skinner & Co. had a misgiving that some Greyfriars man might have been seen sneaking in or out of the back way at the Cross Keys, in Friardale. The Bouncer wondered whether a Remove man had been spotted in a car at Wapshot races. The Famous Five were rather worried at the possibility that Sir Hilton Popper had complained of fellows picnicking on his island. Other fellows thought of other little matters—there were few absolutely perfect characters in the Lower Fourth, if any. And when they faced their Form master the expression on his face sent a cold chill down some backs. Mr. Quelch looked not merely serious, but portentous.

"What on earth can it be?" whispered Bob Cherry.

"Silence!"

There was a deep silence in the Form-room.

Mr. Quelch scanned his class. Every face was grave now, with the exception of Bunter's, which wore a lurking grin. Mr. Quelch noted that grin, and in his mind it exonerated Bunter from suspicion. For if the thief was in the Remove, the fellow could hardly be in doubt why this unusual assembly was called. He would guess at once that the theft had been discovered. And most assuredly he was not likely to grin, in that case.

"My boys," said Mr. Quelch, in a

deep voice, "a very strange and unpleasant thing has happened. Unpleasant as it is, I am bound to acquaint you with it at once; but for the present nothing need be said outside the Form-room."

There was a buzz of quickly-drawn breath.

After this exordium, the Remove were almost prepared to hear that a murder had been committed.

"A watch has been abstracted from my study," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped the Remove.

"A gold watch, which I had intended to send as a present to my nephew. The initials "R. Q." are engraved on the case, and the watch, therefore, can be easily identified."

"Oh!"

"Someone has taken this watch from a box in my table drawer," pursued Mr. Quelch. "I have assembled my Form to inquire into the matter. Any boy present who knows anything of it will stand forward. The thief must be discovered."

Nobody stood forward. There was a long, long silence.

There were two fellows in the Remove who knew something of the matter. Arthur Da Costa knew that the watch was hidden in No. 1 Study. Billy Bunter knew who had hidden it there. Neither made a movement.

Da Costa's mind was almost in a whirl.

The watch had been stolen—that was officially announced now. The stolen watch was hidden in Wharton's desk.

Wharton was the thief!

That was as plain to the Eurasian as anything possibly could be. He had been deceived by Wharton, or, rather, he had deceived himself. For the sake of this fellow whom he had admired, trusted, and believed in, he had resolved to break with the schemer who had sent him to Greyfriars—to give up a brilliant future that was promised him as a reward, and to lose everything. And the fellow he had admired, trusted, and believed in, was a thief—a miserable, secret, surreptitious thief—a worse fellow than Da Costa himself—a fellow who had done a thing that even the half-caste would have hesitated to do!

There was no doubt of it in the half-caste's mind.

With all his astuteness he had been taken in by an utter sham. He had believed this fellow better than himself, and had resolved to emulate him, and all the while he was a base rascal.

Perhaps Da Costa was glad to make that supposed-discovery. If this was what Wharton was, the sooner he was kicked out of Greyfriars in disgrace the better. He, alone of all the fellows there, knew who the thief was, and could give him up to justice with a clear conscience, and, at the same time, carry out Captain Marker's instructions, and earn his reward.

Friendship? He had no friendship for a thief! No regard for a fellow who had imposed on him and deluded him.

His feeling towards Wharton now was one of bitter resentment—the feeling of a cunning schemer who found that he had been tricked by one more cunning than himself.

Keep the secret, save the thief from justice, and, at the same time, sacrifice his own prospects by breaking with Captain Marker! It was not likely. Let the thief take what was coming to him.

The half-caste's olive face grew hard and bitter. In the long silence that followed Mr. Quelch's announcement he

was thinking hard, and thinking rapidly.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter was in an unenviable frame of mind.

He stood rooted to the floor, almost stunned by the shock he had received. The word "thief" danced before his eyes in letters of flame.

Only now did the hapless Owl realise how his action was, and must be, regarded. Apparently, it had not even occurred to Quelch that a fellow had been larking with his watch. He thought it had been stolen. Bunter's fat heart quaked within him. Thieves were expelled—a thief would be flogged by the Head, and kicked out of the school, sent home in undying disgrace and shame. If Bunter had been resolved to keep dark his part in the transaction before, he was doubly resolved now.

The Owl of the Remove was not grinning now. His face was sickly, his eyes dilated behind his big spectacles.

The silence in the Form-room grew painful. Mr. Quelch was waiting—and he waited long. At last he broke the silence, and his voice, though not loud, startled the Remove like a thunderclap.

"My boys, I fear—I cannot help but fear—that there is a thief in my Form! Before investigation is carried outside the Remove, the fullest inquiry must be made in this Form. If any boy present is guilty of this wretched theft, I beg him to confess. If any other boy is aware of it—if any boy had seen the stolen article in anyone's possession—I beg him to stand forward and tell me what he knows, in order that this miserable matter may be cleared up, and honourable boys cleared of all possible suspicion."

There was another long, long pause.

Then Arthur da Costa stepped forward from the ranks of the Remove.

"You know something of this, Da Costa?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Yess, sir!"

"What do you know?"

"I know who is the thief."

There was a sensation in the Remove.

Mr. Quelch started.

"You know the thief, Da Costa?"

"Yess."

"Is he present?"

"Yess."

"Before you speak a name, Da Costa, tell me how this knowledge has been obtained by you? No unthinking accusation must be made. The matter is too terribly serious for that! How do you know?"

"I have seen the watch, sir."

"In the possession of a Remove boy?"

"Yess."

"Then you will point out the boy."

Da Costa raised his hand.

"There's the thief!" he said.

And, with a steady forefinger he pointed at Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Wharton!

"WHARTON!" Almost every fellow present gasped.

Da Costa's statement had amazed the Remove; but when his finger pointed at Harry Wharton, they were absolutely astounded.

Wharton himself only stared at Da Costa.

He was so astonished that for a moment or two he did not grasp the full significance of the accusation.

He did not speak. He only stared blankly at the Eurasian, as if not understanding.

Da Costa repeated his words in a low, distinct voice.

"There stands the thief!"

There was a sudden roar from Bob Cherry. For the moment Bob had been, like the rest, utterly astounded. Now he found his voice.

"You fool! How dare you? You rotter!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"He's calling Wharton a thief!" stuttered Bob. "Why, the rotter! The fool! The scoundrel! I'll smash him! f—I—I—!" Bob fairly gasped.

"Silence! Silence, I say!"

But all the Remove were in a buzz with excitement now, and it was not easy for silence to be restored. However, it was restored at last, and Mr. Quelch addressed Da Costa.

"Da Costa, you state that you have seen the stolen watch in the possession of Wharton?"

"Yess, sir."

"You are making no mistake about this?"

"No, sir."

"Wharton, what have you to say?" asked Mr. Quelch. "Step out before the Form, and speak up, my boy!"

