

**FIVE BICYCLES and 2,000 OTHER GRAND PRIZES TO BE WON!**

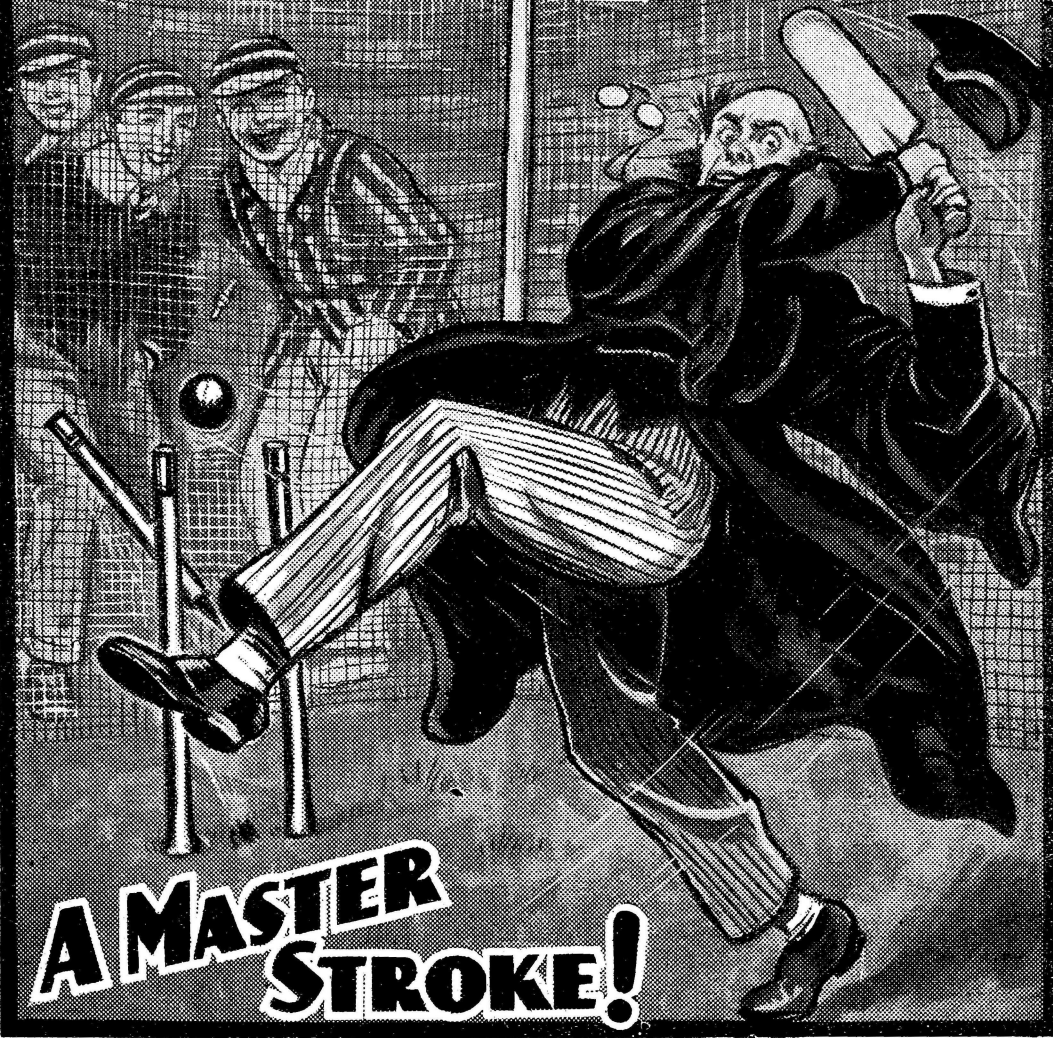
# The GEM

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**INSIDE :**

**"THE MYSTERY CRICKET COACH!"**  
By Martin Clifford.

**"GREYFRIARS VERSUS ST. JIM'S!"**  
By Frank Richards.  
and  
**MANY OTHER FINE FEATURES.**



**A MASTER STROKE!**

# THE GREAT ARMAMENTS RACE

## 5 More Bikes to be Won

### 2,000 Other Top-Top Prizes

**FREE! FREE! FREE!**

**PRIZE NEWS!** This week we start the third lap in our Giant Stamp-Collecting race! We still have Five More "Hercules" Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other grand prizes to give away in the July contest—all for collecting the free Armaments Stamps being printed in the GEM every week. There are now five different kinds to be collected—**BATTLESHIPS, TANKS, DESTROYERS, and so on.** Cut them out and try to get as many others as you can—all those you have collected so far (except Bombers, Submarines, and Searchlights, which have been called in) should be kept for this month's contest.

There are sixteen more stamps in this issue, ten on this page and six more on page 35! Add them to your collection right away, and don't forget that you will find more of these stamps to swell your total in other papers like "Modern Boy" and "Magnet." Why not get your pals interested, too? You can then swap stamps with them!

At the end of July, we shall again ask you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you have collected. And then the remaining Five Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other prizes will be awarded to those readers with the biggest collections of stamps called for. All second-prize winners will be asked to choose their own gifts.

Don't send any stamps yet! We will tell you how and where when the time comes.

**OVERSEAS READERS** are in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers, for whom there will be a special closing date.

(N.B.—You can also collect or swap Armaments Stamps with readers of—"Boy's Cinema," "Triumph," "Champion," "Magnet," "Modern Boy," "Sports Budget," "Detective Weekly," and "Thriller"—stamps can be cut from all these papers, but no reader may win more than one first prize or share.)

**RULES**—Five First Prizes of £4 7s. 6d. "Hercules" Cycles and at least 2,000 other prizes will be awarded in order of merit (as in previous months of the contest) i.e., to the readers declaring and sending the largest collections of the stamps called for. Cash value of any of the first prizes may be divided in case of a tie or ties for such prizes. Ties for any other prizes will be decided by the Editor.

All claims for prizes to be sent on the proper coupon (to be given later); no allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence. No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.





**CRAZY CRICKET AT ST. JIM'S! SENIORS AND JUNIORS HAVE TO BAT LEFT-HANDED UNDER THEIR NEW MYSTERY COACH!**

# The MYSTERY CRICKET COACH!



Baggy Trimble levelled an accusing forefinger at the new cricket coach. "Spoofer!" he exclaimed dramatically. "Impostor! Your game's up!" The Terrible Three stared at the fat junior in astonishment.

## CHAPTER 1. The Fugitive!

"TO walk, or not to walk—that is the question!" said Monty Lowther. Tom Merry looked up doubtfully at the lowering sky.

"I think we'd better take a taxi," he said. "Looks like rain. We were caught in a giddy deluge the last time we went to Wayland Cinema, if you remember. We don't want it to happen again."

"No, wathah not!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I agwee with you, Tom Mewwy, that to take a taxi is the wpopah capah."

"Come on, then!" Five juniors of St. Jim's had just emerged from the cinema in Wayland High Street. They were Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell; and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Talbot.

The hour was late, and the cobbled High Street was practically deserted. But the juniors

had late passes, and they were in no violent hurry to get back to St. Jim's. But heavy storm-clouds hung in the sky, and nobody fancied a drenching; so it was universally agreed to charter a taxi.

The party headed for the railway station. A solitary taxicab stood on the rank outside.

"Heah we are, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus.

And the juniors clambered into the vehicle, Tom Merry instructing the driver to take them to St. Jim's.

It was rather a tight squeeze for five; but they crowded in cheerily enough.

No sooner had the taxi started on its journey than the rain began to fall, lashing the windows of the vehicle on either side.

"Good job we took a taxi," said Talbot. "It's coming down cats and dogs! We should have turned up at St. Jim's like drowned rats if we'd walked."

"And my best clobbah would have been wuined!" said Arthur Augustus.

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By

**MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

*The new cricket coach comes to St. Jim's in strange circumstances, but stranger still are his methods of coaching!*

"That wouldn't have mattered, Gussy," said Monty Lowther. "You've got about fifty more suits in your wardrobe!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"I believe the government intends to put a tax on wardrobes," went on Lowther. "Every fellow who keeps more than a dozen suits will have to pay a luxury tax!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus screwed his celebrated monocle into his eye and glared at the humorous Lowther.

"I wegard you as a cwass ass, Lowthah," he said severely. "The government would nevah do anythin' so stupid as to tax wardrobes. But it would be a jollay good thing, in my opinion, if silly, asinine jokes were taxed!"

"One for you, Monty!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

Suddenly Talbot, who was peering out of the window, gave a start.

The taxi had left Wayland behind now, and was churning its way along a dark lane.

"My hat!" ejaculated Talbot. "What are those lights doing, I wonder? See them, you fellows, bobbing about over the fields yonder?"

The juniors crowded to the window, and Arthur Augustus' noble shin was inadvertently kicked in the process.

"Yawooop!" yelled the swell of St. Jim's, in anguish. "Some careless duffah has hacked my shin, bai Jove! I believe it was you, Lowthah!"

"Rats! Where are those lights Talbot's babbling about? Oh, I see them! They look like lantern-lights."

"Somebody searching for somebody, by the look of it," said Manners.

"Or else playing Jack o' Lantern," said Tom Merry.

Away over the dark fields two bright lights could be seen. They were not stationary; they were advancing, and darting from side to side.

Tom Merry went to the speaking-tube, and addressed the driver.

"Go slow for a bit," he instructed. "There's something queer happening."

The taxi slowed down to a mere crawl. And then, while the juniors were intently watching the approaching lights, a startling thing happened.

There was a crackling sound, accompanied by the snapping of twigs, and a breathless, hunted man fairly burst through the hedge, and darted into the roadway in front of the crawling taxi.

"What the merry dickens—" began Manners, in astonishment.

The headlights of the taxi illuminated the man's figure, revealing him to the St. Jim's juniors as a big, powerful-looking man, past middle age. He was hatless; his clothes were drenched with rain; he was gasping for breath, and there was a wild, hunted look in his eyes. He turned his head once in the direction of the approaching lights; then he hurried to the side of the slow-moving taxi.

"I want a lift!" he panted desperately. "I am being pursued—hunted down! They are after me—they are getting closer. Please give me a lift!"

His hand was on a door-handle, and he tugged at it feverishly.

Tom Merry & Co. were in a quandary. They scarcely knew whether it would be wise, or otherwise, to take the stranger on board.

Who was hunting him down, and why? If

the man were a fugitive from the police, the juniors would be defeating the ends of justice in helping him. If, on the other hand, his pursuers were footpads, or private enemies, it was the plain duty of the juniors to give the man what assistance they could.

"One moment!" said Tom Merry, as the man wrenched the door open. "Before we agree to give you a lift, we want to know what this queer bizney means. Who is after you?"

"My enemies! Quick, quick! Don't let them get me!"

So insistent, so urgent was the man's plea, that when he scrambled into the taxi the juniors made no movement to prevent him.

"The police are not after you?" queried Talbot, eyeing the man curiously.

"Great Scott, no! I'm not a criminal, boy! It is purely a private matter, but if those scoundrels get me—" The speaker shuddered. "Ask the driver to hurry, for Heaven's sake!"

Tom Merry's mind was made up now. He was satisfied that the stranger was no fugitive from justice. The man was agitated, and wild-eyed, and in mortal terror of being captured; but he did not look a criminal. Presumably it was some private feud, and the man was being pursued by personal enemies. In this event Tom Merry was more than willing to help him.

"P'raps you'd like to be driven to Wayland, where you can get police protection?" suggested Tom.

"No, no! I'll come with you wherever you're going!"

"Good enough!" said Tom.

And he instructed the taxi-driver to proceed to St. Jim's with all speed.

It was an even tighter squeeze inside the taxi now that the juniors had this unexpected addition. The "clobber" of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was getting quite crumpled, owing to Gussy being squashed in a corner. But Arthur Augustus was more interested in the fugitive than in his apparel just then.

"You are safe now, deah man," he said. "Those lights are still bobbin' about over the fields. Your pursuers do not seem to be awah of the fact that you've weached the woad an' been given a lift."

"Thank Heaven for that!" panted the fugitive.

He was still rather breathless, but much more composed now as the taxi sped on its way. His fear had evaporated, and he smiled rather grimly, doubtless at having outwitted his pursuers.

The juniors waited for him to explain why he was being hunted—to give them chapter and verse, as it were, of the strange affair. But their natural curiosity on the subject had to go ungratified. The man seemed quite willing to talk on other topics, but in connection with the recent cross-country chase, in which he had played hare to the pursuing hounds, he was strangely reticent.

"It is very decent of you young lads to help me like this," he said. "You needn't have any doubts as to the wisdom of helping me. I am not a fugitive from justice. My name is Bradshaw—Bob Bradshaw. Perhaps you have never heard my name; but if you had belonged to an older generation of schoolboys—"

"You are not Bob Bradshaw, the famous cricketer?" queried Manners.

The man nodded, and smiled.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I have wead a lot about Bob Bwadshaw, in 'Wisden.' He used to be the leadin'

playah in the Loamshire eleven, an' he once played for England in the Tests."

"Quite correct," said the man whom the juniors had befriended.

"And you are Bob Bradshaw?" said Tom Merry, his voice betraying keen interest.

"I am."  
"The man who hit up a century against the Australians?"

"The same."

"Well, my giddy aunt!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Wonders will never cease! We've got one of the world's champion cricketers on board, you fellows!"

Bob Bradshaw smiled rather cynically. "The world soon forgets her cricket champions," he said. "When they drop out of first-class cricket, they just fade away into oblivion. I was twenty years with the Loamshire club, and all I had to show for my long service was a couple of hundred pounds benefit money. That soon went, and now—well, I'm in that undesirable thoroughfare known as Queer Street."

"Rough luck," said Tom Merry. "But I should have thought that a man with your cricketing record, Mr. Bradshaw, would easily be able to get a coach's job."

"That's just what I'm after. But most public schools are already fixed up with cricket coaches."

"St. Jim's hasn't got one," said Talbot. "I should think, if you put it to the Head, he would be able to give you a job—a temporary one, anyway."

"That would be better than being unemployed," said Bob Bradshaw. "I'll tackle your headmaster in the morning. Meanwhile, I want somewhere to sleep. I suppose you couldn't fix me up somewhere at the school? I should feel safe there from—er—my pursuers. Any shed or outbuilding will do. I'm used to roughing it."

Tom Merry pondered the matter.

"I'm afraid we can't help you in that matter, Mr. Bradshaw," he said presently. "We're only juniors, and we've no authority to admit anybody to the school premises. And Taggles, the porter, would be certain not to let you in. But I'll tell you what. If you choose to climb over the school wall after we've gone in, and spend the night in the woodshed, we shan't interfere. But you understand that you will be doing this at your own risk?"

"Quite!" said Bob Bradshaw. "That's what I'll do. Are there any sacks in the woodshed?"

"Plenty!"

"Plenty of rats, too!" said Monty Lowther, with a grin.

"I'll chance that. I think I shall be able to make myself fairly comfortable!"

"Are you hungwy, Mr. Bwadshaw?" inquired Arthur Augustus. "If so, I can get you some gwub fwom my studay."

"Don't trouble," was the reply. "I'm a trifle peckish, but I shall be able to last out till the morning, when I hope your Head will take me on as a coach."

"You are quite welcome to the gwub."

"I know. And thank you very much indeed, sir! But I don't want you to take any risks on my account. Here you are! This is St. Jim's I take it?"

It was. The taxi slowed up outside the school gates, and the juniors tumbled out.

Tom Merry settled with the driver, while Monty Lowther tugged at the bell to arouse

Taggles, the porter, who was dozing in his lodge.

Bob Bradshaw alighted from the vehicle and bade the juniors good-night, and strolled casually down the lane, intending to scale the school wall as soon as the coast was clear.

Presently Taggles came shuffling out of his lodge, with a bunch of keys in his hand and a scowl on his weather-beaten visage.

"Wot I says is this 'ere!" grumbled the porter. "Nice hours for you young rips to keep, an' no mistake! I dunno wot the present jennyration is a-comin' to! When I was a boy—"

"Things have altered since ninety years ago!" observed Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you didn't 'ave late passes," said Taggles, as he viciously swung open the gates, "I should report yer!"

But the juniors were within the law, and they chuckled as they trooped into the dark quadrangle. They were accustomed to Taggles'

THE GEM SPELLING BEE

TEN MORE PROBLEMS.

Take a careful look at the following ten words:

- RECUMBANT
- DIPHTHONG
- ETIMOLOGY
- BENEFITTING
- EFFERVESCENCE
- MANOUVRE
- PROPELLOR
- DISOLVE
- PAROXISM
- COMPATABLE

How many of them contain mistakes? Correct the words which you consider to be wrongly spelled, and then have a look at the list on page 31. You might get a surprise!

irascible moods. The worthy porter's beauty sleep had been disturbed, so it was hardly surprising that he was not in an amiable temper. "Good-night, Taggy!" called Monty Lowther cheerily.

"Night!" snorted Taggles, as if he were uttering a malison instead of a friendly salutation.

Tom Merry & Co. had plenty to talk about as they crossed the quad. Their dramatic meeting with Bob Bradshaw, the ex-cricketer champion, had added a spice of adventure to a very pleasant evening. They were still very curious on the subject of Bradshaw's pursuers, and their reason for chasing him; but Bradshaw himself had been as mum as an oyster on that topic. It was obvious that he had some secret which he did not wish the juniors to share.

"There's something jolly queer about the whole bizney," said Tom Merry. "But the man seems straight enough. He says he's Bob Bradshaw, the cricketer, and we've no reason to doubt him. Matter of fact, I took quite a liking to the chap!"

"Same heah, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "He is not an impostah, I'm suah of that. Bein'

a vevy cute an' discernin' fellow, I can always see through a deception."

"Oh my hat!" gasped Manners. "It's the easiest thing in the world to deceive you, Gussy! Your noble leg is pulled a dozen times a day. But I agree with Tommy that Bob Bradshaw's all right. There's a bit of a mystery about him, but he's not a wrong 'un. I hope the Head gives him a job as cricket coach. It doesn't seem right that a famous cricketer should be stranded on his beam-ends."

Manners' hope was shared by the rest of the juniors, and they were curious to see what would happen on the morrow.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Mr. Ratcliff is Annoyed!

"MY heye!" Taggles, the porter, uttered that ejaculation, in great astonishment.

Like the prophet of old, Taggles was amazed with a great amazement.

It was morning—a sunny June morning—and St. Jim's was astir, buzzing like a vast beehive. Taggles had just sounded the rising-bell; then he had adjourned to the woodshed, where his brooms were kept.

On opening the door Taggles had been mightily surprised to find that the woodshed had a tenant, and he had not yet recovered from his surprise.

"My heye!" repeated Taggles.

Stretched out on a litter of sacks, slumbering soundly and peacefully, was a man—a complete stranger to Taggles. His head was resting on his arm, and he was thoroughly enjoying his repose.

Taggles glared at the intruder. He was not a common tramp, for his clothes, though shabby, were respectable enough. But who ever the man was, he had no right to be within the precincts of St. Jim's. He was a trespasser, a person who, in police parlance, had been guilty of "breaking and entering."

"Well, of all the himperance!" muttered Taggles. "'E must 'ave got in durin' the night, some'ow! Climbed over the school wall, I dessay. Anyways, I'll soon 'ave 'im hout of it!"

And Taggles raised his voice to a roar.

"Hi, you!"

It was a roar that would have awakened the celebrated Seven Sleepers. Certainly it awakened the celebrated Bob Bradshaw. He opened his eyes and blinked at the wrathful Taggles, and passed his hand in dazed fashion across his brow.

