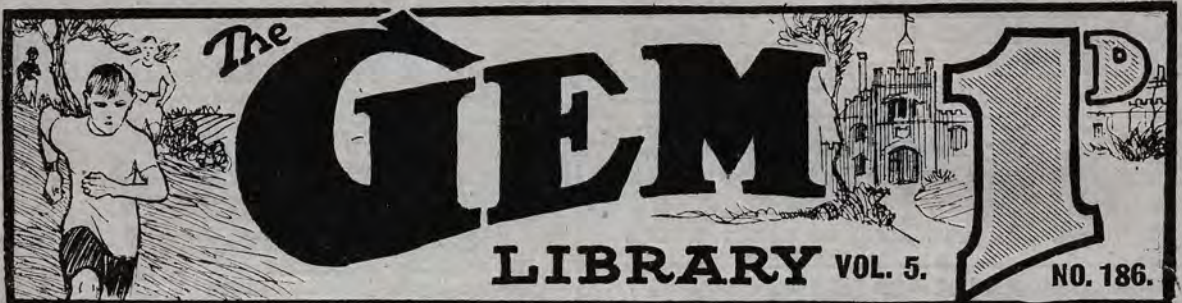


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By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



Tom Merry & Co., Jack Blake & Co., and Figgins & Co. of the New House, leave St. Jim's on a mysterious expedition.

CHAPTER 1.

Most Important!

"DON'T all you fellows talk at once—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"And Gussy had better not talk at all—"

"Weally—"

"Upon the whole, the talking had better be left to me," went on Tom Merry. "I shall put it straight to Kildare—"

"Undah the circs.—"

"Now, Gussy, you're not to talk! Would you like to take a run in the quad. while we go to Kildare's study?" Tom Merry suggested.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's carefully adjusted his eyeglass in his eye and fixed it upon Tom Merry. It might have been supposed, from D'Arcy's expression, that he expected Tom Merry to sink through the floor of the study or to vanish into thin air under that withering glance.

Tom Merry did neither. He grinned.

"It's nice and sunny in the quad," Tom Merry went on. "You can take your latest silk hat out for a little walk, or you can air your new pink waistcoat. You can show the New House fellows the latest thing in neckties, or—"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "Not that I wish to put myself forward in any way. But you know vewy well that you fellows will muck up the whole biznai if I don't come with you. I'm only thinkin' of the success of the ideah."

"Well, will you promise not to say a word?" asked Jack Blake.

"Certainly not!"

"You see," said Tom Merry, "Kildare may listen to us, or he maynt. He might even cut up rusty. You never know how to take these blessed Sixth-Formers. It's quite possible that he may think the whole thing cheek on our part."

Next Thursday

"BOUND BY HONOUR!" AND "DEEP SEA GOLD."

No. 122 (New Series.)

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"Bai Jove!"

"He might, you know, Gussy. Perhaps it is check," Tom Merry remarked thoughtfully, as if struck by a new idea.

"Perhaps it is," grinned Jack Blake. "But we're going through with it, all the same. If an Indian team is coming here to play the seniors, why shouldn't they make a double event of it and play the juniors, too? That's what I want to know."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, with emphasis.

"And I shall point out to Kildare that—"

"You won't point out anything," said Blake. "You'll leave the talking to me. Kildare will naturally expect us to have a sensible chap as spokesman—"

"That bars you out, then," said Monty Lowther.

"Why, you ass—"

"I quite agree with my friend Lowthah," said D'Arcy.

"Undah the cires—"

"Under the circumstances, I shall do the talking," said Tom Merry firmly. "It's no good crowding into Kildare's study, and all talking at once. Darrel and Rushden and Monteith are there with him, too; and we don't want a lot of silly jabber before a set of blessed seniors. I'll point out the facts to Kildare—"

"Undah the cires—"

Manners looked at his watch. Manners had a way, that was sometimes quite irritating, of looking at his watch when a discussion was going on.

"Time's going on," Manners remarked oracularly.

"Go hon!" said Blake.

"I mean, Kildare will be finished tea and gone out to cricket practice if we don't buck up. No good trying to talk to him on the field, I suppose?"

"Mannahs is quite wight. I'm surprised at you fellows wastin' time arguin' in this way when the thing is so simple and straightforward—"

"Oh, come on, then!" said Tom Merry.

And Tom Merry started from the study. The other juniors who were met in conclave there followed him. There were Blake and D'Arcy and Herries and Digby of the Fourth, and Manners and Lowther of the Shell, and Kangaroo, the Cornstalk. They had been discussing the important matter for a good half-hour without getting any "forrarder," as Jack Blake put it.

It was really time to make a move. Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, was in his study at tea, and it was a favourable time for catching him. While he was at the tea-table he could not escape, and there were a lot of things to be explained. Tom Merry & Co. meant to explain them, but they had not finally decided which was to do the explaining. The probability was that they would all start explaining at once, and that might lead to confusion—but it could not be helped.

They marched downstairs to the Sixth Form passage in anything but order. They arrived outside Kildare's study. The door was closed, but from within could be heard a murmur of voices and the clink of tea-cups. Kildare was entertaining four fellows of the Sixth to tea—all of them great men in the First Eleven. It was easy enough to guess what they were talking about; there was only one topic of interest at St. Jim's just then, and that was the coming visit of an Indian team of cricketers.

The Rajah of Jal was to visit St. Jim's on the following day, bringing a team of cricketers who were touring England, and who had already played several famous colleges with great success. It was quite a feather in Kildare's cap that he had been able to fix up a match with the dusky team from Jal, and Kildare was very pleased with himself. Whether the St. Jim's first would succeed in beating the Orientals was another matter. At all events, it would be a good match, and all St. Jim's was looking forward to it with keenness.

Tom Merry halted outside the captain's door and wagged a warning forefinger at his followers.

"Order!" he said.

"I wefuse to ordah—I mean—"

"Follow me in quietly," said Tom Merry severely. "None of your blessed hooliganism now, Gussy."

The swell of St. Jim's was speechless for a moment. He prided himself very much upon his graceful manners and his elegant customs.

"You uttah ass!" he burst out, as soon as he found his voice. "Why, I—"

"Order!"

Tom Merry knocked at the door. Arthur Augustus paused. He could not commit assault and battery under the gaze of the captain of St. Jim's.

"Come in!" called out Kildare's cheerful voice.

Tom Merry opened the door, and the juniors marched in. Kildare and the other fellows were seated round the table by the open window, which gave a view of the quad, and the

green old elms, with the cricket-ground in the distance. They were chatting very cheerfully; but they all stopped as the army of juniors came in, and stared at them in considerable astonishment.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Kildare. "What do you kids want?"

"We're a deputation, Kildare," said Blake.

"A what?"

"A deputation from the Fourth Form and the Shell," said Manners.

"Oh!"

"We've come to talk to you—"

"Thank you very much!" said Kildare. "When I want to enjoy the delights of your conversation I'll let you know. Close the door after you."

"Ahem!"

"You know your way out, I suppose?" Rushden suggested.

"Ahem!"

"You see, Kildare," said Tom Merry, "we've come to talk to you about the match."

"Eh?"

"Yaas, wathah! We wefuse to have the juniahs passed ovah in this way."

"What on earth do you mean?" demanded Kildare, looking puzzled. "Do you mean that you want to see our match with the Jal team? You can if you like."

"Ahem!"

"You see, Kildare—"

"It's like this—"

"Undah the cires—"

Kildare's eyes wandered to a cricket-stump that lay near at hand. The juniors backed away a little.

"If you've got anything to say to me you'd better say it and bunk," said the captain of St. Jim's.

"Well, you see—"

"Pewwaps you had bettah let me explain, Tom Mewwy—"

"Oh, ring off!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You see, Kildare, it's a jolly important matter—"

"Most important—"

"It's a question of the rights of the juniors—"

"And we think—"

"Yaas, wathah—"

Kildare rose to his feet.

"There are two ways out of this study," he remarked.

"Which do you prefer—the door or the window?"

"Ahem!"

"You see, deah boy—"

"Shut up!" roared Tom Merry. "You're wasting Kildare's time—ahem! If you say another idiotic word, Gussy, I'll lam you!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Let me explain—"

"Undah the cires, I considah—"

"Oh, sling him out!" exclaimed Tom Merry, exasperated.

"I wefuse—oh!"

Lowther and Manners laid violent hands upon the swell of St. Jim's. There was a momentary struggle, and then Arthur Augustus went whirling through the doorway. There was the sound of a bump in the passage, and then an ejaculation:

"Ow!"

"Put your foot against the door, Monty."

"Good!"

Monty Lowther closed the door and put his foot against it. Sounds of wrath were heard from the passage. Without taking any notice of them, Tom Merry turned to the captain of St. Jim's and proceeded.

CHAPTER 2.

Chucked Out.

KILDARE had dropped into his seat again. He was laughing, he could not help it; and the other seniors were laughing.

Tom Merry was encouraged. At all events, he had not been bundled out before he had had time to explain, and that was something. With a somewhat flushed face he went on to explain.

"You see, Kildare, the Rajah of Jal is coming here to-morrow with his team of Indians—"

"I believe I was already aware of that," said Kildare, with a nod.

"I've heard something of it," remarked Monteith, the head prefect of the New House at St. Jim's, and the best bowler in the First Eleven. "Have you anything later and a little more surprising in your news budget?"

"Ahem!"

"If you're finished, you may as well join D'Arcy in the passage," Rushden suggested.



There was a momentary struggle, and then Arthur Augustus went whirling through the Captain of St. Jim's doorway. There was a sound of a bump in the passage and then an exclamation: "Ow!" (See Chapter 1.)

"I haven't finished," said Tom Merry indignantly. "The Indian team are coming here to-morrow to play the Sixth, and I hear that they are staying over the next day, to be shown the country round here."

"That is quite correct," assented Kildare. "I hope all you youngsters will wash your necks and put on clean collars for the occasion."

The youngsters glared. It was hard to stand this even from Kildare. Tom Merry coughed violently before he proceeded. "As they'll be here a second day, we thought that the juniors ought to have a chance," he said.

"A chance of what?"

"Playing them," said Tom Merry boldly.

Kildare jumped.

"Playing the Jal team!" he ejaculated.

"Yes."

"My hat!" Kildare burst into a laugh of genuine amusement. "Why, you young ass, they're a big handful even for the First Eleven to tackle."

"As a matter of fact, I've often thought that we might beat the Sixth, if we could fix up a match," said Tom Merry.

The seniors looked at one another. That statement took

their breath away. The proper place for a Fourth-Former or a Shell fellow, of course, was to watch senior matches, and cheer the players. That was right and proper.

For a junior to dream in his wildest and most imaginative moments that he could play the Sixth was unheard-of, or should have been unheard-of. It was heard of now, however.

"If you've come here to get a special assortment of thick ears, you kids, you're going the right way to work," said Kildare, at last.

"We haven't," said Tom Merry. "We want to challenge the Jal team to play the Junior Eleven, that's all. If they beat us, it's all right. If we beat them—"

"Beat them!" shrieked Kildare. "Do you know that they've beaten Oxford and Cambridge teams, you young ass!"

"I dare say they have."

"And you want to play them?"

"Yes."

"Well, for pure, unadulterated cheek, I think that takes the cake," Monteith remarked.

"I think it does," said Kildare.

**NEXT
WEEK:**

"BOUND BY HONOUR!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bully Gore. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"I don't see it," said Tom Merry. "Suppose they beat us, there's no harm done."

"We think we ought to have a chance," said Monty Lowther.

"That's it," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!" came a muffled voice through the key-hole. "You must admit that that's only wight and weasonable, Kildare, deah boy."

"Do you think they would play you?" asked Kildare, still good-humouredly.

