

Anstey F.

**A Bayard From Bengal.
Being some account of
the Magnificent and Spanking...**



F. Anstey
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some account of the Magnificent
and Spanking Career of
Chunder Bindabun Bhosh...**

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CHAPTER I
FROM CALCUTTA TO
CAMBRIDGE OVERSEA ROUTE

At sea the stoutest stomach jerks,
Far, far away from native soil,
When Ocean's heaving waterworks
Burst out in Brobdingnagian boil!

Stanza written at Sea, by H. B. J.
(unpublished).

THE waves of Neptune erected their seething and angry crests

to incredible altitudes; overhead in fuliginous storm-clouds the thunder rumbled its terrific bellows, and from time to time the ghastly flare of lightning illuminated the entire neighbourhood. The tempest howled like a lost dog through the cordage of the good ship *Rohilkund* (Captain O. Williams), which lurched through the vasty deep as though overtaken by the drop too much.

At one moment her poop was pointed towards celestial regions; at another it aimed itself at the recesses of Davey Jones's locker; and such was the fury of the gale that only a paucity of the ship's passengers remained perpendicular, and Mr Chunder Bindabun Bhosh was recumbent on his beam end, prostrated by severe sickishness, and hourly expecting to become initiated in the Great Secret.

Bitterly did he lament his hard lines in venturing upon the Black Water, to be snipped off in the flower of his adolescence, and never again to behold the beloved visages of his relations!

So heartrending were his tears and groans that they moved all on board, and Honble Mr Commissioner Copsey, who was returning on leave, kindly came to inquire the cause of such vociferous lachrymation.

"What is the matter, Baboo?" began the Commissioner in paternal tones. "Why are you kicking up the shindy of such a deuce's own hullabaloo?"

"Because, honble Sir," responded Mr Bhosh, "I am in lively expectation that waters will rush in and extinguish my vital spark."

"Pooh!" said Mr Commissioner, genially. "This is only the moiety of a gale, and there is not the slightest danger."

Having received this assurance, Mr Bhosh's natural courage revived, and, coming up on deck, he braved the tempest with the cool composure of a cucumber, admonishing all his fellow-passengers that they were not to give way to panic, seeing that Death was the common lot of all, and, though everyone must die once, it was an experience that could not be repeated, with much philosophy of a similar kind which astonished many who had falsely supposed him to be a pusillanimous.

The remainder of the voyage was uneventful, and, soon after setting his feet on British territory, Mr Bhosh became an alumnus and undergraduate of the *Alma Mater* of Cambridge.

I shall not attempt to relate at any great length the history of his collegiate career, because, being myself a graduate of Calcutta University, I am not, of course, proficient in the customs and etiquettes of any rival seminaries, and should probably make one or two trivial slips which would instantly be pounced upon and held up for derision by carping critics.

So I shall content myself with mentioning a few leading facts and incidents. Mr Bhosh very soon wormed himself into the good graces of his fellow college boys, and his principal friend and *fidus Achates* was a young high-spirited aristocrat entitled Lord Jack Jolly, the only son of an earl who had lately been promoted to the dignity of a baronetcy.

Lord Jolly and Mr Bhosh were soon as inseparable as a

Dæmon and Pythoness, and, though no nabob to wallow in filthy lucre, Mr Bhosh gave frequent entertainments to his friends, who were hugely delighted by the elegance of his hospitality and the garrulity of his conversation.

Unfortunately the fame of these Barmecide feasts soon penetrated the ears of the College *gurus*, and Mr Bhosh's *Moolovee* sent for him and severely reprimanded him for neglecting to study for his Littlego degree, and squandering his immense abilities and talents on mere guzzling.

Whereupon Mr Bhosh shed tears of contrition, embracing the feet of his senile tutor, and promising that, if only he was restored to favour he would become more diligent in future.

And honourably did he fulfil this *nudum pactum*, for he became a most exemplary bookworm, burning his midnight candle at both ends in the endeavour to cram his mind with *belles lettres*.