"You come along orf out of it!" roared Taggles angrily.

Bob Bradshaw did not reply for a moment. He seemed to have the greatest difficulty in getting his bearings, and recollecting how he came to be there.

"Do you 'ear me?" demanded Taggles, grasping a broom in a threatening manner. "If you don't come along orf out of it, I'll 'ave the lor on yer!"

Bob Bradshaw found his bearings—and his voice—at last.

"My good man," he murmured, "you needn't be so beastly offensive! I'm not doing any harm. I wish to interview the headmaster."

"Friend of 'is, I suppose?" said Taggles, with crushing sarcasm.

"Not exactly. But I think he will remember me. He will recollect seeing me play cricket, at all events. I am Bob Bradshaw, late of Loamshire County and All England."

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"Oh, come orf it!" said Taggles incredulously. "That don't cut no ice with me! Are you goin' quiet, or do you want me to use 'vi'lence?"

Bob Bradshaw rose to his feet. He presented a strange figure in the searching light of the morning. His hair was unkempt and his face covered with bristles. He spoke calmly enough; yet there was a strange look in his eyes which rather frightened the worthy Taggles and made him think twice about using "vi'lence" towards the intruder.

"I will go when I have seen the headmaster—not before," said Bob Bradshaw coolly. "You are the school porter, I presume? Perhaps you would provide me with the facilities for a wash and brush-up?"

"I'll pervide you with my boot if you don't clear hout!" snorted Taggles. "Ah, there's Mr. Ratcliff! 'E'll 'ave you hout of it quick enough!"

The unpopular master of the New House was taking an early-morning constitutional in the quad. He started as he heard his name called from the direction of the woodshed.

"Mr. Ratcliff, sir!" bellowed Taggles.

The Housemaster frowned and strode towards the woodshed.

"How dare you roar at me in that leonina manner, Taggles?" he demanded testily. "What is wrong?"

"Which there's a hintruder 'ere, sir," explained Taggles. "'E's 'ad the ordassity to break into the school presinks durin' the night an' sleep in the woodshed."

"Bless my soul!"

"I hordered 'im hout," said Taggles. "But hout 'e refuses to go!"

"Indeed!" said Mr. Ratcliff grimly.

"'E says 'e's Bob Bradshaw, a cricketer wot used to play for Loamshire an' England," Taggles went on, with a derisive snort. "'E can tell that to the Marines, an' they might believe 'im; but 'e can't deceive Ephraim Taggles. 'E says he wants a hinterview with the 'Ead, an' 'e won't go till 'e gets it!"

"All of which," chimed in Bob Bradshaw, "is correct."

Mr. Ratcliff glared into the woodshed. He was even more wrathful than Taggles had been.

"Are you aware, my man, that you are liable to arrest for being found on enclosed premises?" demanded the Housemaster.

"The headmaster will overlook that when I have explained all the circumstances to him," was the reply.

"You will be given no opportunity of seeing the headmaster!" said Mr. Ratcliff angrily. "You will leave the premises immediately, or I will telephone to the police and have you placed under arrest. You are a worthless vagabond!"

Bob Bradshaw clenched his fists. They were big, businesslike fists, and Mr. Ratcliff jumped back in sudden alarm. It was not the sight of those fists which had alarmed him so much as the strange, menacing gleam in Bob Bradshaw's eyes.

"Be careful, sir!" said the ex-cricketer warningly. "I don't allow anybody to speak to me like that!"

"Leave the premises at once!" commanded Mr. Ratcliff, his voice shaking a little. "Otherwise, I shall call upon Taggles to eject you!"

Bob Bradshaw laughed sardonically.

"It would take a better man than Taggles to eject me," he said. "Why, I could eat him! I could tackle the pair of you, if it came to that, and you would wonder what had hit you. But



don't alarm yourself, Mr. Schoolmaster. I will go, and I will return later to see the Head."

"If you dare to set foot in this quadrangle—" began Mr. Ratcliff.

Bob Bradshaw took no further notice of Mr. Ratcliff, or of Taggles. He stepped out of the woodshed and strode down to the gates with the spring and poise of the well-trained athlete. Mr. Ratcliff glared after his bareheaded, retreating figure. He had conceived a violent antipathy towards Bob Bradshaw, and that individual, in turn, had taken an instinctive and powerful dislike to Mr. Ratcliff.

"I hardly think that impudent rascal will dare

"Excellent, thanks. But I'm afraid I overslept, with the result that your school porter found me in the woodshed this morning."

"My hat!"

"He called in one of your masters—a Mr. Ratcliff—and there was a bit of a shindy. I was ordered off the premises, and I went. But I am determined to see the headmaster, in order to try to get an engagement as cricket coach. Would you mind directing me to his study?"

"Not at all," said Tom Merry. "This way, Mr. Bradshaw."

The Terrible Three piloted the visitor to the Head's study. Bob Bradshaw tapped on the door,



"I want a lift!" panted the man, hurrying to the side of the taxi. "I am being pursued—hunted down! They are after me! Please give me a lift!"

to come here again," said the Housemaster. "Should he attempt to re-enter the premises, Taggles, you will eject him forthwith."

"Oh, cert'nly, sir!" said Taggles, not very confidently, however.

And when Bob Bradshaw returned after breakfast, having obtained a wash and brush-up during the interval, Taggles saw him arrive from his lodge window, but did not go out to challenge him. There was a mysterious "something" about Bob Bradshaw that frightened Taggles considerably, and gave him pause.

Tom Merry & Co. were just out of the dining-hall when Bob Bradshaw made his appearance. He recognised his schoolboy benefactors, and greeted them warmly.

The juniors were equally cordial.

"What sort of a night did you have, Mr. Bradshaw?" inquired Tom Merry.

and was bidden to enter. Then the juniors withdrew.

Twenty minutes later Bob Bradshaw joined them in the quadrangle. He was smiling.

"What luck, Mr. Bradshaw?" asked Tom Merry eagerly.

"Did you work the giddy oracle?" inquired Lowther.

Bob Bradshaw nodded.

"The Head has given me a month's trial as cricket coach," he said. "He was a bit frigid at first, but when I explained who I was he was as nice as pie. He remembered my cricketer exploits well—said he saw me make a century at Lord's fifteen years ago—and he said he'd be only too pleased to be of service to an old County man who is down on his luck. He's fixing up some

accommodation for me in the servants' quarters, and I'm to take up my duties to-day."

"Oh, good!" said the Terrible Three in chorus.

"It was a great stroke of luck for me that I fell in with you young gentlemen last night," said Bob Bradshaw. "If you hadn't given me that lift in the taxi—" The speaker broke off with a slight shudder. "But there, everything's turned out for the best, and I'm very grateful for your help."

"Oh, rats!" said Manners. "We only did what other fellows would have done in the same circs."

"I'm jolly glad you've got fixed up, Mr. Bradshaw," said Tom Merry heartily.

"Yes, rather!"

Whilst the juniors were chatting with Bob Bradshaw, Mr. Ratcliff suddenly bore down upon the little group, like a wolf on the fold.

The New House master was looking even more sour and vindictive than usual.

"Merry! Manners! Lowther!" Mr. Ratcliff barked out the names like a series of pistol-shots. "How dare you hold converse with this—this person? I have already ordered him off the premises, and he has had the temerity to return. He has no right here at all, and you boys have no right to talk familiarly with him."

Bob Bradshaw fixed Mr. Ratcliff with the menacing look which had occasioned Taggles the porter so much uneasiness. Mr. Ratcliff shrank back a little from that piercing look.

As for the juniors, they eyed the Housemaster calmly.

"Mayn't we speak to our new cricket coach, sir?" inquired Monty Lowther meekly.

"What!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Mr. Bradshaw is a member of the school staff,

sir," said Tom Merry. "Of course, if it's wrong to speak to him—"

"What nonsense is this?" demanded Mr. Ratcliff angrily. He turned to Bob Bradshaw. "Is it possible that you have prevailed upon Dr. Holmes, by some trick or other, to give you an engagement as cricket coach?"

"My application for the post of cricket coach," replied Bob Bradshaw, speaking in quiet but deadly tones, "was made in a perfectly straightforward manner." He moved a step nearer to Mr. Ratcliff, who quailed visibly. "You have suggested that I secured my appointment by a trick. Unless you apologise, here and now, for that insinuation, I shall deal with you drastically."

Even Tom Merry & Co. were startled by the quiet deadliness of Bob Bradshaw's tone, and by the strange gleam in his eyes. As for Mr. Ratcliff, he became almost panic-stricken.

"I—I apologise!" he gasped.

And then, without another word, he turned and walked hurriedly away. He was trembling, partly with rage and partly with fright. He had come within an ace of being man-handled, and he knew it.

Straight to the Head's study went Mr. Ratcliff. He would have been wiser to let himself simmer down before interviewing Dr. Holmes. But Mr. Ratcliff was in no state to think or act calmly. He knocked on the door of the Head's study, and burst in without waiting for an invitation.

Dr. Holmes looked up from his desk, frowning slightly.

"Well, Mr. Ratcliff?"

"I am informed, sir," began the irate Housemaster, "that the man Bradshaw has been engaged by you in the capacity of cricket coach?"

"Your information is correct, Mr. Ratcliff."

"Then I must protest, sir—I must protest most strongly! I have no doubt you were prompted by feelings of kindness and sympathy towards that wretched man, who probably told you a plausible tale of poverty and destitution. You have been imposed upon, Dr. Holmes. That man is an insolent rascal—a shiftless rogue! He professes to have been, at one time, a prominent cricketer. I trust you are not so credible as to believe that boast—"

"Mr. Ratcliff!" interposed the Head sternly. "You are beside yourself, sir! I will listen to any calm and reasoned protest, but for some reason you appear to be prejudiced against Bradshaw. The man has satisfied me that he is the same Bradshaw who was for many years with Loamshire County; I am also satisfied as to his qualifications as a cricket coach. I was under no misapprehension when I engaged him; indeed, I had great pleasure in granting him a month's trial."

Mr. Ratcliff bit his lip.

"Are you aware, sir, that the man broke into the school premises during the night, and was discovered asleep in the woodshed this morning by Taggles?"

"I am fully cognisant of all the circumstances, Mr. Ratcliff."

"The man has insulted me, and threatened me with personal violence!" fumed the Housemaster.

"If that is so, I will see him, and administer a fitting reprimand," said Dr. Holmes. "But I cannot help thinking, Mr. Ratcliff, that you must have upset Bradshaw by adopting a hostile attitude towards him. He struck me as being a very even-tempered man, who would not be insolent or threatening unless given ample cause."

## ★ Up for a Prefect's Beating!

The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove have many friends but few enemies. Gerald Loder, however, is one of the few! For a long time the unpopular prefect has been waiting for a chance to land the Famous Five into trouble. Opportunity comes his way this week—and he seizes it with both hands, well and truly placing the

### "FIVE IN A FIX!"

Read this splendid, new 35,000-word school story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, in today's issue of

The

# MAGNET

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Mr. Ratcliff moved to the door. He felt that he was getting very little change, as it were, out of this interview with the Head.

"Then I am to understand, sir, that this man is to remain here as cricket coach?"

"That is so," said the Head quietly. "I am surprised that you should have seen fit to question the wisdom of my action in engaging him. A cricket coach of Bradshaw's wide experience will be a very valuable asset at the present juncture. Pray close the door behind you, Mr. Ratcliff."

The Housemaster lingered on the threshold for a moment, as if contemplating a fresh outburst. But he thought better of it, and whisked out of the Head's study.

Tom Merry & Co. were still chatting with Bob Bradshaw when Mr. Ratcliff came out into the quadrangle. But on this occasion the Housemaster did not interfere. But if looks could have killed, the glare which Mr. Ratcliff bestowed upon the new cricket coach and the Terrible Three would have caused four sudden demises.

CHAPTER 3.

The New Cricket Coach!!

"COMPULSORY!" said Kildare. "Whether we like it or not," said Darrell.

"Exactly!" The captain of St. Jim's and his chum Darrell looked slightly annoyed.

Afternoon school was over, and their attention had been drawn to an announcement which was posted up on the notice-board—an announcement which had a special significance for the Sixth:

"NOTICE!

"Members of the Sixth Form will assemble at the nets at four-thirty this afternoon for compulsory cricket tuition, to be imparted by the new cricket coach, Mr. Bradshaw.

"(Signed) RICHARD HOLMES,  
"Headmaster."

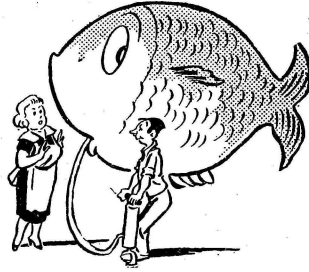
It was the inclusion of the word "compulsory" which got the goat, so to speak, of Kildare and Darrell. Such a word was often used in connection with juniors and fags, but it was seldom applied to the activities of the high-and-mighty men of the Sixth. The members of that select community came and went as they pleased. Their attendance at various functions—apart from Form-work—was optional, not compulsory. Kildare didn't like the word. Neither did his chum, George Darrell. But there it was. The fiat had gone forth, and the Sixth were to assemble at the nets at four-thirty for compulsory cricket tuition.

"This is a new departure, I must say!" growled Kildare, his handsome face clouding a little. "I don't like that word 'compulsory.'"

Darrell nodded. "The Head might have spared us that," he said. "And, anyway, we don't need any cricket tuition. Coaching the Sixth in cricket is rather like teaching one's grandmother to suck eggs!"

"Have you seen this fellow Bradshaw?" inquired Kildare.

"Yes."  
"What's he like?"  
"He struck me as being a very decent sort," said Darrell. "He's got a fine cricketing record behind him. I've been swotting up his performances in 'Wisden.' It was Bob Bradshaw who hit up that hurricane century against the Australians some



"I've got that swanker Jones coming to-night!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to T. Churn, Bishops House, Reynolds Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks.

years ago, and saved England from being walloped in the Test."

"He's an old England player?" queried Kildare, his interest fired.

"Rather!"

"In that case, we ought to consider it an honour to be coached by him. I couldn't stand being coached by some bumptious upstart who didn't know the first thing about the game. If Bradshaw's an expert player, and a good sort into the bargain, we shall have nothing to grouse about."

"Better go and get into our flannels," said Darrell. "It's close on half-past four."

The two seniors strolled away. Their annoyance had been merely transitory, and it was over now. They were, in fact, quite looking forward to their first course of instruction at the hands of Bob Bradshaw.

There were other members of the Sixth, however, who did not take so kindly to the new order. Knox and Webb, when they read the Head's announcement, were decidedly "wrathy."

"Dashed cheek!" snorted Knox angrily. "Compulsory cricket tuition, indeed! Nobody's got the right to compel the Sixth to do anything!"

"No jolly fear!" said Webb. "We go our own way, and take orders from no man!"

Knox scowled at the Head's announcement. "I don't suppose this new coach Bradshaw knows anything about cricket!" he growled. "I expect he's some down-and-out loafer who imposed on the Head's good nature and coaxed a job out of him!"

Although he did not know it, Knox's views coincided exactly with those of Mr. Ratcliff. Both were disposed to prejudge Bob Bradshaw, and to regard him as a worthless rascal.

"This has knocked our little trip to Wayland on the head, old man," said Webb.

"No, it hasn't!" replied Knox grimly. Webb started a little.

"You—you don't mean to say you're goin' to defy the Head's order, Knoxe?"

"Yes!"

"You're not turnin' out at the nets at four-thirty?"

"No!" "Pardon me," interposed a quiet voice, "but you will obey the Head's order and turn out with the others!"

Knox swung round from the notice-board, to find himself confronted by the sturdy figure of Bob Bradshaw.

A set of flannels had been found for the new cricket coach. They were not a good fit by any means. The trousers resembled a pair of tights on Bob Bradshaw's well-developed legs, and the blazer was so close-fitting that the brass buttons

seemed likely to burst at any moment. But, despite these sartorial defects, Bob Bradshaw looked every inch a cricketer.

Knox glared at him.

"So you're the new cricket coach?" he said, with haughty contempt.

"I am."

"And you expect me, a Sixth Form man, to take orders from you?"

"Not from me, in this instance, but from Dr. Holmes."

"And if I don't choose to turn up at the nets, I suppose you'll go and sneak to the Head about it?" sneered Knox.

"I shall do nothing of the sort," said Bob Bradshaw calmly.

"What will you do, then?"

"Take you by the scruff of the neck and march you down to the nets!" was the reply, in calm but deliberate tones.

Knox flushed crimson.

"You—you cheeky rotter!" he spluttered.

"That's enough!" said Bob Bradshaw sharply. "If you are not down at the nets at the specified time, I'll come and fetch you! I don't want any violence or unplesantness, and I hope you won't make it necessary. If you do, you will regret it!"

The new cricket coach turned on his heel and walked away.

Knox glared after him.

"Seems a pugnacious sort of beast!" observed Webb. "He means handlin' you, Knoxey, if you don't go. An' did you notice that queer look in his eyes? I'm not a funk, but it gave me a queer sort of feelin' inside. I—I can't quite explain."

"You don't mean to say you're afraid of the fellow?" said Knox.

"Not exactly afraid; but I think we'd better go along to the nets. If we don't, there'll be trouble."

Knox grumbled and growled, and "carried on" at great length, declaring that a dozen Bob Bradshaws wouldn't induce him to turn out for cricket tuition. And yet, when half-past four came, Knox was to be seen at the nets on Big Side with the rest of the Sixth Formers. Doubtless he realised that it would not have been a safe policy to defy Bob Bradshaw.

"Now, gentlemen," said the new cricket coach briskly, "we will get to business! I imagine most of you can play a pretty useful game; but no player is so perfect that he can afford to turn up his nose at tuition from an older and more experienced cricketer. I will lead off by giving an exhibition of batting, and I want you to watch each stroke very carefully."

Bob Bradshaw peeled off his blazer and selected a good bat. He didn't bother about pads or batting gloves. He took his stand at the wicket, and Kildare and Knox and Darrell prepared to bowl to him.

Behind the nets a crowd of juniors had gathered, including Tom Merry & Co. and Jack Blake & Co. They were curious to see how Bob Bradshaw shaped, and how the Sixth would shape against Bob Bradshaw.

Kildare sent the ball down, and Bob Bradshaw, with a deft flick of his wrists, cut it sharply into the side-net. The very first stroke he made proclaimed him a master-player.

Then Knox bowled; and Knox was savagely eager to take Bob Bradshaw's wicket and make him look small. Knox seemed to twist himself round like a Catherine-wheel as he delivered the ball, and he sent it down with all the vim and

"pep" he could command. Knox expected it to make a nasty mess of Bob Bradshaw's wicket; instead of which, the ball came whizzing back to the bowler along the carpet; and it had such pace on it that Knox, trying to field it, felt as if he were arresting the progress of a cannon-ball. He gave a yelp of anguish, and shook his hand painfully.

"Yaroooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the watching juniors.

"Hold that one, Knoxey!"

Knox muttered a savage imprecation, and Bob Bradshaw called to him:

"Very slovenly fielding, there! You should have got down to that one with both hands!"

Knox scowled, but he could not trust himself to reply.

For the next ten minutes Bob Bradshaw fairly thrilled the onlookers. He was a left-handed batsman, and, after demonstrating a variety of strokes—cuts and pulls and drives—he gave an exhibition of big hitting.