"Well, they could decline if they liked, you know."

"They would take the challenge as a joke, you young ass. You cannot ask them. Mind, I mean that," said Kildare, frowning. "You can't be allowed to play monkey-tricks of that sort on distinguished visitors."

"Look here—"

"And now, if you will kindly depart, we'll get on with our tea," said the captain of St. Jim's.

"I don't see why—" began Blake.

"You see, Kildare, we've never had a chance of playing an Indian team before," Tom Merry urged. "It's rotten to leave us out like this. Besides, we're thinking of the honour of St. Jim's."

"The what?"

"The honour of the school," said Tom Merry firmly.

"Suppose they beat the Sixth—"

"That's quite possible."

"Well, then, if we beat them on the second day—"

"Eh?"

"That would retrieve the disgrace, you see," explained Tom Merry.

Kildare gasped.

"So, if they beat the Sixth, you think that the Fourth and the Shell might beat them," he exclaimed.

"Well, I hope so."

"Yaas, wathah!" came the muffled voice again. "I say, open this door, you boundahs! It would be best for me to put it straight to Kildare!"

"Shut up, Gussy!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

"I really think you might be reasonable, Kildare," said Tom Merry. "We've got a jolly good team. Fatty Wynn, of the New House, is a marvellous bowler, and Figgins bats like Jessop and Fry rolled into one. We're all jolly good, in fact."

"I'm glad to see that you have such a good opinion of yourselves," said Kildare. "Certainly, if gas would win cricket-matches, the juniors of St. Jim's would have a splendid record."

"Let's have a try with the niggers."

"Don't be an ass!"

"But, really—"

"You know your way out of this study," said Kildare, "and if you don't take it, I shall have to help you. Now, are you going?"

"Ahem!"

Kildare rose to his feet. The other seniors rose, too. The juniors retreated towards the door very warily. But they were not finished yet.

"Won't you let us challenge them, and take our chance?" asked Blake.

"Certainly not. It would be too ridiculous."

"Now, Kildare, I'm really thinking of you," urged Blake. "It would be rotten if fellows suppose that the Sixth were jealous of the Fourth!"

"Eh?"

"Follows might think so, you know. And if the Indians beat you, think how rotten it would be to let them go away winners, when we might lower their colours on the second day, if you gave us the chance."

"You—you young ass—"

"We're in ripping form, you know, and—"

"Get out!"

"But—"

"Outside!" roared Kildare. "For goodness' sake, lend a hand chucking them out, you fellows, or they'll go on talking all the evening."

"Oh, we'll go!" exclaimed Tom Merry hurriedly. "We'll go—oh!"

He did!

Monteith and Rushden seized him by the shoulders, and Darrel opened the door. The hero of the Shell was swung out of the study. He crashed into Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and both of them rolled on the floor.

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Leggo!" roared Blake, as Kildare's powerful grasp closed upon him. "Ow! I'm going—"

"You are!" grinned the captain of St. Jim's.

And Blake went.

Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were struggling to their feet, when Blake landed upon them.

Crash! Bump!

The juniors were distributed over the floor of the passage again. There was a wail of anguish from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as his elegant and tight-fitting Eton jacket split up the back.

"Bai Jove! Yawwoh!"

Bump! bump! bump!

In quick succession, junior after junior was tossed out of the study. The last one having been hurled out, Kildare closed the door.

From within the study came a sound of loud laughter, and in the passage was heard a wild scuffling and gasping and snorting from the heap of dusty and enraged juniors. The deputation to the captain of St. Jim's had not been a success.

CHAPTER 3.

A Surprising Telegram.

"B AI Jove!"
"Oh!"
"Gerrooh!"
"Gerroff!"
"Oh, my head!"
"Ow! My ear!"
"Oh!"

Tom Merry & Co. were sorting themselves out in the Sixth Form passage. They sat up, or stood up, and looked at one another. The visit to Kildare's study could not be called a success. The juniors were very dusty and rumpled, and somewhat sore. They were indignant, too. They had gone to Kildare's study to point out the facts of the case, and to try to induce the head of the Sixth to listen to reason. This was the result of it.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy groped for his eyeglass. He found the cord, but the eyeglass was no longer in existence. Somebody's foot had crushed it in the struggle, and it lay in tiny fragments about the passage. The swell of St. Jim's dusted down his clothes, and snorted with indignation.

"Bai Jove! I wegrad this as utably wotten!" he exclaimed. "I considah that we ought to waid Kildare's study now, and thwash those wottahs!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" groaned Blake, nursing his arm. "What silly chump knocked his silly head against my funny-bone?"

Digby was rubbing his head, and he glared at Blake.

"Was it your fat-headed elbow that biffed on my napper?" he demanded. "I should think you might have had more sense, really."

"Ow!" groaned Kangaroo. "I feel as if I'd been used as a punching-ball. Whose silly idea was it to come to the place at all? Ow!"

"If you fellows had left the whole bizney to me, it would have been all wight. I told you that I ought to do the talkin'."

"Oh, ring off!"

"I wefuse to wing off! Undah the cires—"

Tom Merry grunted expressively.

"Gussy's messed up the whole thing," he said. "I think we can agree that it was all Gussy's fault."

"Yes, rather."

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Let's bump Gussy," said Monty Lowther. "It was all his fault. And it would be a satisfaction to bump somebody, anyhow."

"I wefuse to be bumped. I—"

"Look here," said Blake, "Kildare can cut up as rusty as he likes, but I don't think we ought to give up the idea. We're entitled to challenge the niggers."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Can't do that against Kildare's orders," he replied.

"That's settled. But it's rotten—really rotten. I should like to play the Rajah of Jal."

"Yaas, wathah! I think the thing ought to be worked somehow. Let's go and think it ovah in the quad. I don't feel inclined to stay here and be gwynned at by those silly duffahs."

There were a good many grinning faces looking out of the doors of the Sixth Form studies. The juniors went down the passage, feeling very dusty and exasperated, and a sound of mocking laughter followed them. Tom Merry & Co. had very seldom felt quite so wild about anything. It was not only that they were disappointed in their scheme of playing the Rajah of Jal and his team, but they had been treated with contumely—the Lower School had been insulted.

They emerged into the sunny quadrangle. Blake was still tenderly caressing his funnybone, and Digby was rubbing his head. D'Arcy was flicking dust from his trousers with a cambric handkerchief. They looked, as Monty Lowther

expressed it, a set of wrecks; and it was not surprising that three juniors who were coming across the quadrangle grinned at the sight of them. The three juniors were Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn—Figgins & Co., of the New House. They stopped, and regarded the School House fellows with great interest.

"Anything happened?" asked Figgins.

The question was really superfluous. It had an exasperating effect upon the School House fellows.

"Oh, buzz off, and take your face away; it worries me!" snapped Blake crossly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What are those bounders doing on the respectable side of the quad., anyhow?" demanded Tom Merry. "Go for them!"

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Figgins. "We've come over to have a—"

"Licking," said Monty Lowther. "Bump them!"

In a moment Figgins & Co. were in the grasp of the School House juniors, and were being heartily bumped.

They struggled in vain; the odds were too great. They were bumped, and bumped, till they were reduced to a more wrecked and dusty condition than Tom Merry & Co.

"There!" panted Tom Merry. "I feel better now, anyway."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Figgins & Co. sat in the quad., looking dazed. They did not feel better.

"Ow! You chumps!" roared Figgins, trying to collect up his collar and tie. "You silly asses! We came over to have a friendly talk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fatheads!" grunted Kerr. "We've got an idea—"

There was a wail of anguish from Fatty Wynn.

"You dangerous asses! You've squashed my tarts!"

Fatty Wynn extracted a bag of squashed jam-tarts from under his jacket. The tarts were squashed, and the bag was burst. Most of the jam adhered to Fatty Wynn's waistcoat, which was in a very sticky state.

"I was going to offer you tarts all round, you chumps!" roared Fatty Wynn. "Now—"

"Now we shall decline them, without thanks," grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We came to have a friendly talk—"

"Well, you can have it now, now you've been bumped," said Monty Lowther blandly. "Go ahead with the friendly talk!"

Figgins picked himself up.

"You asses!" he grunted. "It's about the Indians. We had an idea of getting up a junior team to play them, if Kildare would let us."

"Oh, that's ancient history!" said Tom Merry. "We've thought of that. We've asked Kildare, and we've been chucked out of his study."

"Hence these tears," said Monty Lowther, pronouncing the word "tares." That was a pun.

"H'm!" said Figgins. "On second thoughts, then, we won't ask Kildare."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's rotten, though!" said Kerr. "We could make up a splendid junior team from both Houses, and I think we should have a chance against the Indians."

"Kildare won't hear of it. He—"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Blake. "Here's the telegraph-boy from Rylcombe. I wonder if it's for us?"

All attention was given to the telegraph-boy at once. Arthur Augustus was known to have had remittances wired to him. The boy came up to the School House.

"Which of us is it for?" asked Tom Merry.

"Master Kildare, sir."

"Oh, rats!" said Tom Merry crossly. "Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir," said the boy, grinning.

"Take it in, then. He's in his study. I'll show you the way."

Tom Merry went into the house with the telegraph-lad. He knocked at Kildare's door and opened it. The seniors were still chuckling over their tea-table. They seemed to be very much amused by the way the deputation had departed from the study. Kildare fixed his eyes inquiringly upon Tom Merry.

"Have you come back for some more?" he asked.

Tom Merry sniffed.

"No, I haven't," he said. "Here's a telegram for you! I was showing the kid the way, that's all!"

"Oh, thanks!"

Kildare took the envelope and opened it carelessly enough. As he glanced over the contents, however, he started.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

"What's the matter?" asked Monteith.

"The match is off."

"What!"

"The Indians aren't coming!"

CHAPTER 4.

Kerr Comes Out Very Strong.

TOM MERRY heard Kildare's words as he turned away from the study, and he came back. The news was surprising and interesting. He looked into the study again.

"Excuse me," he said, "I couldn't help hearing what you said, Kildare! The Indians aren't coming after all!"

"No," growled the St. Jim's captain. "You can hear the telegram if you like, kid. Listen, you fellows!"

The captain of St. Jim's read the telegram out.

"Kildare, School House, St. James's, Sussex.

"Very sorry. Match off; four men ill. Please excuse. Writing—JAL."

"Well, that's rotten!" said Monteith.

"Beastly!" said Rushden.

"It's very unfortunate," Darrel remarked. "Glad he's wired; we shouldn't have had a letter till to-morrow morning. Now we can get up something else for the day."

Kildare grunted.

"Yes; I suppose so. But it's a beastly disappointment! We don't have a whole holiday more than twice a term, and now it will be wasted."

"Still, with four men ill, I don't see what he could do," said Darrel. "It's rough on them. They had two men crooked before, I hear, and have been playing reserves. They couldn't go into the field with only seven players."

"I suppose not."

"Better send a sympathetic wire back," said Monteith.

"Yes."

Tom Merry went down the passage grinning. He was sorry for Kildare's disappointment, but it was really a kind of poetical justice. The juniors had been deprived of their chance, and now the seniors had lost their match as well. The expression on Tom Merry's face drew general attention to him when he joined his comrades outside the School House.

"Any news?" asked Figgins.

"Yes; rather!"

"Kildare tell you?"

"Yes."

"Bai Jove! What's the news, dear boy? What are you gwinin' at?"

"The match is off, that all!"

There was a general exclamation of surprise.

"The match off!"

"Yes. The Rajah of Jal has four men ill, and his reserves have been laid up before, so Darrel says! He can't raise more than seven players, so he's scratched the match."

"My hat!"

"Bai Jove!"

"That's rotten!"

