

"PLAYING THE GAME!"

Extra-special School Story of Harry Wharton & Co.

The

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Magnet

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EVERY SATURDAY.



THE HOPE OF HIS SIDE!

(A forceful incident from the grand school yarn of Greyfriars - inside.)



BOXING AS IT SHOULD'N'T BE!

Boxing, if we were to judge it from this photograph, must be an amazing sport, what with Roman helmets, alarm-clocks, and referees in check suits! One can sympathise, too, with the fellow lying on the ground. To have a sword perilously close to one's throat, with a mallet hovering over one's nose, is not exactly enticing. No need to worry, however, chums! This is boxing as it shouldn't be. In other words, it's a part of the "rag" organised by the undergrads of Chester University in aid of local hospitals!

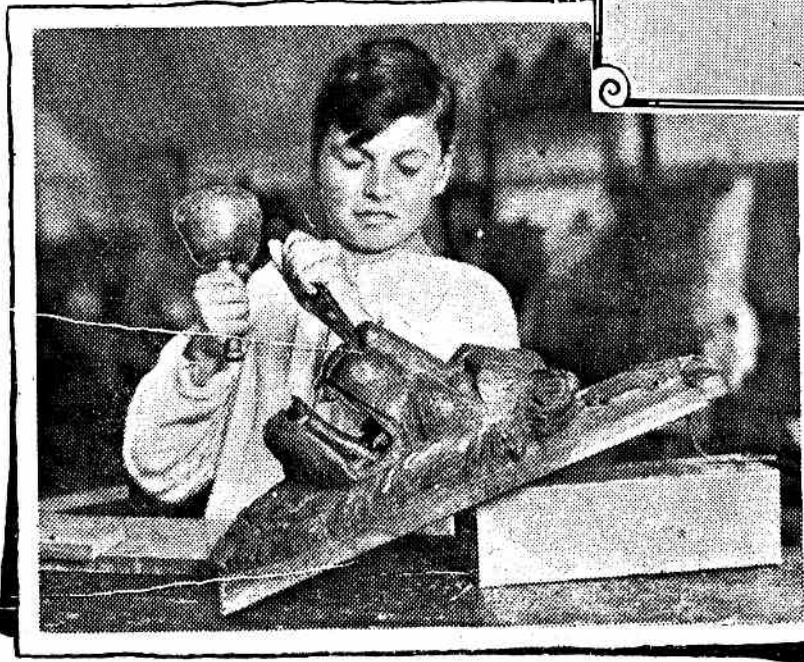
TEDDY GETS A SHOCK!

It happened on a rainy day—not unusual in England!—and the Polar bear shown in the photograph alongside, was the only inhabitant of the Zoo who seemed to be enjoying the climatic conditions. He felt so pleased, indeed, that he needs must gaze at himself in the water. But, alas, for Teddy's vanity! For, upon looking at his reflection in the water, he saw not a fair, beautiful white form, but a vision in black! Teddy gave a snort of utter disgust . . . he decided, like the rest of us, that he did not like the wet weather after all!



SMALL, BUT CLEVER!

The picture on the left shows a small, but clever pupil of the Newdigate Wood Carving Class at work, carving a lion's head out of wood. Clever he certainly is, as a glance at his work will emphatically testify. This school was started by Mrs. E. C. Janson, twenty-three years ago, with the object of providing an interest for the lads in the village of Newdigate, Surrey. To-day it is well known, not only for its awards, but for its wonderful work; indeed, Her Majesty Queen Mary herself, has shown great interest in the articles carved by this class!



THE MISSED CHANCE! *There's big money waiting for Da Costa, the Eurasian, if he can manage to bring about Harry Wharton's disgrace. Yet when the opportunity for which he has schemed and planned comes along, Da Costa lets it slip through his fingers. Why?*



A Dramatic New Long Complete School Yarn, dealing with the Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. of the Greyfriars Remove. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Too Much for Bunter!

HARRY, old chap—
 "No!"
 "Eh?"
 "No!"

"Why, you beast, I haven't asked you yet!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, indignantly.

Harry Wharton laughed. "No, all the same," he answered. "Now roll away, Bunter—we're going to play cricket, you know!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"
 "Buzz off, you fat fly!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Where's my bat? Hand me my bat, Frank—I want to prod Bunter."

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know," said Billy Bunter peevishly. "I say, Harry, old fellow, I was going to ask you—"
 "No!"

"The answer is in the esteemed negative!" grinned Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

There was a chuckle from the Remove cricketers gathered on Little Side.

Stumps were pitched for a Form match—the Remove were playing the Fourth that afternoon. Harry Wharton & Co. were ready—the heroes of the Remove were always on time on such an occasion. The Fourth were not quite ready. Cecil Reginald Temple, the captain of the Fourth, was a leisurely youth, never in a hurry; and he did not mind in the least keeping the other side waiting.

Billy Bunter rolled up to the group of Remove fellows outside the pavilion. Bunter was not a cricketer, and not much interested in cricket. He had not come, like other Remove men, to watch the game. But it was evident that he wanted something. When a fellow was addressed as "old chap," by Billy Bunter, in affectionate tones, he did not

need telling that Bunter wanted something.

What Bunter wanted was really immaterial. Whether he wanted a place in the Form team for the match, or a little loan to tide him over till his celebrated postal-order came, or assistance in writing out lines for Mr. Quelch, the answer was in the negative.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Temple at last!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the elegant figure of Cecil Reginald appeared in the offing.

"I say, Harry, old man—"

"Hook it, Bunter!"

"Will you—"

"No!"

"Lend me—"

"No!"

"Your bike?" Bunter got it out at last.

"No!"

"Now, look here, Wharton, you're not using your bike this afternoon," argued Bunter. "Now, are you?"

"I don't use a bike, as a rule, in playing cricket," answered the captain of the Remove gravely. "A bat is more usual."

"Oh, don't be a funny ass, you know! If you're not using your bike, why can't you lend it to me?"

"Fathead! Why can't you use your own?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! You know my bike's got five or six punctures, and the pedals twisted, and the chain snapped, and one wheel skewed. It's been like it all this term," said Bunter sorrowfully. "I've asked all you chaps, one after another, to put it right for me. You can't say I haven't."

"Dear man!" said Bob Cherry. "Now, where will you have the end of this bat, Bunter? Fore or aft?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep that bat away, you beast! I say, Harry, old fellow, don't be selfish,

you know," urged Bunter. "Why can't you lend me your bike?"

"You see, I don't want it to have five or six punctures, and the pedals twisted, and the chain snapped, and one wheel skewed!" explained Wharton. "You may like a jigger in that state, old fat man; but I should hate it. So if you don't mind, let my bike alone!"

"But I do mind!" urged Bunter.

"Let it alone, all the same!"

"Look here, old chap—"

"Buzz off!"

"Look here, you beast—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fellows ready?" drawled Cecil Reginald Temple. "I hope you're not going to keep us waitin'."

"Ready and waiting," answered Harry Wharton. "Now, roll away, Bunter—don't bother!"

"But, I say—"

"Prod him, Bob!"

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter, as Bob Cherry gave him a playful poke with the business end of a willow. "Ow!"

Bunter jumped back.

Then there was another roar. Bunter did not see very clearly before him, hence the big spectacles that adorned his fat little nose. Even with the aid of those big spectacles, Bunter could not see behind him. That was only to be expected. So when he jumped back from Bob Cherry's lunging bat, Bunter really was not to blame for landing on the foot of one of the Remove cricketers—who happened to be Arthur da Costa, the Eurasian junior.

It was not Bunter's fault. It was Arthur da Costa's misfortune.

But it was not a light matter. Bunter's weight was no joke; and when he came down suddenly on a fellow's foot, every ounce told—and Bunter's weight could hardly be computed in ounces. According to the Remove fellows, it

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had to be computed in tons; and even then it was necessary to go into high figures.

That, of course, was an exaggeration. But the roar of anguish from Da Costa showed that William George Bunter was not, at all events, a light-weight.

"Oh! Ow! Oh!"

It was Arthur da Costa's turn to jump. He jumped on one foot, clasping the other with both hands.

"You fat duffer!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, I trod on something—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked round to see what he had trodden on. The next moment his head was in chancery, and Arthur da Costa was punching his fat little nose with terrific energy.

"Ow! Yarooogh! Help!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, dragin-off! He's gone potty! Yarooogh! Help!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wharton. "Stop him!"

The Eurasian was in a blaze of passionate temper, and certainly he would have hurt Bunter had he not been stopped. But three or four of the Removites grasped him and jerked him away from the Owl of the Remove.

"Nuff's as good as a feast!" said Johnny Bull.

"Let me go!" yelled Da Costa. "I—I will smash him—I'll!"

Bob Cherry caught Bunter by a fat arm and twirled him away from the Eurasian.

"Hook it, you fat duffer!" he said. "Ow! Wow! Yow—"

"Hook it, ass! Do you want any more, you chump?"

Apparently Billy Bunter did not want any more. He gave one blink at the furious face of the Eurasian, and hooked it promptly. Da Costa was struggling with the fellows who held him back.

"Chuck it, Da Costa," said Harry Wharton sharply. "It was an accident. Don't play the goat."

Da Costa gave him a fierce look; but he calmed himself with an effort. Cecil Reginald Temple was staring at him with a curling lip; there was derision in the faces of many of the juniors. Outbreaks of passionate temper like this were not at all the thing at Greyfriars.

"The fat fool hurt my foot!" muttered Da Costa sullenly.

"Well, feet have been trodden on before, without a volcanic eruption following," remarked Vernou-Smith. "We don't like wild cats here, Da Costa."

The Eurasian's eyes gleamed at the Bouncer, and he opened his lips for an angry retort. Harry Wharton interposed hastily.

"That's enough—chuck it! We're here to play cricket, not to rag! Chuck it, I tell you!"

Da Costa turned sulkily away, his olive face dark and sullen.

"Now, then, Temple—"

Choice of innings fell to the captain of the Remove. He elected to bat first, and called to the Eurasian.

"Da Costa! You open with Bob."

"Yess!"

The sullen scowl vanished from Da Costa's face. Temple and his men looked into the field; and Bob Cherry and Arthur da Costa went to the wickets. Harry Wharton's glance followed the Eurasian curiously. The olive face was bright and cheery; every movement of the lithe figure active and alert; he looked every inch a cricketer. And the captain of the Remove, watching him, wondered—as many times he had wondered when he watched the

Eurasian on the cricket-field. Knowing what he did of the fellow, his feeling towards him was one of loathing—the feeling he might have had for a snake in the grass. But when he was playing the summer game, Da Costa seemed a totally different fellow; and on the cricket ground it came oddly into Wharton's mind that he could have liked him, and made a friend of him.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter has a Good Time!

BILLY BUNTER—from a secure distance—watched the Remove cricketers. He was not interested in the game—he watched them only till the match had fairly started. Then he rolled away; and his footsteps took him in the direction of the bike-shed. Harry Wharton & Co., being occupied with cricket, naturally had no eyes for Bunter; and Bunter's next proceedings required that no eyes should be upon him.

Bunter had decided on a bike spin that afternoon. He was not specially keen on a bike spin; but a fellow had to do something on a half-holiday. He would have been willing to play cricket for the Remove, had the captain of the Remove been willing to give a wicket away to the other side. He would have preferred immensely a spread in some fellow's study—but no spread was available. He could have spent a happy afternoon in the school shop, had Mrs. Mimble understood the advantages of running a business on the lines of extensive credit. But Mrs. Mimble didn't. He would gladly have gone over to Cliff House to tea with Hazeldene, if Hazel had given his consent—but so far from giving his consent, Hazel had undertaken to kick Bunter into the middle of next week if he found him within half a mile of Cliff House.

Bunter would have gone to the pictures with William Wibley, if Wib would have stood him a ticket. But Wib—with the selfishness to which Bunter had become accustomed at Greyfriars—wouldn't. He would joyfully have taken a run on the motor-bike that belonged to Coker, of the Fifth; but for the absolute certain fact that Coker of the Fifth would have left him for dead afterwards. He would even have joined Mr. Quelch and Mr. Wiggins, who had gone out in a car, had they desired the company of a nice, well-mannered, fascinating fellow. But they didn't.

So it was really a case of any port in a storm. A fellow had to do something, and Bunter decided that the something should be a bike spin.

He could have found a rather useful occupation in repairing his own bike, which undoubtedly needed it. But that sort of occupation did not appeal to Bunter. He lived in hopes of somebody else repairing his dilapidated jigger. Until that happened, Bunter's own bike was likely to rust unused. Bunter had pointed out that Bob Cherry had spent hours and hours, and made himself as black as a nigger, repairing the bike that belonged to Marge Hazeldene of Cliff House. Why he couldn't do the same for Bunter was a mystery to Bunter. But either he couldn't or he wouldn't.

Bunter did not, therefore, think of touching his own unhappy jigger. He had decided on Wharton's bike, which was a handsome machine, and always in good order. He had asked Wharton to lend it to him, fair and square. A fellow couldn't do more than that. Bunter felt that he had done all that

could reasonably be expected of him; and now he went to the bike-shed for the bicycle.

Hazeldene of the Remove was there when he arrived. Hazel was completing the repair of a puncture.

"Going over to Cliff House now?" asked Bunter.

"Yes," grunted Hazel, "when I've finished this rotten puncture."

"Like me to come, after all?"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"I was going to say," said Bunter, with dignity, "that I shouldn't be able to come. I've got rather too many engagements on a half-holiday. Hazel, to have time for teeing at a girls' school."

"Oh, shut up!"

"Look here, you cheeky rotter—"

Hazel gave him a glare.

"You look as if somebody's been punching your nose," he snapped. "If you don't want some more in the same place, don't bother me while I'm doing this beastly puncture!"

"That cad Da Costa," said Bunter. "I'd have thrashed him, only—I didn't want to interrupt the cricket."

He rubbed his fat little nose tenderly. "I say, Hazel—"

"Shut up!" roared Hazel.

Hazel was rather a clumsy hand with repairs. He was warm and perspiring, and sticky with solution, and obviously in a bad temper.

"Don't get your rag out, old bean," said Bunter calmly. "It's not my fault you're chucked out of the cricket."

Hazel breathed hard.

"In fact, I'm sorry for you," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I know you'd bragged that you were going over to play Rookwood—and now you're chucked even in a Form match! Lets you down a bit—what?"

"I refused to play in the Form match!" said Hazel, in a choking voice. "I bar Wharton, and I won't play in his team."

Bunter gave him a fat wink.

"Too thick, old fellow! The fact is, they don't want you now they've got that new man, Da Costa—somebody had to go to make room for him, and you went! He, he, he!"

Hazel, with flaming face, affected not to hear.

"Rather rough on you, old chap—what?" said Bunter, blinking at him. "I'm rather sorry for you! Makes you look rather an ass—what? All you can do is to blow off steam about barring Wharton, and declining to play, and all that—but, of course, that won't wash! You can hardly expect it to, can you, old chap?"

If this was Bunter's way of expressing sympathy, it was lacking in fact. Hazel was already exasperated by an obstinate puncture, and by sticky solution that seemed to adhere to him everywhere it ought not to have been. He rose from his bicycle with a glitter in his eye, and a tube of solution in his hand.

"You fat rotter!"

"Oh, really, Hazel— Yarooogh!" roared Bunter, as Hazeldene grasped the back of his collar with one hand, and squeezed the solution over his fat face with the other.

"Take that, you cheeky fat frog!"

"Ooooh!"

Bunter took it—there was no help for that! Hazel released him, and stepped back, grinning now. Bunter's fat hands clawed at his face, and came away horribly sticky. William George Bunter felt as if he had been wrapped up in fly-papers. It was not a happy feeling.

"Groogh! Ow! Beast!" gasped Bunter. "I'll jolly well lick you—I—I— Keep off, you rotter!"



Billy Bunter was telling Horace Coker what he thought of him when the Fifth-Former grasped an apple, and took aim at the fat Removeite. Whizz! "Yaroooouh!" Bunter let out a roar, as he received the apple on the widest part of his considerable circumference. (See Chapter 4.)

Hazel made a movement with the solution. Bunter did not want any more of that solution. He bolted out of the bike-shed; and Hazel returned to his puncture, feeling a little better.

For the next quarter of an hour or so, William George Bunter was busy in the House. Bunter was not very particular about the cleanliness of his fat visage; indeed, it was said in the Remove that he never would have washed at all if he could have helped it. According to Skinner, the last time Bunter had washed his neck, he had found a collar he had lost the previous term. Still, even Bunter had his limits, and he could not set off to enjoy his half-holiday with sticky solution all over his face. So he rubbed and scrubbed, and scrubbed and rubbed, for quite a long time, before he repaired to the bike-shed once more.

By that time Hazel was gone. Billy Bunter lifted Wharton's bike from the stand and wheeled it out.

Like Moses of old, he looked this way and he looked that way. But the Remove fellows were playing cricket far off, and thinking of anything but William George Bunter. The Owl of the Remove wheeled the bike safely out, and prepared to mount in the road.

William George Bunter prided himself upon his figure: there was, as he justly remarked, no other figure like it in the Remove. To this he attributed his distinguished appearance. Still, it was a fact that his little fat legs could hardly reach the pedals when he was in Wharton's saddle. Considered sideways, Bunter was a tall fellow; vertically, he rather lacked inches.

Putting the saddle down to its lowest extent would have been judicious; but that involved labour. Not much, it is true, but some; and any exertion failed

to appeal to Bunter. He decided to chance it as it was; and started on his spin under those rather unfavourable conditions.

It is said that a lazy man takes more trouble to dodge work than an industrious man to get it done. That was the case with Bunter, at least. On that sunny summer's afternoon he might have enjoyed a spin through the leafy lanes and by the shady paths under the old beeches and ashes in Friardale Wood. But, with his feet missing the pedals every now and then, and every push requiring a plunge to port or starboard, that spin was anything but enjoyable. Bunter had to exert himself to keep going at all, and he was soon hot and perspiring and exceedingly irritable.

He negotiated the lane and a path through the wood, and by that time he was fed-up with cycling. The glimmering waters of the Sark showed ahead through the trees, where the woodland path joined the towpath by the river. Bunter rolled off the bike, leaned it against a tree, and sat down on a grassy bank by the towpath to rest. Rest was what he felt he needed. Flies buzzed over his perspiring face, the drowsy hum of insects was in his ears; and Bunter, leaning back in the rich grass, nodded off to sleep.

There were three undiluted delights in Bunter's fat existence. The first, of course, was eating; the second was talking; the third was sleeping. There was nothing on the towpath for Bunter to eat; there was no one to inflict with the pleasures of his conversation; but he could sleep. And he slept—and his deep snore mingled with the murmur of the Sark rippling through the rushes.

William George Bunter was, after all, enjoying his half-holiday!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Troubled Conscience!

"O H gad!" said Temple of the Fourth.

Cecil Reginald Temple pulled a rather long face.

In cricket matters Temple of the Fourth was a happy optimist—before taking, so to speak. After taking, he inclined to pessimism.

When Cecil Reginald lounged elegantly on the field in spoils, well-cut flannels, with his expensive bat, he always had a feeling that he was monarch of all he surveyed there; that he was a mighty man with the willow; and that the score he was going to knock up would make fellows open their eyes.

But it never did work out like that somehow. Between what Temple thought he could do and what he actually could do there was a great gulf fixed.

When the Fourth played the Remove, Temple always considered that the time had come to put those fags in their true places, so far as games were concerned. According to Temple, he and his merry men were the true junior eleven of Greyfriars; the Remove were only a Form team, and it was just cheek—pure, unadulterated cheek—that led them to fix up outside matches—such as the Rookwood fixture, for instance. To knock the Remove into a cocked hat on the cricket ground was Temple's dearest dream. For this purpose Cecil Reginald might have been expected to put in some assiduous practice. But that was not Temple's method. He seemed to expect to beat the Remove by the simple process of telling his friends what he

was going to do next time. That process was easy, but did not produce much in the way of results.

The Remove—as another sample of their cheek—looked on this Form match merely as practice for more serious affairs. Harry Wharton was putting his men through their paces, as it were, before the Rookwood match. Temple was aware of it, and he yearned to overwhelm the Remove with defeat and disaster. To this end Temple was prepared to do anything—except play cricket. That, unfortunately, was beyond his powers. On the present occasion his experience was even more disastrous than of old. Arthur da Costa, at the Remove wickets, was making hay of the Fourth Form bowling; and fellows round Little Side were grinning and cackling at the wild efforts of the Fourth to get rid of that wonderful batsman.

Other Remove wickets had gone down; but Da Costa, with a cheery grin on his face, bade defiance to the Fourth Form bowling and fielding, and his wicket was impregnable. The Fourth had one really good bowler—Scott—who took cricket more seriously than the elegant Temple and his nutty friends. Scott had accounted for several wickets, and had made a couple of good catches in the field. But he could not touch Da Costa. He had clean bowled Harry Wharton, which was rather a feat. But Da Costa was beyond him.