"Forcing tactics will sometimes be found necessary when you are fighting against the clock," he explained. "When fours and sixes are wanted, and mere singles are useless, this is the sort of game to play."

And Bob Bradshaw opened his shoulders and jumped out at every ball, laying on the willow in hurricane style. He made some truly prodigious hits, landing the ball twice in succession upon the roof of the school gymnasium.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in great admiration. "What a tewwific sloggah, deah boys!"

"That fellow must be Jessop in disguise!" said Monty Lowther. "Did you ever see such driving?"

"He'll put one in the river in a jiffy!" grinned Tom Merry.

Tom was not serious; but evidently Bob Bradshaw was, for the very next ball was lifted clean out of the ground. It cleared the lower boundary of the playing fields, which was skirted by the River Rhyll, and it plopped fairly into the river.

"Lost ball!" said Jack Blake, with a chuckle.

"Ye gods, what a hit!"

It was Knox's bowling which had been punished in that drastic fashion, and Knox was furious.

"The swanky bounder is simply showing off!" he declared.

"Nothing of the sort!" retorted Kildare. "Bradshaw is giving us an exhibition of big hitting. That's part of his duty as coach."

"That hit was a fluke!" said the exasperated Knox. "I'll bowl the conceited rotter out in a minute!"

But Knox, although he bowled really well, and put all his beef into it, failed to disturb Bob Bradshaw's wicket.

After three "lost balls" had been reported, Bob Bradshaw finished his knock. He seemed to have been thoroughly enjoying himself. And everybody had enjoyed his exhibition of sloggah—with the exception of the unfortunate bowlers.

Bob Bradshaw handed the bat to Kildare.

"Let me see how you shape at the wicket," he said.

Kildare was about to take his guard when the cricket coach intervened.

"One moment! You're holding your bat the wrong way!"

"What do you mean?" demanded Kildare, a trifle huffily.

"Why, you're adopting a right-handed posture.



# LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

*The other day at a keyhole Baggy Trimble was so tired he could hardly keep his ears open.*

Then there was the safe-breaker who went to work with a big "L" on his back, so that if caught the police would not think him a hardened criminal.

*By the way, of course you knew that all policemen belong to the arrestocracy? Ow!*

Talking of aristocrats, Buck Finn, the American junior, was bragging about his family. At last Blake put in a word. "I suppose you'll tell us next that your family were so exclusive they went over to America on the 'April Shower,' a month ahead of the 'Mayflower'?"

*Next: Mr. Ratcliff went North for the shooting last August, but he had a blank time. "You mean to say you've shot all day with this gun and hit nothing?" demanded his host incredulously. "Yes!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff. "Well," replied his host, "I think you ought to report to the Bureau of Missing Persons, Mr. Ratcliff!"*

In an American all-in wrestling bout the contestants wore boxing gloves. And in England when they hug each other with boxing gloves on we just call it boxing.

*Then there was the engineer who was so honest he refused to use forged steel.*

A reader says he often sees pictures in the fire. At the cinema I often see pictures that should be.

*"Financial Sensation in Morocco! Three Banks Close Their Doors." Bang! Bang! Bang!*

CALLING ALL 'PLANES: Visibility poor but honest; further outlook just out of sight.

*"Crazy Paving Losing Its Popularity." Not all it was cracked up to be?*

Every commercial traveller has his favourite lines, we read. The dotted ones?

*"That's very realistic rain," said the stage manager of the provincial theatre. "It ought to be," replied the stage hand, "it's coming through the roof!"*

As the "Go Slow" signwriter remarked, I never seem to get on very fast!

*News: A tank which has stood in the market place in Wayland since the Great War is being removed. "Tank I go 'ome!"*

Story: "You made a set of false teeth for me some days ago," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Yes, I remember," said the dentist. "Well, they are hurting me horribly," said Mr. Ratcliff. "But I told you they would be exactly like real teeth, sir," said the dentist.

*Bite on that, chaps!*

That won't do at all. You must bat left-handed like I do."

"W-w-what!" gasped Kildare, wondering if he heard aright.

"I don't approve of right-handed batting," said Bob Bradshaw. "I always insist on my pupils playing left-handed."

"But—but I'm a natural right-hander!" protested Kildare.

"Nonsense! You must correct yourself of that habit. Right-handed batting is all wrong. Everybody ought to be left-handed."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Kildare.

And he stared at Bob Bradshaw in blank amazement. The rest of the seniors were amazed also.

"The fellow must be off his rocker!" muttered Rusden. "Being a left-hander himself, he's got the obsession that everybody else ought to be left-handed! Did you ever?"

"No, never!" said Langton solemnly.

As for Kildare, he scarcely knew whether to be amused or angry.

"Look here, Bradshaw," he said, "it's ridiculous to say that right-handed batting is all wrong. Our finest cricketers, past and present, were or are right-handers. Take W. G. Grace—"

"I haven't a very high opinion of W. G. Grace as a batsman," said Bob Bradshaw.

"Great pip!"

Kildare looked almost aghast. He had been brought up to idolise the Grand Old Man of Cricket. From a small boy, he had been fired by the exploits of "W. G." This was the first time that Kildare had ever heard the great man belittled and spoken of as if he were very small beer.

"Now, if Grace had been a left-hander, he would have been almost a great batsman!" said Bob Bradshaw.

"Almost great!" gasped Darrell. "Oh, my hat!"

"But he adopted the right-hand stance, and that was his undoing. The really great cricketers are left-handers. But we won't argue about it, gentlemen. I am your cricket coach, and you will kindly observe my wishes."

Very reluctantly, Kildare prepared to bat left-handed. As a right-hander, the captain of St. Jim's was a free and stylish batsman; as a left-hander, however, he was stiff and awkward. But he managed to keep his end up against the bowling of his fellow-seniors and Bob Bradshaw.

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The new coach soon showed that he could bowl as well as bat. He was not fast, but he got plenty of spin and swerve on the ball, and Kildare had all his work cut out to preserve his wicket.

Knox's turn came next, and Knox was sullen and rebellious at having to bat left-handed. He didn't want to make himself look ridiculous with a crowd of grinning juniors looking on.

Bob Bradshaw, however, insisted on his orders being obeyed, and Knox was compelled to bat left-handed.

The unpopular prefect gave a deplorable exhibition. His antics were as awkward and ungainly as those of an elephant in a ball-room. He swiped at the ball too late, and there was a crash and a clatter behind him as his stumps were spread-eagled.

"How's that?" chuckled Jack Blake.

"Out, bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, smiling. "It's wathah wuff on Knox, bein' made to bat left-handed! All the same, there's no weason why he should make such a ludicwous ass of himself!"

Knox overheard that remark, and he went as red as a turkey-cock, and shook his fist angrily at the swell of St. Jim's. Then he replaced the stumps and bails in position, only to have them hopelessly wrecked again by the very next ball.

"Come, come!" said Bob Bradshaw reprovingly. "This isn't cricket!"

"No, it isn't!" snorted Knox. "It's a tomfool game having 'o bat left-handed like this! You can't expect a fellow to shape well when he hasn't played left-handed in his life. You're making a laughing-stock of me before these cheeky fags, and I'm not going to stand it!"

"Get on with your innings!" commanded Bob Bradshaw sternly.

And Knox sullenly complied. He spent a very uncomfortable ten minutes, lashing out furiously at every ball, and being clean bowled times out of number. Indeed, Knox seemed to spend all his time reconstructing his scattered stumps!

None of the seniors, in fact, enjoyed their innings, with the exception of Darrell. Being an ambidextrous fellow, able to bat right or left handed with equal facility, Darrell put up quite a good show. And he was the only fellow to win a word of praise from that amazing cricket coach, Bob Bradshaw.

## CHAPTER 4.

### Ratty the Cricketer!

BOB BRADSHAW was about to dismiss the Sixth—Kildare having hinted that it was past tea-time—when Mr. Ratcliff came into view, approaching the nets with his jerky, impatient stride.

The New House master had come out to see the cricket practice. Mr. Ratcliff was not a bit interested in cricket; it was, in his opinion, a stupid and senseless sport, which ought to be abolished. But he was rather curious to see what sort of a player the new cricket coach was. He rather hoped to find that Bob Bradshaw was an indifferent performer with bat and ball, and therefore unfit for his job.

Mr. Ratcliff more than suspected that Bob Bradshaw was an impostor—that he was not the real Bob Bradshaw, who had played for Loamshire and England some years previously. If the man were a poor player, Mr. Ratcliff's suspicions would ripen into certainty that Bradshaw was sailing under false colours. The Head would

be informed and the new cricket coach would be given marching orders from St. Jim's.

That was a consummation devoutly to be wished, from Mr. Ratcliff's point of view. He hated Bob Bradshaw. It had been a case of hate at first sight. From the moment Bob Bradshaw had been discovered in the woodshed Mr. Ratcliff had disliked him intensely, and his dislike had increased as the days wore on. There had been several stormy passages between the Housemaster and the new cricket coach; and it looked as if there would be several more.

When Bob Bradshaw saw Mr. Ratcliff coming, his eyes blazed for a moment. His expression, genial and pleasant in the ordinary way, became quite ferocious. He seemed to have great difficulty in controlling himself. But his fierce look was only momentary; and he gave Mr. Ratcliff quite a respectful "Good-afternoon, sir!"

Mr. Ratcliff ignored the salutation. He beckoned to Kildare.

"I wish to hear your opinion, Kildare, of your new cricket coach. Is he a competent player?"

"Bradshaw is one of the best players I've ever seen, sir!" was the reply.

Mr. Ratcliff bit his lip with vexation. He had hoped that Kildare's report would be unfavourable.

"I trust you are not flattering Bradshaw, Kildare," he said. "I want your honest opinion of this man's capabilities."

"You've had it, sir," answered Kildare curtly.

"Is he a satisfactory tutor?"

"Well, he's got some rather peculiar whims," said Kildare. "It's a sort of obsession with him that everybody ought to bat left-handed. But apart from that, his tuition is very sound and valuable."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Ratcliff, with a sneer.

Bob Bradshaw, juggling with a cricket ball, strolled across to where Mr. Ratcliff was standing.

"You're just in time for a knock, sir!" he said. "What?"

"I shall be pleased to bowl you for a few moments."

Mr. Ratcliff frowned.

"I do not play cricket," he snapped.

"You don't?" said Bob Bradshaw, in great surprise. "That's queer! Most masters at Public schools play cricket."

"I do not fritter away my time in such senseless and inane foolery," said Mr. Ratcliff. "The fact that other masters may do so is no reason why I should."

"Quite—quite!" said Bob Bradshaw. "But you are going to do so on this occasion. I insist!"

He was standing face to face with Mr. Ratcliff now, "fixing" that gentleman, as it were, with a steady and compelling gaze.

The Housemaster felt decidedly uncomfortable. It was as if he were being hypnotised. He tried to avert his eyes, but he could not do so. He fidgeted nervously.

"I insist!" repeated Bob Bradshaw. "Take this bat, sir, and show us what you can do."

The words themselves were genial enough, but there was a quiet deadliness in the speaker's tone which made Mr. Ratcliff quail, as he had quailed on a previous occasion. Under that hypnotic gaze of Bob Bradshaw the Housemaster felt strangely helpless—felt conscious that he was being dominated by a much stronger will than his own. He wanted to turn and walk away. He began to wish he had stayed indoors in his study. This man seemed to be casting a sort of spell over him.

Bob Bradshaw picked up the bat he had indicated and thrust it into Mr. Ratcliff's hands.



"My heye!" ejaculated Taggles as he entered the woodshed. For stretched out on some sacks, slumbering peacefully, was a man—a complete stranger to the porter.

Seniors and juniors looked on breathlessly. They wondered what the Housemaster would do.

"It—it is quite impossible!" stuttered Mr. Ratcliff. "I do not play cricket—I cannot play!" "It's never too late to learn, sir," said Bob Bradshaw. "I won't detain you long—just half a dozen deliveries."

Mr. Ratcliff saw quite plainly that Bob Bradshaw was determined to have his own way in the matter. He disliked the man more intensely than ever, but he feared him, as well. He had an uneasy feeling that there would be a "scene" unless he did as Bradshaw wished.

Like most tyrants, Mr. Ratcliff was a physical coward. True, there were plenty of seniors standing around, and they would have interfered quickly enough if there were any violence. But their interference might be too late to save Mr. Ratcliff from getting a blow.

The Housemaster decided that it would be best to humour Bob Bradshaw. He shrank from the prospect of making himself look ridiculous in the eyes of a crowd of fellows, but that would be preferable to being assaulted. And the burly Bob Bradshaw looked quite capable of assaulting him.

"Very well," said Mr. Ratcliff at length. "The whole thing is preposterous, but I will do as you wish." But he walked, with many misgivings, to the wicket.

There was a buzz of amazement from the juniors behind the nets.

"Do I dream?" murmured Monty Lowther, rubbing his eyes. "Ratty's going to play cricket! Ratty!"

"It—it's perfectly amazin', bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"First time in history, I believe, that Ratty's handled a cricket bat," said Tom Merry. "I'm surprised that he knows which end to hold!"

"Ha, ha, La!"

With a burning face Mr. Ratcliff took his stand at the wicket. He was the cynosure of all eyes, and he knew it. The seniors were looking at him, and the juniors were looking at him; and now, to add to his discomfiture, a crowd of fags came running on the scene.

Mr. Ratcliff could hear the chuckles of the juniors behind the nets, and he gripped the bat viciously. He adopted a right-handed stance, and Bob Bradshaw did not correct him.

"Ready, sir?" inquired the cricket coach, gripping the round, red ball.

"Yes!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff.

Bob Bradshaw took a short, preliminary run. His arm swung over; the ball travelled down the pitch.

It was a simple-looking ball, and Mr. Ratcliff lunged at it savagely. If the bat had found contact with it, that ball would undoubtedly have been swiped to the distant boundary. But the bat merely sawed the empty air, and the ball, breaking in wickedly, smote Mr. Ratcliff on the ankle.

Now, the ankle of an elderly gentleman is a very sensitive spot, and Mr. Ratcliff dropped his bat and started hopping around on one leg, tenderly clasping his damaged ankle.

"Oh! Ah! Ow!" yelled Mr. Ratcliff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors behind the nets made no attempt to conceal their merriment. The spectacle of Mr. Ratcliff, hopping around on one leg, was too much for them. They roared. And even the seniors could not refrain from chuckling. Indeed, the only person who kept a straight face was Bob Bradshaw.

"Sorry, sir!" he called out. "A pure accident, I assure you. I didn't mean to put so much break on the ball."

"You are—yow!—a dangerous person!" spluttered Mr. Ratcliff. "You have severely injured my ankle, and I refuse to let you bowl to me again! If you persist in this farce being continued, then you must allow the boys to bowl."

"Certainly, sir!" said the cricket coach; and he tossed the ball to Monteith, who was standing near.

Monteith was in rather a dilemma. He didn't want to bowl Mr. Ratcliff out, if he could help it. Monteith was a New House fellow, and Mr. Ratcliff would never forgive him if he were made to look ridiculous by his head prefect.

Monteith, therefore, decided to send down a very simple ball, such as the veriest novice could have dealt with.

But Mr. Ratcliff was not a cricketer. He shut his eyes and smote blindly. The bat missed the ball completely, and the leather hit the middle stump.

The next moment Mr. Ratcliff had lost his equilibrium, and he sat down on his wicket.

Crash!

"Yoooop!"

Mr. Ratcliff emitted a fiendish yell of anguish. The onlookers yelled, too, though not with anguish. Tom Merry & Co. were holding their sides with merriment.

"Another casualty!" gurgled Lowther. "Poor old Ratty! Pity you haven't got your camera here, Manners. A snapshot of Ratty sitting on his own wicket would be a priceless treasure."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

On the face of it, it seemed a little unkind to laugh at the misfortunes of an elderly gentleman who had never handled a cricket bat before. But then, Mr. Horace Ratcliff was a tyrant, harsh and unjust in his dealings with the juniors, and a deservedly unpopular master. Had it been Mr. Latham, or Mr. Linton who was suffering these calamities, the juniors would have felt sorry. But they could not be expected to feel sorry for Mr. Ratcliff.

That gentleman picked himself up. He was bruised, and he was shaken, and he was fairly choking with rage. So great, in fact, was Mr. Ratcliff's rage that it even swallowed up his fear of Bob Bradshaw.

Mr. Ratcliff had had enough! The laughter of the juniors and the grins of the seniors, to say nothing of his physical discomforts, were too much for him. With a baleful glare at Bob Bradshaw, he limped away.

"Here endeth the merry entertainment!" said Monty Lowther. "It was great while it lasted, but it didn't last nearly long enough."

"I'm afraid Bob Bradshaw will get into hot water over this," said Tom Merry, rather gravely. "Rats!" said Jack Blake. "It wasn't Bradshaw's fault. He didn't force Ratty to make a fool of himself."

"True; but—"

"I can't undahstand Watty consentin' to

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play," said Arthur Augustus. "Bob Bradshaw must have been feahfully persuasive."

"It almost looked as if he put the 'fluence on Ratty," said Manners. "Nobody else would ever have induced Ratty to handle a cricket bat."

Seniors and juniors dispersed to their studies for tea. Everybody was discussing the recent comedy on Big Side. It had been very amusing while it lasted, but Tom Merry feared that the sequel might not be so amusing for Bob Bradshaw. Mr. Ratcliff had been made a laughing-stock by the new cricket coach, and he was not likely to take it lying down.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Tea With Bob Bradshaw.

"OUR guest is late," remarked Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry glanced at the clock and nodded.

"Shall we wait tea for him or pile in?" he asked.

"Oh, give him another five minutes," said Manners. "Pr'aps he's been detained somewhere."

So the Terrible Three waited. The guest they expected was no other than Bob Bradshaw, the new cricket coach. He had been invited to tea earlier in the day, and he had cheerfully consented to come along.

Study No. 10 in the Shell passage resembled a land flowing with milk and honey. Tom Merry & Co. were in funds, and they had gone out of their way to prepare something extra special in the way of feeds. Bob Bradshaw's appetite was an unknown quantity, but his burly appearance implied that he was neither a dyspeptic nor a faddist, but rather partial to the fleshpots of Egypt, as it were.

Certainly he would have no cause to grumble at the feed which his schoolboy hosts had prepared. There was a large and tempting variety of edibles on the snow-white tablecloth. If Bob Bradshaw didn't fancy cold rabbit pie, there was a lobster salad; and if he fancied neither, there was a plate piled high with ham sandwiches, and a large, good-looking plum cake, with which an epicure would have fallen in love at first sight.

The juniors were still a little uncertain what to make of Bob Bradshaw. He seemed quite a good sort, and he was undoubtedly grateful to Tom Merry & Co. for having rescued him from his mysterious pursuers overnight. And yet, for all his geniality to the juniors, there was a strange, indefinable "something" in his manner which puzzled them. On several occasions that day he had been seen to pass his hand across his brow in a dazed sort of way, much in the same manner as a lost-memory case trying to recall his identity.

On several occasions, also, Bob Bradshaw's eyes had gleamed with unnatural brightness, and he had seemed to have the greatest difficulty in controlling himself.

It was Tom Merry's opinion that the man was possessed of a violent temper, which he generally managed to suppress, but which was liable at any time to break forth, if given sufficient provocation. Manners and Lowther were inclined to share this view.

There was a rumour going the rounds—it was probably started by Knox of the Sixth—that Bob Bradshaw was an impostor, who had obtained his



# PUZZLE STAMPS

You've got to look twice at some stamps before you discover their ingeniously hidden symbols!