The Remove master's tone was very kind. The recollection was in his mind that Wharton, of all the Form, was the only fellow known to have gone to his study in his absence. That was, at least, circumstantial evidence in support of Da Costa's unexpected accusation. Yet, with his eyes on the flushed face of the captain of the Remove, Mr. Quelch could not, and did not think, that his guilt was in the least probable. Never had his manner been more kind and considerate than it was now.

Wharton stepped out.

EDITORIAL.

NEXT week's grand long complete story of Greyfriars shows Da Costa still bent on accomplishing Harry Wharton's downfall, but for all the Eurasian's wily cunning and scheming he receives a set-back just at the moment when the success of the dastardly plan he has put in operation seems assured. In "BY LUCK AND PLUCK!" readers will find the best story of the week.

THE RETURN OF FERRERS LOCKE!

For some time now letters have reached me asking for another serial story featuring Ferrers Locke, the detective, and his boy assistant, Jack Drake. Well, those two popular characters will be with you chaps again in a fortnight's time. How's that? The mystery Ferrers Locke is called upon to solve this time centres around the astonishing number of liners that have disappeared in the Southern Pacific Ocean without leaving any trace. That piracy is being practised on a wholesale plan is pretty obvious to Locke, and his job is to discover this modern Captain Kidd and hand him over to justice. Not an easy job, or a particularly healthy one, either. Still, the famous Baker Street detective tackles it with his usual keenness and resource. Magnetites will enjoy this coming treat to the full. Make a note of the title:

THE LORD OF LOST ISLAND!

and tell your pals that if they want to read a really good detective adventure yarn it is to be found in the MAGNET in a fortnight's time. Now have a squint at the announcement on page 18 of this issue, which speaks of Birthday Gifts, and then trot round to your newsagent and buy this week's "Popular." You'll not regret it, chums.—Ed.

His face was crimson. Under the stare of so many eyes, with so infamous an accusation levelled against him, that was natural enough. But there was no sign of confusion about him.

He gave Da Costa one look—a look that made the Eurasian wince, so cool and cold and contemptuous was it. It was such a look as Wharton might have given to a detected thief—he looked more like the accuser than the accused. But it was only for a moment that he glanced at Da Costa. He looked at his Form master with a look that was clear and fearless.

"I have nothing to say, sir, except that what Da Costa says is untrue."

"You know nothing of the watch?"

"Nothing, sir! I had never even heard of it till you mentioned it in this room a few minutes ago."

Da Costa's lip curled bitterly.

"That is a lie!" he said.

Wharton clenched his hands.

"Am I bound to listen to that, sir?" he exclaimed passionately.

"Certainly not. Be silent, Da Costa, until I tell you to speak," snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Very well, yess, sir."

"This is most extraordinary," said Mr. Quelch. "Da Costa's statement is explicit. A mistake may have been made: he may have seen you with some other gold watch and fancied—"

"I have na gold watch, sir," said Harry. "My own watch is silver. I have not had any gold watch in my hands this term."

"Very well: you will give me further details of the matter, Da Costa. How and when did you, as you allege, see the watch in Wharton's possession?"

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A pin might have been heard to drop in the Remove Form-room, as the juniors listened for Da Costa's reply.

"I saw it in his desk in his study, sir," said Da Costa, in a clear voice. "It was, and is, hidden there under some old papers and books."

"What do you say to that, Wharton?"

"It's untrue, sir."

"You are willing for your desk to be searched?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Kindly explain how you came to make the discovery, Da Costa," said Mr. Quelch. "If the watch is, as you say, hidden in Wharton's desk, and by Wharton, he could not have expected his study-mates to find it there. If it was concealed as you describe, how did you chance to see it?"

Da Costa breathed hard for a moment. "I was looking through the desk, sir," he answered.

"For what reason?"

There was an instant's pause. But it was only for an instant; to the wily Oriental lying came easily enough.

"I had lost a letter, sir—a letter from the solicitor, Mr. Gedge, who brought me to Greyfriars. I thought it might have been placed in the desk—many things have been put into the desk when the study was tidied up. I was looking for it."

Mr. Quelch gazed at him.

"You were looking for a letter you had lost, and supposed might have been thrown into the desk?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you suppose that it might have become hidden under, as you say, a number of old books and papers?"

"I could not find it, sir, so I searched through the desk."

"Did you ask Wharton's permission to search his desk?"

"I did not think of it, sir."

"I fear, Da Costa, that I cannot accept your statement. It would appear to me that you were searching the desk from motives of curiosity: you had no right whatever to do so."

"Spying cad!" muttered Bob Cherry loud enough for all the Form to hear.

Da Costa did not speak. As a matter of fact, he knew that his explanation was a lame one: and he cared little if he was supposed to have been prying.

"If, however, you saw the watch hidden there, other details are immaterial at the moment," said the Remove master. "When did you make this discovery, Da Costa?"

"This afternoon, sir."

"Did you mention it to anyone?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"I did not know then that a watch had been stolen. I wondered why it was there, so carefully hidden—a watch with initials engraved on it that were not Wharton's. I did not know what to think. I should have known, had I known that a watch had been stolen. But I did not know then."

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch. "If the matter is as you state, the stolen watch is there now?"

"Yes, sir, unless Wharton has removed it since."

Wharton's eyes gleamed at him. But he did not speak.

"Search will be made immediately," said Mr. Quelch. "Describe exactly the hiding-place of the watch, Da Costa."

"The lowest drawer on the left hand side, sir. The drawer is nearly full of papers and books and other things: the watch is at the bottom."

"I shall go to the study immediately. You boys will remain here—and keep order! I forbid you to leave your

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places for one moment during my absence."

Mr. Quelch left the Form-room. There was a buzz of voices at once.

Every fellow had something to say—with one exception. That exception was Billy Bunter—a remarkable exception. For as a rule, Bunter had twice as much to say on any subject as any other fellow.

But the Owl of the Remove was dumb now.

The wretched Owl was rooted to the floor with terror. This unexpected and terrible sequel to his fatuous practical joke had overwhelmed him. He dare not speak out—and yet he knew that he could not keep silent if the captain of the Remove was adjudged guilty of theft. Bunter's fat mind was almost dizzy with horror at what he had done. But he clung to the hope that Wharton would not be adjudged guilty. A sneaking, spying worm like Da Costa might think the worst of anybody: but surely old Quelch would have too much sense. Bunter hung on to that hope.

Something like a storm was breaking over Da Costa's head. Wharton disregarded him with utter scorn and loathing: but the other fellows told him what they thought. Explicit as his statement was, nobody in the Remove believed a word of it. The most charitable supposition was that the fellow was wandering in his mind.

Only Hurree Jamset Ram Singh fixed his dark eyes on the half-caste—wonderingly, searchingly. Back into the nabob's mind came the strange tale Bunter had told—of a plot to disgrace the captain of the Remove and drive him from the school—a plot in which Da Costa had a hand. He had almost forgotten it—Bunter, indeed, had forgotten it by this time. But Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was thinking of it now.