"It jolly well serves Kildare wight! He weally deserves it, aftah havin' tweated us with such gwoss diswespect."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Kerr.

Some peculiar internal change seemed to have taken place in Kerr of the New House. A grin came over his face which grew into a laugh, and the laugh became a wild roar. He held his sides and shrieked. The juniors stared at him blankly. Kerr yelled with laughter, with tears in his eyes.

"What on earth's the matter with you?" exclaimed Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! What's the joke?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I daresay it's funny for Kildare to be dished in this way, but not so funny as all that," said Jack Blake crossly.

"What are you cackling at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Kerr.

The juniors glared at him, exasperated. Their tempers were a little short just then. Figgins and Fatty Wynn seemed as exasperated as the School House fellows. They all gathered round Kerr threateningly. Kerr did not seem to mind. He shrieked with merriment, with the tears rolling down his cheeks.

"You utter ass!" roared Kangaroo. "What are you squeaking at?"

"Yaas, wathah! Explain, you ass!"

"What is it, fathead?"

"What's the matter, chump?"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" yelled Kerr.

"Oh, collar him!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Bump him against the wall, and make him speak!"

Many hands collared the shrieking junior. Kerr was swung to the School House wall, and bumped upon it. Still he yelled with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bump him!"

"Sit on his head!"
 "It's hysterics!" exclaimed Blake. "Thump him on the back!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 Thump, thump, thump!
 "Ow!" gasped Kerr. "Stop it! Oh!"
 "Explain, then! What are you cackling at?"
 "Leggo! I-I'll explain! Ow! Ha, ha, ha! You see," gasped the New House junior, "it's a wheeze—a grand wheeze! Ha, ha, ha!"
 He yelled with laughter again.
 "Bump him!" roared Blake.
 Bump, bump!
 "Ow! Stop it! I'll explain! You—you see—ha, ha, ha!—it's a grand wheeze up against the Sixth. Ha, ha, ha!"
 "What is it then, you cackling ass?"
 "Ha, ha! Look here, the Indians are not coming—"
 "We know that, fathead!"
 "But why— Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Get on."
 "Why shouldn't they come all the same?"
 "What?"
 "Not them, you know; but us!"
 "Us!"
 "Yes. Ha, ha, ha! Yes."
 "Bai Jove! He's wanderin' in his mind, deah boys. What does the silly ass mean?"
 "Us!" shrieked Kerr. "In disguise—with our chivvies blackened. See? Ha, ha, ha!"
 The juniors stared at him blankly for a few seconds. Then they went off into a wild roar together.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 5.

Figgins is Agreeable.

TOM MERRY & CO. laughed, and laughed, and laughed, till the tears ran in streams down their cheeks. Figgins roared, and Kerr shrieked, and Fatty Wynn gasped. Blake threw himself upon the grass and kicked his feet in ecstasy. Monty Lowther leaned on Manners' shoulder and almost wept. Tom Merry leaned against the wall, and seemed to be on the verge of choking. Digby was in hysterics.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Bai Jove! Weally, you know—ha, ha, ha!—I wegard that as awf-ly funny. Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Oh, my Aunt Matilda! Ha, ha, ha!"
 The juniors roared.
 The scheme was so utterly unheard-of that it took their fancy at once. Such a jape against the Sixth would make the whole school gasp when it came out. It would be a just punishment to the seniors for the way they had acted. And if, by some miracle, the "spoof" team should win—what glory for Tom Merry & Co.!

They yelled with delight at the mere thought of it.
 They gathered round Kerr, when they had recovered a little, and thumped him on the back. Kerr was the hero of the hour.

"It's always old Kerr who thinks of these things," said Figgins admiringly. "He's got a head on him!"

"It takes a Scotsman to think of things," Kerr remarked modestly.

"Oh, wats!"
 "Shut up, Gussy!" said Tom Merry. "Let Kerr swank as much as he likes after thinking of a wheeze like that! He's worth his weight in toffee."

"Yes, rather!"
 "Why, it's ripping," said Blake. "It's curious that a New House chap should be the one to think of it; but it's ripping!"

"Splendid!"
 "Gorgeous!"
 "First chop!"

"Well, I think it's a rather good dodge," said Kerr. "We can make up as easily as anything. We've done it before for the amateur theatricals, and we've got all the grease-paint and things we need. We only want the Indian costumes, and we can get those at the costumier's."

"Hurrah!"
 "Hold on!" said Figgins. "Do the Indian cricketers travel in costume?"

"Blessed if I know—but it would be more convincing. We should change into flannels for the match, anyway."

"Yes, that's all right."
 "Yaas, wathah!"

"Kildare can get a wire saying it's all right, after all," said Kerr. "Of course, we couldn't send a wire in the rajah's name; that wouldn't do. But we can word it so

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

as to make Kildare imagine it's all serene, without committing ourselves."

"Oh, yaas, that will be easy enough! I will dwaw up the telegwam with pleasuah."

"If the Indians came," resumed Kerr, thinking it out as he spoke, "they'd have to come to Wayland Junction, and change there into the local train for Rylcombe. We can walk over to Wayland in the morning, make up there, and come over in the local."

"Good!"
 "But the wire will have to come from London," said Monty Lowther.

"Exactly. We'll get some chap in London to send it."
 "My bwothah Conway is in town now," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I can wite to him to-night and enclose the telegwam for him to send. He will get the lettah first post in the morning."

"Yes, Conway will do it. You can explain it's a jape, and he'll know there's no harm in it," said Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "It's the rippingest jape of the term. There never was anything like it before—not since Kerr dressed up as a general and ordered the Territorials about."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "That was ripping," said Figgins. "But this will be ripping." Figgins was too excited to care about his comparatives.

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "Hurrah!"

"We can go down to Rylcombe at once and see about the costumes," grinned Kerr. "We can fix that quite easily. And we'll make up this evening, for practice, in the study, so as to be sure that it will work all right."

"Oh, ripping!"
 "There's just eleven of us here," went on Kerr. "We ought to bring an extra man, so we may as well take another chap into it—say Bernard Glyn. He's a Shell fellow, and we all ought to be as big as possible."

"Yes, that's rather against it," Tom Merry remarked thoughtfully. "They will be surprised to see a team of Indians so jolly small."

"Well, the Jal team are small fellows," said Kerr. "I've got their photographs in the 'Daily Mirror,' and they are small men. Hindus don't grow very large, you know."

"No, I suppose not."

"And nobody here has seen them. They haven't been in England three weeks, and they've been touring and playing matches, and they haven't been in Sussex at all. I've been following their movements in the papers, you see."

"If Kildare should catch on—"

"He won't, unless we give ourselves away," said Kerr confidently. "Of course, we shall have to have a sensible chap as captain—"

"And the captain had better do most of the talking," Manners remarked.

"That's right."

"Yaas, wathah! I pwopose that I should be skippah. I'm not a fellow to put myself forward, of course, but on an occasion like this, what you weally wequire is a fellow of tact and judgment, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I see no weason whatevah for wibald laughah. I considah—"

"My dear chap, your beautiful accent would give you away at once," said Tom Merry. "Besides, as I am junior cricket captain, I should have to be leader."

"We could make an exception on an occasion like this," Figgins remarked thoughtfully.

"Yaas, wathah! Figgins agrees with me—"

"No, I don't!" said Figgins promptly. "What I was going to say was that as it's a New House dodge, I think that a New House chap ought to be skipper for the occasion."

"Hear, hear!" said Fatty Wynn and Kerr together.

"Oh, rats!"

"Now, you'll admit yourself, Figgy, that that's all bosh—"

"I'm willing to put it to the vote," said Tom Merry blandly.

"Nothin' could be fairah than that."

The New House juniors sniffed. As there were eight School House fellows present to three of the New House, it was easy to foretell how the voting would go. Figgins & Co. were not having that.

"Leave it to Kerr to decide, as it's his idea," suggested Fatty Wynn.

"Rubbish!"

"Bosh!"

"Nothing could be fairer than that," grinned Figgins.

"Well, I don't know that it makes much difference,"

"THE ONLY WAY!"

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said Tom Merry, laughing; "and as Figgins is the tallest fellow present—"

"He hasn't much the start of me," said Blake.

"Ahem! He's a bit taller," said Tom Merry pacifically, "and as we shall be pretty small for a grown-up team, we want as big a skipper as we can get. I yield it to Figgins, and I think that ought to settle it."

"I'm agreeable," said Figgins cheerfully.

Blake snorted.

"I dare say you are," he remarked, "but—"

"That's settled, then," said Tom Merry. "Figgie is going to be the Rajah of Jal. By the way, as you know all about the team, Kerr, do you know whether the niggers speak English?"

Kerr shook his head.

"Some of them speak a few words, and some of them none at all," he said. "The Rajah of Jal does, and so does a chap called Chandra Das. So I've seen in the papers; the 'Daily Mirror' had an interview with the rajah, you see."

"Good! Gussy must be careful not to know any English—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"If he opens his mouth he'll give us all away at once," said Kerr. "Could we arrange somehow to have Gussy gagged?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I should uttably wefuse to be gagged, Kerr."

"Well, mind you don't give us away, that's all," said Monty Lowther. "We'll squash you if you do."

"I should wefuse to be squashed—"

"Let's trot down to Rylcombe and see about the disguises," said Tom Merry briskly. "The sooner the quicker, you know."

"Good!"

And the juniors started for the village at once. They were in the greatest of spirits. Even if the jape against the Sixth were not successful, it would be the biggest thing they had ever undertaken; but they were determined that it should be a grand success.

CHAPTER 6.

Mysterious.

THE proceedings of Tom Merry & Co. for the rest of that evening afforded considerable interest and mystification for their friends in the Lower School at St. Jim's.

The first thing that was generally noticed was that they came back from a walk to Rylcombe carrying bags that appeared to be full of something.

There were many curious inquiries as to what the bags contained, but the juniors declined to explain, and the bags were carried into Figgins's study, and locked up there.

Arthur Augustus had posted a letter to Lord Conway in the village, containing the telegram and as much information as it was good for him to know.

The next day being a whole holiday, most of the St. Jim's fellows were making great plans. They did not very often have whole holidays, and they intended to make the best of that one. As a rule, the juniors would have had a cricket match on, but cricket was off now so far as Tom Merry & Co. were concerned.

The School House juniors were to have played the New House juniors, but as Tom Merry and Figgins were captains of the respective junior sides, that matter was easy to arrange, but it led to some surprise and wrath on the part of fellows who were not in the secret.

Tom Merry had pinned up a brief notice on the board in the hall, and it was read by the juniors with many exclamations. It ran:

"Notice. The junior match arranged for to-morrow has been scratched.—TOM MERRY, Capt."

And the juniors who had been going to play in the respective teams were wrathful, as Reilly, of the Fourth, expressed it. Bernard Glyn had been let into the secret, as he was to be one of the dusky strangers to arrive on the morrow. But the juniors wisely decided to let the secret go not an inch farther. There was too much danger of its leaking out if it was talked about, and that would render the scheme a fiasco. And, following the old adage that "Whoever has a secret to keep, should not only hide it, but hide that he has it," Tom Merry & Co. did not breathe a word to hint that a jape was intended at all.

The result was that an indignant crowd of juniors came to Tom Merry's study to demand an explanation.

The twelve japers were all included in the House junior team, but there were ten more fellows who were to have played, and they wanted to know the reason why.

Reilly led a band of exasperated fellows into Tom Merry's study to point out that it wouldn't do, but he found the study empty.

The next day being a whole holiday, there was no preparation that evening, and the Terrible Three had evidently gone out.

"Faith, and they're not here!" said Reilly, looking round. "Let's wreck the study," suggested Gore. "It will be a lesson to Tommy not to ride the high horse."