A hammer and a pair of pincers are well hidden in this Austrian specimen.

**D**ON'T you often think that the designs of many of the stamps in our albums are much like miniature puzzles?

Look at the two stamps illustrated on this page, both of which I expect you got last year in our free gift packets. You must admit that they're jolly well designed, particularly the Austrian, which was the work of William Dachauer, one of Austria's foremost designers, who was responsible for some of this one-time independent State's most effective stamps.

### FIND THE SYMBOLS.

Our illustration formed part of a series introduced soon after the Great War, which was intended to pay tribute to the establishment of the Austrian Republic. Instead of forcing the symbols of the newly formed State down your throat, Dachauer ingeniously hid them away in his stamps' designs, so that, though finding the hammer and pincers (symbols of the republic's "heavy" industries) is something of a puzzle, it's a very pleasant puzzle. A sprouting ear of corn was another Dachauer design in this set.



Can you see the four posthorns on this German stamp? There's one in each corner.

are a very frequent stamp subject. They were carried—and blown lustily—aboard the postal coaches which connected capital with capital in the days before the steam train was thought of.

Another point about our German item. Notice how the value inscription is out of centre. This points to the fact that this stamp went twice

appointment as cricket coach by trading on the Head's credibility.

The best answer to this rumour was Bob Bradshaw's amazing display of cricket on Big Side. If he had proved a poor performer, or an indifferent one, it would have given colour to the story that he was an impostor. But he had played like a champion, and there was no real reason to suppose that he was not the Bob Bradshaw who had played for Loamshire and for his country.

And yet there was some mystery about the man which Tom Merry & Co. could not fathom. They felt curious, and pardonably so, and they were hoping that when Bob Bradshaw came to tea he would enlighten them on certain matters which mystified them.

"Here he comes!" said Manners suddenly. Footsteps sounded in the passage, and they halted outside Study No. 10. A burly fist was applied to the panels, and Bob Bradshaw came in. He was still in his flannels, and he smiled at the Terrible Three.

through the printing presses. What happened was this: To save expense, a single background design containing the words "Deutsches Reich" was devised. Then separate printings of appropriate values were added. Since both background and value inscription are usually the same colour, and you can so easily miss this, I've specially chosen a specimen with value off centre to bring the double printing home to you.

### IN THE STOCKS.

Holland has several times given us "problem" stamps. Most notable are those of the Dutch Lifeboat Centenary, issued in 1924. In the case of the ten cents value, it's difficult to see a boat there at all—until you realise that it might be high and dry. Actually, the stamp represents a life-saving vessel up in the stocks.

And now which country would you say was the first to refer to flying on their stamps? France? No. Japan in some of the values of her 1876 series. Hidden away in each corner of the stamps is a tiny balloon. That Japan should have been air-minded in the '70's is highly doubtful, for she was then only just beginning to emerge from her centuries-old feudal system, when her soldiers fought in armour and used bows and arrows.

The thirty stotinki value of Bulgaria's Vazov commemoratives (issued 1920) provides another poser. In the borders we see a cross, a dolphin-like creature, and a star and crescent. The explanation of these symbols? Vazov's works did much to stir up Bulgarian national feeling, so that the throwing off of the Turkish yoke is quite an appropriate subject for one of the stamps. In the borders we see the Cross of Christendom triumphant over the Turkish star and crescent, which, to bring home the Turkish defeat still further, is drawn upside down!

"Sorry I'm late, youngsters," he said, "but I was unavoidably detained. I intended to come along as soon as the cricket was over; but I was sent for by the Head."

"Trouble with Ratty?" said Tom Merry rather anxiously.

"Yes."

"I hope he hasn't got you into a serious row, Mr. Bradshaw?"

Bob Bradshaw laughed as he took his seat at the table.

"He tried to, but he wasn't very successful," he said. "Directly after that little fiasco at the nets Mr. Ratcliff rushed away to the Head, and reported that I'd made a laughing-stock of him by forcing him to play cricket. It was absurd! There was no question of force. The man has a will of his own, I suppose, and he needn't have played if he didn't want to."

"I think you rather put the wind up Ratty by fixing him with that queer sort of glare," said

Manners. "Honestly, you looked as if you were going to knock him down if he refused to play."

Bob Bradshaw looked grim.

"Mr. Ratcliff has come within an ace of being knocked down several times to-day," he said. "I've had all my work out out to restrain myself. I realise that if I struck a master I should be sacked on the spot. I don't want that to happen, of course. But Mr. Ratcliff seems to be going out of his way to give me provocation. If he tries me too far I won't be answerable for the consequences. I ought not to say it before junior boys, but Mr. Ratcliff is a thoroughly hateful and disagreeable person!"

"And so say all of us!" said Monty Lowther. "Ratty's a tyrant and a tartar. Nobody likes him. But we should be sorry to see you lose your job because of Ratty, Mr. Bradshaw."

"Rather!" said Tom Merry. "I suggest you give the old buffer a wide berth in future—keep out of his way as much as possible."

"I'll try," said Bob Bradshaw. "But he's always popping up in my path. He's asking for trouble, and he'll find it if he's not careful!"

The speaker's eyes blazed for a moment, but he quickly got himself under control.

There could be no doubt that Bob Bradshaw hated Mr. Ratcliff with as much intensity as Mr. Ratcliff hated him. And the juniors could foresee trouble of a serious nature between the unpopular Housemaster and the new cricket coach.

Tom Merry poured out tea.

"Help yourself, Mr. Bradshaw," he said. "Don't let your appetite be upset by thoughts of Ratty. What did the Head say when he sent for you?"

"He simply cautioned me as to my future conduct," said Bob Bradshaw. "Of course, he had to do that after receiving Mr. Ratcliff's complaint; but he did it quite decently. He's well aware of the feud between Mr. Ratcliff and myself, and, although he can't take sides in the matter—openly, at any rate—I believe he's got a sneaking sympathy with me. But let's talk about something else. I want to banish Mr. Ratcliff from my mind."

Bob Bradshaw carved himself a portion of rabbit pit, and voted it excellent. Then the conversation turned upon cricket.

"I say, Mr. Bradshaw," said Tom Merry, "why did you insist upon the Sixth batting left-handed?"

"Because it's the proper way, of course. Everybody ought to be left-handed, as I explained to Kildare."

"My hat! I've never heard that they advanced before," said Tom Merry. "The majority of our county players are right-handers."

"That only shows their ignorance," said Bob Bradshaw.

"Phew!"

"There's a right way and a wrong way of doing everything, and the right way to bat is in the left-handed style. I'm coaching the juniors to-morrow afternoon, and I shall expect you all to bat left-handed."

The Terrible Three exchanged glances of dismay. Much as they liked Bob Bradshaw, they could not understand his obstinacy in this matter. It was really absurd to expect fellows who had batted right-handed all their cricketering lives to change over suddenly and fall in with the peculiar whims of the new cricket coach.

But Tom Merry quickly brightened up.

"It won't be so bad, you fellows, having to bat THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,585.

left-handed," he said. "We're playing a girls' team on Saturday—Cousin Ethel's eleven, you know, and the arrangement is that we are to bat left-handed. So it will be good practice for us."

"True enough," said Lowther. "But on Wednesday we're playing the Grammarians. Surely Mr. Bradshaw isn't going to insist that we bat left-handed against Gordon Gay & Co.?"

"I do insist," said Bob Bradshaw. "As far as cricket is concerned you are under my orders, and I must have things done in a proper way. I shall expect you to toe the line."

"Oh crumbs!"

The prospect of having to bat left-handed against Gordon Gay's eleven was anything but pleasant to Tom Merry & Co. Had not Bob Bradshaw been such a decent sort they would have defied him and refused to toe the line, as he expressed it. But they had no desire to cross the wishes of their cricket coach, peculiar though those wishes were.

"We shall be licked to a frazzle!" said Manners. "It's not quite fair to us, Mr. Bradshaw; but if you really insist that we bat left-handed—"

"I do!"

"Then there's nothing more to be said."

Conversation then drifted into other channels, and the juniors hoped to learn something of Bob Bradshaw's intimate history before coming to St. Jim's. In this, however, they were disappointed. Their guest told them of some of his cricketering achievements in the past; he told them some thrilling stories of games which had been pulled out of the fire and won on the stroke of time. But concerning the events of that memorable night when he was chased across country by men with lanterns, Bob Bradshaw was mute. That mysterious episode was likely to remain a mystery.

## CHAPTER 6.

### A Queer Affair!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

The conversation in Study No. 10 was suddenly interrupted by the breathless entry of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

The fat junior burst into the study without knocking, and he was all agog with excitement. His little round eyes fairly gleamed, and his fat face was flushed.

"I say, you fellows—"

Trimble broke off suddenly, noticing the presence of the Terrible Three's guest for the first time.

"Buzz off, Baggy!" said Tom Merry sharply. "Like your cheek to barge into a study without knocking!"

Trimble ignored that rebuke. His eyes were fixed upon Bob Bradshaw, and he gave vent to his well-known and irritating cackle.

"He, he, he!"

"What's the joke, Baggy?" inquired Lowther.

The fat junior levelled an accusing forefinger at the new cricket coach.

"Spoof! he exclaimed dramatically. "Impostor! Your game's up!"

The Terrible Three stared at Baggy Trimble in profound astonishment. Bob Bradshaw stared at him, too, in a dazed, uncomprehending way.

"You're bowled out, Bradshaw!" went on Baggy, delighted at having made an impression. "I call you Bradshaw, but that's not your name at all! You're a trickster—a spoof! You've taken another man's name and tried to palm yourself off on St. Jim's as Bob Bradshaw!"

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry.

Bob Bradshaw said nothing. But his brow became dark with anger, and he sat clenching and unclenching his hands.

Manners jumped to his feet. "You fat rotter!" he roared. "I'll teach you to come here and insult our guest! You say he's an impostor—that he's filched another man's name. Prove it, or you'll go out of this study on your neck!"

Baggy Trimble gave a snort. "Oh, I'll prove it, fast enough!" he said. "I've been over to Burchester this afternoon for a bike ride, and I've made a discovery. There's a pub on the 'outskirts of Burchester—the Cricketers' Arms. And who do you think keeps it? Bob Bradshaw—the genuine Bob Bradshaw! There's an inscription on the door, and it says:

"Proprietor—ROBERT BRADSHAW  
(Late of Loamshire C.C.)."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Monty Lowther. And Tom Merry and Manners stared first at Baggy Trimble and then at the man he accused. Had the fat junior dropped a bombshell in the study the effect could not have been more startling.

Was there any truth in Trimble's story? Baggy was a notorious fibber; indeed, he had Anamias beaten to a frazzle in this respect. But there was no reason why Baggy should concoct such statements as he had just made. Bob Bradshaw had done the fat junior no harm; in fact, Baggy and the new cricket coach had not come face to face until now.

If it were correct that Bob Bradshaw, the ex-cricketer, kept a public-house at Burchester, then the St. Jim's coach was undoubtedly an impostor. But if he were playing a part and impersonating another man, what was his motive? It was a queer business altogether.

There was a long and painful silence in the study. It was broken at length by Bob Bradshaw, who sprang to his feet, glaring fiercely at the fat junior in the doorway.

"Do you dare to tax me with being an impostor?" demanded the cricket coach. "You fat young rascal! I'll make you suffer for this!"

And Bob Bradshaw stepped round the table and advanced towards Baggy Trimble in such a grim and menacing manner that the fat junior promptly bolted through the doorway and scuttled down the passage at top speed. It was well that he did so, for Bob Bradshaw was almost foaming with rage, and if he had succeeded in laying hands on Trimble it would have gone ill with that plump youth.

"Come back!"

Bob Bradshaw's voice fairly boomed down the Shell passage.

But Baggy Trimble did not come back. He had seen the expression on Bob Bradshaw's face, and it had terrified him. He fairly pelted along the passage, fear lending him wings. He was under the impression that the cricket coach was giving chase; but Bob Bradshaw, controlling his rage with a great effort, stepped back into the study.

Tom Merry looked at him curiously.

"Is there any truth in what Trimble says, Mr. Bradshaw?" he asked.

"Yes—and no. He is right in saying that a man calling himself Bob Bradshaw keeps the Cricketers' Arms at Burchester. But he is quite wrong, of course, in suggesting that I am an impostor. It is the other man who is the impostor

—the publican. Poor fellow! One can't help feeling sorry for him. He is not a lunatic exactly, but he suffers from delusions. And one of his delusions is that he is me—Bob Bradshaw."

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry, in astonishment. "But he's got no business to trade under your name and to say that he's late of Loamshire Cricket Club," said Manners. "You'd think the police would stop him from doing that."

"I expect the police believe him to be the genuine Bob Bradshaw," was the reply. "He's so convinced that he's myself—the ex-Loamshire cricketer—that he succeeds in convincing everybody else that he is."

The Terrible Three were amazed, as well they might be. They hardly knew what to make of this weird business.

"Surely you do not think as that fat rascal thinks—that I am an impostor?" said Bob Bradshaw.

"We—we don't know what to think!" stammered Tom Merry. "It's about the queerest affair we've ever struck. Obviously either you or the publican is an impostor. You can't both be Bob



"Here's the window cleaner I promised to send across, Mrs. Widge!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Hutcheson, Eastwell Road, Malvern, Natal, S. Africa.

Bradshaw, the famous cricketer. Personally, I'm inclined to believe your version of the story, because of the way you played cricket this afternoon."

"Thank you!" said the cricket coach rather sarcastically.

"But if Trimble's story gets to the Head's ears there may be trouble," went on Tom Merry. "If I were you I'd make everything clear to the Head beforehand and tell him that there's a man impersonating you at Burchester."

Bob Bradshaw shook his head.

"I won't do that," he said. "I don't want to cause inquiries to be made and get that poor fellow removed to an asylum. After all, his delusion is quite a harmless one."

"Well, it's your own affair, Mr. Bradshaw," said Tom Merry. "But you ought to safeguard yourself. If there were a chap at another school passing himself off as me I know what I'd do. I'd show him up. You say the man's delusion is harmless, but it may cause a lot of trouble later on."

"There are people who will be only too ready to believe that you are the impostor," said Manners. "Ratty, for instance."

Bob Bradshaw looked thoughtful.

"I'll have to think the matter over and decide whether or not I ought to take action," he said. "And now I must be going. Thanks very much, young gentlemen, for an excellent tea."

So saying, Bob Bradshaw—the mystery man, as Monty Lowther styled him—quitted the study, leaving the Terrible Three to discuss the amazing and baffling affair.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Curious Cricket!

"IF I may be allowed to express an opinion, Mr. Bwadshaw—"

"You may not, Master D'Arcy."

"I considah," said the swell of St. Jim's, quite heatedly, "that it is uttably widic to make us bat left-handed in this match!"

"Hear, hear!" said Jack Blake. "It isn't often I agree with Gussy, but I must uphold his giddy protest now. Dash it all, Mr. Bradshaw, it's too thick! The Grammarians will wipe up the ground with us!"

"I can't help that, Master Blake. Cricket must be played at this school as I want it played—not as my pupils think it should be played."

"Weally, Mr. Bwadshaw—"

"That will do, Master D'Arcy! I refuse to argue the matter."

Arthur Augustus screwed his famous monocle into his eye and surveyed the new cricket coach with haughty disapproval.

The members of the St. Jim's junior eleven were in their flannels, waiting outside the pavilion for their opponents from the Grammar School to turn up.

None of them had taken kindly to Bob Bradshaw's order that they were to bat left-handed; indeed, some of the players had waxed very indignant on the subject. They protested strongly; but the new cricket coach firmly adhered to his decision.

Bob Bradshaw seemed to be going the right way to make himself thoroughly unpopular. Most of the juniors had liked him well enough hitherto, in spite of his whims and oddities. But they agreed with Jack Blake that it was "too thick" to compel them to bat left-handed against the Grammarians.

Gordon Gay was bringing over a strong side, and the match looked like being a cake-walk for them, in the circumstances.

The Grammarians arrived shortly afterwards, having biked over from Rylcombe. They found Tom Merry & Co. looking decidedly glum.

"Wherefore those worried looks?" inquired Gordon Gay, after shaking hands with Tom Merry.

Tom explained the situation.

"We've got a new cricket coach," he said. "Quite a good sort, but a fellow with queer notions. He's one of the umpires in this match, and he insists that we bat left-handed."

"My hat!" gasped Gordon Gay. "The fellow must be off his rocker! Does he imagine you're playing against a team of girls?"

"Left-handed batting's a sort of mania with him," said Tom Merry glumly. "He even makes the Sixth bat that way. Of course, it puts the kybosh on our chances of licking you. We shall be skittled out like rabbits."

Gordon Gay reflected for a moment.

"If you fellows have got to bat left-handed," he said, "then we'll do the same. It's only fair. Let's make a left-handed match of it!"

Tom Merry brightened up at this suggestion.

"That's awfully decent of you, Gay!"

"Not at all! We shouldn't get much satisfac-

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tion out of licking you if we batted right-handed and you batted left. But if both teams bat the same way it ought to be a good game. I imagine there will be plenty of ducks' eggs, though!"

When Tom Merry explained to his comrades that the Grammarians were going to level matters up by batting left-handed as well, there was universal delight, and the St. Jim's juniors looked forward to a keen, if rather amusing, game. Their eagerness to beat their rivals from the Grammar School was just as great as if the game were being played in the normal way.

Gordon Gay won the toss, and Bob Bradshaw, in his white umpire's coat, strolled on to the pitch with Kildare of the Sixth.

Quite a crowd had gathered round the ground to witness the decidedly novel spectacle of a cricket match in which both teams batted left-handed.

Gordon Gay and Frank Monk opened the Grammarians' innings. And Fatty Wynn, smiling broadly, sent down the first ball of the match. Gordon Gay mistimed it hoplessly; he was all at sea under the strange conditions. The ball, however, missed the wicket by a hairsbreadth.

It looked as if the batsmen would have all their work cut out to keep their ends up, much less make runs. But presently Gordon Gay snicked a lucky single, and Frank Monk, lashing out at the last ball of the over, sent it speeding to the boundary.

The batting was very amusing to watch, most of the runs being scored by fluky hits. It was more



"Come on!" roared Bob Bradshaw. "Put up your time, and now you're going to get it!" The New



by luck than judgment that the opening pair managed to take the score to 20 before they were separated, Fatty Wynn bowling Gordon Gay "all over the shop."

Frank Monk lost his wicket almost immediately afterwards, and then the Grammarians were skittled out in an inglorious procession. The bowlers had the batsmen entirely at their mercy. Wootton major made a few big hits towards the end, but the Grammarians were all out for the puny total of 32.

In the ordinary way St. Jim's could have passed such a total with ease. Tom Merry could have knocked off the runs single-handed. But the St. Jim's batsmen were handicapped in just the same way as their rivals had been; and they quickly discovered that left-handed batting was not all lavender—except for the bowlers!

St. Jim's started deplorably.

Tom Merry was clean bowled without a run being scored. Jack Blake, who followed on, scooped his first ball into the hands of point. Talbot tried desperately to stop the rot, but he was snapped up at the wicket; and St. Jim's had lost three of their best men in as many minutes.

"This is too tewwible to be twue, deah boys!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, adjusting his pads. "Thwee men out, an' not a wun scored!"

"It's up to you, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "Don't go and bag a duck's-egg for goodness' sake!"