Mr. Quelch was absent only a few minutes.

The excited voices died away, as the Form-master returned. He entered the Form-room, and all eyes fixed on him. Mr. Quelch held up a gold watch for all the juniors to see.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!" said Harry firmly.

"I have discovered this watch—the missing watch—concealed in a drawer of your desk, precisely as described by Da Costa."

Wharton stared at him.

"In my desk, sir?"

"Yes. What explanation have you to make?"

Wharton did not reply for a moment. He was completely taken aback. Not for an instant had he supposed that the watch really was in the desk at all.

"Well?" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"I know nothing of it, sir," stammered the captain of the Remove. "I never put it there, I know that."

"This morning, Wharton, I sent you to my study to fetch a map," said Mr. Quelch. "You were gone much longer than was necessary."

Wharton started.

"I—I remember, sir."

"You could have gone to my study and fetched the map from my table, and returned here, in a very few minutes. You were gone six or seven minutes."

"I—I didn't hurry, sir—"

"Did you find this watch in my table drawer while you were there, and take it away, Wharton?"

"No, sir!" exclaimed Harry. "Certainly not." The colour came and went in his cheeks. "You can't suspect me of such a thing."

"I am sorry to say, Wharton, that you are under very serious suspicion now," said Mr. Quelch, and his look and voice

were hard. "So far as is known, you were the only person to enter my study during my absence—and the watch has been discovered concealed in your desk, in your study. I do not lose sight of the fact that the thief may have hidden it there without your knowledge. That is a possibility. But—" Mr. Quelch paused. "Wharton, before this matter goes further, have you anything to say—anything to confess?"

"I've said all I can, sir. I never knew the watch was there, and I don't know who put it there."

"That is all you can say?"

"That's all, sir."

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch. "You will now come with me to your headmaster, Wharton, and Dr. Locke will judge the matter."

Wharton's lips quivered a little. "I'm ready, sir," he answered.

"The Form will remain here for the present," added Mr. Quelch. "Come, Wharton."

He moved to the door, and Wharton followed him. They went in the midst of a dead silence, which, as they reached the door, was suddenly broken by an agonized squeak from Billy Bunter.

"Oh, dear! D-d-don't go to the Head, sir! It—it—it wasn't Wharton, sir! Oh, crumbs! Oh, dear! Ow!"

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter to the Rescue!

BILLY BUNTER spluttered out the words.

Mr. Quelch stopped and turned.

"Bunter! What did you say?" he rapped.

"Ow!"

"Do you know anything of this occurrence, Bunter?"

"Oh, dear! Yes, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"If you know anything of it, Bunter, tell me at once what you know," snapped Mr. Quelch, and he motioned to Wharton to remain where he was. "Stand out here, Bunter."

The Owl of the Remove dragged himself out with reluctant footsteps. He quaked from head to foot under the Form-master's piercing eye.

"Now, Bunter, state what you know briefly. I am waiting."

"It—it—it—it was a joke, sir," groaned Bunter.

"What? What was a joke? What do you mean?"

"The—the watch, sir—oh, dear!"

"Calm yourself, Bunter! You have nothing to fear, if you can throw light on this matter."

Bunter did not feel at all sure of that.

"Did you know that the watch was hidden in Wharton's desk, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know who placed it there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was it Wharton?"

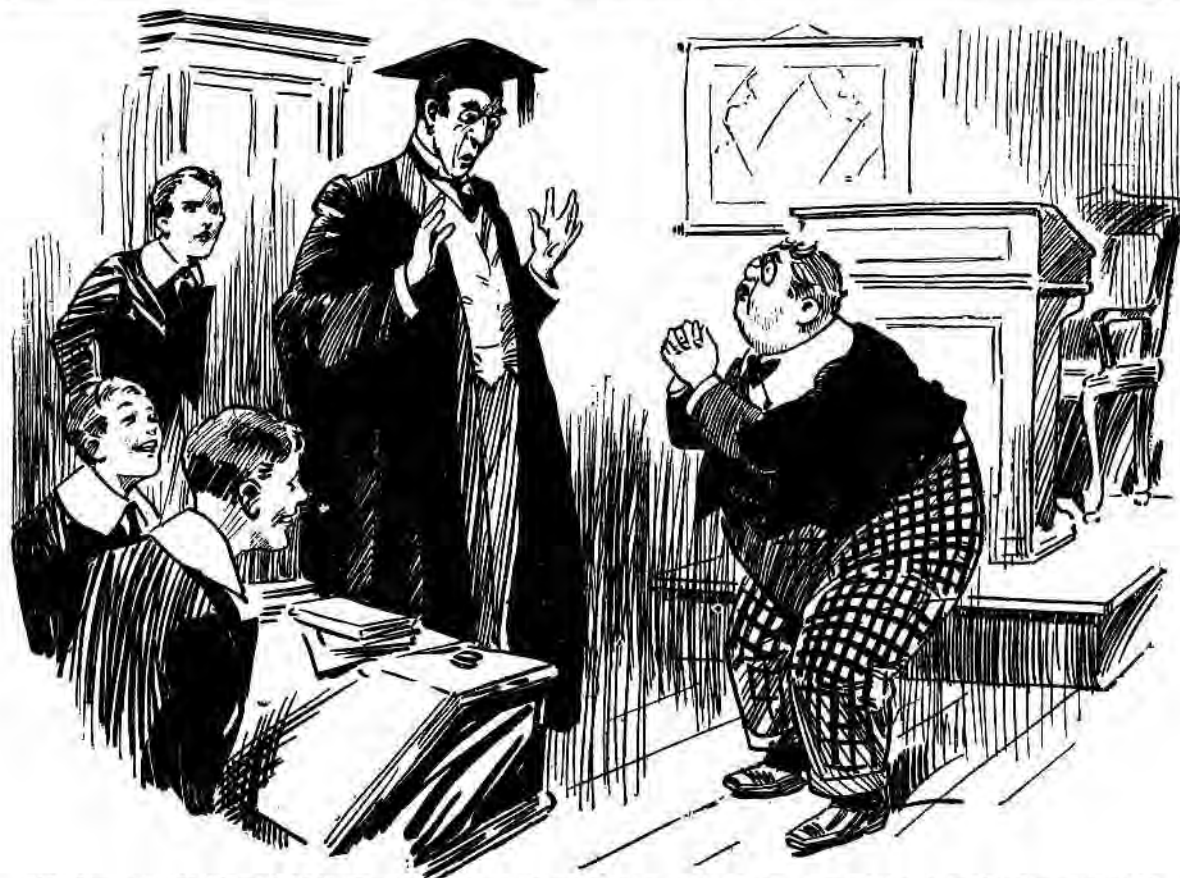
"Nunno, sir."

The Remove fellows stared at Bunter. Harry Bunter felt a weight lifting from his heart. Certainly, this was the very last quarter from which he would have expected rescue in an emergency. Billy Bunter, for once in his fat and fatuous career, was coming in useful.