"Sure, we'd better look for him and wreck him!"

"Hear, hear!" said Hancock.

"They may be in Blake's study."

Down the passage to Study No. 6 went the disappointed cricketers, but that study was also empty. They glared into it in exasperation.

"The spalpeens are gone out too!" exclaimed Reilly. "I suppose they're gone out together intirely."

"Over in the New House, of course!" exclaimed Clifton Dane. "They were very thick with Figgins & Co. this afternoon, I remember."

"Let's get over there."

And the indignant cricketers marched across the quad. They entered the New House, and went up to Figgins's study. In the passage they found Pratt and French and several fellows who were to have played in the New House junior team on the morrow. They were shouting in at Figgins's door, which appeared to be locked.

"Tom Merry in here?" asked Reilly.

Pratt snorted.

"Yes, he's in there with Figgins—the whole blessed family of them—and they've got the door locked!" he exclaimed. "The match is off for to-morrow, and we can't get a reason out of Figgins. He says it can't be helped."

"Faith, and I'm going to have a reason!" exclaimed Reilly, kicking at the door. "Hallo, in there, ye spalpeens, ye omadhauns! Open the dure!"

"Rats!" came back through the keyhole.

"Why aren't you playin' to-morrow, Tom Merry?"

"The match is put off."

"But why?"

"Reasons of state."

"Faith, don't be a silly gossoon! What are you putting off the match for, you silly spalpeen?" roared Reilly.

"Can't be helped."

"Faith, and I—"

"Bust the door in!" said Hancock.

Bang—bang—bang! Thump! Biff! Bang!

A sharp voice called up the stairs—the voice of Mr. Ratcliff, the House-master of the New House:

"What is that noise? Stop it at once!"

It stopped at once. Mr. Ratcliff was a sour-tempered gentleman, and not to be argued with. The juniors melted away. In Figgins's study Tom Merry & Co. were left undisturbed.

CHAPTER 7.

All Serene.

THE morning dawned bright and sunny.

The fellows at St. Jim's turned out cheerfully on that sunny morning. A whole day without lessons, with nothing to do but please themselves from morning prayers to evening prep. That was calculated to make them cheerful.

Tom Merry & Co. seemed to be in extra high spirits.

The disappointed cricketers of the junior Forms had made up two house teams of their own, leaving Tom Merry & Co. out, and they were going to have a cricket-match all the same, with Reilly captaining the School House side, and French the New House.

Tom Merry & Co. were glad enough to see them so occupied. It kept them off the scent, and prevented any chance of a discovery of the great jape.

The juniors were keeping that secret very dark.

Not a word had been breathed outside the twelve, and nothing was known even to their most intimate friends.

The rehearsal in Figgins's study had gone off perfectly successfully, and the plotters, by this time, had not the slightest doubt of success.

They had packed the disguises and the costumes in bags, ready to convey to Wayland, and they only delayed starting while waiting for Kildare to receive the telegram from London. Unless that was safely delivered, of course, the whole thing would have to fall through.

And the chums of St. Jim's waited in a group at the school gates for the telegraph-boy. He seemed a long time coming, but he came at last. There was a general exclamation of satisfaction as he was seen coming up the road.

"Here he is!"

"Who's it for?" asked Tom Merry, as the lad came up.

"Master Kildare, sir."

"Good! Take it in!"

The boy went on. Kildare was in the quad, standing outside the School House, chatting with Darrel, of the Sixth.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bully Gore. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BOUND BY HONOUR!"

The notice of the scratching of the match had come too late for the St. Jim's captain to be able to fix up another match, and the First Eleven were reduced to the necessity of making up a scratch team from the Fifth and Sixth, or of not playing at all. That was what Kildare intended to do; but it was a come-down, after the match he had been anticipating.

"Hallo, here's another telegram!" exclaimed Darrel.

"It's for you, too!"

Kildare took the wire.

"May have found it possible to come after all," Darrel suggested.

Kildare brightened up.

"By Jove, I hope so!" he exclaimed.

He opened the envelope and read the message. It was brief, but it was to the point, and it brought a smile of satisfaction to the face of the captain of St. Jim's.

"Hurrah!" he exclaimed.

"Good news?"

"Yes; they're coming."

"Bravo!"

"Listen!" Kildare read out the message:

"Kildare, School House, St. James's, Sussex.—Previous telegram cancelled. Team arriving Rylcombe ten-thirty."

"Good!" exclaimed Darrel. "I suppose they've got over it, or he's managed to rake in some substitutes. I rather wondered the rajah couldn't manage that. They're in London now, and there are plenty of Indian cricketers there."

Kildare nodded.

"He hasn't signed it," he remarked. "A bit excited, perhaps, and it makes just the twelve words. But it's clear enough."

"Oh, yes, he says plainly 'previous telegram cancelled.'"

Rushden and Monteith and Baker strolled up.

"Where are we playing?" asked Monteith.

"We're playing the Indians after all!" said Kildare.

"The Indians?"

"Yes. The rajah finds he can come."

"Good!" said Baker.

"Ripping!" said Rushden.

"Jolly uncertain sort of beggar, I should think," said Monteith. "Do you mind letting me see the wire?"

Kildare handed it to him. The New House prefect read it through, and uttered an exclamation:

"It's not signed!" he said.

"No. It makes just the twelve words, and of course he knew we should know whom it was from," said the captain of St. Jim's, with a smile. "Nobody but the Rajah of Jal would be likely to wire to me that the team was arriving at Rylcombe at ten-thirty."

"No, I suppose not," said Monteith, thoughtfully.

Kildare looked at him.

"Why, what are you thinking about, Monteith?" he exclaimed. "The telegram's all right, isn't it?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

Monteith read it again. The New House prefect was of a keen and suspicious turn of mind.

"What could be wrong with it?" asked Kildare.

"Well, as it's not signed it crossed my mind that it might possibly be a jape of those young beggars, to make us expect the Indian team for nothing," said Monteith. "If we expected them, and they didn't come, we should look a set of asses."

Kildare laughed.

"I don't think they'd go quite so far as that," he said.

"Hardly!" remarked Baker.

Rushden pointed to the telegram.

"Handed in in London," he said. "I suppose no one here could have gone up to London this morning to send that wire?"

Monteith grinned.

"Well, no, I suppose not," he said.

"Anyway, we shall see at ten-thirty whether they arrive or not," said Kildare. "We'd better have a brake at the station for them. It's all right."

"Of course it is," said Baker.

"Shall we meet them at the station?" asked the New House prefect.

"A couple of us might go in the brake. After all, they're foreigners, you know, and it would be only civil."

"Good!"

"We shall have to go down to Rylcombe to arrange about the brake, anyway, as I had cancelled it," said Kildare. "One of you chaps come with me."

Kildare and Darrel strolled down to the gates. They found Tom Merry & Co. in the road, ready to start. Most of the juniors had well-packed bags in their hands. They all looked at Kildare and raised their caps with unusual respect.

"Going out for the day, Kildare?" asked Blake affably.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

Kildare smiled.

"No," he said.

"But your match is off, isn't it?"

"It's on again now."

"The Indians coming after all?" queried Monty Lowther.

"Yes; I've just had a wire to say they're all right, and coming after all, and they'll be at Rylcombe by the ten-thirty," said Kildare. "Where are you youngsters going? Out for a picnic?"

"Well, not exactly a picnic," said Tom Merry, cautiously. "We're going to make a day of it, though."

"Then you're not going to see the match with the Indians?" asked the St. Jim's captain, good-humouredly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, certainly!" said Tom Merry. "We sha'n't miss that. We shall be on the ground by the time you start, and we shall stay till the finish."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries.

Kildare looked a little mystified.

"What is there to cackle about, kid?" he asked.

Herries turned red, and Tom Merry gave him a severe frown.

"Oh, don't mind Herries," said Blake. "He's often taken like that—a little weak in the napper, you know."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Kildare nodded, and walked along the lane with Darrel. Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another with beatific smiles.

"They're going to arrange about the brake for the team," murmured Blake.

"For us!" said Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "It's all serene, now, and we've only got to get to Wayland and change, and catch the local for Rylcombe. Come on!"

And the rival Co.'s marched off in high spirits.

CHAPTER 8.

Quite a Change.

"HERE we are!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

The juniors stopped.

The bright morning sunlight was falling through the foliage in a deep glade of Rylcombe Wood, beside a rippling stream.

It was a quiet and secluded spot, just suited to what the juniors had to do. No one was likely to observe or interrupt them there.

The bags were opened, and the costumes and disguises taken out. Kerr's services were in general request at once. Kerr was the leading light of the Junior Amateur Society. What he did not know on the subject of making-up was not worth knowing.

And Kerr was very industrious and obliging. He superintended the dressing and the making-up with tireless patience.

The juniors discarded their Etons, which were rolled up carefully and placed in the bags. They donned the Indian costumes. Indian costumes, chiefly used for local fancy-dress functions, had been very easy to obtain, but they had mostly been many sizes too large. But in Figgins's study the previous evening the juniors had taken reefs in, so to speak, and the costumes were quite ready for wearing now.

The making-up was carefully done. Their skins had to be tinted a soft brown, and all Kerr's skill was required. But he excelled himself. Figgins was the first fellow finished. He stood with a brown face and hands, and arrayed in white garments and a turban gleaming with jewels—the jewels being made of coloured glass, of course. There was a tremendous diamond in his turban which would have been worth thousands of pounds if it had been worth anything at all.

The juniors could not help chuckling as they looked at him. Figgins made a very imposing Rajah of Jal.

"It's ripping!" said Tom Merry. "Your mother wouldn't know you now, Figgy."

"Wathah not! I say, shall I look anything like that, Kerr, deah boy?"

"Yes, Gussy."

"Bai Jove! I twust I shall not look like an old-clothes man who has not washed himself for weeks!"

"My dear chap, all Indian princes look like that," said Kerr. "You have to dress up to the character."

"Yaas, but—"

"Keep still, or this stuff will go into your eye," said Kerr.

"Yaas, but—groo!"

"What's the matter?"

"Yow! You've dabbed that howwid thing into my mouth."

"Well, you shouldn't talk while you're being operated



Lash! lash! lash! Courtney's face was white as death. The baronet seemed to be lashing harder since the remonstrance from his keeper. Lash! lash! lash! But even Sir Hilton desisted at last. There was a savage look upon his face; he had not extracted one cry from the victim of his cruelty.

(An incident taken from the grand, long, complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "THE ONLY WAY," by Frank Richards, contained in "THE MAGNET" Library. Now on sale. Price One Penny.)

on," said Kerr. "I can't do a lot of dodging round your mouth while you're talking. Ring off."

"Weally, Kerr—groo!"

"There you go again!"

"You uttah ass! Ow!"

"You'd better shut up, Gussy!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "You'll get it in the mouth every time you talk."

And D'Arcy thought so, too, and the rest of his thoughts remained unuttered.

The work was done at last, and the twelve juniors of St. Jim's stood stained and arrayed like natives of the Eastern empire.

They could not help grinning at one another.

Arthur Augustus arranged his monocle in the right eye, but it did not seem to be comfortable there. He jammed it again and again, and made a round, white circle on his brown complexion.

Kerr caught sight of what he was doing, and gave a yell.

"You ass! Stop it!"

"Weally, Kerr—"

"You're rubbing the brown off!"

"Bai Jove, I must wear my glass, you know!"

"You champion ass! Put it away at once. It will give us away if that's seen. Do you think Indians come over here to play cricket with window-panes in their silly eyes?"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Put it away, Gussy."

"Undah the cires.—"

"Put it away!" roared the juniors.

"I was about to say that, undah the cires.—"

"Put it away, or you'll get it smashed like the other one!" roared Tom Merry.