Arthur Augustus looked rather grim as he sauntered out to the wicket. Gordon Gay, who

was bowling, had collected three scalps, so to speak; and the swell of St. Jim's was determined not to be added to his collection.

From force of habit Arthur Augustus adopted the right-hand stance when he got to the wicket; but Bob Bradshaw quickly corrected him.

"Not that way, Master D'Arcy! Left-handed, please!"

"Pway accept my apology, Mr. Bwadshaw!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I was for-gettin'!"

And he promptly changed over.

Gordon Gay sent the ball down, and the swell of St. Jim's jumped out of his crease to meet it. He smote it hard and true, and away went the leather, soaring over mid-on's head to the boundary.

"Hurrah!"

"Well hit, Gussy!"

St. Jim's had made a start at last; and Arthur Augustus, with Figgins as his partner, continued to offer a stout resistance to the bowling.

Runs were not plentiful; they came in dribs and drabs, so to speak. But by slow degrees the score was taken to 20; and then calamity befell Arthur Augustus.

Gordon Gay sent the ball down; and the swell of St. Jim's, who was now beginning to feel quite at home as a left-handed batsman, jumped out to drive.

At that precise instant somebody was thoughtless enough to walk in front of the bowling-screen.

It was Mr. Ratcliff. The New House master was aware, of course, that there was a cricket match in progress; but, apparently, he was not aware of the enormity of walking across a bowling-screen while the batsman was in play.

That sudden obstruction put Arthur Augustus off his stroke. For an instant he lost sight of the ball; and in that brief instant the damage was done. There was a crash behind the batsman, and Arthur Augustus turned ruefully to survey his wrecked wicket.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated, in dismay. "Just as I was gettin' well set, too! Bothah old Watty! What did he want to cwoss in fwont of the scween for, just as I was in the act of makin' my stwoke?"

There was a loud murmur of indignation from the onlookers. Through the thoughtlessness—or, perhaps, wilfulness—of Mr. Ratcliff, Arthur Augustus had lost his wicket.

Bob Bradshaw had witnessed the incident, of course, and his ire was aroused. He made a megaphone of his hands, and fairly bawled to Mr. Ratcliff:

"Hi, you!"

The Housemaster did not heed. He must have heard, but evidently he did not realise that the hail was intended for him. It was not usual for staid and dignified Housemasters to be addressed in that way.

"Hi, you frantic idiot!" roared Bob Bradshaw. "What do you want to walk in front of the bowling-screen for?"

Mr. Ratcliff gave a jump. He looked around him, and saw that he was the only person near the bowling-screen. Bob Bradshaw's wrathful shout, therefore, must be intended for him.

"Bless my soul!" Mr. Ratcliff's face became almost livid with rage. "That—that objectionable person is actually hurling coarse epithets at me! He has addressed me, before all the boys, as a—a frantic idiot!"

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Ratcliff! You've been asking for a hiding for a long time, and now you've had it. The master gave a startled gasp and sprang back a pace.

Mr. Ratcliff was almost overcome. "Stand clear, and don't cross in front of that screen again!" shouted Bob Bradshaw.

"Good gracious!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff. "That offensive individual is addressing me as if I were a person of no consequence! I have never been so insulted in my life! He shall pay dearly for this conduct!"

Bob Bradshaw continued to shout and gesticulate, waving Mr. Ratcliff away from the bowling-screen.

There was no doubt that the new cricket coach was very annoyed. There was no doubt, also, that Mr. Ratcliff was very annoyed. It would have been a pretty problem to decide which was the more annoyed of the two.

Mr. Ratcliff paused for a moment, uncertain how to act. To stride on to the playing-pitch, and engage in wordy warfare with Bob Bradshaw, could not be done without considerable loss of dignity.

On the other hand, to move away from the bowling-screen, like a small boy doing as he was told, was not to be thought of. Eventually, Mr. Ratcliff decided to remain where he was. Bob Bradshaw looked very grim.

"So you mean to defy me—what?" he muttered. "You've decided to stay where you are, and muck up the game! In that case, I shall have to shift you!"

With gleaming eyes the cricket coach strode away towards the bowling-screen. Kildare, his fellow-umpire, put out a hand to restrain him.

"No, no!" he said. "For goodness' sake calm yourself, Bradshaw! You can't use violence towards a Housemaster, you know!"

Bob Bradshaw gave an angry snort.

"Ratcliff's only doing this to annoy me!" he exclaimed. "He's got no right to stand in front of that screen, after he's been asked to quit!"

"Well, you didn't ask him very politely, did you?" said Kildare, with a grin. "You can hardly expect a Housemaster to do as you want, when you bellow at him like a railway-porter, and call him a frantic idiot!"

"Wait till this game's over!" said Bob Bradshaw vengefully. "Ratcliff's been asking for trouble for a long time, and now he'll get it! I'll settle my scores with him, even if it means losing my job!"

Kildare looked at the speaker in alarm. He had never seen anybody in such a fierce rage. Bob Bradshaw's face was nearly purple; a big vein stood out like whipcord on his forehead; his eyes were agleam with anger.

The captain of St. Jim's hoped that the cricket coach would simmer down by the time the game was over. Otherwise there would be serious trouble.

Everybody was aware of the bitter feud between Mr. Ratcliff and Bob Bradshaw; and it looked as if matters would shortly come to a crisis.

Bob Bradshaw went back to his place, while the Housemaster remained where he was, standing directly in front of the bowling-screen.

The match was all over in another ten minutes. St. Jim's wanted only 13 runs to give them the victory, and they had six men to go in. It seemed a simple enough task, but it was never accomplished.

The batsmen failed hopelessly—partly because of Mr. Ratcliff interfering with their line of vision, but chiefly because of Bob Bradshaw.

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Hitherto the cricket coach had umpired with great fairness and equity; but now, in his eagerness to get the game over that he might settle his account with Mr. Ratcliff, he gave a number of wrong decisions.

Figgins was the first victim. The ball rose up and hit him in the chest, and Gordon Gay, who was bowling, made a frivolous appeal for "leg-before." To the utter astonishment of everybody, Bob Bradshaw allowed the appeal; and George Figgins walked back to the pavilion like a fellow in a dream.

Fatty Wynn shared an almost identical fate. So did Manners and Monty Lowther. They were given "out" by Bob Bradshaw without just cause, and their feelings towards the new cricket coach were almost homicidal. Being good sportsmen, however, they didn't stop to argue the point. One by one, they went back to the pavilion; and in the end the Grammarians won that amazing match by 5 runs.

Gordon Gay sought out Tom Merry in the pavilion.

"We won't call that a win," he said. "It wasn't a cricket match at all; it was a Punch and Judy show! At least four of your fellows were given out unfairly. That cricket coach of yours is the rummiest merchant I've ever struck!"

"Same here!" said Frank Monk. "He seems to me to be clean off his rocker! You can cut that match out of the records, Merry. Tear the scores out of the book, and burn 'em!"

"Thanks, I will!" said Tom, smiling. "And when we play the return match at the Grammar School, we're jolly well going to bat right-handed. I'm fed-up with this nonsense! And I'll see to it that Bob Bradshaw never umpires again in a junior match!"

The St. Jim's cricketers nodded grimly. Bob Bradshaw's peculiar behaviour and his whims and oddities had amused them at first, but now they had begun to get on the juniors' nerves. The popularity of the new cricket coach had slumped considerably, now that he had lost St. Jim's the match by his unfair decisions, and the juniors were resolved that he should not be given an opportunity of umpiring another match, and causing a further disaster.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Mr. Ratcliff's Ordeal!

**D**IRECTLY the match was over, Bob Bradshaw strode across to where Mr. Ratcliff was standing.

Kildare, dismayed to find that the cricket coach had not simmered down, but was as angry as ever, tried to stop him. But Bob Bradshaw shook himself free from Kildare's grasp, and strode on.

"The fool!" muttered Kildare, staring after him. "If he gives Ratty any more cheek, he'll lose his job. Where's the man's sense?"

Apparently, however, the possible loss of his job did not weigh with Bob Bradshaw, just then. His anger was at boiling point. He had suffered much at the hands of Mr. Ratcliff during his short stay at St. Jim's, and matters had now reached a climax.

Mr. Ratcliff was angry, too—exceedingly angry. He considered that he had been treated with the grossest disrespect. The new cricket coach had hailed him as a frantic idiot. Mr. Ratcliff was by no means an idiot, but there could be no doubt

(Continued on page 22.)



# In Town To-day

## Introducing Fatty Wynn to the Microphone. By a B. B. C. TALENT SCOUT.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sit down, Wynn. We particularly want you to settle a controversy.

**WYNN:** Well, Mr. Interviewer, I'm at your service.

**INTERVIEWER:** The point at issue is the amount of fatty tissue which goes to make up your avoirdupois, Wynn

**WYNN:** You mean, listeners want to know if I'm really very fat?

**INTERVIEWER:** If it is not too personal a question, yes

**WYNN:** At any rate, you can trust me not to fog the issue with a tissue of lies. But if anybody has been telling you I'm too fat to be fit, let me say there's a fat lot of truth in the statement! I'm fit enough to play cricket and football for the junior eleven.

**INTERVIEWER:** I take it you must be terrifically keen on sport?

**WYNN:** Between ourselves, I can tell you that I'm not so keen as all that. But Figgy, my chum, is skipper of the New House juniors, and he relies on me to turn out and do my best for the House. Naturally, a fellow can't go back on a pal, can he, even if it means trundling the ball down with the temperature 100 degrees in the shade, when I'd rather be lying in the shade, putting down fifty or a hundred—ice-creams?

**INTERVIEWER:** So your friendship with Figgins has dragged you into the limelight against your will?

**WYNN:** I wouldn't go as far as that, Mr. Interviewer. I'm no slacker, and I enjoy being the star bowler of the cricket eleven. I appreciate the twinkle in Tom Merry's eyes when I manage to shine. When I took eight Grammarian wickets for 4 runs the other afternoon, though, Gordon Gay's eyes seemed to be fairly glittering at me. I think Gay thought I was altogether too bright, and would be better eclipsed.

**INTERVIEWER:** No doubt! Tell me, Wynn, do you train on a special diet?

**WYNN:** Left to myself, I don't. But, unfortunately, I'm not always left to myself. On the morning of the Greyfriars match, I had been thoroughly trounced in Latin class by Mr. Lathom. Figuratively speaking, he hit me all round the wicket. After Lathom had "scored off" me freely I was thankful when he declared the "innings" closed and I could escape to the pavilion—I mean, the tuckshop. I was delighted to find Dame Taggles had just made some fresh cream buns, and I ordered a dozen or so to open with. Believe it or not, I had merely picked up the first bun when Figgins and Kerr came in, and Figgins grabbed the succulent morsel out of my hand. "What's the joke, Figgy?" I cried. "If you're not fit to bowl this afternoon," warned Figgins, "the joke will be on the junior eleven—and that stack of buns would be the cream of it!"

**INTERVIEWER:** So your friends refused to let you stock yourself with Dame Taggles' stock?

**WYNN:** Worse than that. Afraid I had eaten too much at lunch-time, they made me go down to the nets at once and send down a few balls, to limber up in readiness for the Friars. I felt so awful without food, I sent down several loose balls, and Figgins' wide smile faded.

**INTERVIEWER:** How were you during the match?

**WYNN:** At first I was right off the mark. Wharton and Cherry scored at my expense as freely as old Lathom had done in the morning. When Greyfriars took their second knock they needed only 50 runs to win.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you manage to pull yourself together?

**WYNN:** It was old Figgy who did it. Just before I went on to bowl, he whispered: "Two dozen of those cream buns if you get Wharton for a duck, Fatty!"

**INTERVIEWER:** And did you?

**WYNN:** I got Wharton—a crack batsman—first ball; and I caught Bob Cherry in the same over—though if it hadn't been for the thought of those buns, I couldn't have done it. After that I struck form. Every time I got another wicket in the bag, I visualised another cream bun. And, judging by their display, the Friars found things far too sticky for their taste!

**INTERVIEWER:** So that's how you won the match for St. Jim's?

**WYNN:** Yes—and two dozen cream buns for myself. I leave it to you to imagine whether the victory tasted half so sweet as the cream buns, Mr. Interviewer!

that he was frantic! He glared at Bob Bradshaw, as that worthy bore down upon him.

They came face to face by the bowling-screen. That part of the cricket ground was deserted, save for themselves.

Mr. Ratcliff was the first to speak, and his voice trembled with rage.

"Bradshaw!" he exclaimed. "You have treated me with unpardonable insolence in the presence of the boys! You have had the temerity to address me as a—frantic idiot! I cannot allow this to pass. Unless you apologise immediately for your offensive conduct, I shall lay a complaint before Dr. Holmes!"

If Mr. Ratcliff hoped to exact an apology from Bob Bradshaw, he was an optimist. No man could have looked less apologetic than the cricket coach looked at that moment. He was enraged beyond measure.

"Apologise?" hooted Bob Bradshaw. "It is from you that the apology should come! You walked in front of the bowling-screen while the match was in progress, and when I shouted to you to clear off, you deliberately stayed there! You deliberately did it to annoy me. You've had your knife into me from the moment I set foot in this place! You tried to persuade the Head to cancel my appointment as cricket coach. You hinted that I was an impostor—"

"And I still believe you to be an impostor!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff. "A rumour has reached my ears to-day to the effect that the real Bradshaw, now retired from county cricket, keeps a public-house at Burchester. I shall investigate the rumour at the first opportunity, and if it should transpire that you are impersonating another man, you will not be permitted to remain at this school another moment. Further, the matter will be put in the hands of the police."

If Mr. Ratcliff could have foreseen the effect of this vindictive speech upon Bob Bradshaw, he would never have uttered it. But the Housemaster was in such a passion that he did not realise that he was goading the cricket coach beyond endurance.

He realised it the next moment, however. For Bob Bradshaw suddenly clenched his burly fists and threw himself into a fighting attitude.

"Come on!" he roared. "Put your hands up, Ratcliff! You've been asking for a hiding for a long time, and now you're going to get it! I'm going to give you a hammering!"

Mr. Ratcliff gave a startled gasp. He sprang back a pace, his anger giving way to fear.

"I'm going to smash you!" roared Bob Bradshaw.

And he pranced about in front of the Housemaster, brandishing his hefty fists in perilous proximity to Mr. Ratcliff's nose.

Mr. Ratcliff, blinking at the cricket coach in great alarm, came to the conclusion that the man had lost his reason. He was wild-eyed, his face was livid, and neither in speech nor action did he appear sane.

"You say I'm not Bob Bradshaw!" he cried. "Well, you're quite right, I'm not! Do you know who I am? I'm Tommy Farr!"

"G-g-good heavens!" stuttered Mr. Ratcliff. His face was pale, and he was truly terrified. He was quite convinced, now, that he had to deal with a madman.

"I'm Tommy Farr!" repeated the cricket coach hoarsely. "I've put many a better man than you on the floor, Ratcliff! And now it's your turn! Seconds out of the ring! Time!"

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That was altogether too much for Mr. Ratcliff. His scanty stock of courage oozed out at his fingertips, as it were. Mr. Ratcliff was not a fighting-man; and even if he had been, he would have thought twice before tackling a man who was behaving like a dangerous imbecile. A powerful instinct urged Mr. Ratcliff to turn and flee, no matter at what cost to his personal dignity. To linger another moment where he was would have been to invite a knock-out blow.

So Mr. Ratcliff turned and darted off suddenly, his long, thin legs covering the ground at rare speed.

Mr. Ratcliff was not an athletic gentleman, and he detested running almost as cordially as he detested cricket. But he certainly ran now, at a speed which would have turned Nemesis or Charley's Aunt green with envy. And behind him pelted Bob Bradshaw, his white umpire's coat flapping in the breeze.

"Stop, you coward!" he panted. "Come back and take your medicine!"

Mr. Ratcliff heard, but he heeded not. His lean legs were making prodigious strides as he loped across the turf. He ran as if all the furies of the nether world were in hot pursuit.

Tom Merry & Co., trooping out of the pavilion, were astonished by the extraordinary spectacle which met their gaze.

"Great jumping crackers!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "Bob Bradshaw's chasing old Ratty! He looks simply fiendish, too!"

"And he's gaining!" gasped Manners. "If he catches Ratty, there will be giddy slaughter!"

The juniors gazed at that amazing chase as if spellbound. They did not laugh; it was too serious for that.

"We must chip in!" said Tom Merry quickly. "It will mean the sack for Bob Bradshaw if he lays hands on Ratty!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We must pprotect Watty, deah boys!"

And the juniors ran down the pavilion steps, and swarmed on to the playing field.

Mr. Ratcliff was still running hard, but the unusual exertion was telling on him, and he had bellows to mend. Behind him, drawing closer and yet closer, came the pater of pursuing feet.

"Help!" panted Mr. Ratcliff.

Tom Merry & Co. had no love for the tyrant of St. Jim's, but they could not stand by and see a Housemaster subjected to violence—as Mr. Ratcliff indubitably would be, if Bob Bradshaw got hold of him.

The juniors promptly ranged themselves between Mr. Ratcliff and his pursuer, forming a human barrier which arrested Bob Bradshaw's progress.

"Let me pass!" panted the cricket coach as he came up. "Let me get at him!"

And he made an effort to break through the human chain which obstructed his progress.

"Collar him!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Hold him down!"

"Sit on him!"

Bob Bradshaw was duly collared, and held down, and sat upon—though he struggled tenaciously before he was finally overpowered. He seemed to be possessed of superhuman strength, and the juniors had all their work cut out to subdue him. But they succeeded at last, and Bob Bradshaw lay sprawling on the turf, pinned to the ground by the concerted weight of half a dozen juniors.

Mr. Ratcliff did not stop to thank his benefactors. Gasping and almost breathless, he hurried



Mr. Ratcliff stood petrified as he opened the door of the library. The sight of the wreckage was appalling enough; but it was not that which alarmed the Housemaster so much as the wild-eyed, distraught figure standing in the midst of the chaos.

into the school building, and made tracks for the Head's study, in order to acquaint Dr. Holmes with details of the outrage.

Tom Merry & Co. waited until Mr. Ratcliff had disappeared into the building. Then they released their captive.

Bob Bradshaw rose to his feet. The juniors expected him to be furious with them for having balked him of his prey. But the paroxysm of rage had spent itself now. His eyes lost their wild gleam, he became calmer and more composed.

"Sorry we had to manhandle you, Mr. Bradshaw," said Tom Merry, "but it was for your own sake as well as Ratty's. If you laid hands on him, it would have meant the long jump for you."

"I know that," said the cricket coach, "and I'm grateful to you young gentlemen. I'm sorry to have caused such a scene, but that man goaded me to such a pitch that something seemed to snap in my head, and I didn't know what I was doing. I'm all right again now. If I had got hold of Ratcliff, I should have given him a thorough pasting. It's just as well that you took a hand."

"I'm afraid there will be trouble about this, deah man," said Arthur Augustus. "Twue, you didn't actually assault Watty, but you chased him across the cwicket field, an' it will take a jollay long time for his outwaged dignity to wecovah. I expect he's gone to weport you to the Head."

Bob Bradshaw shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him report!" he said carelessly.

A few moments later Toby, the page, came sprinting up.

"Which the 'Ead wishes to see Mr. Bradshaw in 'is study!" he announced.

"My hat! Ratty's lost no time!" said Monty Lowther. "He must have gone straight to the Head."

"I hope you won't lose your job over this, Mr. Bradshaw," said Tom Merry anxiously.