Da Costa's eyes glittered at Bunter. For the first time, it came into his mind that he might have made a mistake—that his cunning suspicion and distrust had made him over-reach himself.

He listened almost in fear.

"You must tell me all you know



"I—I'm not a thief," wailed Billy Bunter. "I put the watch there to hide it, sir. I was going to put it where you could find it next Sunday, sir." "Where?" snapped Mr. Quelch. "In—in your Sunday hat, sir." "In—in—m-m-my Sunday hat!" babbled the Remove master, gazing at the Owl of the Remove as if fascinated. (See Chapter 14.)

Bunter. The watch was placed in the desk by the person who abstracted it from my study. That is certain. If you know who concealed it in Wharton's desk, you know who took it in the first place."

"Yes, sir," gasped Bunter.

"Was the thief a Remove boy?"

"Ow! No! Oh, no!"

"It was some person not belonging to the Remove?" asked Mr. Quelch, with a feeling of hope and relief.

"No, sir."

"What? What do you mean, Bunter?"

"I—I mean he wasn't a thief, sir," gasped the Owl of the Remove.

"Not a thief!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Ow! No! It was a joke, sir," mumbled Bunter. "Just a joke on you, sir, to hide the watch and make you hunt for it, sir."

"A joke on me!" repeated Mr. Quelch, with such a look as Jove, on high Olympus, might have greeted such a statement. Mr. Quelch had hitherto supposed himself immune from jokes.

"Yes, sir!" groaned the fat junior.

"Do you state, Bunter, that some boy dared—that some boy was so crassly and incredibly stupid—as to abstract an article of considerable value from my study for the purpose of a practical joke?"

"Ow! Yes."

"His name?" thundered Mr. Quelch. Bunter jumped.

It was hardly necessary for him to give the name. All the Remove had guessed it by this time.

"Oh, dear! Me, sir!" mumbled Bunter.

"You!"

"Yes, sir! Oh, dear!"

"You admit having abstracted the watch from my table-drawer?" almost stuttered Mr. Quelch. "You state that you committed such an action—an action that could only be construed as a theft—for the purpose of a practical joke on your Form-master?"

"Oh, dear! You—you see, sir—those lines mucked up my half-holiday," gasped Bunter. "Of course, I wasn't thinking of paying you out for giving me that impot on Saturday, sir."

"What?"

"Nothing of the kind, sir. I—I—I thought—I—I thought it would—would amuse you, sir—"

"Bless my soul! You must have been prying in my study, Bunter, to discover the watch there at all?"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I wouldn't have thought of such a thing, sir—"

"Then how did you know the watch was in the drawer?"

"I—I heard it ticking, sir."

"It was not wound up!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Wasn't it, sir? I—I mean, I—I didn't hear it ticking, sir! That—that was what I really meant to say, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch. "This is not a laughing matter. Bunter, for what reason did you go to my table-drawer, if not to steal this watch?"

"Oh, dear! Tho—the lines, sir—"

"Lines! What lines?"

"The lines I did on Friday, sir. I—I thought I might find them and use them over again, sir," groaned Bunter.

"Upon my word!"

"I—I happened to see the watch in

the box, sir, and—thought it would be—rather—rather a lark to hide it somewhere, sir."

"You incredibly stupid boy! Am I to understand that you concealed the watch in Wharton's desk?"

"Toddy was in my study, sir, and so I couldn't put it there—he would have seen it, and—and—made a fuss. I—I had to put it somewhere. I knew Wharton never used that drawer in his desk, so it was safe there. I was going to take it away this afternoon and put it somewhere else, only that beast Da Costa was in the study, and I couldn't. It's all his fault."

Mr. Quelch gazed at the Owl of the Remove.

"Did you not understand, Bunter, that when the watch was missed, it would be supposed that a theft had been committed?"

"Oh, dear! No, sir! I—I'm not a thief!" wailed Billy Bunter. "I put the watch there to hide it, sir. I was going to put it where you could find it next Sunday, sir."

"Where?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"In—in your Sunday hat, sir."

"In—in—m-m-my Sunday hat!" babbled Mr. Quelch.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!"

"Then you'd have found it, sir, without knowing who had done it, sir," gasped Bunter. "It was only—only a joke, sir! Oh, dear!"

Mr. Quelch gazed at Bunter as if fascinated. He knew that Bunter was amazingly obtuse; that if prizes had been handed out at Greyfriars for

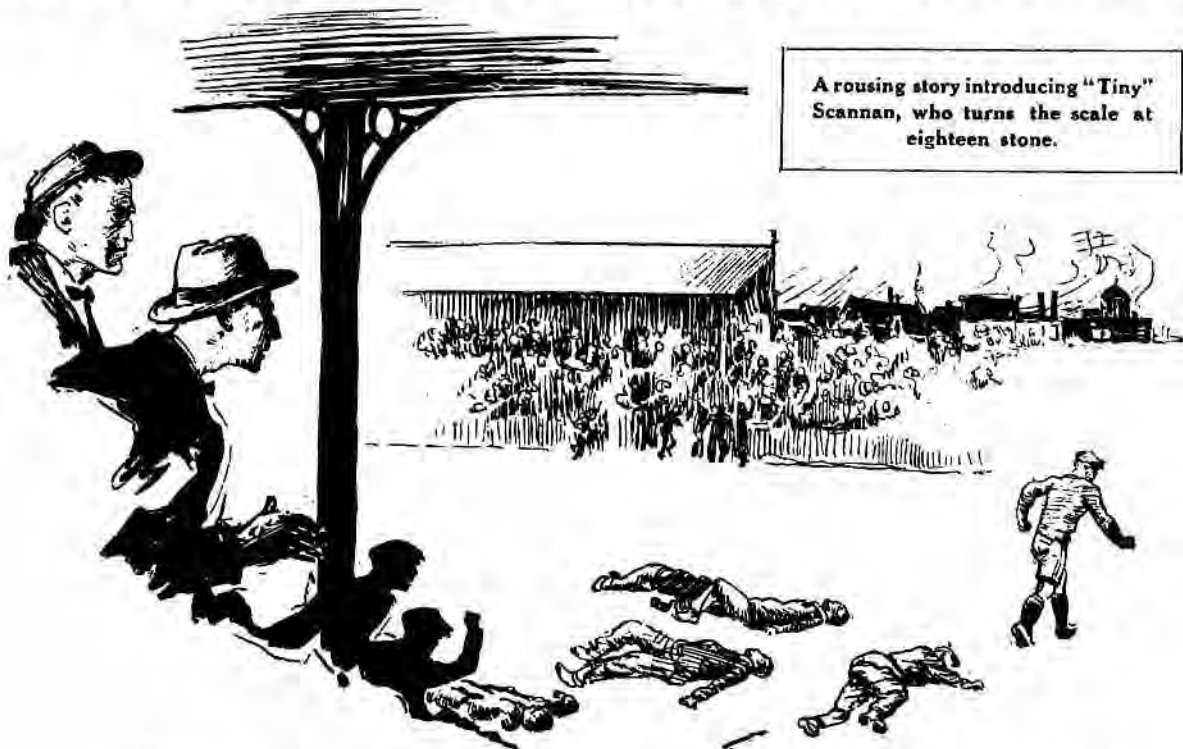
(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,060.