"I wepeat that, undah the cires, I am quite willing to bow to the voice of the majowity, and put it away, deah boys," said D'Arcy gracefully.

And D'Arcy slipped the eyeglass into some recess of his garments. Kerr looked over his face, and touched up his complexion once more.

"Mind you're careful now," he said. "I can't touch up your silly chivvy when we're once before the public."

"I am quite aware of that, deah boy. I—"

"Come on!" said Figgins. "We're ready!"

"March!" said Tom Merry.

The juniors, carrying their cricket-bags and also the other bags containing their usual clothes in the place of the disguises, left the glade in Rylcombe Wood.

Their hearts were beating a little faster as they entered the footpath leading into Wayland town.

Although their disguises were excellently done, so that they could hardly believe that they were themselves, they felt a certain degree of nervousness at the thought of facing the public in their new complexions and attire.

The sight of Indians, too, was very uncommon in a quiet country town like Wayland, and they were certain to attract general attention.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

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A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bully Gore. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Indeed, it was quite possible that they would be recognised as the famous Jal touring team and given an ovation.

A countryman on the footpath was the first man to see them, and he stood, with open eyes and mouth, watching them till they were out of sight.

Then they entered Wayland.

Immediately they started down the High Street towards the station, with Figgins stalking majestically at their head, there was a shout.

As if by magic, the small fry of Wayland gathered round to watch them and follow them and cheer or jeer, as the humour seized them.

The juniors marched on with much dignity.

"When are you going to begin?" yelled a small youth, evidently under the impression that the dusky team were bigger-minstrels and were going to give a performance outside some public-house.

The juniors could not help grinning.

Figgins frowned.

"Keep a stiff upper lip," he said. "Remember you don't understand English, and mind you don't grin. Oriental gravity is the dodge."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And mind you don't talk, Gussy!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"If you have to say anything," went on Figgins, "say one word only, which can be taken to mean 'I don't understand.' You can say 'Bang-bang.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It sounds like a Hindu word, and it might mean anything," said Figgins. "If you're simply driven for a word and must say something else, say 'Boggley.' That sounds jolly good Hindustani to me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And remember, nothing but 'Bang-bang' and 'Boggley.' I'm the only chap here who speaks English," said Figgins.

"Pewwaps it would be a good ideah to speak in Fwench, as lots of Hindus know that language, you know. Suppose I say 'Je ne compwong pah.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or I could say, 'Excusez moi, je vous pwic—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you talk at all," said Figgins. "That's understood."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Here's the railway-station."

A noisy crowd followed the Indian team right up to the railway-station. But there they had evidently been heard of, for the stationmaster came out to meet them in quite a respectful manner.

"Welcome to Wayland, your Highness!" he said, bowing low before the long-legged Rajah of Jal. "We expected you by the train from London, your Highness."

"Bang-bang!" said Figgins.

The stationmaster looked puzzled.

"Yes, your Highness."

"Boggley!"

"I'm very sorry, your Highness, I don't speak Hindustani," said the stationmaster, and he ushered the princely traveller into the station, and the porters stood round with great respect as the cricketing team marched upon the platform.

They were in good time for the local to Rylcombe.

They crowded into first-class carriages, and the stationmaster himself closed Figgins's door, and stood, hat in hand, outside the carriage as the signal was given for the train to start.

"Good-bye, gentlemen!"

"Bang-bang!"

"Ahem!"

"Boggley!"

And the train ran out of Wayland Station.

CHAPTER 9.

The Indians Arrive.

KILDARE and Darrel came into Rylcombe Station, and, with nods to the old porter, they walked upon the platform. They were quite sure that the telegram was all right, and they were there to meet the Indians. The brake was waiting outside the station to convey the team to St. Jim's. But if, by any chance, it should turn out to be a jape there was no harm done—though there would probably be some harm done to the perpetrators if Kildare discovered them afterwards.

"The train's signalled," said Kildare. "We shall see the Indians in a minute."

"Yes, it's all right!" said Darrel.

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"THE ONLY WAY!"

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The train came in sight.

Kildare raised his hand to point, with an exclamation of satisfaction.

"Look!"

Several dusky faces were looking from the windows of the train.

"The Indians!" said Darrel.

"Yes, rather!"

The train ran in and stopped. Kildare and Darrel stepped forward to open the carriage doors for their distinguished guests.

A crowd of dusky cricketers poured out upon the platform.

The St. Jim's seniors could not help staring a little.

They had expected to see small men, but they had supposed that the Jal cricketers were larger in size than the juniors of St. Jim's.

There was only one of the party who was anything like as tall as a man, and that was the dusky youth with the big diamond in his turban.

Kildare guessed that he was the skipper, and he advanced to him with outstretched hand.

"The Rajah of Jal?" he inquired.

"Bang-bang!"

And the rajah shook Kildare's hand heartily.

"I am very glad to see your Highness."

"Boggley!"

"We were very disappointed to get your telegram yesterday; but it's turned out all right," said Kildare. "You speak English, do you not?"

"Bang-bang! I speak your English so well," said the rajah. "It is not with difficulty that I speak him. Bang—"

"That's a blessed Hindustani word, I suppose?" murmured Kildare. "Blessed if I like the look of this lot! They're a shabby crew, anyway!"

But he did not say that aloud.

"We've got a brake outside," he went on. "Will you come with me?"

"With great and venerable pleasure."

And Kildare led the way from the station.

The Indians piled into the brake, amid loud and enthusiastic comments from the interested youth of Rylcombe village.

Kildare and Darrel mounted with them, and they rolled away on the road to St. Jim's. The two seniors of St. Jim's tried to enter into talk with the cricketers en route, but it was useless.

The Rajah of Jal was the only one who spoke English, and his English did not seem very good either, and he did not appear inclined to use very much of it.

He had introduced Chandra Das and Numar Lal, two of his followers, to Kildare, but the two Indians had only bowed and salaamed respectfully, without speaking. If Kildare had heard Chandra Das speak, he might have been struck by a resemblance to the voice of Tom Merry of the Shell, while Kumar Lal's tones would have recalled those of Jack Blake.

Darrel addressed a few polite words to Chandra Das as St. Jim's came in sight. The old grey tower rose over the green trees.

"That's St. Jim's," he remarked.

Chandra Das bowed.

"We shall arrive in a few minutes now."

"Bang-bang."

"You do not speak any English, sir?"

"Boggley."

"I have read about the Jal team in the papers," Darrel said, with a perplexed look, "I understood that most of them spoke some English, some of them quite fluently. But

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perhaps some of you fellows are substitutes for those on the sick list."

"Cham-ram-tooral-kybosh-bang."

That was quite a long sentence, but Darrel could make nothing of it. He knew no Hindustani; but if he had known every word of it in the language, it would hardly have helped him in this instance.

The brake rolled up to St. Jim's. A crowd of fellows had gathered round the gates to see whether the Indians really arrived. There was a loud cheer as the brake was seen with its crowd of dusky passengers.

"Hurrah!"

"Here they come!"

"Here's the giddy rajah!"

"Bravo!"

The brake rolled in amid cheers. Crowds of juniors waved their caps and shouted to welcome the Indians.

Tom Merry & Co bowed on all sides as the brake rolled on.

They had never received such an ovation in their own proper persons, and it was very hard for them to keep grave.

But they managed it.

At the door of the School House the Head himself stood to greet them.

Dr. Holmes welcomed the Jal team in well-chosen words, and it was "up" to Figgins to reply.

The pseudo rajah did his duty well.

He salaamed three times before the reverend Head of St. Jim's, and all his followers followed his example.

"It is great happiness for us to meet and play the honourable St. Jim's cricketers," said the rajah, in a deep voice.

And the Indians all chimed in, in a sort of chorus:

"Bang-bang!"

"We appreciate with deep and venerable feeling the welcome you have so gorgeously extended to us."

"Bang-bang! Boggley!"

"And the play of the honourable cricket will be the great and venerable pleasure to our worthy selves."

"Bang! Boggley! Wallah!"

The Head looked a little puzzled.

He knew a little Hindustani himself, but it was not of the kind used by the visitors.

"Some local dialect of the province of Jal undoubtedly," the Head said afterwards to Mr. Raiton. "'Bang,' I know, is a common Hindustani expression for a certain drug, and 'wallah' means a man or a person. But the words are evidently not used in their customary sense by the Jal people. 'Boggley' is quite beyond me, and I am very curious as to what it may mean."

But the Head was not likely to have his curiosity gratified. The visitors from Jal did not know any more than he did.

The Indians were taken to the pavilion, where they changed from their rich and rare costumes into ordinary cricketing flannels.

When they came out with their dusky faces shining in the sun, there was another cheer to greet them.

They salaamed in return, and said "Bang-bang" with cheerful smiles.

Kildare tossed with the rajah for choice of innings, and the rajah won, and elected to go in first.

"Chandra Das and Kumar Lal," said the rajah.

And Tom Merry and Jack Blake went in to open the innings for Jal.

CHAPTER 10.

The First Innings.

KILDARE placed his men to field. He had heard that the Jal men were very hard hitters, and the seniors fielded deep. Round the ground a great crowd collected, and the junior ground, where Pratt and Reilly and their merry men were playing, was deserted by all but the two junior teams.

Seniors and juniors crowded round to see the Indians play. Clifton Dane and Gore and Skimpole and Macdonald stood in a group to look on. There was a curious expression upon Dane's face. Dane was study-mate in the Shell to Kangaroo and Bernard Glyn; and Dane was gifted with very sharp vision. But if Clifton Dane saw anything unusual about the Indians, no one else did. They were taken at face value, so to speak, by the whole of St. Jim's.

"I guess they're a small size for grown-ups," Jerrold Lumley-Lumley remarked to Clifton Dane.

Dane nodded.

"Yes; they might be a set of boys," he said.

"Well, some of them have big whiskers, though," said Gore. "Look at that chap, Chandra Das, I hear his name is. He's got whiskers like a lion's mane."

"Curious, too," said Lumley-Lumley. "I've seen their portraits in the papers, and they were nearly all clean-shaven."

"I hear that the rajah is playing some substitutes, to-day, though."

"The rajah looks full size," said Lumley-Lumley. "The others are jolly small. They can't really have much chance against Kildare's lot."

"I don't know; they've beaten University teams."

"I guess it's strange, then."

And that opinion was very common on the ground. It was very strange that the little Jal men had beaten 'Varsity players. All excepting the rajah were overtopped by the seniors of St. Jim's.

But the Jal batsmen showed that they could bat, at all events.

Monteith, the New House prefect, was put on to bowl the first over against the dusky youth known as Chandra Das.

Monteith was a good bowler, and very nearly the best in the St. Jim's First Eleven, but he could not touch Chandra Das's wicket.

Chandra Das knocked his bowling all over the field, and the dusky batsmen ran, and ran, and the over gave them eight runs to begin their score.

It was evident that, in spite of their diminutive size in comparison with the St. Jim's team, the Jal men knew how to play cricket.

Chandra Das had taken twenty runs "on his own" when he was finally dismissed by a catch in the slips.

A fat Indian came on to take his place. There were sniling comments from the onlookers as the fat cricketer rolled up to the wicket.

"My hat!" said Lumley-Lumley. "That chap's as fat as Fatty Wynn!"

"By Jove, he is!" said Clifton Dane. "By the way, speaking of Fatty Wynn, where are Figgins & Co.? They're not here."

"Curious they should miss this match."

"And Tom Merry, too—where is he?"

"He's not here."

"And Blake, and Gussy?"

"They all went out this morning," said Lumley-Lumley.

"I remember now, they took a lot of bags with them, and I imagine they're going to make a day of it."