Harry Wharton watched his new recruit with sheer delight. A keen cricketer himself, with little to learn about the game, he had a keen appreciation of form in another fellow. There were men in the Remove who would have expected Wharton to prove a little "edge-wise" at finding a man in his team who excelled himself. But any littleness of that kind was quite foreign to Wharton's nature. There was sheer pleasure in his face as he watched the Eurasian. All Da Costa's offences were forgotten just then—all the tortuous treachery of his strange character, even the knowledge that he had plotted the disgrace of the captain of the Remove, that he had tried his hardest to cause his expulsion from the school; that he was, so far as any fellow possibly could be, a snake-in-the-grass. Wharton simply could not keep such things in mind while he saw him at cricket. All that was best in the fellow's nature came to the surface at such a time; on the cricket field he cast off deceit and dissimulation like a cloak, and became as healthy and wholesome a sportsman as any man in the Remove.

"That chap's a born batsman," said the captain of the Remove. "My hat! He will make Rookwood sit up and take notice!"

"Blessed if I think even Jimmy Silver will be able to touch him!" said Bob Cherry. "And Silver is some bowler!"

"He's just living the game!" said Harry. "They say some fellows are born with a silver spoon in their mouth, like old Mauly. I think Da Costa must have been born with a cricket bat in his hand."

"The cricketyfulness of the esteemed Da Costa is truly terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"He's a good man on the field, whatever he may be off it," said Nugent.

Wharton's brow clouded for a moment. That remark brought other thoughts into his mind.

The fellow was his enemy—his bitter and treacherous enemy. Even now black thoughts might be passing in his tortuous mind against the captain of the Remove, whose ruin he had set himself

to accomplish. Then Wharton, looking at the fellow again, told himself that that, at least, was unjust. There were no thoughts of miserable trickery and subterfuge in Da Costa's mind now. He was living for the game he was playing, and enjoying every minute of it. For the time, at least, he was a cricketer and a Remove man; and not the treacherous emissary of Captain Marker, the plotter in distant India.

"Oh gad!" murmured Temple of the Fourth, dabbing the perspiration from his brow as he returned the ball once more. "Oh gad!"

Temple's hopes were down at zero now, or lower. If he had had any chance of pulling off that match the addition of Da Costa to the Remove team had put paid to it. Once more dismal defeat loomed over Cecil Reginald—and a defeat more crushing than even was his woe to encounter.

The Fourth were a tired team when they went in to their innings. They had had enough leather-hunting in the Remove innings to tire them. But if they had been fresh as daisies they would not have had much of a look-in. They had found Da Costa an unbeatable bat. They found him a bowler of unsuspected powers. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was the champion bowler of the Remove, but even he did not excel the Eurasian.

The Remove chuckled over the hat-trick performed by the new junior; and the countenance of Cecil Reginald grew longer and longer.

The Fourth Form innings was a procession. It was succeeded by another procession, as the Fourth had to follow their innings.

When the match was over the Remove had won by more runs than they wanted to count. Temple, Dabney, & Co. of the Fourth limped away perspiring. Harry Wharton gave Da Costa a cheery smile as they came off the field.

"Topping!" he said. "Keep yourself fit for the Rookwood match, Da Costa; we're going to give them a surprise at Rookwood this time."

Da Costa's look was bright in response.

"Tea in the study," said Harry.

"You'll be there?"

Bob Cherry gave his chum a rather curious glance. Wharton seemed to have forgotten completely that Da Costa was his enemy, and that, outside cricket, they were not on speaking terms. The fact was that the captain of the Remove simply could not keep it in his mind.

But if he had forgotten, the Eurasian had not.

Da Costa paused before he answered, and the brightness faded out of his face. A dark, harassed look replaced it.

"Thank you—no!" he said.

And he walked away by himself.

Tea in Study No. 1, after the cricket, was attended by the Famous Five and Peter Todd and Squiff and Tom Brown and several other fellows, but Arthur da Costa kept away.

It was, Wharton supposed, his enmity, which had revived after the cricket was over, and Da Costa, no longer under the influence of the game that was a passion with him, became his ordinary self again—his bitter, malicious, treacherous self.

But that, as it happened, was an injustice. While the merry party were gathered in Study No. 1, Arthur da Costa was walking solitary in the dim old Cloisters, with a thoughtful and harassed face.

It was not his enmity, but his conscience, that kept him away from the chums of the Remove. Harry Wharton

& Co. were never likely to understand the strange fellow from the East; and probably they would have been surprised to learn that he had a conscience at all, in view of what they knew he had done since he had come to Greyfriars—knew beyond doubt, though actual proof was not to be found. But somewhere in the dark nature of the Eurasian there was a conscience, and it was troubling him now.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Homeward Bound!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Coker of the Fifth stared. Potter and Greene stared. To three men of the Fifth Form, it came as a surprise that a Remove fag could possibly possess the "neck" to hail them in this style. Coker & Co. were pulling up the Sark in a boat—or rather, Potter and Greene were pulling, and Coker was telling them how to do it. The three seniors had been down the river in the boat; and they had to pull back to the school; which naturally caused them to pass the spot where William George Bunter had been enjoying his half-holiday on the tow-path.

At the sight of a Greyfriars boat, Bunter hailed. The Owl of the Remove had awakened from his long, happy nap, refreshed and frightfully hungry. Getting back to Greyfriars for tea was now the problem before Bunter—and getting back on Wharton's bike did not appeal to him. There were many reasons. He was tired, and did not want to bike two miles. The bike was too high for him, and exceedingly uncomfortable. His fat little legs were still aching from the efforts he had made to drive at pedals beyond his reach. He would rather have exerted himself to bike home than to walk home.

But the sight of a Greyfriars boat solved the problem of transit; and Bunter put his fat hands to his capacious mouth, and bawled:

"I say, you fellows!"

Coker & Co. stared, and then gave no further heed. This cheek, on the part of a fag of the Lower School, was unworthy of their notice.

Potter and Greene were rather tired with pulling; there was a fairly strong current on the Sark. They were still more tired of Coker's instructions in the art of rowing. They did not, of course, follow Coker's instructions—they had to get the boat along. They listened to them, because there was no getting out of the range of Coker's voice without jumping overboard. And they refrained from braining Coker with their oars, chiefly because Coker was going to stand tea in the study when they reached Greyfriars.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter for the third time. "Give me a lift back to the school, will you?"

Disdaining to reply, Potter and Greene continued to pull, and Horace Coker continued to instruct. The boat glided on.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter.

Like a castaway on a desert island, watching a sail sinking into the horizon, Bunter gazed after the receding Fifth-Form boat.

They weren't going to give him a lift! Just Fifth-Form swank, of course—sheer swank! Bunter's fat face glowed with scorn and indignation.

"I say, you fellows, stop for me!" he roared. "I say, I want a lift to the boat-house! I say, Coker!"

Bunter rolled along the tow-path, keeping pace with the boat. Headless

of the fat junior, Coker & Co. pursued their way.

"I say, Coker! Will you give me a lift?" shrieked Bunter. "I say, you fellows, give a chap a lift to the boat-house. Do you hear me?"

Coker heeded at last. "You fat young sweep!" he shouted back. "Shut up, and cut off!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Put a bit of beef into it, you men," said Coker to his crew. "We don't want that yelling fag following us all the way back."

Potter and Greene glared at Coker as they pulled. Coker, sitting at the lines and taking his ease, told them cheerfully enough to put their beef into it. It did not seem to occur to him to put any of his own ample beef into it. That was just like Coker.

Billy Bunter glared at the Fifth-Formers. From sheer Fifth-Form swank, the beasts would not take a Remove man into their boat. Possibly they might also have objected to Bunter's weight as cargo, so far as the oarsmen were concerned; Potter and Greene were perspiring over the oars already. Anyhow, they did not intend to give the Owl of the Remove a lift, that was certain; and Bunter, as there was no lift for him, decided to take it out in slanging. Fellows in a boat could not reach a fellow on the tow-path; so for once it was safe for Bunter to tell Horace Coker what he had long thought of him.

"I say, Coker," yelled Bunter. "I say, what's that on your face?"

Coker passed his hand over his face, thinking that perhaps some insect had alighted there.

"You can't brush it off!" howled Bunter. "I see now—it's your nose! I thought for a minute it was a beetroot!"

Coker's complexion was a good deal like that of a beetroot, and, following this remark, Potter and Greene grinned.

"You cheeky little sweep!" roared Coker. "If I could get at you—"

"Yah!" Safe on the tow-path with the wood at hand to dodge into if the incensed Coker showed a sign of landing, Bunter let himself go. It was rather a novelty to be able to cheek Fifth-Form men without being slain on the spot.

"Yah! You come ashore, Coker, and I'll jolly well lick you!" roared Bunter. "Yah! Funnk! A kid in the Third could lick you, Coker! Yah!"

"For goodness' sake, put some beef into it, you slackers!" hooted Coker. "Do you want this all the way home?" He glared at his crew. "What are you grinning at, you chumps? Do you think there's anything funny in cheek from a fag?"

Potter and Greene did not increase their efforts with the oars. They were tired already, of the oars and of Coker. They found it rather entertaining to row under convoy of Billy Bunter.

"Why don't you row, Coker?" yelled Bunter, keeping pace with the boat. He was on his way home, anyway. "Let's see you catch crabs, Coker! I like to watch you catching crabs, Coker! You don't know how funny you are when you row, old bean, or you'd do it oftener."

Coker breathed hard. "I say, you fellows, give Coker an oar!" squealed Bunter. "Take my word for it, it's no end funny to watch him trying to dig up the bottom of the river."

"Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Potter and Greene involuntarily.

Coker glared at them. "You cackling chumps—"

"Hem!" "Are you going to get this boat moving?" roared Coker. "Blessed if I ever saw such a pair of slackers! Put your beef into it! Haven't you any beef to put into it? Next time I'll get some Second-Form fags to row, by Jove!"

"Oh, cheese it!" growled Potter, in a goaded voice. "Why can't you take a turn yourself, Coker, instead of sitting there gabbling?"

"Sitting here what?" "Gabbling!" snarled Potter.

"Why, you cheeky fathead, when I'm trying my hardest to tell you how to pull an oar!" exclaimed Coker, in great indignation.

"Ho, he, he!" chortled Bunter. Coker glared round at Bunter.

"Cut off, you fat freak! Do you hear?"

"Yah! Go and eat coke!"

"Pull, you slackers, will you?" yelled Coker.

Potter and Greene pulled. But it was quite easy for even William George Bunter to keep pace, on the tow-path, with a boat pulling against the current. He rolled on abrest of the boat, and continued to tell Horace Coker what he thought of his features, his manners, his rowing, his cricket, and everything else that was his. Everything that Bunter thought on these topics was uncomplimentary. Coker's red face grew redder and redder; and he glared round the boat for a missile to hurl at Bunter. There was an apple left over from a supply of tuck the Fifth-Formers had taken with them; and Coker grasped it.

"Whiz!" "Yarcooough!"

Bunter received that apple on the widest part of his considerable circumference. It struck him on the equator, as it were.

He sat down on the tow-path with a gasping roar.

"Ow! Ooooooh! Gugglegugglegug!"

Bunter was winded. The flow of his eloquence was cut off; and he sat on the tow-path and gasped and spluttered for breath. Coker grinned back at him as the boat glided on, in sight of the Greyfriars boat-house now.

Coker & Co. were out of sight, when the Owl of the Remove, having got his second wind, staggered up at last. He pressed a fat hand tenderly to his extensive waistcoat.

"Ow! Beast! Wow!"

Still, the pursuit of Coker's boat, and the slanging of Coker, had entertained Bunter on his way home; he had hardly noticed the distance he had covered, with that entertainment on hand. The old tower of Greyfriars was visible over the trees, and Bunter turned from the tow-path to take a short cut across to the school.

Then he uttered a sudden ejaculation of dismay.

"Oh crumbs! The bike!"

He had utterly forgotten Wharton's bike till that moment. That bike, leaning against a tree close by the towpath, was now a mile behind Bunter, and at the bare idea of walking back a mile for it Bunter simply shuddered.

It was not his fault. He had asked Coker & Co. for a lift home, fully intending to lift the bicycle into the boat when they consented. They had refused him a lift. It was their fault, obviously, that the bike had been left behind. That was clear to Bunter. It was their fault, and he was entirely blameless in the matter, as he always was when fellows found fault with him.

Still, he realised that the owner of the bike might not see it in that light. Wharton was beast enough to make him walk all the way back to where the bike had been left, to fetch it in, besides very likely kicking him for taking it out without leave. Bunter had intended to return the bike to its stand, and say (Continued on next page.)

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nothing about having borrowed it. Evidently, he could not return the bike to its stand; but, still, he could say nothing about having borrowed it. Speech might be silver, but silence was golden; and in this case, if in no other, a still tongue showed a wise head. Going back for the bike was impossible—not to be thought of for a moment. Explaining to Wharton that he had left it a mile down the river was risky—frightfully risky! Bunter decided that the less said about the matter the better.

He rolled on to Greyfriars, quite satisfied. He was blameless in the matter; and if he said nothing, nobody could blame him. So there was nothing, so far as William George Bunter could see, to worry about. Besides, more important matters occupied his mind. He was fearfully hungry, and there was the question of tea. So Bunter dismissed that trifling affair from his fat mind, and rolled on to the school, thinking of more important matters.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Bolster for Bunter!

WINGATE of the Sixth jumped. It was half-past nine, which was bed-time for the juniors at Greyfriars. Wingate of the Sixth, whose duty it was to see lights out in the Remove dormitory, was heading for the staircase, when a fat figure came bolting along, and fairly cannoned into him.

The captain of Greyfriars was a powerful fellow. But a cannon with Billy Bunter's weight behind it was no jest. Wingate staggered, and almost went over. Bunter, reeling from the shock, went quite over. He sat down at the feet of the captain of the school, and ejaculated:

"Whoooooop!"

"You fat young ass!" roared Wingate. "What the thump do you mean?"

"Oooooop!"

Rapid footsteps in pursuit showed what was the cause of the disaster. Coker of the Fifth, going strong, came round a corner, evidently after Bunter.

Bunter whipped to his feet with unusual activity, and dodged behind George Wingate.

"Keep him off!" he roared.

Coker halted, just in time to avoid a collision in his turn. Wingate gave him a grim look.

"Well?" he rapped.

"Oh!" gasped Coker. "I—I want that young sweep!"

"Keep him off!" yelled Bunter. "I say, you fellows! Keep that beast off!"

A number of Removites were gathering round on their way to the dormitory. But for Wingate's presence they would have collared the Fifth-Former without ceremony. They did not know why Coker of the Fifth was after Bunter, and did not want to know; but they were prepared to handle any Fifth Form man who adopted high-handed methods with a Remove man. But in the presence of the captain of the school the heroes of the Remove had to restrain their natural impulse to make an example of Coker.

"Shall we take Coker back to his study, Wingate?" asked Bob Cherry meekly.

"No, you young ass! Coker, what the dickens are you chasing a Remove kid like this for?" demanded Wingate.

"Ho checked me!" hooted Coker.

"Walked along the tow-path cheeking me in a boat! I've been looking for him all the evening."

"I didn't," howled Bunter. "I only

told him his nose looked like a beetroot. So it does!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle, you cheeky fags!" roared Coker.

"Thanks; we will!" said Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha! All the same, Bunter was making a mistake. It's more like a turnip!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate grinned.

"You can clear off, Coker," he said. "And don't play the goat like this, or you'll be called to the prefects' room for a beating."

"What?" gasped Coker.

"Just that! Now shut up, and clear off!"

Coker, with difficulty, swallowed his wrath. Even Coker realised that he had to toe the line when the captain of the school chipped in. He gave Billy Bunter a look, indicating that the future held something exciting in store for him, and tramped away. The Removites grinned as they went on their way to their dormitory—and Bunter grinned, too. He had had a rather anxious evening, keeping out of the way of Horace Coker. But he was safe now till morning, at least. The morrow could take care of itself. And, in the meantime, Bunter was going to tell the fellows what a daring and reckless chap he was, cheeking Fifth-Formers just as if they were fags of the Second.

"What have you been doing to Coker, fatty?" asked Peter Todd, after lights were out in the Remove dormitory, and Wingate had shut the door and gone.

"I told him what I thought of him," explained Bunter, sitting up in bed. "I can tell you, I'm not afraid of Coker, like some fellows in this Form."

"Bunter the Bold!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you wouldn't have talked to him as I did, and chance it," said Bunter. "I treated him with scorn! Ragged him like anything. I'm not afraid of any man in the Fifth, I can jolly well tell you!"

"Is that why you were bolting from him when you biffed into Wingate?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"You were putting on a good speed for a fellow who wasn't funky," remarked Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! If you'd heard me talking to him you'd have opened your eyes," said Bunter. "I told him he couldn't row and couldn't play cricket. I told him his face was like a gridiron, and that he had the brains of a rabbit and the manners of a pig!"

"Oh, my hat! You couldn't have been in his reach when you told him these painful truths!" said Bob.

"Well, I was on the towpath and he was in a boat," said Bunter. "He could have come ashore for me. But, of course, I dare say he knew I'd have knocked him into the water."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites. The whole dormitory roared at the idea of William George Bunter knocking the hefty Coker into the water.

"So I would have!" hooted Bunter. "I told him so. The beast wouldn't give me a lift home, you know. I wanted a lift in the boat, and he refused—just Fifth Form swank, you know. I gave it to him hot and strong. As if he couldn't give a Remove man a lift in his boat, the swanking ass! He wouldn't!"

"And so the poor dog had none!" sighed Bob Cherry.

"But what on earth did you want a lift in a boat for when you were on a

bike?" asked Ogilvy. "I saw you start out on a bike."

"Oh, I—I didn't—I—I wasn't—I mean, I—I never went on a bike, after all, you know," stammered Bunter, realising that the talk was taking a dangerous turn. "I changed my mind, you know."

"You mean you had a spill, and had to walk home," chuckled Ogilvy. "You went on a bike. I was behind you on the road as far as Friardale Wood, and watched you plunging. You had a bike too big for you."

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"Whose bike?" chortled Bob Cherry. "What man was ass enough to lend Bunter a bike? It will want some repairing, after Bunter."

"Nothing of the kind, Cherry! I never had a spill. I'm rather too good a cyclist to have a spill, I fancy," said Bunter. "Not like some clumsy asses I could name."

"Then you did go on a bike?" asked Bob.

"Oh, no! Nothing of the sort. Ogilvy must have seen some other fellow and fancied it was me."

"Likely!" chortled Ogilvy. "There's no other fellow at Greyfriars, or in the giddy universe, half your width, Bunter!"

"You cheeky ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Russell. "I can guess whose bike it was. I noticed that Wharton's stand was empty when I put my jigger up."

"Mine!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Oh, really, Russell—"

"I told you not to take my bike, Bunter!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove, in great wrath.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Did you take it?" demanded Harry.

"I should disdain to borrow a bike from a fellow who refused to lend it, Wharton! Blow your old jigger," answered Bunter. "The rotten thing isn't fit for a fellow to ride, either—unless he's spindle-shanked like some fellows. A chap's feet don't touch the pedals."

"You fat villain! Did you damage my bike?"

"Certainly not! It's as good as new. I got fed up with the rotten thing and got off, that's all!"

"Then you admit you had it out, you fat fraud?"

"Oh, no! Certainly not! The—the fact is, I borrowed a Fourth-Form man's bike! Temple's to be exact."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That statement came rather too late in the day to carry conviction. The captain of the Remove sat up in bed, both angry and alarmed. None needed telling what was likely to happen to any bike ridden by Bunter; and Russell's statement that it was missing from the bike-shed was rather alarming.

"Where did you leave that bike, Bunter?"

"I never had it, old chap."

"Russell says it's not in the bike-shed."

"Russell's rather an ass, you know. I expect he made a mistake," said Bunter. "Besides, the bike is all right. I never had a spill! I got off simply because the saddle was too high for me!"

"Where is it now?" shrieked Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton, I don't think you ought to expect me to know where your bike is. The fact is, I haven't seen it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This isn't a laughing matter," exclaimed Wharton. "If that fat villain



Swipe, swipe, swipe! Harry Wharton was going great guns with the bolster. "Yaroooh!" William George Bunter rolled under the bed for refuge. "Come out, you fat sweep!" roared Harry Wharton. "Yow-ow-ow!" "Come out, and have some more!" "Wow! Beast!" cried the Owl of the Remove from his safe hiding-place. (See Chapter 5.)

has left my bike out of gates for the night—"

"My hat! Even Bunter wouldn't do that!" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"He left Inky's bike at Lantham a few weeks ago. Bunter, tell me where my bike is, before I take a bolster to you."

"I expect it's in the bike-shed all right, old fellow. I assure you that nothing happened to it. Besides, it was Coker's fault. If he'd given me a lift in the boat I should have put the bike in. Then it would have been all right. That beast Coker—"

"Where's the bike?" shrieked Wharton.

"I don't know anything about your bike, Wharton. I think it's rather like your cheek expecting me to look after your bike, especially after refusing to lend it to me. I decline to discuss the matter further."

There was a sound of a Remove man getting out of bed, and Billy Bunter blinked anxiously through the gloom.

"I—I—I say, Wharton, old chap, is that you getting up?" he stammered. "Wha-a-at are you getting up for, old chap?"

"To slaughter you, you fat villain!" answered the captain of the Remove, in sulphureous tones. "To bang you with my bolster till you tell me where that bike is."