THE FUNKY CHAMPION! At all costs Pal Jordan, the American boxer, is determined to evade his forthcoming fight with Tiny Scannan, the despised "novice," for Pal's seen for himself that Tiny is a world-beater with sudden death in each of his fists!

THE MAN OF IRON!

By
WALTER EDWARDS.



More Goals!

GRAINGER, the United's half-back, was dour and determined as he waited for his man, and he looked positively cross when Battle, phantom-like, eluded his wild rush; and the West London supporters did not improve matters by shouting rude remarks at the disgruntled Scot.

"Go home, Grainger!"

"What's the matter with you?"

Grainger, as a matter of fact, was suffering from severe inflammation of the temper, and the things he thought about the yelling fans should have made their ears burn.

McNault was soon in the picture, but he had no better luck than Grainger, and the enclosure was in the grip of pandemonium when the diminutive winger swung his leg and placed the leather in the goalmouth.

"Shoot!"

"In with it!"

"Eads up, you!"

"Goal!"

"Ah-h-h-h!"

It was not to be, though, for Crabtree placed his gloveless fists together and gave a prolonged leap-upward and forward.

Boomph!

The ball sailed over the sea of bobbing heads and fell at the feet of Noyle, and Noyle, taking a lightning glance at the goal, let drive with all the power of his magnificent leg muscles.

Boomph!

Travelling with the speed of a projectile, the leather flashed through the air and crashed against the crossbar, rebounding into play and going back to the Storrydene inside-left. Again Noyle let drive, and on this occasion his luck was in.

Goal!

The leather had flashed into the net
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,060.

almost before Crabtree realised what had happened, but the Storrydene folk lost no time in acquainting him with the true facts of the case.

The Midlanders were two goals up.

This disastrous state of affairs was anything but pleasant to the United's supporters, and many pungent remarks were addressed to Jock Cappell and his unhappy warriors.

"Wake up, Jock!"

"D'you call yourselves footballers?"

"You're like a lot of old hens!"

"Brighten your ideas up a bit, Meadows!"

The West London centre-forward was scowling as he prepared to kick-off for the third time that afternoon, and his parting words were anything but jubilant as the referee placed the whistle to his lips.

Phceep!

The attack was grim and determined from the resumption of play, and in a matter of seconds the Londoners' forward line had swept down the field and was bombarding Tiny Scannan from all angles; Tiny, however, a taunting grin on his face, proceeded to play the game of his life. His sense of anticipation was almost uncanny, for his muscular hands seemed to magnetise the ball; and he amused himself by tossing the leather to the West London forwards and inviting them to take a shot.

This taunting, contemptuous attitude roused both the players and the crowd, and the air was soon filled with wild, threatening shouts. But still Tiny carried on, indifferent to the riot that might break out at any moment, and had Terry Carson not gained possession and set off on his own there is no knowing what might have been the outcome of the scene.

Carving his way through the press of players, the brown-haired youngster flew across the turf and entered enemy

A rousing story introducing "Tiny" Scannan, who turns the scale at eighteen stone.

country, and all went well with him until he came up against the Two Macs, who seemed to lose their heads in the excitement of the moment.

McNault's great jaw was thrust forward as he bore down upon the fleet-footed youngster, and he muttered savagely when he was tricked with seeming ease.

"Stop him, Sandy!" he yelled, pounding after Terry; but his shout was drowned by the roar of voices and the ear-splitting din of rattles and trumpets.

The Storrydene fans were giving tongue.

"You're through, lad!"

"Shoot!"

"Dirty!"

"Play the game, McNault!"

"Now then, lad!"

"Sh-o-o-t!"

Boomph!

"G-O-A-L!"

Although Terry had been tripped by McNault, he managed to recover his balance to beat Crabtree with a shot that the bewildered custodian did not even see, let alone save!

Five Blows!

HAVING been beaten "all ends up," McNault had thrust out a treacherous foot and hooked the youngster's ankle. Terry Carson was still stumbling when he managed to get his toe to the ball; and then, losing his balance, he pitched forward and turned a complete somersault, coming to his feet with the agility of a professional acrobat.

The fact that McNault had been guilty of a deliberate foul was forgotten in the excitement that followed the spectacular goal, and the name of Terry Carson must have been heard all over Fulham; but Tiny Scannan, for one, refused to overlook the flagrant offence.

His stentorian voice floated down upon the steady breeze.

"You dirty Scotchman!" roared the giant, shaking a massive fist. "Play the game! You are as bad as the mob of hooligans who back you up!" He took in the crowd with a wave of his hand. "You're a lot of dirty, unsportsmanlike——"

Scannan was allowed to say no more, for a howl of rage, menacing and venomous, welled up from all sides. It was a tragical moment, and it needed but the weight of a straw to start a riot.

The referee, his eyes blazing, tore down the pitch and confronted the goalkeeper.

"That's enough of that!" he snapped, glaring up at Scannan. "I understand that this isn't the first time you've insulted a crowd! Cut it out, or you'll get marching orders—and quick!"

"But——"

"Shut up!" commanded the official, who knew all about mob psychology. "Cut it out! Understand?"

Scannan nodded.

The ground was still seething with unrest when the game was resumed, and the passion of the mob rose with the passing of seconds. There was a vicious undercurrent that could be felt by everybody, a curious tension that might snap at any moment; and the mention of Tiny Scannan's name brought forth hisses and boos.

This unsettled state of affairs affected the footballers, and the play became spiritless and ragged; and there was not a player who did not heave a sigh of relief when the whistle blew for half-time.

A sudden, ominous silence settled upon the vast concourse as Tiny left his goal and strolled nonchalantly across the field, and Terry Carson looked uneasy as the big fellow approached the narrow aperture that led to the dressing-room and waved a mocking hand to the hard-faced fans in the grand-stand.

There was a terrace—a series of concrete steps—in front of the stand, and a number of hooligans who glared over the palings were obviously ready for trouble. They were burly fellows for the most part, young men of the bruiser type; and it so happened that they managed to catch Tiny Scannan's eyes.

And Scannan, catching sight of the scowling faces, grinned unpleasantly.

"Got anything to say?" he asked, coming to a standstill and employing his usual question; and he received his answer in dramatic fashion.

Uttering a low snarl, five hooligans leapt over the wooden barrier and rushed at the sneering giant.

"At 'im!" growled their leader, a man as big as Scannan himself. "Bash 'im, mates!"

With stick upraised, the leader jumped at Scannan: and then it happened.