"It's very odd!" said Clifton Dane.

"Well, yes."

"That fat chap can bat, though," said Gore, as Fatty Wynn drove the ball to the boundary from Rushden's bowling.

"He can! Bravo!"

The St. Jim's fellows were all sportsmen, and they cheered every success of the dusky visitors. And they had plenty to cheer. The St. Jim's bowling and fielding were both good, but the visitors scored very considerably.

Kumar Lal was out at last, and he joined the group of dusky batsmen outside the pavilion. Jal were six down for seventy runs.

When any St. Jim's fellow strolled near the group of Indian cricketers, he heard them talking among themselves in curious language; words like bang, and rang, and chang, and wallah, and boggley, and woggley, continually recurring. But when there was no Saint within hearing, they continued to talk in English.

"It's going on all right," grinned Figgins. "I wonder what Kildare would say if he knew that St. Jim's Juniors had knocked up 70 against the First Eleven, for six wickets."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And wait till they get their innings, and Fatty begins to bowl," said Kerr. "I've always said that Fatty was fit to bowl for the County, and we'll see how he shapes against Kildare's lot."

"Yes, rather!"

"It will be rather an eye-opener for them," grinned Tom Merry. "Of course, the real Jal team would have taken more than 70 in this time. But if Fatty takes their wickets, we shall keep their score down."

"And beat them," said Figgins hopefully.

"Wouldn't that be ripping?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hush!"

Some Saints were strolling by, and Figgins, without a change of countenance, went on in an unknown tongue—as unknown to himself as to everybody else.

"Boggley bang wallah sum sing chang huckaback!"

"Oh, huckaback—huckaback!" said Tom Merry gravely.

"Sin ting ghaunt gommy bong?"

"Ram bang!"

"Blessed if I can make out a word of it," Gore remarked, as he strolled on. "Blessed if it seems possible that they understand it themselves."

"It's rummy," said Clifton Dane.

"You're getting on famously, sir," said Lumley-Lumley, addressing the Rajah of Jal.

"Gommy bhong bang!" said the rajah politely.

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NEXT
WEEK:

"BOUND BY HONOUR!"

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"Eh?"
 "Lummy, crikey, chuck, chuck!"
 "My hat!"
 "Gommy tong!"
 "Oh, I give it up!" said Gore.
 "What's the name of that fat chap who's batting?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"Punar Singh is the name on the list," said Gore.
 "Bravo, Punar Singh!" shouted Clifton Dane, as the fat batsman sent the ball to the boundary again.
 "Hurrah!"

And there was a ripple of hand-clapping.
 Punar Singh was going strong. But he was clean bowled by Kildare in the next over, and he came off the field perspiring. The Rajah of Jal looked at him, and an expression of alarm came over his Highness's face.

"Great Scott!" he whispered. "Get into the dressing-room, quick!"

"What's the matter?" muttered Punar Singh.

"Your complexion's running."

"My hat!"

"And you'd better run, too," grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Fatty Wynn bolted into the pavilion. Kerr followed him, his artistic touch was required. Kerr, under the name of Bolar Das, was wanted next, but the rajah himself went in, to give Kerr time to restore Fatty Wynn's complexion.

CHAPTER 11.

Bowled Out.

THERE was a cheer as the Rajah of Jal came out to the wicket, with his bat under his arm. The hard hitting of the rajah was well known, and the St. Jim's fellows expected to see a second Ranji. The rajah raised his cricket cap gracefully to the cheering, and took his place at the wicket. Kildare tossed up the ball to Darrel.

"You'll have all your work cut out to shift that chap, from what I hear," he remarked.

Darrel laughed.

"I'll do my best," he said.

Darrel did his best; but he could not shift the rajah. The rajah was very careful. He blocked every dangerous ball, and only hit out when it was quite secure to do so. But when he hit, he hit hard, and the Saints were given plenty of leather-hunting. He took 7 for the over, finishing with the odd run, which gave him still the bowling in the next. Monteith was put on against him, but could not hurt him. The rajah piled up runs for his side; inwardly wondering what the prefect would think when he discovered that he had been bowling, in vain, against a junior of his own house.

The rajah piled up 30 runs, and he was loudly cheered, and his dusky comrades cheered as loudly as anybody, in their own peculiar language. At every big hit they clapped their dusky hands and shouted:

"Bang-bang!"

"I suppose that's a sort of Indian cheer," Lumley-Lumley remarked. "Something like the Japanese banzai, I guess."

"I suppose so," said Gore. "What are you looking so glum about, Dane?"

Clifton Dane started.

"Was I?" he exclaimed.

"Well, thoughtful, then. What are you mooning about?"

"I was just thinking."

"About the rajah?"

"Yes," said the Canadian junior, with a grin, "about the rajah."

He strolled away with his hands in his pockets, without saying anything further. Gore and Lumley-Lumley looked after him in some surprise. But they soon turned their attention to the match again.

The rajah was out at last, caught by Kildare, and as he joined the dusky team outside the pavilion, they cheered him loudly.

"Bang, bang, bang!"

"What does that mean in English?" Lumley-Lumley asked one of the Jal men.

"Boggley, deah boy."

"Eh?"

"I mean—ahem!—bang—boggley—chunck—chuncketty clack!"

"My hat!"

"Sang bang chang teotle bunk!"

"I believe that bouncer can speak English if he likes," Gore confided to Lumley-Lumley. "Did you notice how he dropped into English, and stopped himself?"

Lumley-Lumley had a very curious expression upon his face.

"I guess I did," he said.

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He strolled away to join Clifton Dane, and the two were deep in discussion, in whispers, for some time afterwards. The Jal innings was drawing to its close now. The last wicket fell with the score at a hundred and twenty, and the field cleared.

The Jal men crowded to the dressing-room.

They did not admit anybody else with them, and the rajah was careful to close the door. Then the Indians permitted themselves a long chuckle.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's wippen". The boundahs haven't a single suspish, you know."

"Not the slightest," said Blake.

"It's gorgeous."

"There never was a jape of this sort or size before," chuckled Tom Merry. "Of course, they couldn't possibly smell a mouse."

"I neatly put my foot in it once, deah boys!" chuckled D'Arcy.

"Oh, trust you to do that!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"If you give us away, we'll squash you!"

"I should uttably wufuse to be squashed."

"What have you done?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, it was weally nothin'—I used a few words of English when that chap Lumley-Lumley was askin' me a question. But it's all wight."

"Is it?" said Tom Merry anxiously. "Lumley-Lumley's jolly sharp."

"Sharp as a needle," said Digby.

"But he wouldn't give us away, if he guessed," said Kangaroo. "He would play the game, you know. He used to be rather a worm, but he's decent enough now."

"Yaas, wathah."

There was a knock at the door, and the discussion suddenly ceased. It occurred to the Jal cricketers that the partitions in the cricket pavilion were somewhat thin.

"Hush!" murmured the rajah.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Shut up, you ass!"

"I considah—"

Blake jammed his hand over Arthur Augustus's mouth, and the further considerations of the swell of St. Jim's were quite lost. Figgins opened the door.

Clifton Dane and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley were standing there, with demure smiles upon their faces.

"Bang-bang!" said Figgins.

To which Lumley-Lumley replied, in the same language:

"Chuck a luck, and t'ing e ling. Sam chang."

And Clifton Dane added:

"Snorey porey gcey bung."

The Jal men stared blankly at him. The two juniors looked very grave and serious, and evidently expected answers in the same tongue.

"Bang boggley wallah punkah koosh," said Figgins, at last.

"Hanky panky silly pranky chuckit," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Eh? I mean blong song pinky."

"Figgie wiggy merry perry Blakey chakey shakey Gussy wussy," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Monty, Manny, Diggy, Herry, Fatty Wynny," said Clifton Dane.

And then the cricketers knew!

"Come in," said Figgins hastily.

Lumley-Lumley and Clifton Dane grinned, and came in, and Figgins closed the door. The dusky heroes glared at the two juniors who had found them out.

"How did you know?" gasped Tom Merry.

They chuckled.

"It was Gussy's beautiful accent that put me on to it," said Lumley-Lumley. "Dane seems to have suspected something from the start. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Canadian.

"Hush!"

"You're bowled out, I guess," chuckled Lumley-Lumley.

"What a jape! So the real Indians are not coming at all!"

"No!" muttered Figgins.

"You sent a second telegram?"

"We had it sent."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hush!" said the rajah. "Does anybody else know besides you two?"

Clifton Dane shook his head.

"Not a soul," he said. "I shouldn't have known, only old Kangy seemed rather familiar. You see, I have the duffer in my study every day. And then what Lumley told me made me quite certain about it."

"Nobody else knows?"

"So far as I know, nobody."

"I guess not!" grinned Lumley-Lumley.

"You haven't said anything?"

"Not a word, of course."

Figgins drew a breath of relief.

"That's all right, then," he said. "We don't mind you fellows knowing. Keep it dark—deadly dark, that's all. If any other chap suspects, get hold of him and make him shut up. The seniors are not likely to tumble."

"I guess not," chuckled Lumley-Lumley. "They're far too high and mighty to dream that the juniors would jape them like this! My hat! It's the biggest thing I've ever heard of. The cheek of it!"

"And we're going to beat them," grinned Figgins. "A hundred and twenty for the first innings, hey? And wait till Fatty Wynn gets to work on their wickets!"

"Oh, good!"

"Only keep it dark!"

"You bet!"

"We'll back you up," said Clifton Dane, "only we couldn't help letting you know we knew. It's ripping! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Time we got out, I think," said the rajah. "Tumble up!"

And the dusky cricketers left the dressing-room, leaving Clifton Dane and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley there, still laughing.

CHAPTER 12.

The Hat Trick.

KILDARE opened the innings for St. Jim's First with Rushden. The Rajah of Jal placed his men to field, and sent on Punar Singh to bowl. The fat Indian rolled down to the wicket opposite Kildare, his dusky face shining in the sun. Kildare looked at him with a puzzled expression. It happened that he had seen a photograph once of the Indian team. He did not remember them clearly, of course, but he had some idea that Punar Singh was a slim fellow. But that impression was evidently a mistaken one, for Punar Singh in the flesh was fat—as fat as Fatty Wynn of the Fourth Form. But Kildare had not much time to think about that. Punar Singh was preparing for business in a very businesslike way, and the captain of St. Jim's had to look after his wicket.

The crowd looked on with smiles as the fat Indian prepared to bowl. They did not judge, by his aspect, that he would shape very famously as a bowler. If they had known that he was more Welsh than Indian, and was, in fact, Fatty Wynn, of the New House, their expectations would have been very different. For Fatty Wynn was famous as a bowler, and all the juniors of the New House swore by his bowling. Many times it had been said that if etiquette had permitted a Fourth-Former to be enrolled in the First Eleven, Fatty Wynn would have shone forth as the champion bowler of St. Jim's.

And Fatty was feeling in specially good form just now, and in a mood to conquer worlds. He was determined to make the most of the only chance he had ever had of bowling against the Sixth, and he was feeling specially fit for great efforts. If he could perform the hat trick against Sixth-Form batsmen, it would be a feather in his cap, when the truth was known, and St. Jim's would never leave off talking about it.

Kildare faced the bowling—prepared for anything—excepting what he received. Kildare was a first-rate batsman, and yet he was not quite ready for the twister that Fatty Wynn sent him.

The ball looked simple enough as it came down, but it broke in with a spin that was quite unexpected, and before Kildare quite knew what was happening his middle stump was reposing on the ground, leaving his wicket with quite a toothless look.

There was a murmur of amazement from the crowd.

Kildare was out!

Bowled out first ball!

It was astounding! Even in county matches—when the county sent a team to play St. Jim's First—that had never happened.