"I—I say, it's all right," gasped Bunter. "It was Coker's fault! Besides, you can get it to-morrow! I—I'll fetch it in myself, if you like—there! It's quite safe—leaning against a tree, you know—I put it there very

carefully. I'm always careful with another chap's things, as you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows— Yaroooh!"

There was a roar in the Remove dormitory, as Wharton's bolster smote. Billy Bunter rolled out of bed on the other side and bumped on the floor.

"Now where's that bike, you villain?" demanded Wharton, in concentrated tones.

"Yaroooh!"

Wharton came round the bed with the uplifted bolster.

"I—I say, it's in the wood," gasped Bunter. "It's all right. Leaning on a tree at the end of the path, where it joins the tow-path. You know the place. You'll find it easily enough to-morrow— Yaroooh!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

William George Bunter rolled under his bed for safety. He had feared that that beast, Wharton, might cut up rusty if the matter of the bike came to his knowledge. His anticipations had proved well-founded. Wharton had cut up decidedly rusty.

"Come out, you fat sweep!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Come out and have some more!"

"Wow! Beast!"

Billy Bunter remained under the bed.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Biter Bit!

HARRY WHARTON looked out of the high window of the Remove dormitory. It was a soft, calm summer's night—a silver sickle of moon gleamed from fleecy clouds. It was a night upon which

a walk along the river would have been pleasant enough, had the rules of Greyfriars allowed fellows out of the school at such hours. On that point, of course, rules were very strict; and a fellow who broke bounds after bedtime was looked for the most serious kind of trouble if his escapade came to the knowledge of the powers. But that was what the captain of the Remove was thinking of.

Reckless fellows like the Bounder might break bounds after lights out, and brag of it in the Rag; foolish fellows like Hazeldene might occasionally do such things; but sensible fellows did nothing of the sort. There were occasions, however, when a fellow felt that he might be justified in letting the rules go; and Wharton felt that this was one of them.

His bike was a mile down the river, left out for the night; if indeed it was still where Bunter had left it. Already some tramp might have spotted it and walked off with it. But even if it was safe from purloining, which it certainly was not, no fellow liked the idea of his machine remaining out all night in the thick, woodland dews. To send Bunter after the bike was, of course, out of the question; if it was to be fetched in, Wharton had to fetch it. And after a thoughtful gaze from the window, Wharton began to dress in the shadows.

"Going after the bike?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes," answered Harry. "I can't leave it there. And it's not much good going down to ask Quelchy for leave

to go out for it. He would refuse, and give me lines for going out of dorm."

"That's a cert," agreed Bob. "But you can't leave the jigger out all night. It would be pinched before you could get it to-morrow."

"Jolly risky breaking bounds after lights out," said Peter Todd.

"I know that," answered Harry. "But what will happen to the bike if it's left out till morning?"

"I'd scalp Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Scalping Bunter won't bring the bike home," said Harry, who was dressing rapidly while he spoke. "I can trot down there pretty quickly, and it's a fine night, too. I can get the bike back as far as the Cloisters, and leave it safe there till morning."

"You're not going alone," said Bob. "I'll come with you."

"No, old chap! I shall ride the bike back—and only one fellow can ride a bike! We should have to walk back if two came."

"Well, that's so," agreed Bob. "But I don't like your going out alone."

"It's all right; I shall trot all the way, and bike back—I shan't be gone an hour—much less, most likely."

"What about the good example we expect from the head boy of our Form?" asked Skinner. "Breaking bounds at night! This pernicious example may do a lot of harm in the Remove, Wharton! You know how we all look up to you, and look on you as a shining light."

Some of the fellows chuckled.

"Oh, shut up, Skinner," said Wharton. "If I'm breaking bounds after lights out, it's not to sneak into the Cross Keys, as you've done more than once."

"A hit—a very palpable hit!" chuckled Peter Todd.

"How do we know?" asked Skinner airily. "All very well to tell us a story about a bike left out of doors! Do you think Quelchy would swallow it if you told him? Or the Head? Why should we swallow it?"

"Do you want to be hooked out of bed, Skinner, and have your head banged on the floor?" asked Wharton, very quietly.

"Thanks; no!"

"Then you'd better chuck up making rotten insinuations, or you'll get it."

Skinner decided to say no more. But his remark had made Wharton's friends feel rather uneasy. No reason whatever would be accepted as an excuse for leaving the precincts of the school after lights out; a Head's flogging was an absolute certainty in case of discovery, even if the masters did not doubt that the errand was a quite harmless one. But there was always a possibility of doubt. Any fellow caught out of bounds would spin some yarn; and the story of fetching the bike in might very possibly be regarded simply as a plausible yarn.

"I fancy I'd chuck it if I were you, Wharton," said Peter Todd seriously. "We know you all right, but you never know how the beaks might take such a thing if they spotted you. It's jolly easy to be misunderstood when you're doing a thing flat against the rules."

"The beaks wouldn't be likely to suspect me of pub-haunting, I hope," said Harry rather sharply.

"I think you're running the risk. There was talk about you and a racing man a few days ago; I know it was knocked on the head, and there was nothing in it. Still, things like that leave a sort of—"

"Of what?" snapped Wharton.

"Oh, nothing—if you're going to be ratty!" said Peter. "All I say is this—that in the circumstances you ought to be jolly careful not to lay yourself under suspicion."

"Rot!"

"Blessed if I quite like it, Harry!" said Nugent uncasily.

"I can't leave the bike where it is," answered Wharton. "It's a thousand to one it wouldn't be there to-morrow. I'm off!"

Taking a pair of rubber shoes in his hand, Harry Wharton quietly left the dormitory. The door closed softly behind him.

Billy Bunter crawled back into bed. Bunter, at least, was glad that the captain of the Remove had decided to go after the bike. It enabled him to leave his comfortable refuge under the bed and get back into his blankets without dread of an avenging bolster.

"After all, it's as safe as houses really," remarked Bob Cherry. "Wharton won't be an hour gone. I'll make a dummy in his bed in case a beak should look in—and it will be all right."

"Good egg!" agreed Nugent.

Bob Cherry turned out, and in a few minutes Wharton's bed was skilfully arranged to look as if it still contained a sleeper. There was sometimes a quiet inspection of dormitories at a late hour, and in such a case a fellow could not be too careful. Bob Cherry went back to bed, with some idea of remaining awake till Wharton came in. But there was no special object in remaining awake, and Bob was soon fast asleep.

A quarter of an hour after Wharton had gone there was silence in the Remove dormitory, broken only by the steady breathing of sleepers and the rumbling snore of Billy Bunter.

Half an hour of silence had passed, when there was a faint sound made by a fellow sitting up in bed.

There was no other sound—not a whisper. Arthur da Costa's dark eyes gleamed in the gloom as he stared up and down the long row of beds and listened.

The silence satisfied him.

Softly, stealthily the Eurasian crept from his bed. With scarcely a sound, he drew on trousers and jacket and slippers.

Noislessly he crept across the dormitory to the door.

There was no sound, save the breathing of numerous sleepers, and a soft sigh from the wind stirring the old ivy round the windows. That any fellow in the dormitory was still awake was unlikely enough; and the movements of the Eurasian were so stealthy and soft that even a wakeful junior would have been unlikely to notice that anyone was stirring.

Softly the door opened and closed again.

Arthur da Costa was gone.

And then another junior sat up in bed, and a dusky face was bent as a pair of keen, dusky ears listened intently. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh slid noiselessly from his bed, his dark eyes gleaming. Again the door of the Remove dormitory opened and closed softly.

Little dreaming of the keen eyes that had been on the watch, Arthur da Costa trod softly along the dark corridors and reached the lower box-room. He knew the way Wharton must have gone—that surreptitious way out of the House was no secret in the Lower School. The Eurasian opened the door of the box-room and groped his way in.

Opposite the doorway was a window that gave on flat leads, and the Eurasian glided across silently to that window.

As he expected, he found it an inch open at the bottom.

That was the way Wharton had gone; and he had left the window a trifle open, to raise the sash again when he came back.

Da Costa's olive face twisted in a sardonic grin. If his conscience had troubled him earlier in the day, it was sleeping again now. Now he was the cool, calculating, ruthless schemer—the unscrupulous tool of the man in India who, for reasons known only to himself, had plotted against a schoolboy at Greyfriars. The olive fingers groped over the window. Soundlessly the sash was shut down and fastened securely.

When the junior now out of bounds returned he would climb the leads to the box-room window, never doubting. He would find the window closed and fastened on the inside.

Harry Wharton was shut out of the House for the night! When he was discovered in the morning he could tell any tale he liked; no explanation or excuse would alter the fact that he had had a night out. And if he was not sacked for it, at the very least he would be flogged, and there would be a black mark against him. The story of his supposed association with a racing man at the Cross Keys had been quashed; but it was fairly certain to revive in the mind of the Head after this.

Peter Todd had given the captain of the Remove good advice. A fellow who had been under suspicion could not be too careful. After this, suspicion would fasten upon Harry Wharton blacker than ever.

Da Costa turned from the window. He had only to leave the box-room now and return to his dormitory as surreptitiously as he had left it. There was nothing to connect him with the base trick that had been played. If it came out that the window had been fastened after Wharton, it would only be naturally supposed that some master, or prefect, making his round, had found it unfastened, and fastened it. Da Costa felt quite secure.

But as he crossed softly to the door again he gave a sudden gasp and stopped dead, a shudder of startled affright running through him.

The box-room door was drawn shut.

With a faint sound it closed. With another faint sound the key turned in the lock outside.

Da Costa stood rooted to the floor. His heart beat in great throbs, and his dark eyes were dilated.

He was locked in the box-room.

The key, he knew, must have been on the inside of the door when he entered. While he was at the window some unknown hand had reached in and taken it without a sound and placed it in the outside of the lock. Now the door was locked on him, and he was a prisoner.

For a long minute the Eurasian stood quite still, only his heart thumping in great throbs. Then he went to the door and tried it. He knew that it was fast, and he found it so.

Who had done this?

It seemed to him that in the gloom he could see the dusky face of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, with a mocking smile on it. He felt—he knew—that it was the Nabob of Bhanipur who had played this trick on him.

He gritted his teeth as he turned from the door and crossed to the window again, and stood looking out into the moonlight. To leave the box-room by the window, as Wharton had done—what was the use? There was no other way of entering the House, locked and shuttered for the night. He could not return to his dormitory; there was no

way back, save by the door of the box-room—and that door was locked against him.

The biter had been bitten, with a vengeance!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Faithful Chum!

“MY esteemed chum!” Harry Wharton fairly jumped.

The captain of the Remove had lost no time. With great caution he had crept out of the precincts of the school by way of the old Cloisters, and once outside the walls he had put on speed. A rapid trot for a mile on the towpath, by the glimmering Sark brought him to the spot where Bunter had left his bicycle in the afternoon.

The spot where the woodland path joined the towpath was well-known, and Wharton, very soon reached it. And there, to his great satisfaction, he found his machine leaning against the tree, half-hidden by brambles, just as the Owl of the Remove had left it. It was wet with dew; but it was still there, and that was the great point. Whether it would have remained there till the next day was exceedingly doubtful; many tramps camped in the wood on summer nights, and at dawn—a very early hour—the bike would have been visible to any passing eye. But there it was, safe and sound, only dripping with dew. And Wharton wheeled it out on the towpath and mounted it there. After that it was not a matter of many minutes to ride back.

To get the machine into the bike-shed, now locked up for the night, was, of course, impossible. But it could be left in safety in some recess in the old Cloisters to be taken in in the morning. Wharton dismounted near the school, and wheeled the machine to the spot where he had climbed out—a part of the old Cloister wall that had crumbled away with age, and was easy to negotiate, and that was shadowed by thick trees growing close. It was rather difficult to lift the bike in over the wall, easy enough for a climber by himself, but it was possible, and Wharton was preparing to make the effort when a whispering voice from the deep shadows startled him. He stared round in amazement at the whisper of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

“Inky!” he breathed.

From deep shadow under a tree by the wall the dusky face of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh glimmered into view.

“My esteemed and absurd chum,” murmured the nabob. “I hopefully wish that I did not make you jump—”

“You jolly well did!” said Harry. “You were an ass to come out, Inky. It’s more risky for two than for one—”

He broke off. “Is anything up? Have the beaks spotted that I was out?”

“Not at all-fully! Let us get the esteemed jigger in, and I will explain, my ludicrous chum.”

“Lend a hand as you’re here, old chap,” said Harry.

Two pairs of hands negotiated the bicycle easily. It was lifted over the wall, and wheeled into a deep and dark recess under the old stone pillars of the Cloisters. There it was safe till morning. Wharton took a rag from the saddle-bag, and rubbed the dew from the machine. He was rather more careful in such matters than William George Bunter.

“What made you come out, Inky, if there’s nothing up?” asked Wharton, as he rubbed the machine down.

“There is something up, my esteemed chum,” answered the nabob.

“What, then?”
“The excellent and execrable Eurasian.”
“Da Costa?” asked Wharton, with a start.

“Exactly.”

Wharton stared at his dusky chum.

“I don’t catch on! What is Da Costa up to?”

“He is now in the excellent box-room, having sneaked there after you to fasten the ludicrous window on the inside.”

Wharton set his teeth.

“The miserable worm! You’re sure, Inky?”

“The surefulness is terrific. You see, my absurd chum, I remained awakefully to keep open the watchful and suspicious eye,” said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. “The absurd Da Costa supposed that the sleepfulness in the dormitory was terrific, but it was not quite so terrific as he supposed.”

“I never thought—” muttered Wharton.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh grinned.

“It was such a chance for the esteemed reptile that I wakefully watched to see whether he would chip in,” he explained. “I followfully tracked the absurd rotter to the box-room, and put the key on the outside of the lock, and turned it on him.”

“Oh, my hat! Then he’s locked in the box-room?”

“Exactly.”

Wharton chuckled.

“The sneaking worm! Let him stay there, then! But how are we going to get back into the House, Inky? How did you get out?”

“By the window of Study No. 1, my absurd chum. I rigged up a rope to the leg of the excellent table, and descendfully slid from the window.”

“Good man!”

“We shall climbfully return the same way, esteemed old bean, when you are ready,” chuckled the nabob. “The execrable Da Costa may spend the night in the box-room. I hopefully trust he will enjoy his atrocious self there. But we will let him out before rising-bell; if he is found there, it will cause a terrific fussfulness.”

“My hat! I wonder what he’s feeling like—locked in the box-room!” Harry Wharton chuckled again. “Let’s get in, old fellow!”

The juniors stole away through the Cloisters. Many windows in the great facade of the House were still lighted; but the two juniors kept carefully out of the radius of the lights. In the thick ivy below the window of Study No. 1, the rope hung where Hurree Singh had left it. One after the other, the active juniors climbed, and clambered in at the study window.

The rope was replaced in a box, and the window closed; shoes were taken off, and on tiptoe the two juniors crept back to their dormitory.

All was silent there.

Without waking the other fellows, Wharton and Hurree Singh turned in. But there came a yawn from Bob Cherry’s bed.

Bob sat up and blinked in the darkness.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! You back, Wharton?”

“Yes, old bean; safe and sound.”

“Got the bike all right?”

“Yes.”

“Good!” yawned Bob; and in a minute or so he was asleep again.

Harry Wharton was not long in following his example. The thought of the plotting Eurasian locked in the box-room brought a grin to his face as he closed his eyes. Da Costa had planned

a night out for the captain of the Remove; but it was Da Costa who was getting the night out. He was not likely to enjoy it.

Wharton was soon fast asleep. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh closed his eyes in peaceful slumber. But there was no sleep that night for the enraged schemer pacing the box-room—pacing wearily, or sitting on a box to rest—while the long, dreary hours wore away.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Wharton Speaks Out!

CLICK!

Arthur da Costa started. The early summer dawn had long been streaming in at the window of the box-room. It lighted a haggard olive face. Da Costa, utterly weary, had dozed several times, seated on a box, leaning against the wall; but only for spells of a few minutes at a time. Daylight found him weary and pale and consumed with rage, and bitterly apprehensive of what the day would bring.

That the nabob had locked him in he felt certain; but whoever it was, it was a friend of Wharton’s; and that friend would have admitted the captain of the Remove by some other window. He was assured of that. While Da Costa was aching with weariness in the box-room, Wharton had returned to the dormitory to sleep soundly there; and the Eurasian gritted his teeth when he thought of it.

What had happened showed him, beyond doubt, that the chums of the Remove knew of his treachery, and were on their guard against him. That alone was a blow to the schemer, who prided himself on his wary cunning, and had hoped to conceal the hand that struck treacherous blows. But still more was he tormented by the thought of what was to happen when day came. If he were left locked in the box-room, he would be missed when the Remove went down—he would be looked for and found—and what explanation was he to give? He could betray Wharton’s escapade—and be sent to Coventry with the whole Form as a sneak. That was not what he wanted.

Whether he betrayed Wharton or not, Da Costa could not deny that he had left his dormitory and gone to the box-room—he would be called upon to explain why; and to reveal that he had done so for the purpose of locking Wharton out, would be to expose himself to the contempt of the whole school—masters as well as boys.

Da Costa’s thoughts were bitter enough, as the long weary hours of the night dragged by.

It was getting towards time for rising-bell, when the sudden sharp click at the box-room door caught his ear.

He started up.

He knew that the door had been unlocked on the outside. It was a relief to him. They did not intend to leave him there to be discovered and questioned. Not for his own sake, doubtless, but because if he had been forced to tell why he was there Wharton’s escapade would have come to light. At all events, he was released; and he was glad enough of it.

He crossed quickly to the door. But when he opened it, the passage outside was vacant. Whoever had unlocked the door had slipped away immediately after turning back the key.

The House was still silent; rising-bell had not yet begun to ring. Faintly from the distance came some sound of an early housemaid. Arthur da Costa left

the box-room, and hurried to the Remove dormitory. The light of the early summer morning showed him the long row of beds, every one but his own tenanted.

He glanced savagely along the beds. Whoever had unlocked the box-room door, had lost no time in getting back to bed. The fellow was still awake, he was sure of that; but if so, he gave no sign.

Da Costa turned in. He was tired to the bone, and glad to get even half an hour's sleep before the Form had to turn out. His eyes closed as soon as his head touched the pillow.

In another bed a dusky face wore a grin. Wharton was still fast asleep. So far as he was concerned, the Eurasian would probably have been left in the box-room till he was discovered there. But Hurree Janset Ram Singh had awakened in time to release the prisoner. He grinned cheerily as he heard Da Costa turning in, and closed his eyes once more.

Clang, clang, clang, clang!
The rising-bell rang out over Greyfriars—a second or two, as it seemed to the weary Eurasian, after he had closed his eyes.

The Remove turned out, Da Costa with even more unwillingness than William George Bunter. He was far from being a slacker, as a rule, but that morning he felt very slack indeed.

A dozen fellows looked at Harry Wharton when he turned out. The captain of the Remove was there—and he was cheery, as usual.

"So you got back all right?" asked Nugent.

"Right as rain!"
"Good luck!" said Johnny Bull. "I never heard you come in."

"I kept rather quiet," said Harry, with a smile.

"Well, you've been lucky," said Peter Todd. "Did you bag the bike all right?"

"Yes; it's in the Cloisters now."
"You can get it into the bike shed after brekker," said Johnny Bull. "Thank goodness it's all serene. There would have been a fearful row if you'd been spotted out of bounds."

It was not till the Remove had gone down that the Co. were told of what had happened in the night. Johnny Bull, Bob Cherry, and Frank Nugent listened in amazement and wrath.

"The measly worm!" said Bob. "Look here, he's going to be jolly well thrashed for this."

"I think he's had rather a high old time in the box-room," said Harry, laughing. "Inky didn't let him out till half an hour before rising bell."

"I noticed he looked a bit sickly," said Bob, with a grin. "I'd have left him there to be found by the beaks."

"If he had been naively nabbed outside the esteemed dormitory he would have given away the absurd Wharton," remarked Hurree Singh.

"Oh, I forgot that! Look here, the rotter ought to be licked!" said Bob. "What he wants is a thumping good hiding!"

"Perhaps he's had enough—mouthing about a giddy box-room all night," said Frank Nugent, with a chuckle. "He must be feeling pretty sick of himself."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he is!" said Bob, with a glare at the Eurasian, who had come out of the House, his tired eyes blinking in the sunlight.

The Eurasian glanced at the Famous Five. He did not need telling what they had been discussing, and the crimson surged into his pale face. It was odd enough that a fellow who was

capable of such black treachery should feel stung and humiliated by his treachery being known. His face crimsoned, his dark eyes drooped, and he turned away hastily.

In break that morning, when the bike shed was open, Wharton's machine was taken from its hiding-place in the Cloisters and returned to its stand. It was after classes were over that Arthur da Costa came up to the captain of the Remove, watching his opportunity to speak to him alone.

Wharton looked at him coolly and contemptuously.

"You know?" muttered the Eurasian. "About your cowardly trick last night? Yes."

Da Costa winced.
"It was Hurree Singh locked me in the box-room?"

"Find out!" answered Wharton curtly.

"Will you let me explain? I never intended—"

The captain of the Remove interrupted him.