But he was assailed by a temptation which I cannot forbear to chronicle. One evening as he was poring over his learned tomes, who should arrive but a deputation of prominent Cambridge boatmen and athletics, to entreat him to accept a stroke oar of the University eight in the forthcoming race with Oxford College!

This, as all aquatics will agree, was no small compliment – particularly to one who was so totally unversed in wielding the flashing oar. But the authorities had beheld him propelling a punt boat with marvellous dexterity by dint of a paddle, and, taking the length of his foot on that occasion, they had divined a

Hercules and ardently desired him as a confederate.

Mr Bhosh was profoundly moved: "College misters and friends," he said, "I welcome this invitation with a joyful and thankful heart, as an honour – not to this poor self, but to Young India. Nevertheless, I am compelled by *Dira Necessitas* to return the polite negative. Gladly I would help you to inflict crushing defeat upon our presumptuous foe, but 'I see a hand you cannot see that beckons me away; I hear a voice you cannot hear that wheezes "Not to-day!"' In other words, gentlemen, I am now actively engaged in the Titanic struggle to floor Littlego. It is glorious to obtain a victory over Oxonian rivals, but, misters, there is an enemy it is still more glorious to pulverize, and that enemy is – one's self!"

The deputation then withdrew with falling crests, though unable to refrain from admiring the firmness and fortitude which a mere Native student had nilled an invitation which to most European youths would have proved an irresistible attraction.

Nor did they cherish any resentment against Mr Bhosh, even when, in the famous inter-collegiate race of that year from Hammersmith to Putney, Cambridge was ingloriously bumped, and Oxford won in a common canter.

CHAPTER II

HOW MR BHOSH DELIVERED A DAMSEL FROM A DEMENTED COW

O Cow! in hours of mental ease
Thou chewest cuds beneath the trees;
But ah! when madness racks thy brow,
An awkward customer art thou!

*Nature Poem furnished (to order)
by young English Friend.*

MR Bhosh's diligence at his books was rewarded by getting through his Little-go with such *éclat* that he was admitted to become a baccalaureate, and further presented with the greatest distinction the Vice-Chancellor could bestow upon him, viz., the title of a Wooden Spoon!

But here I must not omit to narrate a somewhat startling catastrophe in which Mr Bhosh figured as the god out of machinery. It was on an afternoon before he went up to pass his Little-go exam, and, since all work and no play is apt to render any Jack a dull, he was recreating himself by a solitary promenade in some fields in the vicinity of Cambridge, when

suddenly his startled ears were dumbfounded to perceive the blood-curdling sound of loud female vociferations!

On looking up from his reverie, he was horrified by the spectacle of a young and beauteous maiden being vehemently pursued by an irate cow, whose reasoning faculties were too obviously, in the words of Ophelia, "like sweet bells bangled," or, in other words, *non compos mentis*, and having rats in her upper story!

The young lady, possessing the start and also the advantage of superior juvenility, had the precedence of the cow by several yards, and attained the umbrageous shelter of a tree stem, behind which she tremulously awaited the arrival of her blood-thirsty antagonist.

As he noted her jewel-like eyes, profuse hair, and panting bosom, Mr Bhosh's triangle of flesh* was instantaneously ignited by love at first sight (the intelligent reader will please understand that the foregoing refers to the maiden and not at all to the cow, which was of no excessive pulchritude – but I am not to be responsible for the ambiguities of the English language).

There was not a moment to be squandered; Mr Bhosh had just time to recommend her earnestly to remain *in statu quo*, before setting off to run *ventre à terre* in the direction whence he had come. The distracted animal, abandoning the female in distress, immediately commenced to hue-and-cry after our hero, who was compelled to cast behind him his collegiate cap, like tub to a

* *Videlicet*: his heart

whale.

The savage cow ruthlessly impaled the cap on one of its horns, and then resumed the chase.

Mr Bhosh scampered for his full value, but, with all his incredible activity, he had the misery of feeling his alternate heels scorched by the fiery snorts of the maniacal quadruped.