Although the new cricket coach did not stand so well with the juniors since he had robbed them of victory against the Grammarians, none of them wanted to see him sacked. They were rather afraid, however, that Mr. Ratcliff would prevail upon the Head to give Bob Bradshaw marching orders.

Bob Bradshaw removed his umpire's coat, and restored it to the pavilion. Then, after making himself presentable, he wended his way to the Head's study.

Mr. Ratcliff was there, swollen with anger. He had been letting off steam, as it were, and had complained bitterly to the Head that the new cricket coach had not only threatened him with physical violence, but had actually chased him across the cricket field.

"I am quite certain, sir," Mr. Ratcliff had said, "that the man is demented. He spoke and acted like a man bereft of all reason. He even harboured the delusion that he was Tommy Farr, the boxer!"

Naturally, the Head had been considerably startled by Mr. Ratcliff's story, and he had sent for the cricket coach at once. In view of what



Mr. Ratcliff had told him, he expected Bob Bradshaw to come bursting into the study like a maniac, almost frothing at the mouth.

Mr. Ratcliff also expected a cyclonic entry on the part of Bob Bradshaw, and he was careful to take up a position of comparative safety on the far side of the Head's desk.

When Bob Bradshaw knocked and entered, however, it was in a quiet and orderly manner. He did not seem the same man who, only a short time previously, had chased a Housemaster across the cricket ground. He was cool and calm and collected, in striking contrast to Mr. Ratcliff, who was almost beside himself with rage. Indeed, had anyone been asked to say which of the pair was demented, he would unhesitatingly have pointed to Mr. Ratcliff.

"Bradshaw," said the Head sternly, "I have received yet another complaint about you from Mr. Ratcliff. He tells me that you shouted to him in a most impertinent manner."

"He called me a frantic idiot!" spluttered Mr. Ratcliff.

"Pray be silent a moment, Mr. Ratcliff. I am also given to understand, Mr. Bradshaw, that after the cricket match you approached Mr. Ratcliff



"'S funny, doesn't seem as if anyone's at home!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Turner, Gale House, Pulgrave, near Diss, Norfolk.

and threatened him with personal violence, and declared that you were Farr, the boxer."

Bob Bradshaw looked astonished.

"It seems to me, sir," he said quietly, "that Mr. Ratcliff's imagination has been running riot. I certainly did not claim to be Farr—"

"You did!" hooted Mr. Ratcliff.

Bob Bradshaw ignored the Housemaster.

"I did not, Dr. Holmes," he said in the same quiet tone. "I give you my word that I did nothing so preposterous."

As a matter of fact, now that he had simmered down, Bob Bradshaw had no recollection of having said that he was Tommy Farr.

The Head was frankly puzzled. He scarcely knew what to believe. Mr. Ratcliff, although often given to exaggeration, was not a perverter of the truth. On the other hand, Bob Bradshaw's statements were so quietly convincing that the Head felt bound to accept them.

"This wretched man dare not deny that he pursued me across the cricket ground!" broke out Mr. Ratcliff.

"No, I don't deny it!" said Bob Bradshaw calmly. "But you gave me ample provocation. From the moment of my arrival at this school, Mr. Ratcliff, you have gone out of your way to cause me annoyance."

Dr. Holmes frowned.

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"Whatever the extent of your provocation, Bradshaw, you were not justified in intimidating and giving chase to a Housemaster," he said. "This hostility towards Mr. Ratcliff must cease forthwith, and he must be treated with the respect to which he is justly entitled. I do not say that you are wholly to blame in this matter; there have been faults on both sides. But there has been far too much trouble in the short time that you have been at this school, and I warn you, Bradshaw, that any further complaint as to your conduct will result in your instant dismissal."

"Very well, sir!"

"The man should be dismissed here and now!" interposed Mr. Ratcliff, enraged to think that Bob Bradshaw was getting off with a mere reprimand. "He is an impostor! He is assuming the identity of another. There is a strong rumour—"

"Marshal your facts, Mr. Ratcliff, and bring them to me, and I will judge of their accuracy," said the Head coldly. "But pray do not make wild accusations which you cannot substantiate."

It was a crushing rebuke for the New House master, and Mr. Ratcliff dared not trust himself to reply, so great was his fury. He flounced out of the Head's study, his face crimson with mortification, and Bob Bradshaw followed in a more leisurely manner, smiling serenely.

## CHAPTER 9.

### Desperate Measures!

SATURDAY afternoon was bright and sunny. The conditions were ideal for cricket, and Tom Merry & Co. were in great spirits. They were keenly looking forward to their match with the girls' eleven, captained by D'Arcy's Cousin Ethel.

That young lady had succeeded in getting up a very fine team. It included Marie Rivers, the school nurse; and Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara Trevlyn, and Phyllis Howell, from Cliff House girls' school. Bernard Glyn's sister, Edith, a fine sportswoman, was also in the eleven.

Everything promised well for an excellent afternoon's sport. There was only one fly in the ointment, so to speak. Bob Bradshaw had declared his intention of umpiring the match.

Remembering what had happened in their match with the Grammarians, Tom Merry & Co. were quite determined that the cricket coach should umpire no more of their matches.

That morning the junior cricketers had formed a deputation and called upon Bob Bradshaw, and requested him not to umpire. They had been very polite, they had put it very nicely, they had been careful not to ruffle the feelings of a man who was subject to sudden and violent outbursts of frenzy.

Tom Merry, the spokesman of the deputation, had waxed quite eloquent. He had put it to Bob Bradshaw like a Dutch uncle, as Monty Lowther afterwards expressed it.

The cricket coach had listened patiently to the leader of the deputation, but he had stubbornly refused to give way. He pointed out that it was his duty to take a keen interest in all the junior matches, and to umpire in them whenever possible. And he had no intention of shirking that duty.

The deputation had retired discomfited, but still determined. Bob Bradshaw must not be allowed to umpire; everybody was agreed on that point.

At a "confab" in Tom Merry's study, it was

decided to resort to drastic measures, and to get Bob Bradshaw out of the way for the afternoon.

How was this to be done? It was rather a poser for the junior cricketers, but Tom Merry finally hit upon a simple yet effective plan.

After dinner, when Bob Bradshaw was strolling under the old elms in the quad, Tom Merry joined him.

"Topping afternoon for the match, Mr. Bradshaw," said the captain of the Shell.

Bob Bradshaw gazed up at the azure sky and nodded.

"Glorious!" he said. "When do you expect your fair opponents to arrive?"

"They'll be along any minute now," said Tom Merry. "By the way, Mr. Bradshaw, I've just seen a ripping photograph of you."

"Eh? Where?"

"In a book called 'Cricketers of the Past.' It's simply packed with photos of famous players. There's W. G. Grace, and Archie Maclaren, and Jessop, and there's a splendid one of you batting at Lord's."

Bob Bradshaw became interested at once.

"I should like to see that book," he said. "Where is it?"

"In the library."

"Could you run and fetch it for me?"

"Afraid not," said Tom Merry. "We're not supposed to remove books from the library without permission. But I'll come along with you and show you."

"Good!"

Tom Merry accompanied the cricket coach to the school library. A group of cricketers, in their flannels, watched them go, and Monty Lowther chuckled.

"Tommy's worked the oracle," he said. "Bob Bradshaw's tumbled guilelessly into the trap. He won't relish being locked in the library for the afternoon. Still, he'll have plenty of books to read to pass the time."

Little dreaming that he was being lured into captivity, Bob Bradshaw walked on with Tom Merry. They came to the library, and Tom found the volume he had mentioned and turned up the photograph of Bob Bradshaw, taken many years previously. The cricket coach had altered considerably since the days of his prime, but that was hardly surprising.

Bob Bradshaw studied the photograph keenly. Then he turned over the pages of the volume, becoming deeply engrossed, and oblivious of Tom Merry's presence.

That was exactly what Tom wanted. Taking advantage of Bob Bradshaw's preoccupation, the junior tiptoed swiftly to the door and darted out into the passage, and then hastily closed the door and locked it.

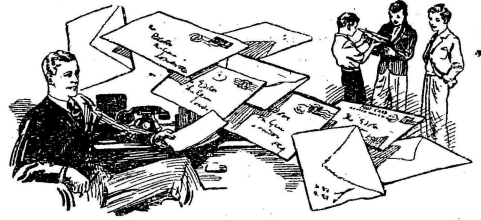
Bob Bradshaw was a prisoner in the library!

No studiously inclined person would have objected to being locked in the library for an afternoon, but it was probable that Bob Bradshaw, who was an outdoor man, would object very strongly.

The library windows were at too great an altitude from the ground to admit of escape that way, while the door was too stout and solid to be easily forced, even by a man of Bob Bradshaw's abnormal strength.

Doubtless the cricket coach, on finding himself a prisoner, would shout for help. But this would not avail him much. The library was rather off the beaten track, and, in any case, nobody was

(Continued on next page.)



## THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Let the Editor be your pal. Drop him a line to-day, addressing your letter: The Editor, The GEM, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

**H**ALLO, Chums! Great news is coming-- the best news in the history of the GEM! I'm so enthusiastic over it that I should like to tell you all about it now, but I mustn't let the cat out of the bag too early. However, I'll just give you a hint of what to expect. I've been very busy lately preparing a magnificent new programme of stories and features for the old paper, and believe me, chums, it will be the best programme ever published! It starts in three weeks' time, but I shall have a good deal more to say about it before then--so keep your eyes open for special announcements.

### "ST. JIM'S UNDER CANVAS!"

Meantime, before the big event, so to speak, readers are booked for two great camping yarns of the St. Jim's chums. The first will appear next Wednesday, under the above title.

While the school is being painted and re-decorated, all the masters, seniors, and juniors pack off to camp at a place called Windyridge, on the Sussex coast, for a fortnight. It's not just a holiday, though rules are relaxed and the boys have a free and easy time. Lessons are carried on as usual--with a green field as the Form-room and the blue sky overhead. But in their leisure hours the juniors have the time of their lives. There's sea-bathing, camp cricket, japes, and fun. And the novel experience of being under canvas is not without its thrilling moments--thanks to the recklessness of Wally D'Arcy & Co. of the Third! Join up with the chums of St. Jim's next week--and enjoy their fun and adventure. It's better than a holiday!

### "GREYFRIARS VERSUS ST. JIM'S!"

The big cricket match between the rivals Harry Wharton & Co. and the St. Jim's chums is the high spot in part two of Frank Richards' grand yarn. Throughout the game the play fluctuates in an exciting manner, first Tom Merry & Co. getting on top, and then the Greyfriars chums reversing the position. The finish is full of thrills--and it's anybody's game right up till the last ball is bowled!

To round off this ripping number there will be another "In Town To-day" interview, featuring Kerr, the canny Scot; Monty Lowther invites you to laugh off some more wisecracks and jokes; then there's another stamp article, readers' prize jokes, and our other features.

See you next Wednesday, chums! Chin, chin!

THE EDITOR.

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likely to remain indoors on that sunny June afternoon.

Tom Merry waited outside the door, listening. Presently his chums joined him in the corridor. "So you've managed it all serene, Tommy?" said Manners.

Tom Merry nodded, and grinned.

"It was dead easy," he explained. "I had no trouble at all. Bob Bradshaw doesn't realise yet what has happened. He's deep in that cricket volume."

"He'll soon tumble to the fact that he's a giddy prisoner," said Monty Lowther, "and then he'll raise Cain!"

A couple of minutes passed. Then footsteps were heard crossing the library, and approaching the door. The juniors in the corridor exchanged smiling glances.

Bob Bradshaw had just discovered that he was alone in the library. He was mystified as to Tom Merry's sudden disappearance. A suspicion leapt to his mind—a suspicion that was soon confirmed when he turned and tugged the door-handle.

The door was locked.

"Tricked! Tricked and trapped!"

Bob Bradshaw's tone was thunderous. He hammered furiously on the door.

"Merry, you young rascal! Open this door at once! Let me out!"

There was a soft chuckle from the corridor.

"Let me out!" roared the cricket coach.

"Not this evening!" chortled Monty Lowther. "Some other evening."

It soon became evident that Bob Bradshaw was not going to accept his fate with silent resignation. He worked himself into a frenzy, pounding on the door with his burly fists. Then he charged the door, hurling himself bodily against it. The door quivered and groaned under the impact, but it did not give way.

"He'll soon get tired of that," said Tom Merry. "Come along, you fellows! The girls ought to be here by now."

The juniors hurried down into the quad, just in time to meet Cousin Ethel's eleven, the members of which had met by appointment and travelled down together.

Cordial greetings were exchanged, and the rival teams adjourned to Little Side.

Now that Bob Bradshaw had been got out of the way, the St. Jim's juniors looked forward to a keen game, with possibly a thrilling finish. There would no doubt be "ructions" after the match, when the cricket coach was liberated. The vials of his wrath would fairly overflow. He would be furious, perhaps violent.

But Tom Merry & Co. were not worrying themselves about future possibilities. Their one aim in life, at that moment, was to vanquish and overcome Cousin Ethel's eleven. They took the field with light hearts; and in the excitement of the game, the imprisoned cricket coach was soon banished from their minds.

## CHAPTER 10.

### Startling Revelations!

**M**R. HORACE RATCLIFF was in a happy humour. It was fairly late in the afternoon when the New House master came striding up from Rylcombe Station to St. Jim's.

Mr. Ratcliff's eyes were gleaming with malevolent satisfaction; and from time to time he smiled—a curious, twisted smile.

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As a rule Mr. Ratcliff spent his Saturday afternoons in his study, or prowling around in search of delinquents. But on this particular afternoon he had taken a trip to Burchester. His destination had been the Cricketers' Arms, and at that hostelry Mr. Ratcliff had made inquiries, and obtained corroboration of the rumour he had heard relating to the St. Jim's cricket coach.

Mr. Ratcliff had ascertained, beyond all doubt or dispute, that Bob Bradshaw, the old Loamshire and England player, was the proprietor of the Cricketers' Arms. The man had furnished proofs of identity, and those proofs were now in Mr. Ratcliff's pocket, to be placed before the Head at the first opportunity.

The production of those proofs would show clearly that the St. Jim's cricket coach was an impostor, who had deceived and duped the Head, and obtained an appointment by false pretences. It would result in instant dismissal for the man who was masquerading as Bob Bradshaw.

Hence Mr. Ratcliff's satisfaction, and the vindictive gleam in his eyes as he strode along. He was delighted to think that he held in his possession the evidence which would expose and condemn his enemy, and get him marching orders from St. Jim's.

The Head would now have to admit that he had committed an error in judgment in engaging a worthless rascal as cricket coach. He would have to admit that Mr. Ratcliff's protests and warnings had been fully justified. Mr. Ratcliff would be in the happy position of being able to say "I told you so! I warned you that the man was an impostor!"

On arriving at St. Jim's, the Housemaster was annoyed to find that the Head was out, and would not return for an hour. The exposure of the cricket coach, therefore, would have to wait.

Having an hour to kill, the Housemaster decided to get a book from the library, and adjourn with it to his study.

He was rather surprised to find the door of the library locked; though the key was there, on the outside.

Mr. Ratcliff was surprised, also, to hear sounds of furious tramping inside the library. There was quite a commotion going on in what was usually the quietest and most sedate apartment at St. Jim's.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Ratcliff, pausing outside the door.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

The footsteps ceased for a moment. They were followed by a series of terrific crashes, as of book-cases being overturned. Mingled with the crashes came sounds of splintering glass.

"Good gracious!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff, in great alarm. "Some vandal is actually engaged in wrecking the library!"

Crash! Crash!

Mr. Ratcliff listened in horror to those loud and reverberant crashes. Then, without more ado, he turned the key and threw open the door, and rushed into the library.

The scene which met Mr. Ratcliff's startled gaze almost beggared description. The library was in a state of dreadful disorder. The various book-cases had been hurled to the floor, their glass panels smashed, and their contents strewn all over the carpet as thickly as leaves in Vallombrosa.

It looked, indeed, as if the notorious vandals of old had sprung into life again and visited the St. Jim's library on one of their missions of destruction.



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Mr. Ratcliff stood petrified—rooted to the floor with horror.

The sight of the wreckage was appalling enough; but it was not that which alarmed Mr. Ratcliff so much as the wild-eyed, distraught figure who stood in the midst of the chaos.

It was Mr. Ratcliff's enemy—the man whose downfall and degradation he was about to encompass.

"G-g-good heavens!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff.

The Housemaster had more than suspected all along that the cricket coach had a streak of insanity in him. No sane person would have wrought this havoc. No sane person would have had the strength, single-handed, to overturn those weighty bookcases.

Nor did the man have any appearance of sanity at that moment. His face was distorted, his eyes were wild, and his hair unkempt, as if he had been tearing it. He turned and gave Mr. Ratcliff a look that made the master's flesh creep.

"You!" he said hoarsely.

And then, his face working convulsively, his hands shaking with uncontrollable rage, he made a sudden rush at Mr. Ratcliff.

With a gasp of terror, the Housemaster turned to flee.

Fortunately for Mr. Ratcliff, his pursuer tripped over one of the volumes on the floor and went sprawling. Before he could pick himself up, Mr. Ratcliff was out and away, streaking down the corridor like a champion of the cinder path.

He ran as he had never run before. Even his previous efforts, when he had been chased across the cricket field, were put in the shade now. Mr. Ratcliff no longer doubted that his pursuer was a maniac—a man bereft of all reason.

Mr. Ratcliff reached the end of the corridor. Glancing back wildly over his shoulder, he saw that his enemy was in pursuit.

Down the stairs plunged Mr. Ratcliff, precipitate in his frenzied flight. He bounded through the Hall and emerged into the quadrangle and made tracks for the playing fields, where he knew he would find protection.

His pursuer was hard at his heels now, and Mr. Ratcliff, though well-nigh exhausted, put on a desperate spurt.

It was that spurt which saved him. Mr. Ratcliff rounded a corner of the building and came into view of the playing fields, dotted with flannelled figures. Never had the sight of the St. Jim's playing fields been so welcome to Mr. Ratcliff.

Tom Merry's eleven were just trooping off the

C. A. Thomas, 62, Rugby Road, Dagenham, Essex; age 14-15; dramatics and general topics; Canada, India, or any other country.

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### PEN PALS COUPON

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field. In a keen and exciting tussle, they had beaten the girls' team by a narrow margin, and they were looking very pleased with themselves.

Suddenly they caught sight of Mr. Ratcliff staggering and stumbling towards them, with the cricket coach giving chase.

Mr. Ratcliff was showing signs of distress. His breath came and went in great gasps, and his tongue was lolling out of his mouth. His eyes were strained ahead of him, eagerly seeking protection and assistance.

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Bob Bradshaw's chasing Ratty again! The—the mad idiot! This will be the finish of his career at St. Jim's!"

"How did he escape from the library, I wonder?" gasped Manners.

But there was no time to speculate about that. Mr. Ratcliff needed help, and he needed it badly. With one accord, the cricketers raced towards him.

But their help was not needed, after all.

A couple of burly men, strangers to St. Jim's, who had been chatting with Mr. Railton, the School House master, suddenly took a hand in the proceedings. The juniors took them to be policemen in plain clothes, for one of them whipped out a pair of handcuffs.

The two men interposed themselves between Mr. Ratcliff and his pursuer. And when the cricket coach came up they promptly closed with him.

There was a short, sharp struggle, and the handcuffs clicked on the wrists of the man who had masqueraded as Bob Bradshaw.