"Save your breath, Da Costa! I know exactly what you intended, and you need tell me no lies. I know what your game is at Greyfriars; my friends know it, and you'll never have a chance of pulling it off. Keep on trying, if you like," added the captain of the Remove, with bitter scorn. "As soon as you make a slip, and give yourself away, look out! Let me get hold of proof enough to satisfy the Head or Mr. Quelch, and I'll let all Greyfriars know that Captain Marker sent you here from India to play a dirty and treacherous game, and you'll get kicked out of the school so quick it will make your head swim."

The Eurasian turned deadly pale. There had been many indications, to his keen eyes, that he was more than suspected by the chums of the Remove, but it was a shock to him to hear Wharton speaking as one who possessed certain knowledge.

"You think—" he faltered.
"I don't think, I know! Keep on with your dirty game, you'll find decent fellows more than a match for you," said Harry contemptuously.

"You are making some mistake—"

"Oh, chuck it!"
Da Costa's eyes gleamed at him.
"After this, then, you will not want me to play in the cricket match at Rookwood?" he asked.

Wharton paused.
"This makes no difference to that,"

he said. "I can't tell all the fellows what I know about your vile rascality because I have no proof. I couldn't explain to them why you were chucked out of the cricket. Besides"—he paused again—"I don't want to chuck you out of the cricket, Da Costa. You're the rottenest, trickiest, most unscrupulous rotter I've ever come across; the worst fellow at Greyfriars is a shining character in comparison with you. But you've got one good point. When you're at cricket you play the game. It's the only decent thing about you, and I'd be sorry to take it away. I can trust you in cricket, though in nothing else. You will play at Rookwood, unless you stand out of your own accord."

The dark face lightened. It was evident that Da Costa felt a weight lifted from his mind by Wharton's reply.

"I am glad of that, at least," he said.
Wharton was turning away, but he turned back. An impulse urged him to speak.

"Look here, Da Costa! You're a queer beggar, as thoroughly wicked in some ways as any fellow could be, and yet you're not all bad. I believe there's

a lot of good in you somewhere; you could make yourself a decent fellow if you tried. Why not try? It's never too late to mend. A rascally man in India has put you up to this—goodness knows why. But you're not bound to obey orders. Why not chuck it up and play the game, and be a decent chap off the cricket field, as well as on it?"

Wharton spoke quietly and earnestly, and the Eurasian's face showed that his words had an effect. But the strange boy from the East did not speak, and Wharton turned away from him, leaving him silent, still, with a deep cloud on his brow.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Blow for Blow!

HOLD ON!
Hazeldene of the Remove snapped out the words.

Wharton stopped.
"Well?" he said curtly.

Hazel was loafing on the tow-path by the park, when the captain of the Remove came along. He was loafing there with his hands in his pockets and a sullen frown on his brow. Since Hazel had "barred" Wharton he had found himself rather in a barred position himself. Barring Wharton meant barring Wharton's friends—most of the Remove. As Hazel felt that he was in the right—and indeed, had no choice but to act as he had done—this was rather hard on him, and it made him moody, and angry, and irritable. Barring the captain of the Form was a good deal like sending himself to Coventry; and that was not at all what Hazel wanted.

Hazel had carried his new attitude to the extent of "chucking" cricket; but the Remove cricketers had not regarded that as a disaster. Hazel's place in the Form Eleven was filled by Da Costa, who was so good a man that it was clear that, in any case, room would have had to be found for him in all important fixtures. Hazel did not want to give up games, by any means; but having taken up that attitude, sullen pride would not allow him to recede from it. With each passing day his resentment towards Wharton grew more bitter—all the more because the Remove fellows looked upon it as mere cheek on his part to bar the captain of the Form. More than once it was on his lips to tell the whole Form why he barred Wharton.

As Harry came up the tow-path, heading for the old stone bridge over the Sark, Hazel stepped out into his way with a lowering brow, and called on him to stop. The captain of the Remove eyed him coolly.

"What do you want?"

"You're going to Cliff House, I suppose," said Hazel, looking at him with sullen and resentful eyes.

"That's my business."

"Mine, too!" said Hazel, savagely.

"You know why I bar you, Harry Wharton, if the other fellows don't. And I tell you plainly that you're not fit for me to speak to, and I won't have you speaking to my sister! You'll keep clear of Cliff House School!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed.
"I shall please myself about that," he answered. "If Marjorie tells me she doesn't want to speak to me again, I shall certainly keep away from Cliff House. You will hardly expect me to take orders from you, Hazel."

"You'll have to!" said Hazel, between his teeth. "I won't have my sister speaking to a thief!"



As Da Costa crossed softly to the box-room door he gave a sudden gasp and stopped dead, for the door was suddenly drawn shut, and the key turned in the lock outside. Da Costa's heart beat in great throbs, and his dark eyes were dilated. He was locked in! (See Chapter 6.)

"That's enough," said Harry, as calmly as he could. "I've told you you made a fool's mistake in that matter, Hazel, and I'm willing to explain if you want to know—"

"I don't want to hear anything from you! I want you to keep your distance—from me and my people!" snarled Hazel. "I haven't told Marjorie yet; but if you go to Cliff House again I shall tell her. She will drop you fast enough when she knows what you are."

"So far as you are concerned, Hazel, you can think what you like, and be hanged to you," said Wharton, still calmly. "But as you are Marjorie's brother, I tell you again that I will explain the whole matter if you like."

"You'll explain how you came to have a stolen banknote in your hands, and got me to pass it for you!" sneered Hazel. "A fellow who will steal will tell lies, I suppose."

"I have Miss Primrose's permission to call at Cliff House this afternoon," said Harry. "Will you come with me, Hazel, and I will explain the matter to you and Marjorie together."

"No, I won't!"

"I am going to explain to Marjorie, anyhow. I can't run the risk of letting her think what you think."

"You're not going to see her," said Hazel. "I won't have it, and for two pins I'd tell the Remove all I know! Only you know you've got me in a corner; I can't give you away about the banknote without letting it be known that you lent me the money to pay a bookmaker. That means the sack for me if it comes out. I can't afford to have the matter talked about; but at least my sister shan't associate with a thief. Keep your distance!"

Wharton clenched his hands.

"I'm trying to be patient with you, Hazel! But I will not allow you to

give me that kind of talk. Don't repeat that word, or I shall hurt you."

"Thief!" retorted Hazel instantly.

Wharton breathed hard.

"Stand aside and let me pass," he said in a choking voice. "I want to keep my hands off you if I can."

"I won't—you thief!"

That was too much for Wharton. He advanced on the sullen junior with hands clenched and eyes glinting.

"Stand aside!"

Hazel's reply was a blow full at his face—a rattier unexpected blow, which landed on Wharton's cheek and left a red mark there.

The next moment Hazeldene was spinning backwards, and he went sprawling in the grass on the towpath.

"Ow!" he gasped.

He sprawled for a moment or two, and then scrambled to his feet and rushed furiously on the captain of the Remove.

Wharton, with his hands up, backed away a pace or two.

"Keep off, you fool!" he shouted.

"Keep off! I tell you I don't want to knock you out!"

Hazel followed him up furiously.

There was no help for it; and in a moment more the two juniors were fighting fiercely.

Hazel was no match for the captain of the Remove; but fierce anger and resentment lent him a fictitious strength, and for a few minutes his passionate attack drove Wharton back, and several of his furious blows came home on his opponent's face.

But Wharton rallied and came on, and Hazel was soon being knocked right and left.

He fought fiercely and persistently; but at last he went down in the grass, and this time he did not rise. He lay panting and spent, staring up at the

captain of the Remove with bitter hatred.

"You rotter!" he muttered thickly.

"You've licked me! But—"

Wharton dabbed his nose with his handkerchief.

"I never wanted to touch you," he said. "You asked for it, Hazel; and even now I'll tell you the truth about that banknote, if you'll listen to me."

"Leave me alone, you rotter!"

Hazel rose unsteadily to his feet. His nose was streaming, and his good-looking face was not good-looking now. He leaned against a tree, panting for breath.

Wharton looked at him, and then, without another word, turned and walked back the way he had come. He had received some damages in the fight, and was not in a fit state to present himself at Cliff House; neither did he desire to see Marjorie Hazeldene, fresh from a fight with her brother. He disappeared from sight in a few minutes, Hazel staring after him sullenly and bitterly.

He moved from the tree at last, groaning. He stooped over the margin of the stream and bathed his face. He was feeling spent and almost sick with the reaction after the excitement of the fight. His only satisfaction was that he had turned Wharton back; and that was little enough satisfaction in his present painful state. He threw himself into the grass under the trees by the towpath to rest, aching with fatigue after his exertions. He was feeling utterly wretched, down and out, and unwilling to face the fellows at the school again till he had recovered a little. The sight of a Greyfriars cap in the distance on the towpath made him withdraw out of sight into the wood, where

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he sat down wearily, resting against the trunk of a beech, hidden by the thick brambles.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

No Progress!

MR. GEDGE came along the tow-path from the direction of Friardale, with a squeak of elastic-sided boots. The City gentleman was not looking happy on that glorious summer's afternoon. He gave not a glance at the shining river on his left, or the deep dark woods on his right; not a glance at the summer sky with its fleecy clouds, or at the blue sea that shimmered in the distance. Such things did not appeal to Mr. Gedge, who looked on every excursion he had to make into the country as a martyrdom. Mr. Gedge was no doubt making a good thing out of his business with Captain Marker, of Lucknow; but whenever he came down into Kent to see Da Costa he felt that he was earning the money.

Had it been practicable Mr. Gedge would certainly have made the Eurasian call at his office in Chancery Lane to report progress. That, however, was not possible; and to keep in touch with Captain Marker's emissary at Greyfriars it was necessary for Mr. Gedge to make periodical visits to the neighbourhood of the school—visits as brief as he could make them. When he got back to his happy surroundings in Chancery Lane, he carried back no recollection of shimmering sea and fleecy sky and cool, shadowy woods; he remembered only the fatigue, the exertion, and the flies. Especially the flies, who settled on Mr. Gedge's perspiring face and beaky nose in the most irritating manner.

Mr. Gedge sighted a Greyfriars junior in the distance—a junior with an olive face and black eyes. It was Arthur da Costa, coming to the appointed place to meet the "legal Johnny."

As was his custom, Mr. Gedge did not approach the junior on the open tow-path. As soon as he knew that Da Costa had seen him, he turned into the shade of the wood and waited for the junior under a tree there, out of sight of passers-by. Mr. Gedge was a cautious gentleman, and in such a matter as he had in hand he could not be too careful. Had the Greyfriars fellows known how often Captain Marker's legal representative considered it necessary to meet the Eurasian, certainly there would have been plenty of comments on the subject, and comments were what Mr. Gedge wanted to avoid.

Da Costa turned from the tow-path into the wood, and joined the lawyer under the spreading beech. Round them the woods were deep and still, the silence broken only by the twittering of the birds in the trees.

Mr. Gedge wasted no time in greetings. He fixed his sharp, beady eyes on the olive face of the Eurasian. What he read there did not seem to please him.

"I have heard nothing from you, Arthur," he said abruptly.

"I had nothing to tell you."

Mr. Gedge looked unpleasant.

"This will not do, Arthur," he said, in a low, acid voice. "The last time I saw you you outlined a plan that seemed assured of success. According to what you told me, you had matters cut and dried. A banknote stolen from a junior's study was to be placed in a letter addressed to Wharton, unknown to him.

"He was to suppose that it was a tip from his uncle, Colonel Wharton. He was to spend the money unknowingly, and then the note was to be identified by the number, and Wharton denounced as a thief. His expulsion from the school was to have followed, and the orders of Captain Marker would then have been carried out. All this you explained to me, and I have waited to hear the result."

Mr. Gedge paused.

But as the Eurasian did not speak, he went on, more acidly than before: "Apparently there has been no result! Apparently, you have failed again, as you failed before! Apparently, Captain Marker has spent his money for nothing in placing you at Greyfriars. This will not do, Arthur."

He paused again.

"It was not my fault," said the Eurasian at last. "I cannot understand it even now. The banknote was taken from Mauleverer's study. It was placed in the letter that came from Colonel Wharton. It was received by Harry Wharton."

"Well?"

"I cannot understand the rest. For some reason that I cannot imagine, Wharton did not change the note. What has become of it I do not know. It seems as if Fate has befriended him."

"Nonsense!"

"I cannot understand how he escaped such a snare, at least. That the banknote reached him, that he believed it was a tip from his uncle, I am absolutely certain. But he did not change the note. Nothing has been heard of it since. It baffles me."

"You are sure?"

"I am sure of what I say. I know nothing further. He could not have lost the banknote. There would have been inquiry. He cannot have given it away to someone outside the school—at least, I cannot think so. He has escaped the snare as if by magic. I—I sometimes think—"

"What do you think?"

"I think perhaps he is fated to escape," said the Eurasian, in a low voice. "We are fatalists in my country, Mr. Gedge, and it seems to me that there is fate in this. Every time I strike he escapes the blow. I bribed a racing man to write him a letter—which I knew must fall into his Form master's hands, and give the impression that he was associating with racing men.

"But this failed, too. His friends forced the man to come up to the school, where it was proved that he did not know Wharton by sight. Only last night Wharton went out of bounds at a late hour to fetch in a bicycle that had been left in the wood. I fastened the box-room window after him. He was fasted this time to be caught, I believed. Some friend of his intervened, and he escaped again. It is Fate!"

"Nonsense!" rasped Mr. Gedge impatiently.

The Eurasian gave him a sullen look. "It seems so to me!" he muttered.

"How do I know? It may be that cunning and treachery are useless against one who is brave and honourable and straightforward—that such attacks will fall harmless from him, like arrows from a breastplate. After all, that is the teaching of all experience and history."

"What? What do you mean?" rasped Mr. Gedge.

The Eurasian smiled bitterly.

"If astuteness and cunning and dissimulation and false dealing could overcome courage and honesty, the English would not be ruling in India to-day," he said. "Why do a handful of foreigners keep down dusky millions who would gladly throw them into the sea? Because the white man in India is the only man who keeps faith. That is his strength.

"If the Afghan leagued with the Hindu, and the Hindu with the Marhatta, and the Marhatta with the Parsee, how long do you think the white man would remain in India? But they cannot league, for the Afghan would betray the Hindu—the Hindu would betray the Marhatta—the Marhatta would deceive the Parsee—the Parsee would delude all of them and betray them in turn.

"No rich Hindu would lend an anna towards such an enterprise, because he knows he never would be repaid if there was success. He is glad to lend all he has to the British Raj at a low interest. The English are strong because they keep faith, because they have not learned the wiles of the native, who despises them as fools, and bows under their rule, because he cannot keep faith with his brethren to unite against the foreigner."

Mr. Gedge stared blankly at Da Costa.

"What rubbish is this?" he snapped. "I did not come here to listen to a talk on Indian politics, Arthur."

"I am not wandering from the point, Mr. Gedge. There is a struggle between East and West in my country, and it is the same thing, on a tiny scale, at Greyfriars. The white man, fearless because he is honourable, and strong against the attacks of Eastern treachery. If there were cowardice or baseness in Wharton's character I should soon hold him in the hollow of my hand. I am a thousand times more clever than he—more cunning—more wily. And he defeats it all by being—what he is! I feel sometimes that he is fated to get the better of me—that when one of us is driven in disgrace from Greyfriars, it will not be he, but I!"

The Eurasian spoke in a tone of deep discouragement.

"What utter nonsense!" rasped Mr. Gedge. "You are losing confidence in yourself because you have failed once or twice."

"That is true."

"You must pull yourself together, Arthur. Things cannot go on like this for ever. Captain Marker went to a great expense in sending you here, and he will expect results."

"I have done my best," said the Eurasian sullenly. "I have stified my conscience. I have done all I could. I have failed!"

"Next time you will not fail."

"I am sick of it all!" muttered Da Costa. "At the school at Lucknow it was different. Here there is a changed atmosphere. There are bad fellows in the school—bad characters, they would be called. But the worst of them would shudder to come near me if he knew what I am, and what I am doing. There are times when I loathe myself."

"Nonsense!"

The Eurasian looked at him. "Are there not times?" he asked, "when you, though you are grown old in trickery and chicanery, feel that you would gladly be a different man—that you would like to be open and honest and healthy, and dare to look honourable men in the face?"

Mr. Gedge blinked at him. "You impertinent young rascal!" he rasped. "How dare you talk to me in such a strain! Upon my word! Arthur, I am here to give you a serious warning. Whether you are doing your best to carry out Captain Marker's orders, I cannot say; but if you have no success to show before the end of the present term, different methods will be employed.

"If you fail you are useless, and you can return to your own country and your beggarly prospects there, leaving the task to be done by abler hands. I warn you, Arthur, that the present term at Greyfriars is your limit. If you have not succeeded by then you will be thrown aside like a useless tool."

The Eurasian did not answer. "That is all!" rasped Mr. Gedge. "Drop all this nonsense from your mind, and set to work to carry out the task you are paid to do. Let me know—and soon—that you have made progress. That is all I have to say to you at present, Arthur da Costa."

With that, the lawyer turned angrily away, walked back to the tow-path, and the squeak of his elastic-sided boots died away in the direction of the village.

Da Costa stood for some moments after Mr. Gedge had left him, buried in deep and troubled thought. Then he sighed, and turned away, and followed the towpath in the opposite direction from that taken by Mr. Gedge.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Hazel Makes Amends!

HAZELDENE lay like a fellow in a dream.

Indeed, for some minutes, while the voices of Mr. Gedge and Da Costa were in his ears, he fancied that he must be dreaming.

The big trunk of the ancient beech and a mass of bracken hid the junior as he lay at the foot of the tree, and it was on the other side of the beech that the lawyer and Da Costa had talked.

Every word, cautious as the tones were, had come quite clearly to Hazel.

Mr. Gedge, for once, had been a little too cautious. Six or seven times already had the man from Chancery Lane met Da Costa in that lonely, secluded spot, and there had been no ears to hear. It was only by the sheerest chance that anyone was there now. Hazel, fatigued and moody, had lain silent where he had thrown himself down, and the talk from the other side of the beech had reached him without the slightest intention on his part to play the eavesdropper. After the first few sentences he had listened with a sort of incredulous horror.

He knew the truth now. He knew whence had come that banknote that belonged to Lord Mauleverer, and that Harry Wharton had given him to satisfy a dunning charper, and save him from exposure and disgrace. Knowing that the banknote was Mauleverer's, when he had learned the number of Mauly's lost note, Hazel had believed that Wharton was a thief! Even now, he asked himself what else he could

have believed? But he knew the truth now—knew how that banknote had come into the hands of the captain of the Remove, who, in the belief that it was his own, had given it to him.

It was long before Hazel stirred.

He rose to his feet at last, and came out of the wood to the tow-path.

Mr. Gedge had long gone; Da Costa had returned to the school. Hazel moved off slowly in the direction of Greyfriars.

He had almost forgotten the fight now, and the damages he had received. He was reminded, when he came into the school and met Skinner in the quad. Skinner gave him a cheery grin.

"Been through it?" he asked.

Hazel started.

"Eh! No—yes!" he stammered.

"Did Wharton lick you?"

"Mind your own business!"

Skinner laughed.

"I noticed Wharton's nose when he

came in," he remarked. "I wondered who had been the happy victim. My dear chap, you were an ass to give Wharton a chance at you; he was waiting for a chance to lick you, of course."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snapped Hazel.

He went on to the House.

"Hazeldene!"

Mr. Quelch called to him as he went in.

"Yes, sir!" muttered Hazel.

"You have been fighting!" said the Remove master severely. "Your face is in a disgraceful state, Hazeldene. With whom have you been fighting?"

"Wharton, sir!"

"Indeed! Then why—"

"It was my fault, sir!" said Hazel quietly. "I ragged him into it! Wharton wasn't to blame!"

Two or three fellows who heard that reply glanced rather curiously at Hazeldene. Mr. Quelch looked at him.

"Indeed!" said the Remove master dryly. "I am glad that you are so frank, Hazeldene. You will take a hundred lines."

"Very well, sir."

Hazel went up to the Remove passage. On the Remove landing Billy Bunter met him—with a fat cachinnation.

"Been under a motor-car, old chap?" chortled Bunter. "I say, your chivvy is a corker!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"He, he, he! I say— Yarosh!" roared Bunter, as Hazel gave him a shove, and he sat down on the landing. "Ow! Wow! Beast!"

Hazel went on to Study No. 1. He could hear cheery voices in that study, and he hesitated outside for a few moments. Then he tapped and opened the door.

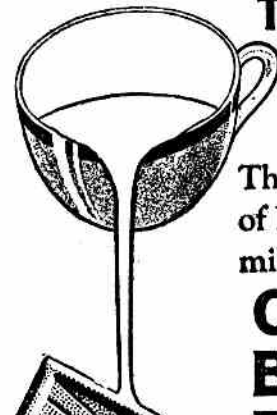
Harry Wharton & Co. were at tea there. Wharton's nose was rather red and bulbous to the view; but otherwise he showed no sign of the fight on the tow-path. The Famous Five all looked at Hazeldene as he stood in the doorway, his damaged countenance flushing crimson.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, breaking an uncomfortable silence.