Then he stripped from his shoulders his student's robe, relinquishing it to the tender mercies of his ruthless persecutress while he nimbly surmounted a gate. The cow only delayed sufficiently to rend the garment into innumerable fragments, after which it cleared the gate with a single hop, and renewed the chase after Mr Bhosh's stern, till he was forced to discard his ivory-headed umbrella to the animal's destroying fury.

This enabled him to gain the walls of the town and reach the bazaar, where the whole population was in consternation at witnessing such a shuddering race for life, and made themselves conspicuous by their absence in back streets.

Mr Bhosh, however, ran on undauntedly, until, perceiving that the delirious creature was irrevocably bent on running him to earth, he took the flying leap into the shop of a cheese merchant, where he cleverly entrenched himself behind the receipt of custom.

With the headlong impetuosity of a distraught the cow followed, and charged the barrier with such insensate fury that her horns and appertaining head were inextricably imbedded in a large tub of margarine butter.

At this our hero, judging that the wings of his formidable foe were at last clipped, sallied boldly forth, and, summoning a police-officer, gave the animal into custody as a disturber of the peace.

By such coolness and *savoir faire* in a distressing emergency he acquired great *kudos* in the eyes of all his fellow-students, who regarded him as the conquering hero.

Alas and alack! when he repaired to the field to receive the thanks and praises of the maiden he had so fortunately delivered, he had the mortification to discover that she had vanished, and left not a wreck behind her! Nor with all his endeavours could he so much as learn her name, condition, or whereabouts, but the remembrance of her manifold charms rendered him moonstruck with the tender passion, and notwithstanding his success in flooring the most difficult exams, his bosom's lord sat tightly on its throne, and was not to jump until he should again (if ever) confront his mysterious fascinator.

Having emerged from the shell of his *statu pupillari* under the fostering warmth of his Alma Mater, Mr Bhosh next proceeded as a full-fledged B.A. to the Metropolis, and became a candidate for forensic honours at one of the legal temples, lodging under the elegant roof of a matron who regarded him as her beloved son for Rs. 21 per week, and attending lectures with such assiduity that he soon acquired a nodding acquaintance with every branch of jurisprudence.

And when he went up for Bar Exam., he displayed his

phenomenal proficiency to such an extent that the Lord Chancellor begged him to accept one of the best seats on the Judges' bench, an honour which, to the best of this deponent's knowledge and belief, has seldom before been offered to a raw tyro, and never, certainly, to a young Indian student. However, with rare modesty Mr Bhosh declined the offer, not considering himself sufficiently ripe as yet to lay down laws, and also desirous of gathering roses while he might, and mixing himself in first-class English societies.

I am painfully aware that such incidents as the above will seem very mediocre and humdrum to most readers, but I shall request them to remember that no hero can achieve anything very striking while he is still a hobbardehoy, and that I cannot – like some popular novelists – insult their intelligences by concocting cock-and-bull occurrences which the smallest exercise of ordinary commonsense must show to be totally incredible.

By and bye, when I come to deal with Mr Bhosh's experiences in the upper tenth of London society, with which I may claim to have rather a profound familiarity, I will boldly undertake that there shall be no lack of excitement.

Therefore, have a little patience, indulgent Misterns!

CHAPTER III

THE INVOLUNTARY FASCINATOR

Please do not pester me with unwelcome attentions,
Since to respond I have no intentions!
Your Charms are deserving of honourable mentions —
But previous attachment compels these abstentions!

AN UNWILLING WOODED TO HIS WOOER."

Original unpublished Poem by H. B. J.

MR Bhosh was very soon enabled to make his *debût* as a pleader, for the *Mooktears* sent him briefs as thick as an Autumn leaf in Vallambrosa, and, having on one occasion to prosecute a youth who had embezzled an elderly matron, Mr Bhosh's eloquence and pathos melted the jury into a flood of tears which procured the triumphant acquittal of the prisoner.

But the bow of Achilles (which, as Poet Homer informs us, was his only vulnerable point) must be untied occasionally, and accordingly Mr Bhosh occasionally figured as the gay dog in upper-class societies, and was not long in winning a reputation in smart circles as a champion bounder.