Tom Merry & Co. looked on, spellbound. They saw the brief but desperate struggle, they heard the click of the handcuffs, and, finally, they saw their cricket coach being marched away between the two stern-faced men—like Eugene Aram of old was marched away—with gyves upon his wrists.

"We—we must be dreaming!" murmured Monty Lowther. "This fairly beats the band!"

"Our cricket coach must be a blessed criminal!" muttered Manners.

Mr. Railton noticed the blank consternation and bewilderment of the juniors, and he came forward, with a grave face, to explain.

"My boys," said the Housemaster, "that unfortunate man is not Bradshaw, the cricketer.

"He is a mental case," went on Mr. Railton, "and it appears that he made his escape from a private asylum. The authorities were unable to trace his whereabouts until this afternoon, when two warders were sent here to reclaim him."

(Continued on page 36.)

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THE CRICKET MATCH OF THE SEASON! HARRY WHARTON & CO. ARE  
THE VISITORS OF THEIR OLD RIVALS OF ST. JIM'S.

# Greyfriars versus St. Jim's!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

## The Eleven!

"IS the list up yet?"

"Not yet."

Bulstrode grunted.

"Just like Wharton to keep us waiting!" And he thrust his hands discontentedly into his pockets and waited.

He was not the only one who was anxious—there was a score at least of the Greyfriars Remove waiting before the notice-board, or lounging about the Hall.

They were waiting for Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, to put up the list of players for the St. Jim's match to be played the following day. Wharton and the cricket committee were still in consultation, and the result of their deliberations was not yet known.

The St. Jim's match was the most important fixture of the Greyfriars junior cricket matches. They had to face a team that should have been above their strength, for it was recruited from the Shell of St. Jim's, as well as the Fourth Form; while Harry Wharton's eleven was wholly taken from the Remove at Greyfriars. But the Remove were a hard playing Form. They had defeated their own Upper Fourth, and would willingly have taken on the Fifth, if the dignity of the Fifth had allowed such a match.

Wharton had every hope of going to St. Jim's with a good eleven, but the matter required great care. The cricket committee was giving it their undivided attention. Personal considerations could not be allowed to weigh. Any player who was out of form was expected to be willing to make way for a better man—but whether he was willing or not, he would have to go.

There was another reason, too, why some of the fellows wanted to be included in the eleven. Instead of the usual half-holiday that Saturday there was a whole holiday for the players in St. Jim's match. The journey to St. Jim's was a long one, and the members of the team were excused morning lessons. A whole holiday and a run into Sussex naturally formed a great attraction for all the Remove.

The fellows loitered about anxiously. Some of them looked careless, but the way they started when anybody came along, thinking it might be Wharton with the cricket list, showed that their carelessness was assumed.

Bulstrode wore a heavy frown. He had little expectation of seeing his name up. He had been in the eleven before, but he had allowed his form to deteriorate, and could not reasonably expect to be played, in the circumstances. But of late he had been "bucking up"—more with the idea of showing the Remove what he could do than with a hope of getting into the eleven.

"Of course, it all goes by favouritism," he confided to his chum Skinner. "Wharton always puts in the fellows belonging to his own study."

"Faith, and they're the best cricketers in the Form intirely!" broke in Micky Desmond.

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"Oh rats! I would undertake to bat or bowl or field with any of them. But you'll see that Wharton won't put my name down."

"Faith, and it's such an ill-tempered baste ye are!" said Micky. "Even if ye can play cricket, ye'd be always making trouble."

"What-ho!" said Hazeldene. "You see, Bulstrode, your temper can't be relied upon. But I'll tell you what—I saw Wharton looking at you this morning when you were batting against Stott, and he looked pleased."

Bulstrode sniffed.

"I don't care whether he's pleased. I know jolly well he won't put me down. The team is run by favouritism! He puts in the chaps in his own study—Cherry, Nugent, and the nigger. He'll put you in, Hazeldene—"

"I hope he will."

"Not because you can play cricket, though—you can't—but because of your sister Marjorie. That's why he put you in the footer eleven."

"I believe I can keep goal," said Hazeldene, his temper rising, though he did not want to quarrel with the bully of the Remove. Bulstrode was a hard-hitter, and Wharton and Mark Linley were the only fellows in the Remove who could stand up to him.

"You wouldn't have had a chance to keep goal, only—"

"Faith, and it's a grumblin' baste ye are, Bulstrode! Hallo, here's Wharton!"

There was a general movement as Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, came along and stopped before the notice-board, with a paper in his hand.

It was the cricket list at last.

The fellows crowded round eagerly. Bulstrode, with an affectation of indifference he was far from feeling, held back.

"Shove it up, Wharton!"

"Let's see it!"

"Right!" Harry Wharton pinned up the notice. "I'm sorry some of you chaps are left out, but of course, I couldn't take a side of forty to St. Jim's. I believe we've got the best material in the team, and I think we've got a good chance of beating Tom Merry's eleven. I know that you'll believe I've done my best, anyway, and not allowed personal feelings to count."

"Oh, of course!" sneered Bulstrode.

Wharton glanced at him, and smiled slightly, but did not reply. Having pinned up the paper he walked away, and the juniors crowded round to read it.

"Read it out, Micky!" said Skinner.

"Faith, and it's all right—me own name's there!"

"Read it out!"

"Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh—" began Micky.

Bulstrode interrupted him with a scornful laugh.

"All Study No. 1!" he said. "What did I say?"



## JOIN UP WITH THE GREYFRIARS CRICKETERS—BUNTER'S WITH 'EM!— AND ENJOY THEIR FUN AND ADVENTURE.

"Desmond—that's me—Morgan, Ogilvy, Hazel-dene—"

"Of course!" sneered Bulstrode. "Didn't I say Hazeldene would be in? That's on account of his sister Marjorie."

"It's a lie!" broke out Hazeldene fiercely. "You know Wharton wouldn't—"

"Eh, what's that?" said Bulstrode, turning on him. "I'll—"

"Shut up!" hissed Skinner. "Let's hear the rest."

"Next man's Skinner—"

"Hurrah!" said Skinner.

"Then Mark Linley—"

"Linley!" Bulstrode almost roared out the name. "That cad from the cotton mill—that mill-hand who sneaked into Greyfriars on a scholarship. Fancy putting him into a team to play a school like St. Jim's. I vote that we all stand up against it and elect a new cricket committee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you Irish image?"

"Ha, ha, ha! You haven't heard the eleventh name yet, darling."

"What is it—the Chinese, I suppose? It would be like Wharton to play Wun Lung in a cricket eleven."

"Faith, it isn't—it's yere own!"

"What?"

"There's the name—Bulstrode!"

Bulstrode's face was a study.

He pushed the other fellows aside and stared at the list himself. There it was, plain enough—the last name on the list was his own.

Disappointed as most of the fellows were at finding their own names missing, the expression on Bulstrode's face made a roar of laughter go up.

"Faith, and I think we'll protest, in a body, and make a stand against the committee," said Micky Desmond. "Is it ready ye are to take the lead, Bulstrode?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All favouritism!" grinned Hazeldene. "Bulstrode's quite right. We'll ask Wharton to scratch the last name off, and go on strike if he doesn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bulstrode. "Of course, I—"

"Ha, ha, ha! He thinks the list's all right now."

"Well, if Wharton's trying to do the fair thing I think we ought to back him up—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode glared at the Removites, but it was no use trying to check that torrent of laughter. After what the Remove bully had been saying, his change of front was absurd enough, and the juniors could not help laughing. Bulstrode put his hands in his pockets and walked away, leaving the Remove still roaring.

### Bunter Joins the Party!

THAT evening the Remove eleven were making their little preparations for the journey to St. Jim's. They were to leave the school before morning lessons, in order to arrive early on the St. Jim's ground.

Bulstrode was in an unusually good temper, and was heard to reply civilly every time he was addressed—a most unusual circumstance. Two or three disappointed cricketers made attempts to



"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Micky Desmond. "You haven't heard the eleventh name yet, darling!"

"What is it—the Chinese, I suppose?" sneered Bulstrode. "It would be like Wharton to play Wun Lung." "Faith, it isn't—it's yere own!" exclaimed Micky.

persuade Wharton to make a slight alteration in the list, but they found the captain of the Remove as hard as iron.

Billy Bunter was the most troublesome. As he was in Wharton's own study he seemed to consider that he had a natural right to go into the eleven. He had always considered that, but he had never had his claims admitted. He could play cricket as easily as he could pilot an aeroplane, but he was far from looking at his cricket as other fellows looked at it. Besides, as he explained to Wharton, this was a special occasion.

The door of the committee-room had been locked against Bunter, but after the notice was on the board, the fat junior hunted Wharton down and expostulated. Harry Wharton had plenty to see to, but Bunter was not to be denied.

"I say, you fellows!" he exclaimed, bursting into Study No. 1, where the Famous Four were busily discussing the next day's journey. "I say—"

Bob Cherry took Bunter by his shoulders and slewed him round. Then he dug his knuckles into the back of the fat junior's neck and marched him to the door.

"Oh, really, Cherry, you beast! I say, you fellows—"

Bob marched him through the door and solemnly gave him a lift with his boot, which started him a long passage.

"Now buzz off!" said Bob. "There's no time for you to talk; it's bed-time in about four hours, so we should have to interrupt you, anyway. Don't start! Get off!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Bob went into the study again and slammed the door. It opened again in a few seconds, and Billy Bunter blinked in through his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Get out!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ye-es; but I say, you fellows——"

Bob Cherry stooped for the poker. Harry Wharton burst into a laugh.

"What's the matter, Bunter? You can't jaw now."

"It's about the cricket team," said Bunter, blinking indignantly at Bob. "I want to point out to you once more that if I'm left out——"

Bob Cherry groaned.

"My hat! Is he going to start with that again?"

"I'm thinking of the honour of the school," said Bunter loftily. "I'm not the chap to brag, but you've all seen me play cricket——"

"We have," said Nugert. "It was a sight for gods and men—and little fishes!"

"The sightfulness was terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The batfulness of the esteemed Bunter was only equalled by his bowlfulness, which was like nothing else ever seen on the earthful globe."

"Oh, really, Ink——"

"Don't begin on that topic again, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "It's no use talking sense to you, and I've given it up. If you say the word 'cricket' again you go out of this study on your neck!"

"I suppose it's no use trying to oppose jealousy," said Bunter. "If you're determined to leave me out, I don't care."

"Then shut up, if you don't care."

"What I was thinking is, if you leave me out of the eleven, you ought at least to take me to St. Jim's with you," said Bunter. "I don't think you ought to go back on a fellow in your study. You'll need a fellow to come along and see to things, and you want an extra chap outside the team. I ought to be there."

"It's only members of the team who have leave in the morning," said Wharton. "You can follow in the afternoon, if you like."

"Yes, but there's a difficulty about the fare. As a matter of fact, I haven't any money. I've been expecting a postal order, but somehow it hasn't come yet. I——"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Is the pleasure of Bunter's company worth the railway fare, you chaps?" he asked.

"Not much!"

"No fear!"

"The nofulness is terrific!"

"Oh, really, you fellows! You see, Wharton, you could ask leave of Mr. Quelch, and he would be certain to give it. You could say you were taking me as a reserve—— Oh! Leave my ear along, you beast!"

"Then don't recommend me to tell Mr. Quelch lies, you young rotter! I've a jolly good mind to kick you out of the study," said Wharton.

"Oh, really, you could take me as a reserve if you liked! Look here, you ought to get permission for me to come. I expect it of you."

"Well, I'll ask Quelch," said Wharton impatiently. "Now buzz off!"

"That's all right! I say, I've been disappointed about a postal order. Could you lend me half-a-crown till I—— Ow!"

Bob Cherry's boot was making active play upon the fat Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter dodged and twisted, and escaped from the study, and

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Bob slammed the door after him. This time Bunter did not return.

"Now, about what we were discussing," said Wharton. "It would be ripping if Marjorie Hazeldene could come over to St. Jim's, and I don't see why not. Miss Penelope Primrose gave permission for her to see the St. Jim's match when I spoke about it, but I forgot to mention that it was a whole day match away—I mean, I made it a point to forget. I thought it more judicious to break that gently to her, as Marjorie will have to miss morning lessons at Cliff House. My idea is to send Hazeldene over to Cliff House on his bike to arrange the matter."

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Bob Cherry heartily. "Let's go and find Hazeldene, and put it to him now."

And the Famous Four, who had no preparation to do that evening, immediately went to look for Hazeldene. They found him in the Junior Common-room. Wharton explained, and Hazeldene was delighted with the idea.

"Jolly good!" he said. "I'll go over to Cliff House with pleasure. Miss Primrose is pretty certain to give permission."

And a few minutes later Hazeldene was on his bicycle, pedalling away on the road to Cliff House School.

While Hazeldene was gone, Harry Wharton looked into Mark Linley's study. The lad from Lancashire was at work, and had not yet seen the notice on the board. He was alone in the room, and he looked up with a pleasant smile as Wharton came in.

"News for you," said Harry, with a smile.

"About the cricket?"

"Yes; the committee have decided to play you."

A troubled look came over the Lancashire junior's face. Wharton looked at him in astonishment. Any other fellow in the Remove would have jumped with delight at a similar announcement.

"Do you want to play?" said Harry quickly.

"Yes, of course; but I was thinking of the railway fare," said Linley awkwardly. He coloured, and then went on quietly: "I really oughtn't to have joined the Form cricket club, as I'm poor, and the rest of the fellows have plenty of tin. But you were so decent about it—and I like to play, too. Only——"

"That's all right, my son," said Wharton, laughing. "I shouldn't have let you remain outside the club, I assure you, if I had had to yank you in on your neck. About the fare to St. Jim's, all fares are paid on this occasion out of the club funds. It's a bit unusual to have a match with a school so far off, but it's the match of the season to Greyfriars juniors. I wouldn't miss it to play in a Sixth Form match."

Linley looked relieved.

"That's all right, then," he said.

"Get your things ready to-night; we leave by the eight-twenty from Friar-dale in the morning, and we're going to have an early breakfast."

"I'll be ready," said Mark cheerfully.

Wharton nodded and left the study. He rejoined his chums, and they went down into the Hall to wait for the return of Hazeldene.

There was a ring of a bicycle bell in the Close at last, and presently Hazeldene came in. His beaming face showed that he had been successful.

"It's all right," he announced. "Marjorie and Clara are coming, and they'll be at the station in the morning in time for the train."

"Hurrah!"

## Off to St. Jim's!

THE Remove cricketers did not wait for the rising-bell next morning; they were up and doing while the rest of the Form still slumbered. They went downstairs into a silent House, and found their breakfast served by the time rising-bell began to clang.

It cost Bunter a big effort to get out of bed, but he did it. He had obtained the necessary permission to accompany the cricket team to St. Jim's—or, rather, Wharton had obtained it for him.

Breakfast was disposed of, and then the juniors set out for the station, carrying their bags. They were in good form, and all feeling and looking fit. Bulstrode's good temper was holding out, and he still seemed in a state of astonishment at finding himself in the team.

Billy Bunter was the only one of the party in anything like a grumbling humour. He was muttering to himself and murmuring things, in the hope of attracting sympathetic attention, but the cricketers were too busy discussing their prospects to have any time to attend to Bunter. Bunter came out into the open, so to speak.

"I say, you fellows, you might have ordered a cab to take me to the station. You know jolly well that all this walking isn't good for my constitution."

"Yes, we're likely to order a cab for you!" assented Bob Cherry. "I can see us spending the money on it—I don't think! If you're really tired, though—"

"I'm simply fagged out," said Bunter, putting on an expression of exhaustion. "My legs are aching, and my—"

"Well, that bank looks very comfy to take a rest on. Why don't you sit down for an hour or so?"

"Good! If you fellows will wait for me, and catch a later train—"

"Oh, no, we won't do that! The train goes in ten minutes, and we're going in it. But if you like to rest here for an hour, we won't object. In fact, we'd be pleased."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" grunted Billy Bunter. "On second thoughts, I'm not too tired to walk to the station."

"Well, leave off grumbling, then," said Bob Cherry warningly. "It makes me tired. If I hear you mumbling again you'll stop here and rest, whether you like it or not."

Bunter preserved a stony silence during the rest of the walk. The juniors came in sight of the station. Two girlish forms were coming in the same direction by another road, and they met at the station.

The juniors raised their caps to Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevlyn.

"Jolly glad you're in time!" said Hazeldene. "How did you manage it?"

Marjorie and Clara laughed. Hazeldene's frankness was the privilege of a brother. The two girls were very bright and happy. The excitement of the holiday trip evidently pleased them. Marjorie thanked Wharton as they went into the station.

"I know we owe it to you," she said. "It was very kind of you to think of us, and we shall enjoy this excursion immensely."

"Yes, rather! I call it ripping!" said Clara. "Not to say stunning!"

Marjorie turned to Harry.

"Miss Primrose has given us the money for our return tickets," she said. "Please take it."

Wharton nodded and took the money. He would have preferred to take the tickets himself, but it was not for him to gainsay the decision of the persons concerned.

Fourteen return tickets meant a sum of money that made the booking clerk at the sleepy little station open his eyes.

The train puffed in along the platform, and the juniors looked for an empty carriage. They had agreed that they were to go all together, though it was likely to be a crowd. They had taken third-class tickets, and they were able to find an old-type carriage with two compartments adjoining, and so could all remain together without too much overcrowding.

They all entered at one door, and some of them gained the next compartment by vaulting over the partition.

The whistle screamed, and the train rolled out of the station.

The Greyfriars cricketers were off to St. Jim's. "I say, you fellows—"

"That's all right, Bunter! We know you're hungry. We know you're on the point of a breakdown for want of sufficient nourishment. Don't tell us."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You can get some lunch at the station where we change—"

"As a matter of fact, you fellows, I've come away without any money."

"Rotten!" said Bulstrode. "Left your cheque-book and a bundle of banknotes on the grand piano in your study, haven't you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode! As a matter of fact, we came away in too great a hurry to wait for the morning's letters to come in. I was expecting a postal order—"

"Oh, ring off that!"

"Of course, you never believe me, Cherry!" said Billy Bunter. "You don't believe in my wonderful powers as a ventriloquist—"

"I believe in your wonderful powers as a loud-speaker," groaned Bob Cherry. "I don't believe you ever switch off, though."

"Ventriloquist?" exclaimed Clara with interest. "Is Bunter really a ventriloquist?"

"Why, I told you I was when we were at Cliff House the other day," said Bunter. "Don't you remember?"

## Right or Wrong?

This week all ten words in the Spelling Bee are incorrect. Look at the list below and see if you went wrong.

RECUMBENT  
DIPHTHONG  
ETYMOLOGY  
BENEFITING  
EFFERVESCENCE  
MANŒUVRE  
PROPELLER  
DISSOLVE  
PAROXYSM  
COMPATIBLE

More teasers next week.

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"Yes, I remember you told me," said Miss Clara, colouring. "But—but—"

"Oh, give us some ventriloquism!" said Marjorie. Clara, though she was very candid as a rule, didn't want to explain that she had doubted the statement simply because Bunter had made it.

Billy Bunter beamed at once. "Certainly!" he said. "You see, besides being a wonderful ventriloquist, I'm a marvellous imitator, and a——"

"And an amazing ass!" said Bob Cherry.

"I wish you wouldn't interrupt me, Cherry, when I'm explaining to a lady. I'll now give a demonstration to you, ladies and gentlemen, of my amazing powers. Of course, there are some things I cannot do. I can make any fellow seem to talk in his own voice, or somebody else's—but I couldn't make Bob Cherry talk politely——"

"Ha, ha, ha! That's one for Bunty!"