"Can I come in, Wharton?" asked Hazel, very quietly.

(Continued on next page.)

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"If you like."
Hazel entered the study. The juniors there regarded him with curious inquiry.

"I—I've got to speak to you, Wharton," stammered Hazel. "I—I've found something out! I—I—I'm sorry!"

"Sorry we scrapped?" asked Wharton. "So am I, if you come to that! I never wanted to."

"That—and something else! I want to speak to you—if these fellows knew about—about that matter, I can speak before them. I—I mean—"

"The banknote, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"They know all about it—all that I would have told you if you'd have listened to me," answered Harry. "I don't see how you can have found out anything about it without my telling you."

"Well, I have," said Hazel huskily. "I know now who took that banknote from Mauleverer's study, and got it somehow into that letter from your uncle. I know it was a trick to make you out a thief."

"Great pip!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "And how the thump have you found that out, Hazel?"

"I know it was Da Costa," said Hazel. "I heard him say so."

"My only hat!"

"I—I believed—" stammered Hazel. "Hang it, Wharton, what was I to believe, when the number on the note you gave me was the same number as that of Mauly's lost note? But I'm not making excuses—I'm sorry—awfully sorry! I dare say I was a fool! Anyhow I know now—and I'm ready to go to the Head, if you like, and tell him what a reptile he's let into Greyfriars."

"But how—" exclaimed Wharton, in amazement.

Hazel explained.

The Famous Five listened in deep silence, forgetting their unfinished tea. Hazel stammered out his story shamefacedly. He had repaid Wharton, who had saved him from disgrace, with an accusation of theft; and there was no doubt that he was contrite enough now.

"Well, my only hat!" said Frank Nugent, at last. "That puts the lid on! It's not a matter of suspicion now, Harry, but of proof—Hazel can prove it against that rat Da Costa."

"I'll go to the Head if you like," said Hazel. "That fellow is a dangerous villain and ought to be kicked out of the school."

"This ought to fix Da Costa!" said Bob.

There was a footstep outside; and Arthur da Costa came into the study. Evidently he had heard Bob Cherry's remark, for his dark eyes glanced quickly and suspiciously round the circle of faces.

"You speak of me?" he asked, with a sneer.

"Yes, your reptile!" said Hazel.

Da Costa turned on him in surprise. He had had little to do with Hazel since he had come to Greyfriars, and had had no trouble with him. The junior's words, and his look of bitter scorn, startled the Eurasian.

"What do you mean, Hazeldene?" he asked. "What have I done to you?"

"You reptile! I was on the tow-path—under the trees in the wood—when you met that rascally villain an hour ago."

Da Costa started.

"I heard every word that you and Mr. Gedge said to one another," said Hazel contemptuously, "and I'm only waiting for Wharton to say the word, to go to Dr. Locke."

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All eyes in the study were fixed on the Eurasian. The effort he made to pull himself together, under this unexpected accusation, was visible to all the juniors. But in a few seconds he was his cool, self-possessed, impassive self again.

"I do not catch on," said Da Costa calmly. "I have not been on the tow-path to-day—I know nothing of any meeting in a wood."

Hazel gasped.

"You mean to deny it?" he ejaculated.

Da Costa laughed.

"I deny what is not true," he said. "Have you been telling a fanciful story, like Bunter? I have not seen Mr. Gedge, whom you mention, since the day he brought me to Greyfriars—and if you doubt it, I have no doubt that Mr. Gedge will be able to prove, if it is needed, that he has not been near the school since that day."

Hazel could only gasp.

"Go to the Head, if you choose," said Da Costa coolly. "Tell him any absurd story you please! I have no fear that he will believe you."

"My word!" stammered Hazel. "You—you awful beast—denying what you know is true." He stared round at the Famous Five. "You fellows—you believe what I told you—what I heard—and—"

"Every word!" said Harry Wharton. "Of course! But I'm afraid the Head wouldn't take what you heard as proof, old chap. Da Costa knows that."

Da Costa smiled.

"Let him put it to the test," he said.

Bob Cherry rose to his feet.

"You sickening worm!" he said. "You may be safe, for all I know. You're as wily as a snake, I know that. But if you can stuff the Head, you know that we know the kind of miserable reptile you are. Get out!"

"This is my study—"

Bob Cherry's powerful arm rose, and his clenched fist struck the Eurasian full in the face.

Da Costa spun through the study doorway and sprawled at full length in the Remove passage.

"You fellows don't mind my knocking that reptile out of the study, I hope?" asked Bob.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No fear! More power to your elbow!" chuckled Nugent.

Da Costa leaped to his feet, and came back into the study with the spring of a tiger. Bob Cherry's face set grimly, and he met the Eurasian with right and left.

Crash, crash!

Da Costa sprawled in the Remove passage again. Bob closed the door on him.

"That's that!" he said.

"The thfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Take a pew, Hazel, old man, and have tea!" said the captain of the Remove. "All serene now—what?"

"I'm sorry for what—what I said to you!" stammered Hazel.

"That's all right now. Squat down."

And Hazel stayed to tea in Study No. 1; and later that day all the Remove knew that Hazel no longer "barred" the captain of the Form. But what Hazel had heard under the old beech by the towpath was not told outside the study. It was too wild a tale to be told without convincing proof, and that proof was lacking. But more and more the traitor of the school was becoming known in his true colours; and more and more likely it seemed that his words to Mr. Gedge would prove prophetic, and that it would not be

Harry Wharton, but Arthur da Costa, who would be turned out of Greyfriars in disgrace—at long last.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Rookwood Match!

ARTHUR DA COSTA was among the Greyfriars cricketers who went over to Rookwood. In view of the terms he was on with the Famous Five, it was odd enough that the captain of the Remove was not only willing, but keen, to play him in the cricket eleven. But undoubtedly Wharton was quite keen on that. It was not only that Da Costa was a cricketer of amazing powers for his age, and a rod in pickle for Rookwood. But, as he had told the Eurasian, Wharton would have been very unwilling to turn him out of the cricket so long as he stayed at Greyfriars.

That the traitor should go, as soon as proof could once be obtained of his treachery, was a settled thing, and all the chums of the Remove were anxious to see the last of him. Nevertheless, all the Co. agreed with Wharton that he should play for the Form. Cricket was the one thing that seemed to lift the strange boy of mixed blood out of the mire of deceit and double-dealing, and on the cricket ground he could be trusted.

If there was any hope of his repentance and redemption, it lay through his sporting instincts; and the thought had more than once come into Wharton's mind that Da Costa might yet learn to "play the game" off the playing-fields as well as on. And so, though Wharton's personal feeling towards the fellow was one of deep repulsion, he was glad to include him in the team that went over to Rookwood to play Jimmy Silver & Co.

So far as cricket was concerned, the captain of the Remove had reason to be glad that he had not turned down the half-caste.

For quite a long time the Remove men had been getting into great form for that great fixture. But—as sometimes happens in such cases—when the date came round the eleven was nowhere near top form—nothing like even the team that had played Temple & Co. Such things happened sometimes, and could not be helped.

The Bounder was in poor form, which alone made a big difference. Penfold had to stand out, and Hazeldene had been given his place; and, though Hazel was on his best behaviour now, and very keen to distinguish himself, he was nowhere near Pen's form. Mark Linley was working for an examination, and was not available. Peter Todd had crooked his wrist, and his place was taken by Russell—a good man, but not up to Peter's form. Squiff was down with a cold, and his place had been given to Tom Redwing; a good man enough, but miles behind the Australian. Frank Nugent was in the team; and, though Wharton was very glad to see his best chum there, that did not make him believe that Frank was quite up to the form required to play Rookwood.

Taken altogether, the eleven was what Bob Cherry called very "so-so," and there was no doubt that Arthur da Costa was worth his weight in gold in the circumstances. The fellows who liked him least were glad that he was there, when, in the Rookwood first innings, Jimmy Silver & Co. piled up a hundred runs.

But it is said that it never rains but it pours.

Arthur da Costa opened the Greyfriars innings with Wharton, and was bowled first ball by Jimmy Silver of Rookwood.

Wharton, at the other end of the pitch, simply stared at him.

"How's that?" inquired about fifty Rookwooders round the field.

"Out!"

Wharton could hardly believe his ears.

The best batsman must have had luck sometimes, and there was no doubt that "Uncle James" of Rookwood was a wonderful bowler. But the collapse of Da Costa's wicket for no runs was utterly unexpected. A black suspicion forced itself into Wharton's mind that the Eurasian was carrying his treachery into games—was deliberately letting down the cricket captain, whose enemy he was.

Da Costa's face expressed nothing as he walked back to the pavilion with his unused bat.

Many times, at Greyfriars, the Eurasian had given signs of a passionate and furious temper—a wild-cat temper, as some of the fellows called it. But that temper was never shown on the playing-fields. If the fall of his wicket was a blow to the Eurasian, he gave no sign of it; his face was impassive, expressionless. That, certainly, was as it should be. The Greyfriars men would have been shamed in public had the fellow given way to his temper before the Rookwooders. At the same time, it strengthened the black doubt that had come into Wharton's mind. He told himself bitterly that he had been a fool to trust, in this one matter, a fellow who was not to be trusted in anything else.

With the best batsman down for nothing, and a weakened list to follow him, the Greyfriars innings, naturally, did not amount to very much. That initial failure had a discouraging effect on the other batsmen, too. The Bounder, usually a tower of strength, made a poor show, and only Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Tom Brown put on any runs to speak of. The innings was over much sooner than anticipated, with a total of 55.

After that rather deplorable innings, some of the Rookwooders were seen to exchange very cheery smiles; and Arthur Edward Lovell, of the Rookwood Fourth, was overheard to opine that the home team would not have to bat again unless they liked. The Rookwooders were very confident and cheery, and even Jimmy Silver—who never counted a game won till it was lost—had no doubts about the finish this time. As for the olive-skinned Greyfriars recruit, Jimmy had noticed him only as a fellow who had bagged a duck's-egg, but whose bowling had been good, though nothing wonderful.

"What on earth's the matter with Da Costa?" the Bounder asked the captain of the Remove. "He bowled wonderfully against the Fourth last week. His bowling here is nothing to sing a song about. And this is the first duck's-egg he has scored since he came to Greyfriars. Has he saved up his rottenest form for this match?"

"Looks like it," said Harry glumly.

"A chap can't always be at the top notch," remarked Tom Redwing.

"Still, there's a limit," said the Bounder. "He's a queer beggar, and gets his back up very easily. Blessed if I don't half think he's letting the game down on purpose!"

"Oh, rot!" said Redwing.

Wharton did not answer Vernon-Smith. The thought that had crossed the Bounder's mind was rankling very deep in Wharton's.

Where was the wonderful form Da



Keeping carefully out of the radius of the lights, Harry Wharton and Hurree Singh stole away through the Cloisters, until they reached the thick ivy below the window of Study No. 1. Then, one after the other, the active juniors climbed up the rope which hung there, and clambered in at the study window.

(See Chapter 7.)

Costa had shown as a bowler? Where was his wonderful form as a batsman?

Wharton was not the skipper to "rag" any man while a game was on. If a fellow failed, he failed, and there was an end to it. It was taken for granted that he had done his best.

But that was just what the captain of the Remove could not take for granted in the present case. If the tortuous double-dealing of the Eurasian had been brought into this game—and it seemed only too likely—Wharton could not forgive himself for having trusted the fellow. And yet—

When Rookwood went on again, Da Costa was not given the bowling. During a good many overs, he looked many times at Wharton; while the Rookwood score mounted. Hurree Janset Ram Singh enveloped his side with the hat-trick; but the change bowlers were far from deadly, and Rookwood were quite satisfied with their progress. In other circumstances, Wharton would have put Da Costa on to bowl as a matter of course; but after his display in the Rookwood first innings, and with that dark doubt in his mind, he left him in the field.

At last, while the field crossed after an over, Da Costa found an opportunity of speaking to his captain.

"You will not let me bowl?" he muttered.

Wharton gave him a look.

"No."

"But why not?" asked the Eurasian.

Wharton made no answer.

"I did not do well in their first innings," muttered the Eurasian. "I was not at my best. I—I was thinking—I have many things on my mind—I was troubled—downhearted! But that has passed—I give you my word that I am fit—I can get their wickets. Will you not give me a chance?"

"Your word!" said Harry.

Da Costa crimsoned.

"Yes—my word," he repeated.

"What is that worth?"

"Oh!" muttered Da Costa.

His dark eyes dilated as he looked at Wharton.

"You think—" he faltered.

"I don't know," said Harry. "I'm sorry if I'm unjust—but I can't trust you. I was a fool to play you, knowing you as I do. You are my enemy—you've played any number of dirty tricks—you may be letting me down in this match for all I know. If I'm wrong, I'm sorry—but I can't trust you, and you won't bowl again."

There was no time to say more—and

It was not needed. Arthur da Costa turned away with a set, white face. He did not approach the captain of the Remove again; and in the field he missed more than one catch that should have come to him. Rookwood made exactly another hundred in their second innings; and Greyfriars were left with a hundred and forty-five to get to equal their score—a task which the most hopeful of the merry men from Greyfriars hardly hoped to accomplish.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

"Play Up!"

BOB CHERRY and Johnny Bull were told off to open the Greyfriars second innings. Arthur da Costa came over to Wharton, with a gleam in his dark eyes. Some of the Removites, looking at him, thought that a burst of his passionate Oriental temper was coming; but the Eurasian remained quite calm. He spoke to Harry Wharton in a low voice:

"Wharton! I was down to open the innings."

"I know that."

"Well, then—"

"Now you're at the other end. A duck's-egg is better to wind up with than to begin with."

Da Costa breathed hard.

"You are wrong—you are wrong," he muttered passionately. "You suspect me of playing you false in the game."

"Have you ever played anything but false?" asked Wharton, with a curl of the lip. "I thought that cricket was an exception. It seems that it isn't! I'm not surprised—I ought to have expected this. It's only one more dirty trick."

"You are wrong!" breathed the Eurasian. "Any man may have bad luck! Nugent was bowled first ball—you do not accuse him of letting down the game."

"That's rather different. If Nugent were capable of putting a stolen bank-note in a fellow's letter, I might suspect him easily enough," said Harry scornfully. "Or if he were capable of locking a fellow out of the House to get him nailed breaking bounds. You are false to the marrow of your bones, Da Costa, and I was a blind fool to trust you in cricket."

"I swear that you are wrong," said the Eurasian huskily. "Whatever else I may have done, in cricket I have always played fair and square. I would cut off my hand sooner than play false."

Wharton looked at him curiously.

He had ample reason for his distrust; yet there was a ring of almost wild earnestness in the Eurasian's voice that impressed him.

But he shook his head.

"I can't trust you!" he said curtly.

"Then—when do I bat?"

"Last."

Da Costa turned away without another word. There was no anger in his face now; but a look of deep pain that touched Wharton's heart. He opened his lips to speak, but closed them again. After all, he could not trust the fellow, and he said no more to him.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull were at the wickets now, and making runs. Their innings was a good one; but Jimmy Silver caught out Bob at last; and when the Bounder took his place, Arthur Edward Lovell caught out the Bounder in very quick time. The

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clean-bowling of Frank Nugent followed, and then a catch that sent Russell home.

"This is a jolly old procession!" Bob Cherry remarked lugubriously. "Did you ever learn to play cricket, Smithy? The Rookwood men will think that your game is marbles."

The Bounder scowled.

"We've got a rotten streak of luck, and no mistake," said Frank Nugent. "I shan't write home about my runs."

"The luckfulness is not terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "But an esteemed game is not lost till it is won! Perhaps there will still be a stitch in time to save the cracked pitcher from going longest to the well, as the English proverb says."

And that English proverb cheered up the Greyfriars batsmen a little!

There was rather a change for the better when Harry Wharton went in, and when Hurree Singh joined him the Rookwooders were shown that Greyfriars, after all, knew how to bat. The score mounted; but Jimmy Silver put paid at last to the nabob. Wharton was still going strong; and with another bat of the same quality to back him up, might yet have pulled the game out of the fire. But at the other end of the pitch, wickets went down fast. Greyfriars were only forty for the second innings, when last man was called.

Defeat, more overwhelming than they had ever experienced before, loomed over the men from Greyfriars. They had ninety-five against two hundred, with one wicket to fall. Harry Wharton looked as if he might have held the enemy till the light was gone; but last man in was Arthur da Costa—and Harry expected nothing of him but a duck's-egg. The game was over, in the opinion of the captain of the Remove, and he only waited for Jimmy Silver to knock out the Eurasian with the first ball.

But that ball did not knock out Da Costa. It went travelling, and the Eurasian was running—and Wharton was so taken by surprise, that for a moment he stood still, watching the little figure that was flashing towards him like a streak of white. Then he understood, and ran—ran his hardest. Again the batsmen ran before the ball came in, and Da Costa had the bowling again. And a weight was lifted from Harry Wharton's mind and heart as he watched the boy from the East deal with the bowling.

Jimmy Silver almost rubbed his eyes. The fellow he had bowled for a duck's-egg seemed a new man now. Duck's-eggs were things of the past. Arthur Edward Lovell had told his friends that it would be a "pair of spectacles" for this especial batsman. Arthur Edward had to modify that opinion. If Da Costa had been off colour at the beginning of the game, he was at the top of his form now.

"Bravo!" roared Bob Cherry, in great delight. "Well hit! Oh, well hit, sir."

"Hurrah!"

"The esteemed Da Costa is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, his dark eyes watching the Eurasian curiously.

Harry Wharton's face was bright. He was sure of himself; and he was sure now of his partner at the wickets. The traitor of the Remove, false in all other things, was, after all, justifying Wharton's faith in him. It was bad luck, and not a bad heart, that had caused his failure earlier in the game. He was more than making up for it now.

The hopes of the Greyfriars men began to rise. It looked as if the game might be pulled out of the fire, after all.

"That chap can bat, and no mistake," said Vernon-Smith. "Wharton's good, but Da Costa is twice his form."

"The twicefulness is terrific."

"Bravo!"

"They'll do it yet!" grinned Bob Cherry. "They'll pull it off! You listen to your Uncle Robert, my infants—they'll pull it off yet!"

"Looks like a chance, anyhow," said Hazel.

"Hurrah!"

"Over a hundred to get on the last giddy wicket—and we're going to pull it off!" said Bob. "Why, Rookwood can't touch them! How's the score—jumping like a giddy kangaroo?"

"The jumpfulness is incessant and terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "Did I not remarkably observe that a game is not lost till it is won. The esteemed victory is now an absurd possibility."

"Bravo, Da Costa!"

"Good man!" roared Bob Cherry, as the Eurasian drove the ball away again to the boundary.

No one would have guessed at that moment that the Famous Five of Greyfriars were on the worst possible terms with the olive-skinned fellow at the wickets. Had he been their dearest chum they could not have cheered him more enthusiastically. Wharton, passing Da Costa on the pitch, gave him a cheery, breathless grin.

"Keep it up, old bean!" he called, in passing.

The Eurasian smiled, with a flash of white teeth.

"What-ho!" was his answer.

It seemed as if Captain Marker's emissary at Greyfriars was dead and gone, and a first-class sportsman had come to life in his place.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Victory!

"THE sting's in the tail!"

Jimmy Silver of Rookwood made that remark.

Arthur Edward Lovell nodded assent.

The Rookwood men were being given some of the hardest work they had ever put into a cricket match.

Right up to "last man in," the Greyfriars game had been, on the whole, a poor game, though there had been bright patches. Now, almost at the finish, Greyfriars had awakened to new life. The sting was in the tail, as Jimmy remarked.

Jimmy Silver was a bowler of renown, and he had worked havoc among the Greyfriars wickets that day. But though he was as good as ever, he was powerless now. Harry Wharton was at his very best, and when he was at his best, Wharton was a very good man indeed. But no one on the field would have denied—least of all Wharton himself—that good as he was, Arthur da Costa was better. The boy from the East seemed born to handle a bat; no bowler could touch him, and the field had absolutely no chance. It was hard to believe that he was the same fellow who had lost his wicket for a duck's-egg in the first innings.

Wharton was more than satisfied now. He had doubted the Eurasian—he had had only too much reason to doubt him. But he knew now that his judgment had been right—that Da Costa was to be trusted in games at least. The fellow might very well have resented his captain's distrust, and played a poor game for that reason alone, sensitive and touchy as he was. But there was no

sign of that. With the willow in his hands, he was thinking only of the game.

Whatever it was that had weighed on Da Costa's mind earlier in the day and caused that collapse of his form, had been dismissed now. Whether it was some tortuous plot that had been working in his mind, or whether it was some heavy trouble of which the other fellows knew nothing, it was gone, for the time at least; and the Eurasian was thinking only of the matter in hand.

The score was going up by leaps and bounds. It seemed almost like a miracle to the Rookwooders, who had been so near to a sweeping victory, when they saw the Greyfriars score at 130 for the second innings. The long summer's day was far from its close; there was ample time for the finish, and that sweeping victory was gone from the vision of the Rookwooders—gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream.