For he did greet those he met with a pleasant, obsequious affability and familiarity, which easily endeared him to all hearts. In his appearance he would – but for a somewhat mediocre

stature and tendency to a precocious obesity – have strikingly resembled the well-known statuary of the Apollo Bellevue, and he was in consequence inordinately admired by aristocratic feminines, who were enthralled by the fluency of his small talk, and competed desperately for the honour of his company at their "Afternoon-At-Home-Teas."

It was at one of these exclusive festivities that he first met the Duchess Dickinson, and (as we shall see hereafter) that meeting took place in an evil-ominous hour for our hero. As it happened, the honourable highborn hostess proposed a certain cardgame known as "Penny Napkin," and fate decreed that Mr Bhosh should sit contiguous to the Duchess's Grace, who by lucky speculations was the winner of incalculable riches.

But, hoity toity! what were his dismay and horror, when he detected that by her legerdemain in double-dealing she habitually contrived to assign herself five pictured cards of leading importance!

How to act in such an unprecedented dilemma? As a chivalrous, it was repugnant to him to accuse a Duchess of sharpening at cards, and yet at the same time he could not stake his fortune against such a foregone conclusion!

So he very tactfully contrived by engaging the Duchess's attention to substitute his card-hand for hers, and thus effect the exchange which is no robbery, and she, finally observing his *finesse*, and struck by the delicacy with which he had so nonstentatiously rebuked her duplicity, earnestly desired his

further acquaintance.

For a time Mr Bhosh, doubtless obeying one of those supernatural and presentimental monitions which were undreamt of in the Horatian philosophy, resisted all her advances – but alas! the hour arrived in which he became as Simpson with Delilah.

It was at the very summit of the Season, during a brilliantly fashionable ball at the Ladbroke Hall, Archer Street, Bayswater, whither all the *élites* of tiptop London Society had congregated.

Mr Bhosh was present, but standing apart, overcome with bashfulness at the paucity of upper feminine apparel and designing to take his premature hook, when the beauteous Duchess in passing surreptitiously flung over him a dainty nosehandkerchief deliciously perfumed with extract of cherry blossoms.

With native penetration into feminine coquetries he interpreted this as an intimation that she desired to dance with him, and, though not proficient in such exercises, he made one or two revolutions round the room with her co-operation, after which they retired to an alcove and ate raspberry ices and drank lemonade. Mr Bhosh's sparkling tittle-tattle completely achieved the Duchess's conquest, for he possessed that magical gift of the gab which inspired the tender passion without any connivance on his own part.

And, although the Duchess was no longer the chicken, having attained her thirtieth lustre, she was splendidly well preserved; with huge flashing eyes like searchlights in a face resembling

the full moon; of tall stature and proportionate plumpness; most young men would have been puffed out by pride at obtaining such a tiptop admirer.

Not so our hero, whose manly heart was totally monopolised by the image of the fair unknown whom he had rescued at Cambridge from the savage clutches of a horned cow, and although, after receiving from the Duchess a musk-scented postal card, requesting his company on a certain evening, he decided to keep the appointed tryst, it was only against his will and after heaving many sighs.

On reaching the Duchess's palace, which was situated in Pembridge Square, Bayswater, he had the mortification to perceive that he was by no means the only guest, since the reception halls were thickly populated by gilded worldlings. But the Duchess advanced to greet him in a very kind, effusive manner, and, intimating that it was impossible to converse with comfort in such a crowd, she led him to a small side-room, where she seated him on a couch by her side and invited him to discourse.

Mr Bhosh discoursed accordingly, paying her several high-flown compliments by which she appeared immoderately pleased, and discoursed in her turn of instinctive sympathies, until our hero was wriggling like an eel with embarrassment at what she was to say next, and at this point Duke Dickinson suddenly entered and reminded his spouse in rather abrupt fashion that she was neglecting her remaining guests.