Smack! Smack! Smack—smack—smack!

Tiny struck five blows with the speed of a snake—each blow sent a hooligan crashing to the ground: and each hooligan rolled over and remained still—knocked out!

Not a sound broke from the staring crowd as the giant grinned down at his victims and continued on his way, and he had disappeared before the uncanny silence was shattered into a million pieces. Then the whole universe seemed to rock in a cataclysmal roar of voices.

Leaning forward in their seats, Pal Jordan and Abe Maulstein stared down at the five still forms, like persons transfixed, and it was not until the police had removed the senseless hooligans that the Pittsburgh Dentist turned to his companion.

"It sure happened, Abe," breathed Pal, his voice no more than a scared whisper.

"It sure did," agreed Maulstein, removing his broad-brimmed hat and mopping his brow. "Pshaw!"

"He's—he's a man-eater, Abe!"

"He sure is," agreed Maulstein, still mopping.

"A blamed cannibal!"

"Sure," nodded Maulstein. "Got anything on your hip, Pal?"

Mechanically, the boxer produced a silver-topped flask from his hip-pocket and handed it to his manager; and Maulstein swallowed a large quantity of brandy to steady his nerves.

The Americans sat very still for a full minute, their thoughts upon the forthcoming contest at the Olympus Boxing Hall; and it gradually dawned upon Maulstein that Harry the Rat's report had been true in every detail. Maulstein, in dismissing the Rat, had accused him of concocting a sensational story with the idea of making a few easy dollars, yet in view of those five devastating punches he could well understand the supreme confidence that reigned in the other camp. Tiny Scannan was a man-eater, he told himself, a cannibal, for there was not another human being who could have knocked five strong men senseless with five punches.

And that was not all.

Tiny was no snail: he was as nimble-footed as a light-weight. And he was quick: as quick as a rattler darting from its coil. He was a world-beater—and Pal Jordan was to meet him that evening for fifty thousand pounds a-side!

There was something else, as well, a clause that Sir Aubrey had put in the articles. The stake money would be forfeited in the event of either boxer failing to be inside the ropes on the stroke of nine-thirty.

Abe Maulstein breathed hard.

"We've got to go through with it, Pal," he drawled, his little eyes upon his companion's fleshy features.

The Dentist nodded and grunted, but he made no reply.

"He'll go all to bits once he gets inside the ropes," continued Abe. "You said so, didn't you?"

Again the Dentist grunted, and Maulstein ran on:

"And you said you'd get him in the first minute, didn't you? And you said he wouldn't last a round! And you said——"

"Bo!" drawled Pal Jordan, speaking very gravely. "I wouldn't get inside a ring with that guy if you promised to pay me ten thousand dollars a punch! He ain't human, Abe! He's a man-eater!" Again Pal paused. "Bo," he concluded, "I'm through!"

INTRODUCTION.

Sir Aubrey Ailen, chairman of the *Storrydene F.C.*, and a big gun in the sporting world, is convinced that the *Storrydene* goalkeeper—a giant of a man—could make mince-meat of Pal Jordan, pugilist with a big reputation from the United States. The big thing, however, is to arrange a match, and Sir Aubrey sets about this task with his usual cunning. After a bout in which Scannan, acting upon orders, allows himself to be knocked out in the first round by Jordan, the wily Sir Aubrey experiences no difficulty in arranging a second match for fifty thousand pounds a-side. Then Sir Aubrey Ailen organises a charity football match in aid of the Greater London Hospitals—his sole reason being to put Scannan in the limelight. With misgivings in their hearts, Jordan and Maulstein watch Scannan's prodigious fists punch out shot after shot with force that brings hysterical shouts from every fan on the ground. *Storrydene* score first through Terry Carson, and barely does the applause die down when another *Storrydene* forward in battle is seen to trick his man and race away in the direction of the opponents' goal.

(Now read on.)

Staring at his companion in speechless amazement, Abe Maulstein remained like a person turned to stone.

"You're—you're through, Pal?" he breathed at length, his Semitic face ghastly in its pallor. "You're crazy! You're plumb loco! Think, Pal! Think! It means that I lose fifty thousand of the best if you don't show up at the Olympus to-night! It means——"

"And it means that I become cold meat if I do show up," put in the Pittsburgh Dentist. "There's sudden death in that big guy's mitt. It'd be cold-blooded murder! No, Abe! I ain't takin' none! Anybody can have my share!"

"But the money! Fifty thousand——"

"Forget it!" drawled Pal, waving the monetary side of the business away. "I'm crying off! I ain't going to fight! Got that, old-timer?"

Slowly a wave of angry blood overspread Maulstein's face, and into his little eyes there crept an ugly red light, the light of a glowing cinder.

"You're rank yellow, you skunk!" breathed Abe ferociously, his strong fingers closing upon Pal's wrist. "You've got cold feet! The thought of gettin' a licking scares you stiff! You're as yellow——"

"Hold on a bit, old-timer," put in Pal, swallowing his rage. "And what if Scannan don't show up? What if he ain't at the Olympus at a half after nine? Don't this forfeit clause cut both ways?"

The red light died out of Abe Maulstein's narrowed eyes, giving place to an expression of vulpine cunning. He searched his companion's face—and understood.

"You mean——" he began, his voice shaking.

"Sure," nodded the Dentist, showing his teeth in a grin. "Keep Scannan out of the way until a half after nine and Ailen will have to cough up fifty thousand of the best and brightest! And me—well, I'm saved from the type of sudden death that don't make no particular appeal to me! In a word, Abe, Tiny Scannan's got to be fixed between now and half-past nine to-night!"

"B-but how?" breathed Maulstein, quivering with excitement. "How's it to be done?"

"Come with me, old-timer," drawled the pugilist, getting to his feet and making for an exit. "I'll tell the world that I've just had a rush of brains to the head!"

The Hero!

SIR AUBREY AILEN was waiting in the dressing-room when the players trooped in at half-time, and the uncanny grin upon his fleshy countenance suggested that he was well pleased with the way things were going.

"Splendid, my dear fellow!" he cried, slapping the Man of Iron upon the back. "The story of those five punches will be in all the evening papers. And what better advertisement could you have than that? The Olympus'll be packed, and I bet we'll have to turn hundreds of pounds away!" There was something very like hero-worship in his little eyes as he beamed up at the towering figure of Tiny Scannan. "You certainly pack a wallop, as the Americans say!"

"Talking about Americans," put in the quiet voice of Terry Carson, "I wonder what Pal Jordan thought of those sudden-death punches?"

"Pal Jordan!" echoed the Man of Iron, swinging round upon the young-

"What's Jordan got to do with it, anyway?"

"He's here this afternoon—in the grand-stand."

"Alone?"

"No; he's with a fat-faced fellow with a hooked nose."

"Maulstein!" said Sir Aubrey, with a swift glance at Scannan. Then to Terry: "You're sure it was Jordan?"