Victory was more than doubtful now. There was only one wicket to fall; and fifteen were wanted to tie; but that one wicket did not seem at all likely to fall; Da Costa looked as if he were good for a century if they had been wanted, and Harry Wharton was firmly set. Jimmy Silver and Mornington and Erroll, of Rookwood, laboured in turns with the leather, and laboured in vain. The men in the field were tired with leather-hunting; but they were alert and watchful for chances—but chances for the field were few and far between.

"That's three!" said Bob Cherry.

Three it was!

Another three followed, and a four.

"Bravo!"

"Hip-pip!"

From the group of Greyfriars men came a ripple of clapping. Rookwood men were cheering, too; they were good sportsmen at Rookwood, and could take defeat like sportsmen. And few of them doubted that it was going to be defeat. Five wanted to tie—six to win—and Arthur da Costa drove the ball away for three; and Wharton cut it for two; and there was a yell from Bob Cherry when the score tied.

Jimmy Silver sent down his last ball, and put all his skill into it. Wharton cut it away for the single run that was wanted.

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Bravo!"

"Good man!"

Bob Cherry rushed on the field and clapped Wharton on the back—a clap that made the captain of the Remove stagger.

"Ow!" he gasped.

Half a dozen fellows surrounded Da Costa as he walked off. The Eurasian's face was bright, his dark eyes glowing. Harry Wharton, flushed, breathless, and joyous, joined the Eurasian, and almost unconsciously slipped an arm through his as they went to the pavilion.

"You've played the best game the Remove have ever put up, old chap," he said.

Da Costa looked at him.

"It was a good game," he said.

"It was ripping! My hat! You were worth your weight in gold," said Harry. "Thank goodness you came over to Rookwood!"

The Eurasian smiled.

"Yet you did not trust me."

"Oh!" Wharton coloured. He had forgotten. "I—I'm sorry for that—but—but—but—"

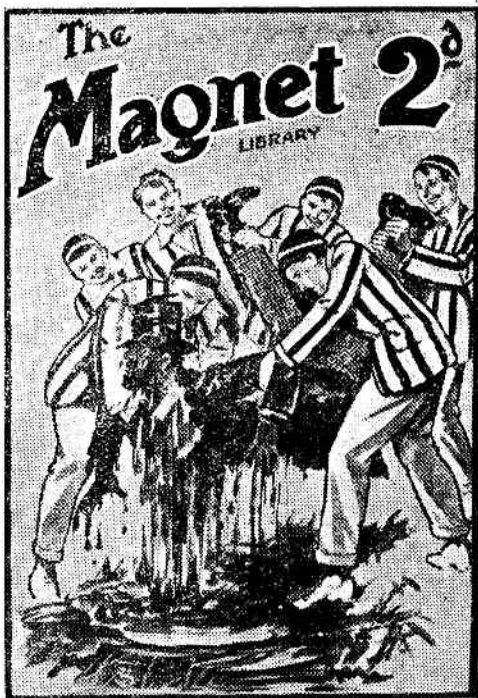
He dropped Da Costa's arm as he remembered.

A bitter look came over the Eurasian's face.

"You were right," he said, in a low

"TRIED AND TRUE!"

Da Costa has sworn that in the future he will run straight: that no longer will he attempt to carry out the dastardly plan of Captain Marker. But such a decision means that his days at Greyfriars are numbered. Yet there are no regrets: the Eurasian has, through the example set by the fellow whom he tried to ruin, learned to play the game. Captain Marker, the plotter, isn't finished with, however. You'll read all about him in next week's glorious yarn of school life and adventure. Don't miss this treat, chums.



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voice. "It was just—why should I blame you? But—if you had known what was on my mind, you would not have blamed me for being off my form."

"I'm really sorry," said Wharton.

It was all he could say. He wondered, too, what it was that had troubled the strange boy from the East so deeply that day. It must have been some deep and heavy trouble, to put such a cricketer off his form—considering how he had played up since.

But confidence between the two was impossible. Da Costa's words had recalled to Wharton what he was—and for what he had come to Greyfriars. No more was said by either of them.

On the way home to Greyfriars the victorious team were in a merry mood—with one exception. Da Costa seemed to be plunged into the blakest depression. He was the hero of the hour—all the fellows knew that he had won the game for his side; that he had saved them from an overwhelming defeat. And the game he had played for Greyfriars was likely to be long remembered at Rookwood. The fellows who liked him least could not help feeling cordial towards him at the present moment—trying hard not to think of what he was, what they knew he was.

The Eurasian might have been expected, in the circumstances, to be as merry and bright as any fellow in the chery party; but he was plunged in deep gloom, avoided joining in the chery talk of the cricketers, and uttered scarcely a word on the journey home.

A number of Remove fellows met the returning cricketers at the school gates in the dusk of the summer evening.

"How did it go?" asked Peter Todd.

"Licked?" asked several fellows.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"It was a jolly old victory," he said.

"Licked right up to the finish, and

then Da Costa pulled the game out of the fire," said the Bounder.

"Just that!" said Harry Wharton. "It was a close thing, but a miss is as good as a mile! I'd have taken twopence for our chances before Da Costa went on to bat; but we've beaten Rookwood!"

"Hurrah!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo hallo! Here's Bunter! Feeling anxious to know how we got on, fatty?" roared Bob. "We've won, my fat pippin!"

"What about supper?"

"Eh?"

"What about supper in the study?" asked Bunter. "The fact is, I've been waiting for you fellows to come in. My idea was to have a ripping supper in the study all ready for you fellows—"

"Jolly good idea!" said Wharton, laughing.

"Only my postal-order didn't come in time—"

"Fathead!"

"I think I told you fellows I was expecting a postal-order—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, you men," said Bob. "I can manage some supper, but I think I'd rather have supper in Hall than wait till Bunter's postal-order comes!"

"Oh, really, Cherry. I say, Mrs. Mumble will let us have the stuff, and, if you like, I'll do the shopping, and— I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter. "Oh, really, you know— Beasts!"

Victory at Rookwood did not produce a study supper for William George Bunter—in consequence of which, victory at Rookwood was to the Owl of the Remove a trifle light as air. But all the rest of the Remove rejoiced—and Arthur da Costa received many congratulations. Yet his olive face was

dark and gloomy when he went to the dormitory with the Remove.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Blow!

TROT in, old bean!" Harry Wharton called out that invitation as a tap came at the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove.

It was a few days after the Rookwood match, and the three occupants of Study No. 1 were at prep.

Wharton jumped up the next moment with a red face as the door opened to admit Henry Samuel Quelch, the master of the Remove.

"Oh, sir!" ejaculated Wharton. "It was the first time he had ever addressed his Form master as 'old bean'; and it was quite inadvertent on his part. He had not been expecting a call from Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master, however, took no notice of that informal greeting. He came into the study with a grim face, and with a sheaf of impot paper in his hand. Wharton, to his surprise, recognized his own writing on the top sheet—it was an imposition he had lately handed in at his Form master's study.

Mr. Quelch held it up. "These lines were written by you, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir!" said Harry, in wonder. "They were left on my table."

"Yes, sir; you weren't in your study when I took my lines in."

"Quite so! You were probably unaware of the state of these lines when you left them in my study!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

Wharton made no reply to that. It was true that the lines had not been written with great care—lines seldom were. But if a carelessly-written impot had to be done over again, that was no reason for this thunderous frown on his Form master's face, as far as Wharton could see.

Mr. Quelch turned back the top sheet. On the second sheet was a small round black mark, surrounded by a tiny hole in the paper. It was a burnt mark—and obviously had been made by the lighted end of a cigarette—as if a cigarette had been carelessly laid on the sheet.

Wharton stared at it blankly. "That mark on the paper, Wharton, can have been made in only one way," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "You are well aware of the strictness of the rule against smoking in junior studies. It would appear that smoking is so habitual in this study, that you are careless enough to lay a lighted cigarette on an imposition."

Wharton gasped. "Certainly not, sir! I don't know how that mark came there. It was not there when I left the lines in your study, sir!"

"Do not be absurd, Wharton!" "It was not there, sir!" repeated the captain of the Remove. "Nobody ever smokes in this study, and the mark cannot possibly have been made here."

"Indeed! Then how do you account for it?" asked the Remove master, with grim sarcasm.

Wharton was silent; but his eyes fixed on the olive face of the Eurasian. Da Costa and Frank Nugent were standing at attention while their Form master was in the study.

"There's only one way of accounting for it, sir," said the captain of the Remove steadily. "That mark was made after I left the impot on your table, and it was made by some fellow with a grudge against me."

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"That is scarcely possible, Wharton! It could, of course, have happened, but it is very improbable indeed."

Mr. Quelch laid the lines down. "In the circumstances, Wharton, I shall search this study very carefully. If smoking goes on here, I shall no doubt find some proof of it."

"You are welcome to search the study, sir," said Nugent. "Nobody ever has any cigarettes here."

"No one, sir!" said Da Costa.

"That is what I shall ascertain," said Mr. Quelch icily. "You will turn out everything in the study under my inspection."

Wharton and Nugent exchanged a look. The same thought was in both their minds—that this was a new trick of the Eurasian. Arthur da Costa's face expressed nothing.

"This desk is locked, I think," said Mr. Quelch, eyeing the old and rather massive desk that stood in a corner of the study.

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "I keep it locked since the time Bunter played that silly practical joke with a watch."

"Unlock it!"

Wharton felt for his keys. The old desk had several drawers and receptacles, with locks. The same key opened all of them; and the desk was soon laid open to Mr. Quelch's inspection.

"Upon my word!" The Remove master uttered a sharp exclamation.

From one of the drawers, after removing several books and old papers, he drew a packet of cigarettes, and a pink paper—evidently a racing paper, with pencil marks against the names of certain horses.

Wharton stared at it dumbfounded. Nugent gasped.

The drawer had been locked, and the key, as Wharton well knew, had never left his possession. Yet this discovery had been made in the locked drawer. The Remove master's face was like iron now.

"It would appear, Wharton, that you have spoken falsely, and that you are not only in the habit of smoking, but that this racing paper belongs to you," said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice. "You were suspected a short time ago of association with a racing man. I allowed myself to be convinced of your innocence. It appears that I was deceived."

Wharton panted. "Those things don't belong to me, sir. I've never seen them before. They've been put in my desk."

"You keep this desk locked?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Have you left the key about at any time?"

"N-no, sir!"

"Do you ask me to believe that some ill-disposed boy has placed these articles in a locked desk, when you had the key in your possession?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Harry. "That's the only way they could have come there. They're not mine!"

"You may tell that absurd story to your headmaster, if you choose," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "I shall now take you to Dr. Locke."

"One moment, sir!" said Da Costa. Mr. Quelch turned on him.

"Do you know anything of this, Da Costa?"

"Yes, sir!"

For one moment the Eurasian paused. Then he spoke again, in a quiet, firm voice.

"Those things do not belong to Wharton, sir."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch. "Then to whom do they belong?"

"To me, sir!"

"You!"

"Yes, sir!"

There was a moment of dumbfounded silence in the study. Mr. Quelch stared at Da Costa as if he could scarcely believe his ears. Wharton and Nugent gazed at him in blank wonder. For the moment, a pin might have been heard to fall in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Clean Cut!

ARTHUR DA COSTA stood facing the Remove master, with a calm, impassive face. He did not look at Wharton.

Mr. Quelch found his voice at last. "Da Costa! What does this mean?"

Is this some absurd story to shield your study-mate? If these things belong to you, how could you place them in a locked drawer of which Wharton has the key?"

"I had a key that fitted the lock, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"Oh!" breathed Wharton. He had felt, he had known, that this was some new device of his enemy; but he had not expected this. The locks on the old oaken desk were not of a common kind; and it could not have been easy to obtain a key to fit them.

"Do you mean that you kept these things in Wharton's desk with his knowledge, Da Costa?"

"No, sir! I placed them there without his knowledge," said the Eurasian. "They have not been there two hours. I placed them there after I had entered your study secretly and made that mark on Wharton's lines."

"Oh!" gasped Nugent. Mr. Quelch's face was a study in itself.

"Da Costa! I hardly understand you! Are you confessing that you have had a base scheme to cause another boy injury?"

"Yes, sir."

"And why?" demanded Mr. Quelch. "Why have you taken all this trouble, all this risk, only to confess to me in this way?"

"Because I have changed my intention, sir," said the Eurasian calmly. "When I did what I have done, I was half-hearted—I was not sure that I would do it—but I went on to the end. But I will go no further. I am ready for punishment, sir—to be sent away from Greyfriars if you think fit! I have been a rascal—but I cannot go on with it."

There was another long silence in the study.

Mr. Quelch was gazing at the boy from the East, in utter wonder. He spoke at last.

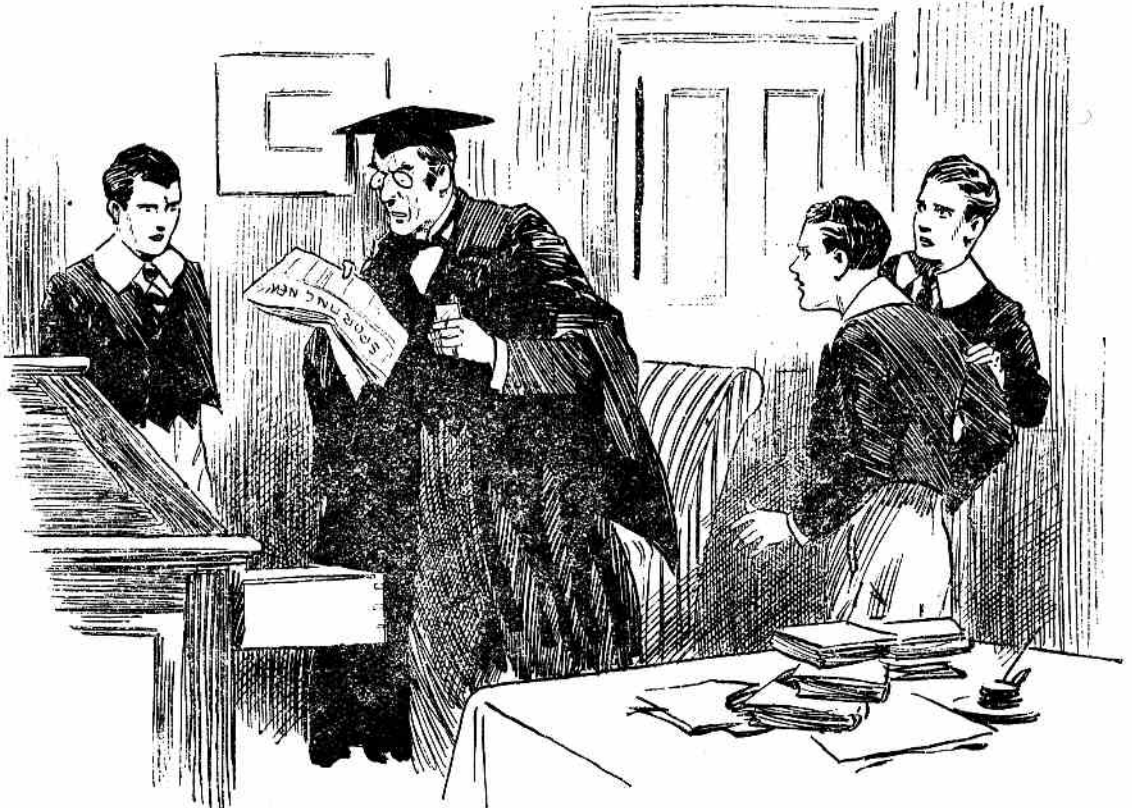
"For such a wretched trick, Da Costa, you certainly would be expelled from Greyfriars, had it come to my knowledge in any other way. But your confession, before harm has been done, makes a very great difference. I presume that you were actuated by some foolish malice, and that you have repented in time. Such a matter cannot be passed over, Da Costa."

"Yes, sir."

"Wharton, I am sorry that I have misjudged you," said the Remove master. "This boy's confession places the matter in a very different light. Da Costa, you will follow me to my study."

"Yes, sir."

The Eurasian, without a look at his study-mates, followed the Remove master.



"Upon my word!" Mr. Quelch uttered a sharp exclamation as from one of the drawers in Wharton's desk he withdrew a packet of cigarettes and a pink paper—evidently a racing paper, with pencil marks against certain horses' names. Wharton stared at it dumbfounded. "It would appear, Wharton," said the Remove master, "that you are not only in the habit of smoking, but racing as well!" (See Chapter 15.)

When they were gone, Wharton and Nugent looked at one another.

"Well, my hat!" said Harry. It was all he could say.

"How could he have got a key?" muttered Nugent.

"Goodness knows."

"And why did he own up?"

"I can't make it out."

Prep was forgotten in Study No. 1. In sheer amazement the juniors waited for Arthur da Costa to return.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You men finished?" Bob Cherry looked in at the open study doorway. "Hallo, what's up?" he added in surprise.

Harry Wharton explained, and Bob gave a long whistle. The three juniors waited a while in the study, but Da Costa did not return, and they went down to the Rag at last.

The Eurasian was not seen there that evening. But there was news of him. Billy Bunter rolled into the Rag with a fat, grinning face.

"I say, you fellows."

"Well, what's the latest?" yawned the Bounder.

"Da Costa's got it!" said Bunter. "He, he, he! I saw him coming out of Old Quelch's study—he looked done to the wide! Old Quelch has been laying it on with a trowel, I fancy! He, he, he!"

"That fellow in a row with Quelch?" said Skinner. "He's generally on Quelch's safe side. What has he been up to?"

"Perhaps Quelch's found out the sort of worm he is!" remarked Hazeldene.

"Frightful worm!" agreed Skinner, with a wink at Snoop. "Makes no end of a score at cricket when other fellows bag duck's-eggs and things."

"I'm not talking about his cricket."

His cricket's all right. But he isn't!" growled Hazel.

"I say, you fellows, he's an awful beast," said Bunter. "A savage, ill-tempered beast! I just smiled at him when I saw him come squirming out of Quelch's study, and he shoved me over! He did really! I only gave him a smile—quite a pleasant smile!"

"Gammon!" said Bob Cherry. "You couldn't do it, with those features."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you beast—"

"I wonder what he's licked for, though?" said the Bounder.

"Let's go and ask him?" suggested Skinner.

But Da Costa was not to be found when Skinner looked for him; and he was not seen by the Remove again till bed-time.

He turned up in the Remove dormitory then, and several fellows asked him questions; but Da Costa had nothing to say. He went to bed with hardly a word, and without even a look at Harry Wharton.

Harry Wharton & Co. knew why the Eurasian had had that painful visit to Mr. Quelch's study, but they said nothing on the subject. The latest development had quite surprised them, and even Hurree Jamsset-Ram Singh had to admit that he did not catch on.

It was not till the following morning that the boy from the East broke his silence. The Famous Five were in the quadrangle after breakfast, when Da Costa came up. The juniors stopped.

"I should like to speak to you, Wharton," said Da Costa, in a low voice, and the Co., after a glance at Harry, walked on and left the Eurasian with the captain of the Remove.

"Well?" said Harry, wondering what

was coming. He could not understand the expression on the olive face.

Da Costa looked at him with a slow smile.

"It is over," he said.

"What?"

"Did you not understand—in the study? It was on the Rookwood day," said Da Costa, speaking slowly. "You thought that I was betraying you—letting down the game. I do not blame you. But that was a mistake—as I think I proved to you."

"You did," said Harry.

"I had much to think of that day," said Da Costa. "That morning I had received a key—you can guess for what use from what happened last evening. Never mind how I obtained the key. It is now at the bottom of the Sark, and will never be used again. I had that scheme in my mind; but—you do not know what this means to me, and I shall not tell you. But it became clear to my mind at last that I could not do what I had come to Greyfriars to do. And yet—"

He broke off.

"Yes?" said Harry, in wonder.

"Yesterday I was tempted; it means a great deal to me to give up all that has been promised," said Da Costa. "It means much—very much. I stifled my conscience once more and laid that snare, and then—then, when success was in my hands, I spoke out, as you heard me speak. You told me that I was false to the marrow of my bones, and perhaps it is true. Later, I might waver again, but now I have placed it out of my own power. After what happened yesterday, and my confession, it would

(Continued on page 28.)

THE BLACK FLAG! Even in 1928, piracy on the high seas is not unknown, for liners with valuable cargoes aboard are "disappearing" in circumstances that are singularly uncanny. Who is this modern Captain Kidd, who flies the skull and cross-bones?

The LORD of LOST ISLAND

Featuring **FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE,** and his Boy Assistant, **JACK DRAKE.**



Introduction on next page.

Ferrers Locke's Disclosures!

BUT surely Sir Richard Templeman cannot be a party to the plot to poison you by fumes from the stuff which we removed from the mouthpiece of the telephone!" said Jack Drake, aghast.

Ferrers Locke sank into an armchair in front of the hearth.

"To-morrow, Jack," he said slowly, "I hope to be able to tell you something definite! There are sinister influences at work! I—"

He broke off as a car came to a purring halt on the road outside. An interval of silence followed, then someone knocked softly on the outer door of the flat.

In response to a gesture from Ferrers Locke, Jack crossed to the door and, opening it, found himself confronted by Professor Chalmers.