After the Duchess's departure, Mr Bhosh, with the feelings of an innate gentleman, felt constrained to make his sincere apologies to his ducal entertainer for having so engrossed his better half, frankly explaining that she had exhibited such a marked preference for his society that he had been deprived of all option in the matter, further assuring his dukeship that he by no means reciprocated the lady's sentiments, and delicately recommending that he was to keep a rather more lynxlike eye in future upon her proceedings.

To which the Duke, greatly agitated, replied that he was unspeakably obliged for the caution, and requested Mr Bhosh to depart at once and remain an absentee for the future. Which our friend cheerfully undertook to perform, and, in taking leave of the Duchess, exhorted her, with an eloquence that moved all present, to abandon her frivolities and levities and adopt a deportment more becoming to her matronly exterior.

The reader would naturally imagine that she would have been grateful for so friendly and well-meant a hint – but oh, dear! it was quite the reverse, for from a loving friend she was transformed into a bitter and most unscrupulous enemy, as we shall find in forthcoming chapters.

Truly it is not possible to fathom the perversities of the feminine disposition!

CHAPTER IV

A KICK FROM A FRIENDLY FOOT

She is a radiant damsel with features fair and fine;
But since betrothed to Bosom's friend she never can be mine!

Original Poem by H. B. J. (unpublished).

MR Bhosh's bosom-friend, the Lord Jack Jolly, had kindly undertaken to officiate as his Palinurus and steer him safely from the Scylla to the Charybdis of the London Season, and one day Lord Jolly arrived at our hero's apartments as the bearer of an invite from his honble parent the Baronet, to partake of tiffin at their ancestral abode in Chepstow Villas, which Bindabun gratefully accepted.

Arrived at the Jollies' sumptuous interior, a numerous retinue of pampered menials and gilded flunkies divested Mr Bhosh of his hat and umbrella and ushered him into the hall of audience.

"Bhosh, my dear old pal," said Lord Jack, "I have news for you. I am engaged as a Benedict, and am shortly to celebrate matrimony with a young goodlooking female – the Princess Petunia Jones."

"My lord," replied Mr Bhosh, "suffer me to hang around your patrician neck the floral garland of my humble congratulations."

"My dear Bhosh," responded the youthful peer of the realm,

"I regard you as more than a brother, and am confident that when my betrothed beholds your countenance, she will conceive for you a similar lively affection. But hush! here she comes to answer for herself... Princess, permit me to present to you the best and finest friend I possess, Mr Bindabun Bhosh."

Mr Bhosh modestly lowered his optics as he salaamed with inimitable grace, and it was not until he had resumed his perpendicular that he recognised in the Princess Jones the charming unknown whom he had last beheld engaged in repelling the assault of a distracted cow!

Their eyes were no sooner crossed than he knew that she regarded him as her deliverer, and was consumed by the most ardent affection for him. But Mr Bhosh repressed himself with heroic magnanimity, for he reflected that she was the affianced of his dearest friend and that it was contrary to *bon ton* to poach another's jam.

So he merely said; "How do you do? It is a very fine day. I am delighted to make your acquaintance," and turning on his heels with a profound curtesy, he left her flabbergasted with mortification.

But those only who have compressed their souls in the shoe of self-sacrifice know how devilishly it pinches, and Mr Bhosh's grief was so acute that he rolled incessantly on his couch while the radiant image of his divinity danced tantalisingly before his bloodshot vision.

Eventually he became calmer, and after plunging his fervid

body into a foot-bath, he showed himself once more in society, assuming an air of meretricious waggishness to conceal the worm that was busily cankering his internals, and so successful was he that Lord Jack was entirely deceived by his *vis comica*, and invited him to spend the Autumn up the country with his respectable parents.

Mr Bhosh accepted – but when he knew that Princess Petunia was also to be one of the *amis de la maison*, he was greatly concerned at the prospect of infallibly reviving her love by his propinquity, and thereby inflicting the cup of calamity on his best friend. Willingly would he have imparted the whole truth to his Lordship and counselled him to postpone the Princess's visit until he, himself, should have departed – but, ah me! with all his virtue he was not a Roman Palladium that he should resist the delight of philandery with the radiant queen of his soul. So he kept his tongue in his cheek.

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