Bob Cherry laughed, too.

Gr-r-r!

Clara jumped as the growl of a dog came from beneath her seat.

"Oh dear! There's a dog!"

Bunter chuckled.

"It's all right; there isn't any dog. That was my wonderful ventriloquism."

Clara looked dubious; but a glance under the seat showed that there was no quadruped in the carriage.

Bob Cherry said reassuringly that there was no animal there, except Bunter—a statement which earned him a withering glare from the ventriloquist.

"It's really clever," said Clara.

"You wait till somebody else gets into the carriage," said Bunter confidently.

And, as a matter of fact, at the next station at which the train stopped a stout man in a check tweed suit and a bowler hat stepped in. He was evidently connected with the Turf, and doubtless on his way to a race meeting somewhere.

He took out a little book and began conning it over as the train started.

Billy Bunter coughed. That was a sign that some ventriloquism was coming, and the juniors waited.

### The Mysterious Voice!

THE stout man was very busy with his book and pencil, with which he seemed to be making calculations. He hardly looked at the juniors, save to give them a glare because their chatting interrupted his mental problems.

The Removites were not inclined to remain silent because the Turfy man was working out form in a railway carriage, and they endured his occasional glares with great fortitude.

Bunter had just coughed, preparatory to beginning operations, when the stout man spoke very snappishly:

"Can't you boys be quiet?"

Wharton looked at him.

"We're not making a noise, sir," he said.

"And a railway carriage is a place to talk in. We can't be quieter than we are."

"Don't be insolent, boy!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"The insolence seems to be on your side," he said calmly.

The stout man turned very red. He seemed about to become violent, but then he stopped.

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There was something in the look of the juniors that made him hesitate. He muttered something under his breath, and returned to his occupation again.

"What price Pinkie?"

It was a voice from behind the stout man. He turned his head and looked into the compartment behind him.

"Eh?" he said. "Did you speak to me? Pinkie is not running to-day. He's entered for the Schwindell Handicap next week."

Then the Turfy man looked puzzled. There were only boys in both compartments, and it had seemed a man's voice that he heard.

The juniors, knowing very well that the Greyfriars ventriloquist was at work, grinned at one another.

The Turfy man seemed amazed. He looked round the carriage with a puzzled air, and then turned to his book again.

Hardly had he dropped his eyes on the mysterious entries on the page when the same voice inquired:

"What price Pinkie?"

The stout man looked up angrily.

"I tell you that Pinkie isn't running, whoever you are!" he exclaimed. "I'm Abel Benson, and I know!"

The sporting man evidently considered his name a well-known one—as it probably was on the racecourse. The Greyfriars juniors had never heard it before. He snorted and glared round, and looked at his book again.

"Yes, that's all very well, Abel! But what price is Pinkie?"

"I tell you Pinkie isn't running!" roared Mr. Benson, glaring round. "Where are you? Who are you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors could not contain their laughter. Billy Bunter was the only one who was serious. He could not laugh and ventriloquise, too. Even Marjorie and Clara could not help smiling.

Mr. Benson evidently did not suspect a boy of speaking to him in a man's voice. He thought somebody was hidden in the compartment. His look showing that if he was annoyed again there would be trouble.

But he had hardly settled in his seat when the voice was audible once more.

"What price Pinkie?"

The stout man jumped up.

"Come out!" he shouted. "Show yourself! I'll teach you to joke with Abel Benson!"

The juniors roared with laughter.

Mr. Benson glared round the carriage savagely.

"Show yourself!" he exclaimed.

"What price Pinkie, old son?"

The voice seemed to come from under the seat in the next compartment, where several of the Greyfriars party were sitting.

"Will you come out?" roared Mr. Benson.

The voice declined to come out, and the stout gentleman mounted on the seat, and clambered awkwardly over the partition. It wasn't an easy task for a gentleman of his size and weight, and he managed it very clumsily. He lost his balance as he went over, and rolled on the seat on the other side, and the juniors scrambled hastily out of the way.

"Ware porpoises!" exclaimed Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The stout gentleman lay for a full minute on the seat, gasping for breath. The effort and the

tumble had quite exhausted him. And as he paused to recover, a voice came from under the seat:

"What price Pinkie? What's the odds on the field?"

Mr. Benson gave a grunt and stood up.

"Now I'll have you out!" he muttered.

And he stooped and looked under the seats—first one, and then the other. Then he rose again, and his face was a study. There was no one there.

"M-m-my stars!" gasped Mr. Benson.

He stared round him blankly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Benson rubbed his perspiring forehead. He had never been so amazed in his life.

As he stood in doubt and wonder the irritating voice came again—from the carriage he had just left.

"What price Pinkie?"

Mr. Benson jumped.

It seemed impossible that the owner of the voice could have skipped from one compartment to another without being seen. Yet that was the only explanation.

Mr. Benson gritted his teeth.

"I'll ave you now!" he muttered.

And he began to clamber over the partition again.

"Careful," said the voice. "Don't bring your ninety stone down too suddenly, or you'll go through the bottom of the train."

Mr. Benson snorted. He was stout, but ninety stone was an exaggeration.

Over the partition he came again, snorting and gasping, with his tie hanging loose.

"Now then!" he exclaimed.

The juniors and girls scrambled out of the way to let him look under the seats.

Mr. Benson's fat, ruddy face went quite pale when he saw that there was no one in the carriage besides himself and the juniors.

He sat down again, quite overcome. And when a voice at his ear inquired softly, "What price Pinkie?" he did not even turn his head.

When the train stopped at a station Mr. Benson jumped out to change carriages. He left the Greyfriars juniors almost in convulsions.

### Arthur Augustus is Amazed!

THE absurd adventure of Mr. Benson considerably lightened the long journey. But there was no more ventriloquism. Bunter, being fairly started, was quite ready to spring squeaky mice on nervous old ladies, or to make imaginary dogs bark under the feet of short-sighted gentlemen; but Harry put his foot down.

He would not have inoffensive passengers worried for the fun of the thing, and so Billy Bunter had to suppress his wonderful powers. He consoled himself with the prospect of letting himself go at St. Jim's.

"Getting near St. Jim's," said Bob Cherry, when the train stopped at Wayland Junction. "We change into the local train here for—Rylcombe, isn't it?"

"That's the place."

The juniors poured out of the train. Harry Wharton looked round him. The local train for Rylcombe—the station for St. Jim's—was waiting on the other side of the platform.

"This way!" said Harry.

There were several people already in the local train, which was waiting for the juniors' train to come in before starting. The Greyfriars

party crossed the platform, and Harry became aware of a face and a silk hat projected from the window of a first-class compartment, and of a lavender kid-glove waving excitedly to him.

"Bai Jove! There they are! This way, deah boys!"

"It's a St. Jim's fellow!" exclaimed Nugent.

The junior looking out of the carriage was a slim and elegant fellow, clad in Etons that fitted him like a glove. There was no mistaking him. Harry Wharton & Co. had met him before. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's.

Wharton made for his carriage at once. D'Arcy jumped out on the platform, and shook hands heartily with the Remove captain.

"Awfully glad to see you, deah boy!" he exclaimed. "You see, I came to Wayland to meet my Cousin Ethel, who is comin' to St. Jim's to see the match, and I thought you might catch the same local, so I was lookin' out for you."



Gr-r-r! The growl of a dog came from right under D'Arcy's feet, and he jumped clear of the floor and dropped the bag, scattering Hurree Singh's clothes. "Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "This is weally most surpriswin'!"

"Glad to meet you," said Wharton. "Marjorie, Clara, this is D'Arcy, whom I've told you about." Both the girls smiled, whether for pleasure at seeing D'Arcy, or at the recollection of what they had heard about him, was not clear. "D'Arcy, Miss Hazeldene, Miss Trevlyn—"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy swept off his silk topper.

"What a wippin', unexpected pleasuah!" he exclaimed. "More than delighted! Ethel, deah boy—I mean deah gal—"

Ethel Cleveland was looking out of the carriage with a bright smile. She stepped out on the platform and greeted Marjorie and Clara, and the three girls seemed to become friends at once.

"Urry up, please!" said the Wayland porter.

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There was not room in the carriage, of course, for all the party. Marjorie and Clara, and Wharton, Hurree Singh, Billy Bunter, and Hazeldene entered the carriage with D'Arcy and his cousin. The others went farther along.

The local train crawled out of the station. D'Arcy placed his silk topper carefully on the rack, and very gently fanned his brow with a glove. The June morning was very warm.

"Awfully glad I met you fellows," he said. "It is wippin'. Some of the chaps are goin' to be at Wylcombe Station with a motah-coach to take us to St. Jim's. Looks like bein' a wippin' day for the match."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus gave a start. Cousin Ethel looked amazed. It was a voice exactly like D'Arcy's that had replied to him. Harry Wharton gave Bunter a warning glance, but the fat ventriloquist pretended not to see it.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, after a pause. "That was weally stwange."

"What was strange?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Oh, nothin'. I—"

Gr-r-r-r!

D'Arcy jumped up.

"Bai Jove! There's a beastly dog undah the seat. Is it poss that Hewwies' wotten bulldog has followed me? I can nevah get wid of that bwute."

Gr-r-r!

"Stand on the seat, deah gals, in case he bites you."

D'Arcy searched for the dog, but there was no dog to be discovered, and the swell of St. Jim's looked amazed.

"Bai Jove! I weally thought I heard a dog growlin'!"

"So did I," said Cousin Ethel, looking very much surprised.

"I weally don't know how to account for the stwange occuwence. I—"

Gr-r-r-r!

The growl seemed to come from overhead this time. D'Arcy looked up, and his eyes became fixed on a large, strapped bag Hurree Singh had put on the rack.

"Bai Jove! Who does that bag belong to?"

"It is the property of my esteemed self, my worthy chum," said the Nabob of Bhanipur blandly.

"You have w'apped up a dog in it by mistake."

"Ha, ha, ha!" gurgled Hazeldene.

D'Arcy looked at him.

"It may seem imposs," he said, "but that is the fact. I am certain that the growl pwoceeded fwom that bag. Listen!"

Gr-r-r!

It was a fainter growl, but it certainly seemed to come from the strapped bag. The nabob grinned.

D'Arcy tapped him on the shoulder excitedly.

"My deah chap, you've got a dog w'apped up in that bag, and he sounds as if he's suffocatin'. Pway open it and welease him."

"My honourable and ludicrous friend is mistaken. The bag contains only the harmless attire for the cricketful game."

"Listen to that growl, then."

Gr-r-r!

"My esteemed friend may look into the bag, if he thinkfully imagines that the dogful quadruped is concealfully hidden there."

"Bai Jove, I've no doubt on the point, deah boy!"

"Then make the honourable search. But I do not thinkfully suppose that the worthy dog is thereinfully concealed."

"I wathah think it is, deah boy."

And Arthur Augustus unstrapped the bag. He opened it and looked in. There were cricket things crammed in the bag, but no sign of a dog. D'Arcy stared into the bag in blank astonishment.

"Have you found the worthy dog, my esteemed friend?"

"N-n-no!"

Gr-r-r-r!

The growl came from right under D'Arcy's feet this time, and he jumped clear of the floor and dropped the bag. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's clothes were scattered at once. D'Arcy looked round for the dog.

"Bai Jove! This is weally most surprwising."

"The surprisefullness is terrific!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur, as he began to collect up his property.

"It is somebody playin' a twick."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! It was done awfully well," exclaimed D'Arcy. "I was weally most deceived."

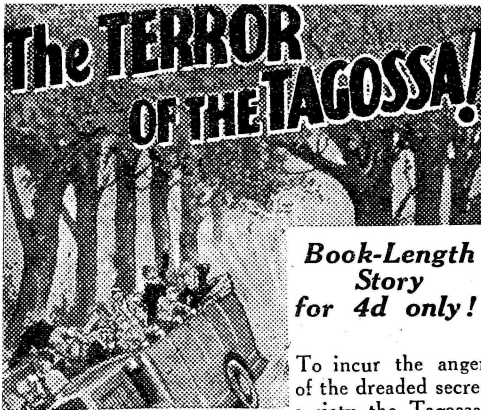
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, I didn't exactly think there was a dog in the bag—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Singh strapped the bag again. Everyone in the carriage was laughing; and Arthur Augustus, who was seldom put out of humour, began to laugh, too.

A few minutes later the train ran into the little station of Rylcombe, and there was a shout from the platform. The juniors of St. Jim's were waiting there for them.



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# Are You Saving These Stamps?

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Ten More Stamps on Page 2.

### At St. Jim's!

THERE were half a dozen juniors belonging to St. Jim's waiting on the platform for the visitors. Tom Merry, the captain of the Shell, was there with his chums, Manners and Lowther. With them were Blake, Herries, and Digby of the Fourth Form. They immediately spotted the carriages containing the visitors, and came scudding along to them as the train stopped.

D'Arcy looked out of the window, with a beaming smile.

"Here they are!" he said. "This way, dear boys!"

Tom Merry pulled the carriage door open, and the Greyfriars party alighted. The greeting of the St. Jim's juniors was a hearty one. They had not known that Marjorie and Clara were coming, but they were evidently delighted to see them.

Arthur Augustus had taken possession of the three girls, but that did not last long. Tom Merry made a sign to Lowther and Manners, and they took the swell of St. Jim's by either arm.

"Come on," said Lowther affectionately. "I want you to sit beside me in the coach, Gussy, and tell me how to play that late cut of yours."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Come on, old chap!"

"I should be delighted to give you some instruction in my late cut, Lowthah, but weally—"

"That's all right, then. In you get!"

"Weally, Lowthah—Mannahs—"

"Shove him in!"

D'Arcy was helped into the coach by the two Shell fellows, who sat down on either side of him.

Meanwhile, Jack Blake had taken possession of Cousin Ethel, and Tom Merry of Marjorie, and Digby of Clara. They helped them into the coach, and the crowd of juniors followed.

Arthur Augustus tried to rise in order to take a seat between Miss Cleveland and Miss Hazeldene. But Lowther had slipped an arm through his, and held him fast.

"Pway welease me, Lowthah! I—"

"I want you to tell me how to play that late

"I believe you are wottin', you wottah!"

"Sit down!"

"I absolutely wefuse—"

Monty Lowther jerked him back into his seat. Jack Blake had taken the coveted place with the girls, and D'Arcy submitted to his fate, in a state of simmering indignation. He turned his monocle upon Lowther with a withering expression.

"Lowthah, I wegard you as an uttah beast!"

"Go hon!"

"I wefuse to give you any instnuction on the subject of my late cut."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The coach rolled down the lane towards the school. The old grey tower of St. Jim's rose to view over the trees.

It was a whole holiday at St. Jim's for the cricket eleven, as for the Greyfriars cricketers, of course. The rest of the eleven were waiting at the gates to greet the coach. They looked very fit in white flannels and their House caps.

The St. Jim's junior eleven was formed of fellows from both Houses—School House and New House—but the School House being the larger, most of the members belonged to that House. There were only three New House fellows in Tom Merry's team, and they were the three juniors known all over the school as Figgins & Co.—Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn. They were in the gateway now, with Reilly of the School House.

They greeted the motor-coach with a cheer, and took off their caps to the girls. They jumped on the running-board of the coach as it drove into the wide, green quadrangle, and Figgins was introduced to Marjorie and Clara.

The coach stopped in front of the School House. Kildare of the Sixth looked out, with a pleasant smile on his handsome Irish face. He was captain of St. Jim's, but he had agreed to umpire the match for the juniors—an act of kindness of which the juniors were very appreciative. It was not a small thing for the head of the Sixth to give up almost a whole day to the juniors.

The ground was in excellent condition, beautifully rolled and ready for play. The visitors were taken straight into the pavilion, while Cousin Ethel, who was quite at home in Mrs. Holmes' house at St. Jim's, carried off the two girls.

The Greyfriars juniors were not long in getting

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ready to play. A cold collation had been prepared, to refresh the visitors after their long journey, and Billy Bunter at least did it full justice.

And there was one junior of St. Jim's who was very willing to see that Bunter had of the very best. It was Fatty Wynn of the New House.

During the St. Jim's visit to Greyfriars he had struck up a friendship with Bunter. Bunter was not half so decent a fellow as Wynn, but their tastes were alike. And Fatty Wynn, great performer at the table as he was, recognised his master in Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, this is ripping!" said Bunter, his fat face glowing as he looked over the lunch. "Yes, I will have the rabbit-pie, Wynn. And you may as well shove some of the ham over here—and the beef. Just a minute and I'll be ready for another helping."

"Good!" said the gratified Wynn. "I say, we're going to have a feed after the match, too. Tom Merry's seen to that. There's been a whip round, and we've laid in supplies that would make your mouth water."

Bunter's mouth did water—in spite of the fact that it was full.

"Got 'em all ready?" he asked.

"Yes. Mrs. Mimms, the House dame, has 'em in charge, except the cakes and tarts, and figs and apples, and things. They're in a box in Tom

Merry's study. They were carefully selected this morning, and they're ripping."

"In Tom Merry's study?" murmured Billy Bunter. "I may get hungry again presently—h'm!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Time to be moving!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Looking very fit in spotless white, the cricketers turned out. The St. Jim's eleven was as follows: Tom Merry, Manners, Lowther, Blake, Herries, Digby, D'Arcy, Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, Reilly.

Harry Wharton looked over them outside the pavilion, and he had to confess to himself that the Greyfriars juniors had never tackled such a keen-looking side.

"We've got all our work cut out, Harry," Nugent remarked.

Wharton nodded.

"Still, we shall beat them. It's a ripping day and a ripping ground. Here come the umpires."

Tom Merry and Harry Wharton tossed for choice of innings, and the luck of the toss fell to Wharton. He elected to bat first, and Tom Merry led his men out into the field.

*(Who will win the big match—Greyfriars or St. Jim's? Don't miss the exciting play and the lively fun in next week's ripping chapters.)*

## THE MYSTERY CRICKET COACH!

*(Continued from page 27.)*

Tom Merry & Co. were thunderstruck. It took them a full minute to digest Mr. Railton's astounding information. Then they recalled the memorable night when they had first met "Bob Bradshaw" and rescued him from his pursuers. Those pursuers—though the juniors little dreamed it at the time—had been asylum warders. And Tom Merry & Co. had unwittingly aided an escaped lunatic!

"It is a very sad business," said Mr. Railton. "The man is not utterly insane, but he is subject to strange delusions. He believes himself at various times to be certain celebrities. His latest delusion is that he is Bob Bradshaw, the cricketer. The fact that he bears a superficial resemblance to Bradshaw, and plays cricket really well, gave a strong appearance of genuineness to his amazing

claim. I readily admit that, for my part, I had no suspicion that he was not the real Bradshaw."

"Neither did we, sir," said Tom Merry. "It's a queer business altogether."

"I feel wathah distwessed about it," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, glancing at the three retreating figures in the distance. "Will the unfortunate man evah wecovah his weason, Mr. Wailton?"

"It is hoped that he will," said the House-master. "At present he is subject to delusions and to occasional brain-storms, but with careful treatment his sanity should be restored at no distant time."

"I'm jolly glad to hear that!" said Tom Merry. That evening St. Jim's was thrilled by the knowledge that for several days past the school had harboured a lunatic. And great indeed was the relief of Mr. Ratcliff at the departure of the mystery cricket coach.

*(Who says an exciting holiday in camp? Join up with Tom Merry & Co. next Wednesday! Make sure you read "ST. JIM'S UNDER CANVAS!")*

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