"I must apologise for this late intrusion!" said the professor, a kindly note in his voice. "I wish, if possible, to speak to Mr. Locke on a somewhat urgent matter! If it is too late I will call at his office in the morning!"

"Come in, sir!" said Ferrers Locke, coming forward with outstretched hand. "I am honoured by this call!"

The professor entered the room and, Jack relieving him of his silk hat and gloves, he sank into a chair.

"It is about Sir Eustace, that I wish to see you, Mr. Locke!" he said. "Poor fellow, I am afraid that he has taken this lamentable tragedy very much to heart!"

"I am sorry to hear that."

"I knew his father, Mr. Locke," went on the professor sadly. "I feel, as it were, somewhat responsible for the boy—for he is little more than a boy! His father, as you probably know, left him a colossal fortune, and lately Sir Eustace has been associating with men of whom I cannot approve. I do not say that they are bad men, but Sir Eustace is beginning to attend race-meetings in their company, and I would very much like to see something occur to get Sir Eustace out of town and away from their influence!"

"I see! But what—"

"You are going to ask what is the

connection between that and the murder to-night! Just this, Mr. Locke. Sir Eustace told me to-night, when you had gone, that he is very much inclined to leave town and go on a tour round the world. This murder has sickened him. He is very impressionable. And I am convinced that he would go were it not necessary for him to be at hand—the house where the tragedy occurred, being his property. Now, Mr. Locke, is it entirely necessary for Sir Eustace to remain? If you could tell him that it is not, then both I and others, who are interested in his future, would be very deeply grateful to you. It is the chance we have been longing for—the chance to get him away from his doubtful companions."

Professor Chalmers blinked anxiously at Ferrers Locke. Jack quietly studied his kindly old face with interest. He knew, as did everyone, the enormous sums the professor had given to charities, and he knew also that more than once the professor had refused a title which a grateful country was eager to bestow on him as some reward for his disinterested philanthropy.

"There is no reason why Sir Eustace should remain in England!" replied Ferrers Locke. "He was in no way concerned in the tragedy, except that he owned the house where it occurred! Scrivener, his secretary, will be able to give us all the information we require."

"Thank you very much indeed, Mr. Locke," said the professor, rising. "I will acquaint Sir Eustace with what you have said. I take it that Scotland Yard will put no obstacles in his way?"

"None at all!" replied the Baker Street detective. "I can assure you that Sir Eustace need not delay his departure!"

With renewed thanks the professor took his departure and Jack turned in.

All through the night Ferrers Locke worked. He spent three hours in his small laboratory, analysing the oily substance which he had taken from the telephone. He made copious notes and, eventually, his experiments concluded, he unlocked his safe and compared his notes with others contained in a bulky volume.

Once he smiled grimly as though satisfied about some point and, taking another thin volume in which were pasted certain newspaper clippings and letters, he turned the pages till he came to a letter written in a faded, spidery scrawl.

He read this earnestly, and was still engaged with the thin volume long after the first faint light of dawn had crept through a chink in the curtains of the window.

Jack awoke to find that Ferrers Locke had already left the flat leaving a brief note saying that he would not be back till late that night.

"That's our holiday gone west!" remarked Jack Drake. "Poor old gov'nor, he needed one, badly!"

He sauntered down to the Baker Street office during the morning, and alternated between there and the flat during the remainder of the day. But there was no sign of Ferrers Locke, and it was close on midnight when the detective returned to the flat.

Divesting himself of his hat Ferrers Locke seated himself in a comfortable easy-chair. Jack, sitting opposite him, waited for the detective to speak. But for a long time Ferrers Locke sat silent.

"Disappointed, lad, about our cruise falling through?" asked the Baker Street detective suddenly.

"No, gov'nor!" replied Jack valiantly.

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"Yet we are going on a cruise, Jack," he said. "A cruise to the South Pacific and on as wild and strange a quest as one could imagine!"

"You mean, gov'nor—"

"I mean, Jack, that my inquiries, of which I am now about to tell you, have resulted in my proving, without a shadow of doubt, that the loss of shipping in the Southern Pacific, the murder of Pennyfold, the attempt to poison myself, are all the work of one man; a man who has reduced piracy and murder to a fine art; a man who has sent, and who will send—unless he is stopped—thousands of seamen to their deaths! He is as merciless and as inhuman a monster, Jack, as ever trod the earth!"

"You know him, then, gov'nor?"
"Yes, Jack, I know him! But it is going to be difficult to bring his guilt home to him! He is a fiend incarnate, yet hides his foulness behind a kindly countenance! You know him, Jack!"
"I, gov'nor?"
"Yes! It is Professor Chalmers!"

The Chain of Evidence!

"PROFESSOR CHALMERS?" repeated Jack sharply. "But surely, gov'nor—"
The detective's boy assistant broke off helplessly, staring in stark astonishment at the grim, serious face of Ferrers Locke.

The famous Baker Street detective rose to his feet, and, crossing to the safe, returned with an old and faded letter in his hand.

"Let us assume that the missing liners are to be accounted for by piracy," he said, resuming his seat. "Now, listen to this!"

In a quiet, even voice Ferrers Locke commenced to read an extract from the letter:

"And this murderer, this pirate, is known as Black Michael! I've only seen him once, and that was when he cleaned up a saloon called the Bucket of Blood down the Valparaiso docks. Ay, held the place up at the point of the gun, along with three mates of his. And got away with it. They say he's scuttled more than one hundred coasting vessels, but there's nary a soul amongst the crews what has lived to tell the tale. Howsumever, if he ever heads castwards for European waters, you'll know him by the withered and deformed little finger on his right hand. Ay, and maybe by his cursed, oily politeness. I don't know where he was educated, but he'll pass for a gentleman all along the line."

Ferrers Locke laid down the letter.

"That was written to me, Jack," he said, "seven years ago by a sea captain to whom I had rendered some little assistance. Knowing I was interested in all forms of crime, he wrote telling me something about the activities of a pirate, Black Michael, who was terrorising the western seaboard of South America."

He paused; then resumed impressively:

"When Sir Richard Templeman informed me last night that ten large vessels had been lost with all hands under mysterious circumstances in the Southern Pacific, and went on to say that he and his fellow-directors suspected piracy, my mind leapt to this letter—to this Black Michael. I confess that it was not till later in the evening that I directly associated Black Michael with the disappearances of these vessels!"

"But you said Professor Chalmers—"

ventured Jack.
"Professor Chalmers and Black Michael are one and the same man!" said Ferrers Locke grimly. "I met Chalmers for the first time last night. Understand, Jack, that I had this letter in my thoughts; and my mind was, therefore, extremely receptive. I noted that the little finger on Chalmers' right hand is deformed!"

"But, gov'nor, might not that be merely coincidence?"

"Exactly! But compare the charming urbanity of the man with the phrase in his letter which reads, 'His cursed, oily politeness.' The clue is somewhat strengthened by that, but is still far from strong enough."

"Yes, I see that, gov'nor!" said Jack eagerly. "Go on."

"When we got back to my flat we found that the telephone mouthpiece had been doctored. A call came through. That call was from the house of Sir Richard Templeman, requesting me to proceed no further in the case. I have ascertained that Sir Richard did not send the call, but that the butler of Sir Eustace Fitzclarence did so. The man was recommended to Sir Eustace by Professor Chalmers. He had scraped an acquaintance with Sir Richard Templeman's butler, and, calling casually late last night, asked if he might use the telephone. It was I whom he rang up."

"And you faked your collapse through pretending to inhale the poison!"

"Yes. Then Professor Chalmers called round hard on the heels of that pretended collapse. Obviously to assure himself that I was beyond mortal aid. You see how it begins to fit in, Jack?"

"Yes, yes! Chalmers thought you were taking up the case, and wanted you out of the way."

"Exactly! Scotland Yard have made inquiries, and they informed me this evening that the butler who has been in service with Sir Eustace, on Chalmers' recommendation, is a man named Muller. He has a notorious criminal record in South America."

"In South America? That's a hefty link in the chain, gov'nor!"

Ferrers Locke nodded.
"The man has disappeared—cleared out! He has taken alarm at something, or is acting under orders."

"But why should he be working for Sir Eustace? What was Chalmers' idea?"

"Possibly Chalmers got the man the job in order that an eye could be kept on Sir Eustace. The latter admitted to me to-day that he has parted with large sums of money to Chalmers. One sum was expended on the super-seaplane which Chalmers designed for an Atlantic flight. That seaplane disappeared somewhere in mid-ocean. Sir Eustace has been a pigeon which Chalmers has been plucking."

Ferrers Locke paused a moment; then resumed, speaking with slow deliberation.

"And now we come to the final links in the chain of evidence. Chalmers was the last prospective tenant to visit the house in Middle Park Street where Pennyfold was murdered. He was the last man to handle the keys. Those keys were examined by me to-day. They bore traces of wax. An impression of them had obviously been taken. Why? In order that Chalmers might easily obtain access to the house on some other occasion. Admitting that Chalmers has a hand in the disappearance of these

INTRODUCTION.

Following the startling disappearance of ten large vessels—lost with all hands under mysterious circumstances in the Pacific—Joshua Pennyfold, a trusted representative of Lloyd's, is instructed to acquaint Ferrers Locke, the celebrated Baker Street detective, with the facts. Pennyfold is forcibly detained, however, in an unattended house owned by Sir Eustace Fitzclarence, and is in the act of telephoning to Ferrers Locke when he is attacked from the rear by some unknown foe and brutally murdered. After an interview with Sir Richard Templeman, a departmental head at Lloyd's, Ferrers Locke, accompanied by Jack Drake, his boy assistant, pays a visit to Sir Eustace Fitzclarence where he makes the acquaintance of Professor Chalmers, a wealthy philanthropist. After making certain inquiries the Baker Street detective returns to his flat to discover his telephone mouthpiece doctored with poison. When a message comes through shortly afterwards, presumably from Sir Richard Templeman, requesting Ferrers Locke to proceed no further with the case, the Baker Street detective fakes a collapse by pretending to inhale the poison.

(Now read on.)

liners, would he desire the death of Pennyfold before the latter could tell me all he knew of the disappearances?"

"Absolutely!" replied Jack Drake emphatically.

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"And there you get the motive for the murder. You also get the motive for the attempt to poison me. The poison used was an extract from a plant named the tantilga, which grows only on certain islands in the Southern Pacific."

"By Jove, gov'nor! There's a pile of evidence against this Professor Chalmers, or Black Michael!" exclaimed Jack. "Is it strong enough to have the man arrested?"

"No. We are waiting for confirmatory evidence from the Civilian police as to the appearance, etcetera, of Black Michael before we take any action. Even then we will have to learn something very definite. In the meantime, Chalmers is being shadowed, and—"

The Baker Street detective broke off sharply, as a quick step sounded in the corridor outside, and someone knocked impatiently on the door. Rising to his feet, he crossed the room and opened the door.

Inspector Pycroft of the C.I.D. stood on the threshold.

He pushed brusquely past the detective into the room, then swung round and faced him.

"Mr. Locke," he said, "when you told me to-day your suspicions about Chalmers, I thought you were a fool. I'm sorry. It was I who was the fool!"

"Yes?"

Ferrers Locke's tone was questioning. "I had Parkin trailing him! An hour ago Parkin was found with a knife in his back down the East India Docks! In his pocket was this note. He was quite dead!"

Inspector Pycroft held out a scrap of paper; and, with a sharp glance towards him, Ferrers Locke took it. Unfolding it, he scanned the written words, then handed it to Jack Drake.

In a scrawling hand was written:

"There's the same dose waiting for Ferrers Locke!"

The note was unsigned.

The Plan of Campaign!

"WELL, what do you make of it?"

Inspector Pycroft's voice was sharp.

"Blunt, if crude," replied Ferrers Locke, albeit his eyes were grim. "The assassin has expressed his intentions without any beating about the bush."

"You bet he has!" responded Pycroft. "It's Chalmers, of course!"

"Or one of his agents," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "I suppose, with the death of Parkin, all trace of the man has been temporarily lost?"

"Yes, it has," replied Pycroft gruffly. "We're in possession of his town house, and I have plain-clothes men waiting at all his known haunts. We're combing London for him as well, and all the ports and railway stations are being watched."

"How long has Parkin been dead?" asked the Baker Street detective.

"We found him an hour ago. The police surgeon said that he had been dead about three hours. A dock hand found the body in a narrow cul-de-sac."

"Then Chalmers has had four hours' start, at least. He is no ordinary sneak-thief, and I guarantee that he has been prepared for such an emergency as this."

"Meaning?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,064.

The El Peco!

IN the cold grey light of early morning Ferrers Locke and Drake stood on the boat-deck of the R.M.S. Ramilles as she dropped down the Thames. The subsequent voyage to Buenos Aires proved uneventful, and towards evening of the day upon which the ship docked, the wireless operator handed Ferrers Locke a message in code.

In the privacy of their cabin, the Baker Street detective and Jack Drake decoded the message. It was from Inspector Pycroft.

"Absolutely certain that Chalmers escaped country. Have informed South American police re our suspicions. Call on them for whatever aid you may require. Anxiety felt about s.s. Patagonia, homeward bound from Sydney. Two days overdue at Panama."

"The s.s. Patagonia!" repeated the detective, taking a book from one of the shelves. "Here we are! Red Funnel Line, twenty-eight thousand tons burden. Fastest ship of the line. She's a big one. Jack!"

"And she's disappeared between Sydney and the Panama Canal!" said Drake. "That's in the Pacific, gov'nor, where the other ships have vanished!"

Ferrers Locke nodded. "Yes," he said grimly, "and there can be little doubt but that she has gone the same way. Have a stroll on deck now, lad. We dock in an hour, and I have a letter to write!"

Within an hour the Ramilles docked, and the Customs formalities over, Ferrers Locke hailed a taxi.

"El Peco Hotel!" he said to the driver, then followed Jack into the musty interior of the cab.

The taxi threaded its way through narrow, tortuous streets till dockland was left behind. It turned at length into a quiet thoroughfare of poor-looking tenements, and drew up in front of a squalid building which bore, in faded gilt letters above the door, the legend, "El Peco."

The interior of the hotel was in keeping with its outward appearance. A sallow-looking individual in shirt-sleeves, and minus a collar, stared at the Baker Street detective and his boy assistant suspiciously, ruminated audibly as to whether he had any rooms to spare, and then decided that he had. Having got the money in advance, he took a suit-case in each hand, and led the way up a flight of stairs, along a corridor, and halted in front of a door with cracked panels.

"One of youse kin hev this'n," said the sallow-looking individual. "t'other kin hev t'other next door! S'long!"

He deluged the floor with a spurt of tobacco-juice, turned on his heel, and slip-slipped away. The two bed-rooms were uncarpeted and their sole furnishings consisted of an iron bedstead apiece, a rickety washstand, and a broken-backed chair. One door had a bolt on the inside which functioned. The other door was minus lock or bolt. Jack was inwardly wondering why the detective had chosen such quarters as these, but knew an explanation would be forthcoming in due course.

A down-at-the-el, hungry-looking waiter brought up some supper on a tray at Ferrers Locke's request. It was dark by now, and, the unappetising

(Continued on page 28.)



In the dead man's pocket was a scrap of paper, on which was scrawled a message threatening Ferrers Locke with a like fate. (See page 26.)

"Meaning that, like every cunning rat, he has his secret exit ready for immediate use. He would see the writing on the wall when Lloyd's decided to take action. He would know then that it was about time for him to clear out of London. He attempted my life the moment he thought I had taken up the case. Muller disappeared from the house of Sir Eustace Fitzclarence today. It all points to a speedy departure, and a departure which, I am convinced, has been well and carefully arranged."

"Then you think most likely he has slipped through our fingers?" said Inspector Pycroft.

"Candidly, I very much doubt if he is still in London, or even in this country," answered Ferrers Locke.

"We'll find him if he is!"

"I know you will. But it's because I don't think he is still in England that my assistant and I sail for the Southern Pacific in the morning!"

"Oh?"

"In the morning," repeated Ferrers Locke. "And I will be much obliged if

you will book us passages on the R.M.S. Ramilles, sailing from the Thames for Buenos Aires on the dawn tide. Book the passages for a Mr. Henderson and his nephew."

"But what's the idea?"

"Simply this," explained the Baker Street detective. "If Chalmers has not left the country, Scotland Yard will get him. I am certain he is the man behind these raids on the shipping in the Southern Pacific. He must have a base somewhere, and it is that base I wish to discover. It is obviously somewhere in the South Pacific, or on the west coast of South America. If you do apprehend him in this country, he's not likely to tell you much. The base, and his gang, will still exist. It has got to be cleaned up!"

"Parkin was murdered down in the East India Docks," said Pycroft slowly. "It's certain he trailed Chalmers there. Confound it, but what did Chalmers want down there? By Jove, it looks like a getaway down the Thames!"

"Absolutely!" said Ferrers Locke. "The chances are that the man is now on the high seas in some craft of his own. Listen! Get me those berths, and keep in touch with me by wireless throughout the voyage. If Chalmers is not apprehended by the time I reach Buenos Aires, then it's certain that he has got out of the country. I've got to solve the mystery of these missing liners, Pycroft, and I am going to do it!"

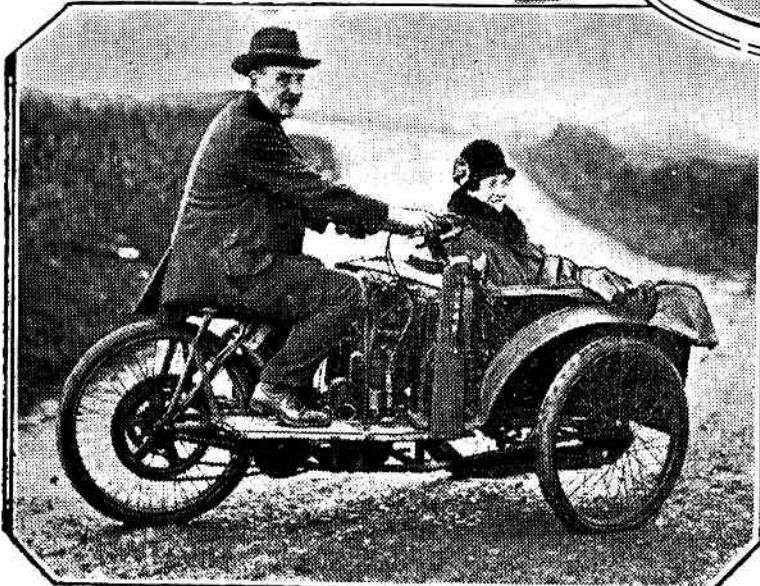


A YOUNG CENTURY-MAKER!

We think nothing of county cricketers scoring hundreds, but when a lad of twelve starts knocking up centuries, we begin to take more than a passing interest. Alfred Kerry, of Hermit Road School, West Ham, is the budding Hobbs in question, for he scored 109 runs, not out, against Halleville Road School, in the West Ham Schoolboys' Cricket League. No wonder his school-mates gave him a rousing greeting, and chaired him, as can be seen in the photograph! Hats off to Alf!

FOLLOWING IN FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS!

When Charles B. Murphy came into the world two and a half years ago, some people said he did as much roaring as the wild animals in the Zoo at Universal City, U.S.A., of which his father is the keeper. Perhaps that was a good omen, for now Charles can do almost anything with the most ferocious of the wild beasts in his father's charge. You must agree he seems quite at home on his weird perch!



**BORN IN 1896—
AND STILL GOING
STRONG!**

A remarkable motor-car, this! It belongs to Mr. James Collins, of Thorngate, Donholme, near Bradford, and cost £110, being one of the first motor vehicles in the north. Mr. Collins still uses it daily, and in spite of its being thirty-two years old, he can make it buzz along at 50 m.p.h. The engine is only 3½ h.p., and consumes one gallon of petrol to every sixty miles! Another remarkable feature of this amazing car is the fact that it possesses no springs. One would imagine that bumps and jumps would be the order of the day, but apparently Mr. Collins does not mind this, for he has toured Wales and the north and south of England in the sturdy old bus. The photograph shows him just starting off on another spin.

"PLAYING THE GAME!"*(Continued from page 23.)*

Le futile for me to plot again, if the temptation seized me. My confession of such trickery will not be forgotten. You understand now—"

"I think I do," said Wharton slowly. "You have called me a reptile," said the Eurasian bitterly. "Well, if I am a reptile I have now drawn my own fangs, and I cannot harm you, if I would. You will never understand me, or perhaps forgive me, but at least you may be sure that I shall not harm you again."

Harry Wharton stood silent. It was difficult for him to understand the strange nature of the boy of mixed blood, but he believed what Da Costa was telling him now—that he had made a resolve to play the game, and to give up the treacherous purpose for which he had been sent to Greyfriars School. That resolve—for the moment, at least—was sincere, though that it might change again was very possible. Da Costa, watching Wharton's face, read what was passing in his mind and smiled.

"Even now you do not believe me," he said. "It is natural enough. But I have written a letter. I want you to read it and then drop it into the school letter-box."

Wharton took the envelope the Eurasian held out to him. It was addressed to Mr. Gedge, in Chancery Lane.

"You want me to read this?"

"Yes, yes."

"But—"

"Read it!"