Out first ball!

The Saints could not believe their eyes. They stared at the wrecked wicket, and Kildare stared at it, too. Was it true?

There was a yell from the Indian fieldsmen:

"How's that?"

And the crowd gasped again.

The dusky heroes who could not talk English seemed to have acquired the gift of tongues all of a sudden, under the influence of that lucky ball.

"My hat!" gasped Rushden. "Do you hear that?"

But the Indians recollected themselves in a moment. They clapped their hands, in their places in the field and shouted:

"Bang-bang! Boggley!"

Kildare looked at his wicket twice, to make sure that it was no dream. But the umpire's out was not to be mistaken, and the captain of St. Jim's tucked his bat under his arm, and walked off towards the pavilion.

"Hard cheese, old chap," said Darrel as Kildare joined him.

The St. Jim's captain nodded.

"Beastly hard!" he said. "Rotten!"

"Bad for us," said Monteith, rather acidly.

Kildare gave him a quiet look.

"Yes, bad for us," he said.

"Was it a fluke, do you think?" Baker asked.

"No." Kildare was quite frank about it. "I don't think it was. That chap is a bowler that county batsmen might be afraid of. He would make Fry or Hayward hop."

"I hope he won't make me hop," said Monteith, rather sarcastically, as he drew on his gloves. He was next man in, but he had not expected to be wanted for some time yet. Kildare generally stayed a good while at the wickets.

"I hope he won't, for the sake of the side," said Kildare, very quietly.

There was a suspicion of swank about the New House prefect's manner as he went on to take the captain's place. The two seniors were now on very good terms, but as heads of the rival Houses of St. Jim's, they were to some extent rivals; and the time had been when the rivalry was very bitter. That time was past now, but Monteith felt an inward satisfaction at the idea of making a high score where the captain of the school had been dismissed for a duck's egg.

Monteith took his place at the wicket to face the bowling. Nobody expected him to share the fate of Kildare—himself, least of all. The general impression was that the fall of the wicket had been a hopeless fluke—a very lucky fluke for the visitors, but a fluke all the same, that would not be repeated.

But there were surprises in store for the St. Jim's crowd that day.

Fatty Wynn had never felt better, never more fit to conquer. His second ball was very different from the first, but it was equally deadly. Monteith gave a mighty swipe at the place where the ball ought to have been, but wasn't. The off-stump was on the ground the next moment, and the balls kept it company. Monteith uttered a savage exclamation. He was not so patient and good-tempered as Kildare.

"How's that?" gasped the Rajah of Jal.

"Out!"

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Kildare's down, and Monteith, too—two duck's eggs!"

"Phew!"

There was no doubt about it. The crowd rubbed their eyes and looked, and looked again, but they could not look the balls back into their place. Monteith was out—the second duck's egg in the innings. The dusky fieldsmen yelled.

"Bang-bang!"

"My only hat!" muttered Kildare. "That bowler is a demon!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the crowd, recovering a little from their astonishment. "Hurrah! Well bowled, sir!"

"Bravo!"

"Bang-bang! Boggley!"

Monteith came out pale with anger. He threw down his bat, and peeled off his gloves with his thin lips tightly set.

"Rough luck," said Baker.

"Oh, hang it!" growled the prefect.

"Was it a fluke?"

"Blessed if I know! I know I'm out. It looks as if we shall have a ripping score to set against their one hundred and twenty."

"It's rotten!"

"Beastly!"

"Do your best, Baker," said Kildare, as the New House senior went in, and Baker nodded, but not very hopefully.

He stood up to the bowler, very much on his guard, but perhaps he was a little too much on his guard. The ball that came down was like a shell for speed, and it whipped under Baker's bat and tore out his middle stump like a flash of lightning.

Then St. Jim's yelled.

"Out!"

ANSWERS

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bully Gore. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BOUND BY HONOUR!"

"Oh, great Scott!"

And the fieldsmen shrieked:

"Bang-bang!"

Kildare's face was a study as Baker came disconsolately out. The Jal bowler had performed the hat trick at the beginning to the first over. How was that innings to end, when it had commenced so?

The Saints were looking very serious and glum. They had been very keen to play the Indians, and they had expected a stiff match, but their expectations had not been quite up to this.

Where was the wreck to stop?

Lefevre of the Fifth went in after Baker, and Lefevre tried stonewalling. He succeeded in stopping the next ball, and the Saints breathed more freely. At all events, they were not all to be dismissed for duck's eggs.

They were glad when the over was finished. The Jal men were not likely to have another bowler of quite so deadly a description.

They hadn't. But two, at least, of the best batsmen were out, and the score could never reach the dimensions that were hoped for—and necessary.

Fatty Wynn had bowled wonderfully well, but fortune had favoured him. He could not expect to repeat the hat trick.

But later in the innings he bowled Darrel with only seven runs to his credit, and after Kildare and Monteith, Darrel was looked upon as a tower of strength in the St. Jim's first.

The innings tailed off after that.

When all the wickets were down St. Jim's first had totalled ninety, to balance against the one hundred and twenty taken by the Indians in their first innings. If it had been a single innings match St. Jim's seniors would have been hopelessly licked. But there is nothing so uncertain as the great game of cricket, excepting the weather, and the Saints still hoped to turn the tables upon their opponents in the second innings.

CHAPTER 13.

Something for Levison.

LUNCH was a merry meal to the Indian cricketers, though it was not quite so cheerful as usual to Kildare and his team.

The visitors were entertained in a really handsome way by the Saints, and everything had been provided for their comfort, and they certainly enjoyed their lunch.

Punar Singh, the bowler, came in for a great deal of attention, and all his wants were well looked after—and his wants were many.

He ate heartily of everything that was offered him, and he was not by any means slow to help himself, and his fat, dusky face grew fatter and shinier during lunch, and his round eyes beamed with enjoyment.

The rajah was seated at some little distance from him, but he cast many anxious glances in the direction of Punar Singh.

Figgins was afraid that Fatty Wynn would overdo the lunch, and spoil his form for the afternoon's innings, and his fears were well grounded. Whenever Fatty Wynn found himself at a really plentiful spread he was liable to forget everything else.

On any other occasion Figgins would have spoken to him in the plainest of plain English, but just now English of any sort was barred, and it was useless to shout out "Bang-bang!" or "Boggley!" to Fatty Wynn.

The fat Fourth-Former was enjoying himself, and cricket and everything else had faded quite into the back of his mind.

"Keep that fat boulder off the pastries as much as you can," the rajah whispered to Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! I'll go and speak to him!" said D'Arcy.

"Shut up!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Chunkety chunk bang wallop!" said Figgins loudly.

"Weally—"

Blake pinched D. Arcy, and the swell of St. Jim's remembered.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

bered himself, and was silent. Tom Merry crossed over to Fatty Wynn, and tapped him on the shoulder. Gore and several other fellows were close at hand, so English was barred.

Tom Merry pointed to the pastries, and shook his head, and Fatty Wynn understood.

"All right!" he said sadly. "I—I mean, boggley—boggley!"

Gore looked at him very curiously.

"So you can speak English, Mr. Punar Singh?" he asked.

"Yes—no, I mean—"

Tom Merry pinched him frantically, and Fatty Wynn broke off. The Shell fellow dragged him away from the table. Gore stared after them curiously enough.

"Those chaps are playing some blessed game with us!" he said. "They pretend they can't speak English, excepting the rajah, but they jolly well seem able to speak it all the same."

"Yes, rather!" said Levison of the Fourth, his suspicious eyes gleaming. "You noticed how they shouted out 'How's that?' once on the field?"

"Well, they'd learn those words, I suppose, if they played much cricket in England," French remarked.

"Yes, but—"

Levison did not finish, but he strolled away. Levison, the cad of the Fourth, was as keen as anybody else in the school, and he always followed a scent to a finish, even if it did not concern him in the least.

He joined Clifton Dane and Lumley-Lumley, who were chatting with the Rajah of Jal. He looked at the rajah with a peculiarly penetrating expression, and the rajah strolled away. Levison grinned.

"Curious how those chaps drop into English at times, isn't it?" Levison remanded.

"Do they?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes. You chaps went into their dressing-room after their first innings, didn't you?" Levison asked.

"How did you know that?"

"I happened to see you."

"You happen to see a lot of things, don't you?" said Dane disdainfully. "Well, if you saw us there's no need to ask the question."

"I dare say you heard them talking English."

"I dare say you'd better find out."

"They seem an odd lot."

"Do they?"

"Yes," said Levison; "and you two chaps know something about them, or you wouldn't be so jolly thick with fellows you'd never met before."

Clifton Dane and his companion strolled away. Levison's eyes glinted. He felt certain that he was upon the scent of something, and he meant to know what the mystery was. He strolled over to one of the Jal cricketers, an elegant youth, whose complexion was as dark as that of the others, but whose features were of a decidedly European cast. Levison nodded to him cheerfully, scanning his face the while.

"Good match, eh?" he exclaimed.

"Ya—hem! Bang-bang-bong-chuck-wallah!"

"Warm to-day for cricket, though?"

"Sam song tooral chump."

"That's Hindustani, I suppose?" said Levison.

"Chang-bang."

"Can't you speak any English?"

"Ching ching-punkah wallah."

"Well," said Levison, feeling quite secure in talking as plainly as he liked if the Indian could not understand English, "of all the muggy, inky, blacking-faced boobies I ever saw, I think you take the giddy biscuit! Where did you pick up those features. Where did you discover that nose—you call it a nose, I suppose?"

"You uttah wottah!" shouted the supposed Indian.

Levison staggered back in blank astonishment.

Biff!

The dusky fist shot out, and it caught Levison on the point of the chin. The cad of the Fourth sat down in the grass with a bump and a gasp.

Next

Thursday:

BOUND BY HONOUR!

A Splendid, New, Long Complete School Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order

Early!



Figgins opened the door. Clifton Dane and Lumley-Lumley were standing there with demure smiles upon their faces. "Bang-bang!" said Figgins. To which Lumley-Lumley answered in the same tongue: "Figgy wiggy merry perry Blakey chakey shakey Gussy wussy." "Monty manny diggy herry Fatty Wynny," added Clifton Dane. And then the cricketers knew that they had been found out. (See Chapter 11.)

CHAPTER 14.

Levison is Looked After.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY had given himself away with a vengeance.

Levison sat in the grass, looking at him with a blank and dazed expression.

Fortunately, the spot where they had been standing was screened by the pavilion and a group of trees, and the happening had not been seen by others.

"D'Arcy!" ejaculated Levison.

"You feahful wottah!"

"D'Arcy!"

"You insultin' beast! I— Bai Jove!" The swell of St. Jim's remembered himself a little too late. "Bai Jove—I mean, bang-bang-nang-chang—"

Levison grinned unpleasantly as he rubbed his chin. He picked himself up slowly.

"So you're D'Arcy, are you?" he exclaimed.

"Punkah wallah bo peep!" stammered D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha! It's not much use trying to keep that up now."

"Boggley bang wallop!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Levison impatiently. "I know you're D'Arcy, of my Form, and I can guess who the rest are now. I wondered what had become of Tom Merry and his crew—they weren't likely to stay away for a whole day while there was a match like this going on."

D'Arcy bit his lip. He was very angry with himself for having given the show away, but it was too late to think of that. The only thing to be done was to make terms with the cad of the Fourth Form.

"Of course, you won't say a word about this?" he remarked.

Levison laughed unpleasantly.

"After your dotting me in that way?" he asked.

"You deserved it, you utter wottah!"

"My hat! Kildare will be pleased to hear this," grinned Levison. "It will make the Sixth stare a bit, I reckon."

Arthur Augustus looked very much alarmed.