"Quite sure," answered the youngster. "I recognised him at once; for I was at the Olympics the night he fought Dave Ironmonger."

Tiny Scannan pursed his lips and looked thoughtful.

"Well, I don't see that it matters," he said.

"Nor me!" declared Allen, with an oily laugh. "Everything is signed and sealed, and even Maulstein wouldn't be able to find a loophole in the articles. He may have got a bit of a shock when he saw you lay those five chaps out just now, but he and Pal won't be able to back out of to-night's scrap on that score. Not on your life!"

"Is it likely that they'd try to back out?" asked Hefty Hebble. "Mean to say they aren't good sportsmen?"

"Good sportsmen!" echoed the portly baronet, and he appeared to be greatly amused at the mere idea. "Why, those two Americans are so crooked that if you stuck a batpin into either of 'em it would come out a corkscrew! Abe Maulstein's the most unscrupulous boxing manager in the States, and what he doesn't know about the dirty side of the winking game isn't worth knowing!" He rubbed his plump hands together and grinned up at Tiny Scannan. "But he's met his match this journey, eh, Tiny?" he chuckled.

It seemed to Terry Carson and the other fellows that Sir Aubrey was paying himself a very doubtful compliment, but they all felt quite sure that Allen would prove more than a match for the wily Mr. Maulstein if it came to a battle of wits and trickery.

"Abe stands to lose fifty thousand pounds to-night," continued the baronet; "so I can imagine what his feelings are at this moment."

"But what about Pal?" asked Scannan, with a broad grin. "We know that he hasn't troubled to train for to-night's scrap; so I bet he ain't looking forward to it now he knows that I'm a man-eater, a world-beater, a man of iron! And don't forget that he ain't at all partial to punishment. I reckon he pretty well faded away when he saw those five fellers go down for the count; I must have scared the life out of him!"

"And he and Maulstein must realise that the fifty thousand is as good as ours!" chuckled Sir Aubrey, a cunning glint in his beady eyes.

"Sure!" agreed Tiny.

"There's such a thing as counting your chickens before they're hatched," said Terry Carson quietly; "and if all you say about Abe Maulstein is true, I think you'd better keep your eyes skinned for treachery. I don't suppose little Abe will part with all that money without—"

"Aw, shut up!"

The Man of Iron placed his hairy hands upon his hips and went off into a shout of uproarious laughter that seemed to shake the dressing-room.

"You seem to be mildly amused about something, old man," remarked Terry.

"Amused!" shouted Scannan. "I should say I am, you young idiot! D'you think there's anyone living who'd try to get at me? I can kill a man

with one blow of my fist, so I don't think tricky Abe will try any funny stuff! You make me tired!"

"The kid only gave you a friendly warning, Scannan," put in Hefty Hebble in his stolid way. "After all, I suppose even your thick hide isn't tough enough to withstand a bullet!"

A tinge of angry blood overspread Scannan's battered countenance.

"Who's talking about bullets?" he demanded, a snarl in his husky voice.

"I am!" growled Hefty doggedly. "I've heard some queer yarns about Maulstein and Pal Jordan, and I happen to know that they stop at nothing when they're on the war-path. Take your Terry's tip and keep a weather-eye open for squalls, Scannan."

"And you take your Tiny's tip and keep your mouth shut!" snarled the Man of Iron, his old hatred of Hebble welling up within him. "That's the warning!" he added meaningly.

Hefty shrugged his broad shoulders and turned away in disgust.

"You know, Scannan," remarked Terry, his thoughtful gaze upon Tiny's queer collection of facial defects, "it's difficult to believe that you became comparatively human after we saved you from the Smith Street gang! Hefty was there, you know, and he did his bit in protecting you; yet you always go out of your way to insult him! Also," continued the slim-limbed youngster, sidling towards the open door, "he's a great friend of mine; and for two pins I'd give you a good hard smack on the wrist, you great big, bottle-nosed, blustering bully! I don't wish to be rude, of course; but if I had a face like yours I'd exchange it for a pot of ferns, or an air-balloon—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A mighty shout of laughter echoed through the dressing-room as the Man of Iron emitted a roar of fury and made a wild rush at Terry Carson, and the laughter increased in volume when the door slammed and Tiny was brought up with a jerk. Ripping out another bellow of rage as his ample nose came into violent contact with the oak door, Tiny wrenched viciously at the brass knob and pulled it out of its socket; then, realising that the door was locked on the outside, he stepped back a few paces and hurled his gigantic body through space.

Crash!

Striking the door with every ounce of his weight, Tiny Scannan sent it flying upwards upon its hinges, and so great was his own impetus that he shot across the corridor and jammed his countenance against the opposite wall, and, the wall being made of stone, the terrific impact was mildly disconcerting, to say the least of it. Or so it seemed; for Tiny Scannan's thunderous roar must have been heard all over the ground.

"I'll smash the little rat for this, by heck!" shouted the Man of Iron, swaying slightly as he glared up and down the corridor. "Where is he?" he raved, beating the air with his clenched fists.

"Lead me to him!"

Of Terry there was no sign, and there was no immediate rush to conduct Scannan to his intended victim.

The Man of Iron was nearing the gibbering stage when the referee came hurrying along the passage.

"Get your men out at once, Scannan!" snapped the official. "We can't wait about all day, you know, so you'd better get busy!"

"Hi!" shouted Tiny, as the ref turned

and strode away. "Have you seen anything of that brass-faced young monkey Carson?"

"He's on the field, talking to Hefty Hebble," came the reply, accompanied by a furtive grin; "and he said something about giving you the hiding of your life, if you don't get a move on!"

"Said that, did 'e!" shouted the Man of Iron, as another outburst of laughter broke from the delighted players. "The Villa will be playing ten men in the second half, by Jupiter, 'cause the centre-forward will be a hospital case! Ring up for an ambulance, one of you!"

Standing in midfield, Terry Carson was chatting pleasantly with Hefty Hebble, and so engrossed was he in the conversation that he appeared to be oblivious of the fact that the scowling individual who had leapt across the cinder track was at that moment bearing down upon him with hostility in his mien and a wicked light in his close-set eyes. That Tiny Scannan was put out about something was obvious, and his flat-featured face was distorted with fury as he towered over the youngster and struggled to articulate. Strange, gurgling noises came from him, and it was the unfamiliar sound that caused Terry to turn round.

"Hallo, old man!" he smiled, a light of sweet innocence in his brown eyes. "Trying to speak a new language—Siamese, shorthand, or something?"

"You—you—you—" stuttered Scannan, going purple.

"Quite!" agreed Terry, brightly. "Indisputably, in fact! What's the matter?"

"I'll get even with you for this, you little rat!" ground out the Man of Iron, as the grinning players gathered round. "Just you wait till after the match, my lad, and I'll lambaste you until you wish you'd never been born!"