Wharton drew the letter from the envelope and read, with deepening amazement:

"Dear Mr. Gedge,—The key you sent me is now at the bottom of the river. I am done with you. I have your letter

and refuse to meet you again, as you ask. You may tell Captain Marker to find another tool. I will do nothing for him.

ARTHUR DA COSTA.

"You are sending this to Mr. Gedge?" said Harry Wharton, replacing the letter in the envelope and looking blankly at the Eurasian.

"I ask you to post it, that you may be sure!"

"Well, my hat!"

Arthur Da Costa turned and walked away to the House, leaving Wharton with the letter in his hand.

His comrades rejoined him when the Eurasian was gone, and they watched while their skipper dropped the letter into the box. It was gone beyond recall now.

What Mr. Gedge's feelings would be like when he received that curt missive, Harry Wharton wondered, though he cared little.

Arthur da Costa did not seem to care at all. The blackness that had weighed upon his spirits since the day of the Rookwood match seemed lifted now; a weight seemed to have rolled from his mind. For the short time that he had to remain at Greyfriars the boy from the East, who had played so strange and treacherous a part, had placed it out of his own power to fall to temptation if his resolve wavered, and in Study No. 1, if there could not be friendship, there was at least respect for the fellow who, almost in spite of his own nature, had resolved upon playing the game.

THE END.

(A splendid series of yarns, you'll all agree. But the titbit of all is: "TRIED AND TRUE!" If you fail to read it, chums, you'll be missing the treat of the week. Make a special point of ordering your MAGNET WELL IN ADVANCE!)

THE LORD OF LOST ISLAND!*(Continued from page 26.)*

meal over, the detective turned to Jack.

"Now, listen, my boy!" he said. "You will take the room with the Bolt on the door. Shove the bolt home and turn out your light. Keep awake, and keep your gun in your hand! If I am not much mistaken, we will have a visitor before morning!"

Jack Drake did as he was told, and, turning out the gas-jet in his room, seated himself on the bed.

Time dragged wearily past, till at last Drake consulted his wrist-watch. It was midnight now, but there was still life in the hotel. This visitor Ferrers Locke was expecting. One of the Chalmers men, probably. Jack had not forgotten Chalmers' threat to give the detective the same as Parkin had got.

One o'clock. Jack stiffened suddenly. He could have sworn that he had heard a stealthy step in the corridor outside. With straining ears and bated breath, he listened. All was silent. A false alarm—must have been a floorboard, rotten with age, creaking.

Then, without warning, the silence was shattered by the crashing report of two revolver-shots. They came from the next room—Ferrers Locke's room. Then came a shriek and a dull thud.

White-faced, Jack Drake leapt for the door, and, with frantic fingers, wrenched back the bolt. He turned the handle, but the door refused to open. It was fastened on the outside!

(Like a flash it came to Jack Drake's mind that Chalmers had carried out his wild threat. The revolver-shots, the shriek, the dull thud—what else could it all mean! There's a big surprise waiting for you in next week's thrilling instalment of this powerful serial, chums. Don't miss it, whatever you do.)

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DR. BIRCHEMALL'S DICKY NUGENT.

Twenty-eight years has Bill Bodger waited for a chance to settle accounts with his old headmaster, and the form Bill's revenge takes certainly causes a big laugh at St. Sam's, in which, of course, Dr. Birchmhall does NOT participate!

HELP! Verlies! Five! Murder! Reeker, St. Sam's!

It was Dr. Birchmhall, the refined and scholarly headmaster of St. Sam's, whose harrowing shrieks broke the stillness of the summer evening.

As a rule, the Head was cool and calm and collected. He never turned a hair or behaved like a frightened rabbit, in a crisis. Perhaps it was his baldness which prevented him from turning a hair!

On the present occasion, however, the Head had every egg-cuse for being hysterical. For he was a prisoner in the pillery!

It was amazing—it was incredible—it was utterly unheard-of—but it was a painful fact!

Fixed in the pillery, with his head and hands protruding, and his legs wildly flailing in the air, was the sacred and sacred—person of Dr. Birchmhall, surrounded by a yelling hoard of boys and 'Nid Boys.

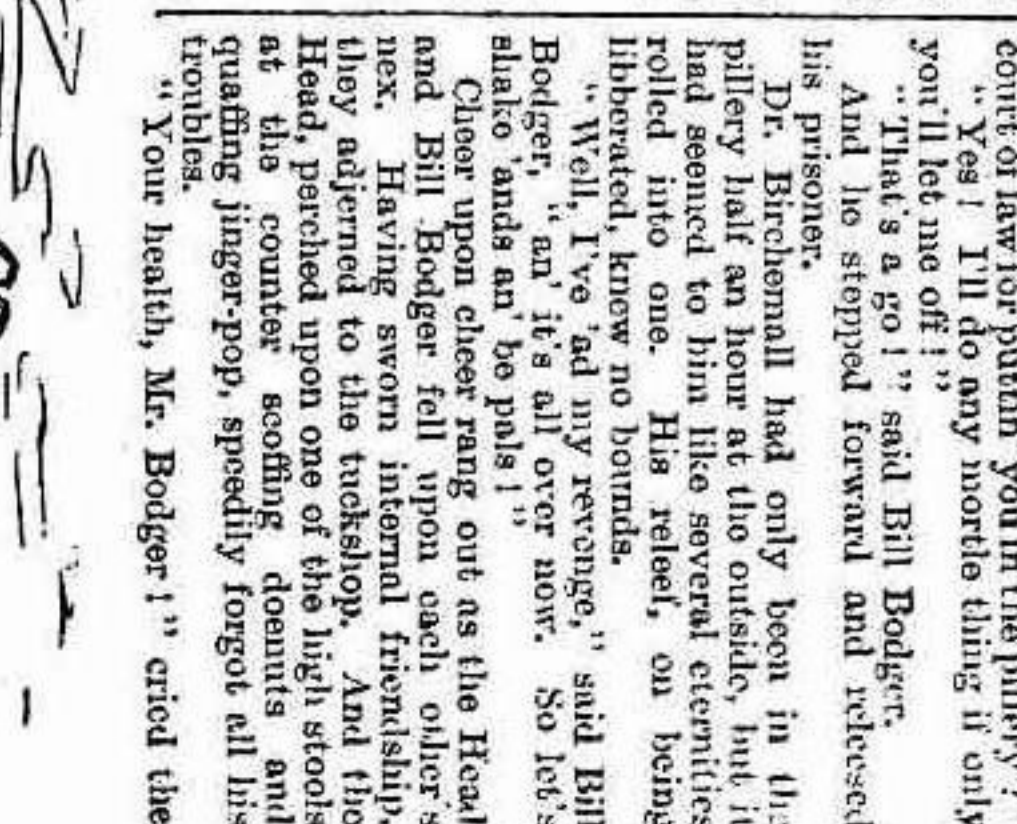
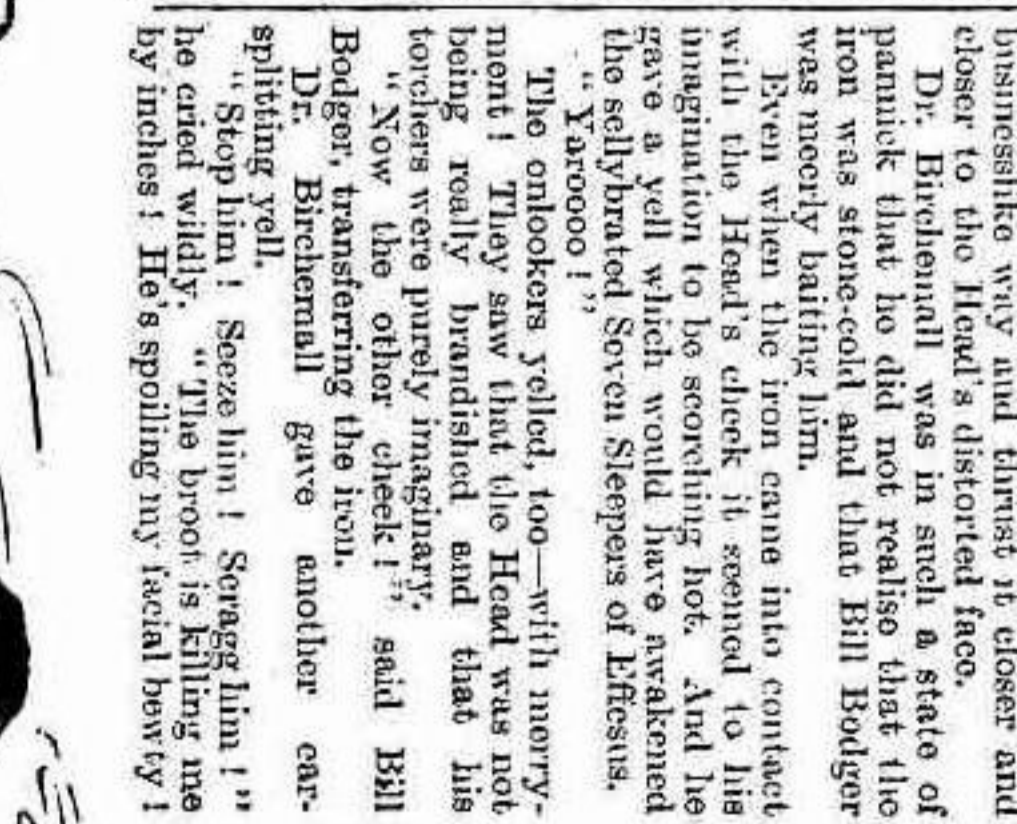
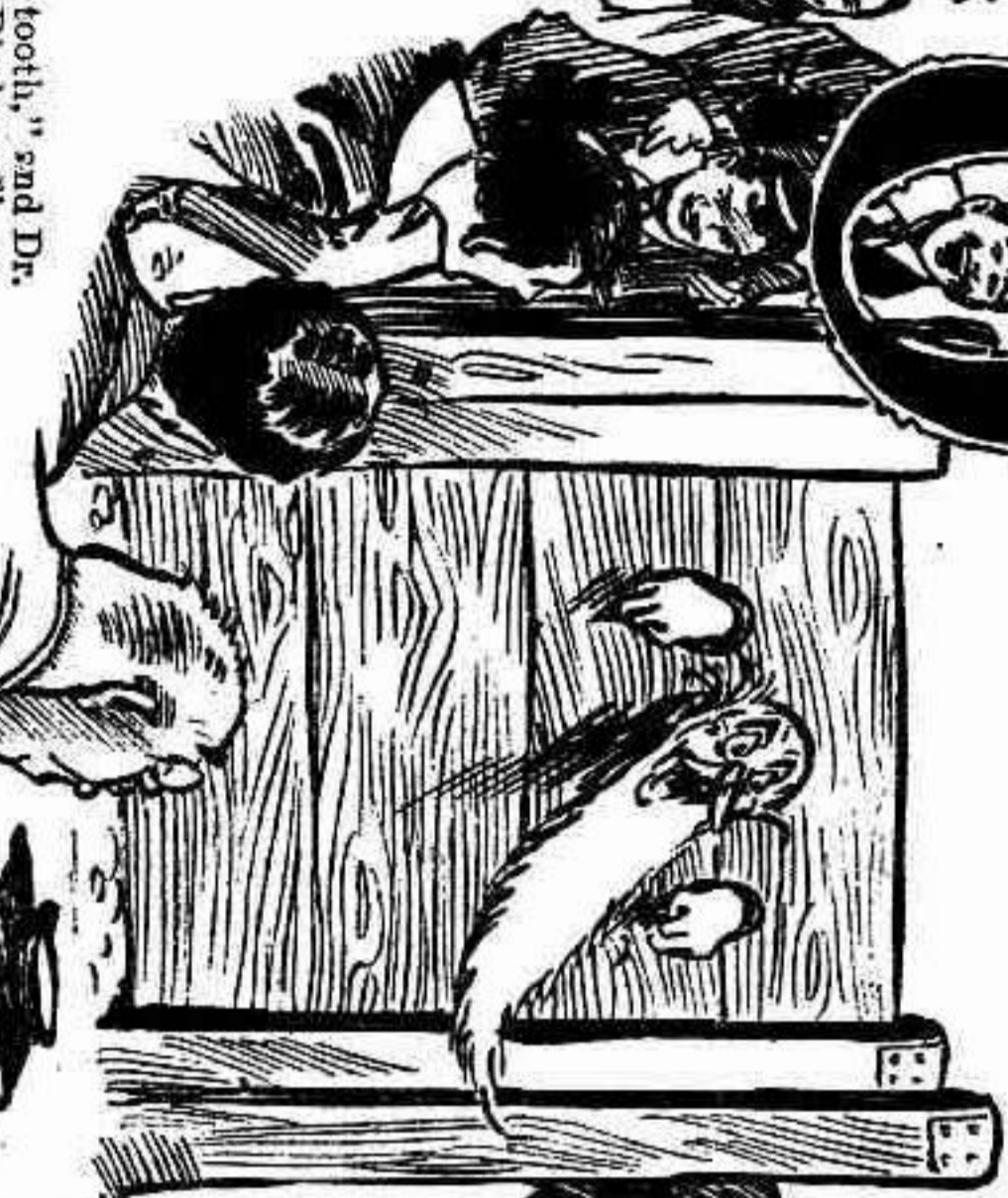
The pillery, as a form of punishment, had been abolished in England in 1837; but at St. Sam's, where custom and tradition dyed hard, its use had been 'obscured' up till 1900. In that year it had been taken down and put in the school museum—a barbarous relic of a barbarous past.

And now the pillery had been brought back to life, so to speak, by an Old Boy named Bill Bodger for Dr. Birchmhall's benefit.

Bill Bodger had been the last St. Sam's fellow to suffer in the pillery. He had been placed in it in 1900, by Dr. Birchmhall's orders, and had been brandished with hot irons. For in those days the punishments at St. Sam's were more severe than they are to-day. In Bill Bodger's time a fellow thought nothing of getting ninety-nine strokes with the birch. It was just like being tickled with a feather by companions. For Dr. Birchmhall had ruled with a rod of iron—and being flogged with a rod of iron is no joke!

Twenty-eight years had collapsed since Bill Bodger had suffered his torments, but he had never forgiven or forgotten. Feelings of rancor and revenge had burned in his breast ever since, and he had vowed a solemn vow that he would make Dr. Birchmhall suffer for his brutality and cruelty.

And he was avenged at last! It was a case of "an I for an I and a tooth for a tooth." THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,064.



tooth," said Dr. Birchmhall, "I was getting a taste of his own medicine. Apparently, he didn't seem to relish it! It was a bitter pill for the Head to swallow—to find himself in the pillery, with a stream of yelling schoolboys dancing around him, putting their thumbs to their noses with fingers outstretched, and hurling offensive epithets at him.

Bill Bodger's face was almost glistening with glee as he gloated over his victim.

"At last!" he cried. "For twenty-eight weary years, Birchmhall, I have waited for this day—the day of my just vengeance! I have sighed for the day, I have cried for the day—and now the day has come!"

"Brood!" cried the Head hoarsely. "Covered! rough! You'll go to the gallows for this—or at least get six months' hard labor for life!"

"How long am I to hang here like this—a faggot of fun, an object of scorn and ridicule to all beholders?"

"Oh, a few hours!" said Bill Bodger, carelessly.

"What!" shrieked the Head. "A few hours! Why, I'm cramped and numbed in every limb already! My neck is being choked, and I am being chaffed—"

"I know exactly how you feel," said Bill Bodger, with a grin. "You see, I've been there myself! And when I pleaded for mercy an' implored you to let me out, you laughed in my face! But he who laughs last laughs longest. An' it's my turn to laugh now! Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

"Ow, ow, ow!" cursed Dr. Birchmhall. And there was a yell of laughter from the hardies mob.

Dr. Birchmhall gazed wildly around, with eyes which were protruding from their sockets.

"You wait, you young villains!" he hissed. "I'll birch you all black and blue, if ever I emerge from this ordeal alive!"

"I say, Birchmhall, you do look a gony dangly there like that!" said Colonel Fleggy Sparkes. "Pon my Sam, you look perfectly hoodicrum, by gad!"

"Provided what?"

"Provided Mr. Bodger has no objection!"

But Mr. Bodger had very strong objections to the Head being rescued, and he stated them forcibly.

"Justice, of course, will not interfere with the course of justice," said Bill Bodger. "Otherwise the quid will be strewn with little pieces of the corpse of Justice!"

"You hear him, sir?" said Mr. Justice, turning to the Head. "If I attempted to rescue you I should be taking my life in my hands!"

"Coward!" roared the Head. "Consider, yourself, sacker! If you refuse to rescue me, there are others who will do their duty by their headmaster. Swishingham! 'Yser! Ham! Gungelheimer! Mon-sire Progray! Help! Save me!"

But the masters thus addressed were walking rapidly away. Whether they had heard the Head's frantic appeal or not, they certainly didn't heed it.

"Funks! 'Funks! 'Funks! Howled the Chickens-harted pillars of the Head. "Consider your selves sacker! all of you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Head. "You are aiding and abetting this scoundrel! I believe you are actually enjoying the spectacle of me in the pillery!"

"So I am!" confessed Colonel Sparkes. "It's better than a pantomime! Scuse me larrah!" He, ha, ha!

The colonel fairly eggsplored; and so did Dr. Birchmhall, but in a different way. Then the Head's eye fell upon Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth. Mr. Lickham had been grinning broadly at the Head's discomfiture, but when he caught Dr. Birchmhall's eye the grin vanished and a look of sympathy and compassion took its place.

"Lickham!" cried the Head. "Do your duty! I order you to release me at once from this intolerable and doocidly uncomfortable position!"

Mr. Lickham hesitated. He glanced nervously at Bill Bodger, who gave him a look that was full of meaning and menace. Then Mr. Lickham turned to the Head.

"I'm awfully sorry, sir," he said. "My heart bleeds for you, but I cannot interfere with the course of justice."

"Then consider yourself sacked from St. Sam's!" roared the Head.

"Oh lor!" gasped Mr. Lickham. Dr. Birchmhall's eye then lighted upon Mr. Justice, who was in the act of taking a snapshot of him.

"Justice!" roared the Head angrily. "What are you doing?"

"Taking photographs, sir."

"Of me?" almost shrieked the Head. "Oh, no, sir—merely a general view of the quid as a whole."

"Well, stop taking snaps," snapped the Head snappishly, "and come and rescue me!"

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Justice, "provided—"

Altogether, in imagination, he could feel the hot irons brandishing his cheeks. "Mercy!" he pleaded. "Spare me!"

Bill Bodger snorted. "Which cheek would you like me to do first?" he asked, taking an iron from Jack Jolly. "Or shall we start by snipping your beard off?"

"P-p-put that implement of torture down!" stuttered the Head, squirming and struggling in the pillery. "If you dare to scar me the consequences will be serious!"

Bill Bodger gripped the iron in a businesslike way and thrust it closer and closer to the Head's distorted face.

Dr. Birchmhall was in such a state of panic that he did not realize that the iron was stone-cold and that Bill Bodger was neatly baiting him.

Even when the iron came into contact with the Head's cheek it seemed to him imagination to be scorching hot. And he gave a yell which would have awakened the self-branded Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.

"Yaroooo!"

The onlookers yelled, too—with merriment! They saw that the Head was not being really brandished and that his torments were purely imaginary.

"Now the other cheek!" said Bill Bodger, transferring the iron.

Dr. Birchmhall gave another ear-splitting yell.

"Stop him! Seeze him! Seezeze him!" he cried wildly. "The broon is killing me by inches! He's spoiling my facial beauty!"

"If I was to let you off—" he began. "Yes?" cried the Head eagerly. "Would you promise to turn over a new leaf?"

"Yes, yes! I'll go straight to the school library and turn over all the new leaves I can find!"

"Will you be a better man in future?"

"Yes, rather! I'll back every horse that runs!"

"Will you sack all the masters you've sacked?"

"Yes, yes! Any old thing!"

"An' refrain from persecutin' me in a court of law for puttin' you in the pillery?"

"Yes! I'll do any worthy thing if only you'll let me off!"

"That's a go!" said Bill Bodger. And he stepped forward and released his prisoner.

Dr. Birchmhall had only been in the pillery half an hour at the outside, but it had seemed to him like several centuries rolled into one. His relief, on being liberated, knew no bounds.

"Well, I've had my revenge," said Bill Bodger, "an' it's all over now. So let's shake hands an' be pals!"

Cheer upon cheer rang out as the Head and Bill Bodger fell upon each other's neck. Having sworn eternal friendship, they agferred to the trunkslop. And the Head, perched upon one of the high stools at the counter scoffing deonuts and quaffing jinger-pop, speedily forgot all his troubles.

"Your health, Mr. Bodger!" cried the Head, raising aloft his glass of jinger-pop. "May your shandlo never grow less!"

"Good eath!" responded Bill Bodger. "Long may you ruin as 'cudmaster of this 'istorick stool!"

They drank the toast and then ate some toasts. And it was a pleasant and convivial ending to Dr. Birchmhall's ordeal!

Look out for the further amusing adventures of Jack Jolly & Co. next week, chapters 54: "SACKED FROM ST. SAM'S!" Talk about laugh! This yarn knocks all Dicky Nugent's past successes into a cocked hat!

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