Tiny was still mumbling as he turned on his heel and strode away up the field, and the rumble of laughter that broke from the players did nothing to put him in a more amiable frame of mind. He soon had other things to think about, however, for no sooner did the game restart than West London broke away and swept down the pitch in dangerous fashion. And Scannan, between the sticks, was given a red-hot three minutes—three minutes of intensive bombardment—and at the end of that time he cleared with a smashing punch that sent the ball soaring away over the touchline.

A roar went up from the fans.

"Oh, played, sir!"

Scannan, from that moment, proceeded to play a really great game, and time after time he saved the situation when all seemed lost, his 'keeping being masterly-inspired; and when long whistle shrilled he received a personal ovation from all parts of the packed enclosure.

"Well played, Scannan!"

"Good luck, old man!"

"Put it across the American, Scannan!"

"We'll be there, Tiny!"

Sir Aubrey Ailen, who was standing upon the clubhouse balcony, smiled an oily smile and rubbed his fleshy hands together.

"What an advertisement!" he muttered. "And all done in the sweet name of charity!"

(Don't miss the continuation of this powerful serial whatever you do, chums. A wise move would be to order your copy of next week's MAGNET right now!)



FORTUNES FROM WHALES!

In the "good old days" they used to cut up a whale by hand, which took considerable time and a number of "hands" into the bargain. But nowadays a special machine is used which makes mighty short work of a 90-ton whale such as is shown in our photo of a whaling station at South Georgia. The tempting profits, which it is alleged the Norwegians are making from whaling, have induced a British company to try their hand at it.

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION!

The terrible delay of waiting for special lifting or rescue apparatus before the work of rescue can proceed has resulted in great loss of life to the crews of sunken submarines. In the photo alongside is shown the model of a wonderful rescue apparatus, built in the style of a diving-bell, which is lowered to the ill-fated sub-mercraft. A watertight connection is then made between the bell and a specially constructed porthole with which submarines would be equipped. Through this bell it is claimed the men could be transferred to a rescue ship with great expedition. The value of this clever apparatus is that it can be carried by practically any naval vessel. Tests with models have proved eminently successful.



FRIEND OR FOE?

(Continued from page 25.)

stupidity, Bunter would have captured the lot with ease. But that even William George Bunter was capable of this was a surprise to him.

Bunter quaked. He was fully expecting a record licking, and he was well aware that he deserved one.

Mr. Quelch broke his silence at last. "Wharton! You are, of course, completely cleared by this confession of Bunter's. I may add that, black as the matter looked, I had every hope that you would be able to clear yourself."

"Thank you, sir," said Harry.

"I cannot blame you, Da Costa, for what you believed," said Mr. Quelch. "But I must point out that had you not been guilty of the mean and contemptible action of prying in your study-mate's desk, you would not have formed such an opinion of him."

Da Costa did not speak. His face was white, and his lips trembled. Only too clearly he realised what a ghastly mistake he had made—and the difference that it must make to him at Greyfriars.

"As for you, Bunter—"

"Oh dear!"

"I should punish you with the greatest severity for your folly," said Mr. Quelch; "but I am so thankful that this disagreeable matter has been cleared up, with no stain on the honour of the Form, that I am disposed to take a lenient view. I do not lose sight of the fact that you spoke out of your own accord, though you were aware that your conduct merited the most condign punishment. I shall not cane you, Bunter."

"Oh, sir! Thank you, sir!" gasped Bunter, brightening up wonderfully.

"I shall only give you five hundred lines—"

"Ow!"

"And if these lines are not handed to me by tea-time to-morrow you will be caned and the imposition will be doubled."

"Wow!"

"And if ever you should venture to play a cross practical joke again at Greyfriars," said Mr. Quelch in a deep, rumbling voice. He did not

finish; the rest was left to the imagination of the Owl of the Remove.

With a gesture Mr. Quelch dismissed the Form.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton's Last Word!

PREP had been interrupted in the Remove. It was not resumed in most of the studies. That exciting happening banished all thoughts of prep from the minds of the Removites, and they discussed it with breathless interest, instead of returning to prep. And there was a good deal of laughter in the Remove studies while the discussion went on. Mr. Quelch had said that Bunter's amazing proceedings were not a laughing matter. The Remove did not agree with him. And they laughed. It was agreed on all hands that William George Bunter, as a practical joker, took the whole cake.

It was agreed that the Remove had never really known their Bunter; they had supposed that they knew every kind of idiot he was, and still he had had a surprise to spring on them. Skinner declared that Bunter ought really to be stuffed and put in the British Museum. He declared that when Bunter passed away, future generations would not believe that such an unmitigated ass had ever existed, and that Bunter ought to be put on record somehow.

Bunter, however, cared little what the Removites said. Bunter was having the time of his life.

In Study No. 1 there was a supper party. At that party William George Bunter was the guest of honour.

Harry Wharton & Co. felt that it was his due. It was true that they considered that he ought to be booted in oil for what he had done. It was true that they warned him that if he ever tried on practical jokes again they would skin him alive in the Remove passage. Nevertheless, they knew that Bunter had taken the risk of a terrific licking in speaking out as he had done. Certainly he was bound to speak out when the matter became so terribly serious. Still, it was much to his credit that he had done so. And so Bunter was re-

warded in a way that appealed to him most strongly—and when supper was over in Study No. 1 Billy Hunter crawled away loaded far above the Plimsoll line.

It was after Bunter was gone that Arthur da Costa came to Study No. 1. After the scene in the Form-room Da Costa had disappeared for a long time. But at last he came to the study.

The Famous Five looked at him as he came in. No one spoke. The wretched fellow looked from face to face, to read there only disgust and condemnation.

Wharton raised his hand and pointed to the door.

Da Costa licked his dry lips.

"What do you mean?" he muttered.

"Get out!"

"This is my study."

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"Your study or not, you'll get out! I'd rather have a snake in the study! Quelch will change you out if you ask him. You'd better. You cur! I treated you as a friend, as a decent chap; and you spied in my desk, spied among my things! You miserable spy and rotter! You're not a fool, like Bunter; you knew what you were doing. What were you looking for in my desk—letters to read? Oh, that was it?" said Wharton scornfully, as the Eurasian gave an involuntary start.

"You cur! And when you found the watch there it never came into your mind that somebody else might have put it there; you jumped to it at once that I was a thief! You jumped at the chance of denouncing me as a thief before all the Form! Oh, you rotter!"

"I—I—" muttered Da Costa.

"Don't speak to me! You make me sick!"

"I—"

"Get out!" exclaimed Wharton. "I tell you I won't stand you in the study! Get out, or you'll be put out!"

"I—"

"Outside, you rotter!"

And as the Eurasian did not stir Wharton grasped him by the shoulders, spun him round, and sent him whirling into the Remove passage.

The door of Study No. 1 closed on the boy from the East—the fellow who had been both friend and foe to the captain of the Remove, and was now only his foe!

THE END.

(The next story in this grand series is entitled: "BYE-LUCK AND PLUCK!" You'll enjoy it no end, chums!)

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