"You mustn't say a word!" he exclaimed. "Play the game, you wottah!"

"I'm certainly going to tell Kildare."

"Bai Jove! If you do, I will give you a fearful thwashin'!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Clifton Dane and Lumley-Lumley know, and they are not sayin' a word."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

I wely upon you, Levison, to keep mum. Otherwise, we shall all combine to wag you when the game is given away, and I warn you that you will have a wuff time."

Levison hesitated.

He was the most unpopular fellow in the Lower School, and if Tom Merry & Co. chose to rag him there, there was no one to stand by him in his hour of need. He knew that very well; and he knew, too, what a tremendous ragging he could expect if he spoiled a jape of that kind.

"Well, I might keep mum," he remarked. "By the way, I'm pretty hard up to-day. Could you lend me a sovereign, D'Arcy?"

The swell of St. Jim's looked at him with immeasurable scorn.

"So you're goin' to blackmail me, are you?" he exclaimed.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"I could do with a sovereign," he said; "I'm short of money! Of course, you needn't lend it to me unless you like. If this secret leaks out, though, it would be a pity, wouldn't it?"

D'Arcy looked at him, and slowly extracted a sovereign from his pocket. Levison slipped it into his waistcoat-pocket with a grin.

"Thanks!" he said airily. "You can rely on me."

"I twust so," said D'Arcy. "If the secret leaks out, you will get such a waggin' that you will think life not worth livin'!"

"Oh, hold on! Somebody else may tumble, all of his own accord!" exclaimed Levison.

"I twust not, for your own sake. It will certainly be put down to you," said Arthur Augustus coldly. "Pway come with me!"

"With you? Where?"

"Where I am goin'."

Arthur Augustus linked arms with the cad of the Fourth, and strolled away with him. He joined Clifton Dane and Lumley-Lumley, who were chatting near the front of the pavilion. It was nearly time for the Jal second innings. The two juniors looked at D'Arcy in astonishment as he walked up with Levison, who was looking sulky and uneasy.

"This utter wottah has bowled me out," said D'Arcy, in a low voice. "I am afraid I gave myself away, wathah."

"Well, you are an ass!" said Dane.

"Weally, Dane—"

"I guess you are a prize chump!" remarked Lumley-Lumley.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"I'm not going to say a word," said Levison. "It's all right!"

"I want you two fellows to see that he doesn't," said Arthur Augustus. "He's such a feashful liab, you know, you can't twust him."

"We'll stick to him all the afternoon," grinned Lumley-Lumley. "He sha'n't get out of our sight."

"Look here—" began Levison.

"No good talking. You shouldn't have been so jolly keen in making discoveries," said Lumley-Lumley. "You're going to stay with us."

"Thank you, deah boy! You're awffy good."

"Not at all; quite a pleasure! We'll keep Levison from chattering. You can rely on us, Gussy. Only don't give yourself away any more!"

"I shall be vewy careful not to uttah anothah word—exceptin' Hindostanee."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy joined the rest of the Indian cricketers. They were preparing for their second innings now. Lumley-Lumley and Clifton Dane placed themselves to watch the play, and they kept Levison between them. It was useless for the cad of the Fourth to say that he wanted to spend his time elsewhere. They would not let him go. And as either of them could have knocked him out in a single round without the slightest difficulty, the cad of the Fourth did not venture to resist.

"It's going all serene," Tom Merry remarked, with a chuckle. "Nobody but Dane and Lumley-Lumley has any idea—"

"And Levison," said D'Arcy.

"Levison! Does he suspect?" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"Ho knows!"

"How does he know?"

"He guessed. He was talkin' to me, and—"

Figgins gave a snort.

"I guessed Gussy would give it away!" he remarked.

"Levison will let the whole school know now—Kildare first!"

"Wats! I—"

"Ass!" said the whole Indian team together, speaking in English. "Fathead! Chump! Duffer! Benighted burler! Frabjous ass! Yah!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

"THE ONLY WAY!"

is the Title of the Splendid, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. One Penny.

"Of all the frabjous fatheads—"

"Levison won't say a word. I've given him a sovereign

"The mean rotter, to take it!"

"Yaas. I was much more inclined to give him a feashful thwashin', deah boys; but it was necessary to be vewy diplomatic," explained Arthur Augustus. "Of course, you can always wely upon me to—"

"To give the show away."

"No, Lowthah; certainly not! You can always wely upon me to use tact and judgment when they are wequired. I have shut Levison up, and Dane and Lumley-Lumley have agreed to look atfah him, and see that he doesn't jaw."

"Oh—good! They'll do that," said Tom Merry, greatly relieved. "Gussy hasn't done so vewy much damage, after all."

"Weally, Tom Merry—"

"No; he's really a harmless lunatic, when you come to know him!" Monty Lowther remarked.

"Lowthah, you ass—"

Kildare came over towards the Indians. Tom Merry nudged the swell of St. Jim's hastily.

"Hush!"

"Weally, you ass—"

"Hush! Cave!"

"Oh, all wight!"

"You fellows ready?" asked Kildare, with his pleasant smile.

"The readiness is quite prepared," said the Rajah of Jal, in peculiar English which he made up as he went along.

"We attend the honourable pleasure of your worthy selves." And his followers chimed in gravely:

"Bang-bang."

"Very well," said Kildare; "we're ready for you to open your second innings whenever you like."

Figgins glanced over his team, and spoke to them interrogatively in the mysterious language that was supposed to have originated in the distant land of Jal.

"Punkah nunky wallah koosh koosh?" he asked.

"Punky wallah boosh," replied Blake.

"Kish kish," said Tom Merry, with a nod.

And the rajah, as if satisfied, turned to the St. Jim's captain.

"We have the complete and venerable readiness," he said. And so the Indians commenced their second innings.

CHAPTER 15.

Going Strong.

Figgins put down the name of Punar Singh—alias Fatty Wynn—as last man in. The fat Fourth-Former had lunched not wisely but too well, and he was not exactly in a state to do his side credit. Figgins was at present restricted to the mysterious language of Jal; but later on he meant to say some things to Fatty Wynn in English. Figgins opened the innings himself this time, with Tom Merry for his partner. The crowd cheered the Rajah of Jal and Chandra Das as they came on, remembering how they had shaped in the first innings. Figgins salaamed gracefully in response to the cheer.

The Saints looked as if they were determined to make a tremendous effort to get level. They were thirty runs behind on the first innings, which was a serious handicap to carry through the rest of the game. But Kildare and his men were on their mettle now, and they did their very best.

The Indian batsmen did very well indeed, but the bowling was good, and the fielding excellent, and wickets went down faster than in the first innings. Figgins himself did very well, and so did Jack Blake, but Monteith took Digby and Herries' wickets in quick succession for duck's-eggs. He did not succeed, however, in performing the hat-trick, and it could not be said that any of the First Eleven bowling equalled that of the dusky Punar Singh.

In half an hour Jal were five down for twenty-four, which was a low score for the Indians, and caused the Saints' hopes to rise high.

Then Tom Merry came in, with Kangaroo at the other end. And the hero of the Shell and the Cornstalk proceeded to make the fur fly.

Both of them were good hitters, and both very fast, and both as keen as mustard. They made hay of the bowling, though Kildare changed Monteith, Darrel, and Baker continually—and took the ball himself sometimes.

The two batsmen were simply splendid, and when they could not hit out they blocked the balls, and their wickets remained intact while the runs piled up.

Loud cheers greeted the hard hitting of the two dusky batsmen. Even if the Saints were being beaten the crowd were ready to cheer any good play.

"Bravo, Chandra Das!"

"Hurray!"

And the group of dusky batsmen standing waiting in front of the pavilion joined in with a yell.

"Bang-bang!"

It was a splendid innings for Tom Merry and Kangaroo. They piled up the runs, till the seniors were weary with leather-hunting. Clifton Dane and Lumley-Lumley especially cheered and clapped. They knew whom they were cheering and clapping. Levison knew, too, but he did not cheer. He sat in the grass between the two juniors looking sullen. Once or twice he made an effort to get away, but he had not succeeded. And he had received a solemn promise that if he wandered off, he would be followed, and soundly licked on the spot, and so he had at last resigned himself to his fate. He had D'Arcy's sovereign in his pocket, but, excepting for that, he had reason to rue his keenness. For Levison was not a sportsman, and he had no desire whatever to watch a cricket match through a whole afternoon. But this time he had no choice in the matter.

Kildare was looking very ruddy, and a little winded himself, now. The Indians' score had leaped up to seventy-five, and the two formidable bats were still going strong.

Kildare tossed the ball to Monteith.

"Do get them out!" he exclaimed ruefully.

Monteith grinned rather disconsolately.

"I never saw a pair of bounders so well set!" he said.

And he went on without much hope.

But fortune favoured the New House prefect. Kangaroo drove the ball right back at him, and Monteith caught it as it came. He held it up.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

Kangaroo carried out his bat. Manners came in to join Tom Merry, and went out again with only three runs to his credit. In the next over—with Monty Lowther at the other end—Tom Merry, emboldened by success, tried a run too many. He had made three, and the ball was still far down the field, and he started on the fourth; and Monty Lowther loyally backed him up. Then the ball came in, straight as a die, for the batsman's wicket.

Tom Merry felt, rather than saw, it coming. He strained every nerve and his feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as he raced along.

The whole field hung breathless upon his movements.

"Faster! Faster!"

"Go it!" shrieked the crowd.

"Well run!"

"Put her through!"

"Hurrah!"

The ball was whizzing in. The batsman made one more desperate effort, and hurled himself forward, and fell—the end of the bat on the crease!

Crash!

The wicket flew to pieces; but the bat was on the crease; the ball, straight and steady from Kildare's hand, had come in a second too late!

The umpire shook his head.

"Not out!"

Tom Merry breathed again.

He rose, gasping to his feet, amid the cheers of the on-lookers. The Indians shouted at the top of their voices.

"Bang-bang! Bravo!"

Tom Merry passed his hand across his perspiring forehead. Then he started as he caught a brown stain upon his batting-glove. For a moment his heart jumped. He knew there must be some betraying sign on his forehead, where that stain had come off. With a quick movement he pulled his cricket cap lower down.

Monty Lowther's wicket fell in the next over. The innings was petering out; Fatty Wynn came in last to join Tom Merry. But the over-abundant lunch was still telling upon the fat Fourth-Former, and his movements were heavy and slow.

"Buck up!" Tom Merry said to him as he passed.

Fatty Wynn nodded.

"I'm all right."

"Chang, chang!" said Tom Merry hastily, as the wicket-keeper looked at him.

"Oh, bang, fuzzy wuzzy pop!" said Fatty Wynn.

And he went to his wicket.

Tom Merry continued to score, and the Saints realised that it was useless to attempt to shift Chandra Das from his wicket. They concentrated their attention upon Fatty Wynn, otherwise Punar Singh. But the fat Indian kept his sticks up gallantly. He did not do much scoring, but he stonewalled excellently, and for a long time he saved his end.

But his fate overtook him at last.

He was labouring on in a heavy run to the wicket, when Tom Merry had already reached the other end, when the

ball came whizzing in from Darrel, knocking the wicket to pieces.

And the Saints shouted in great relief:

"How's that?"

Fatty Wynn was out, and Tom Merry had finished his big innings, not out. The total of runs was exactly one hundred. It was a good score, making two hundred and twenty with the score of the first innings.

"And they've got ninety towards it," grinned Figgins to his comrades. "They won't reach it very easily, especially if Fatty bowls as well as before."

"Can't do that twice in one match," said Kerr.

"No; especially as the fathead has been feeding too much," said Figgins. "All of you keep an eye on him during tea, and punch him if he touches anything but a little bread and butter and tea."

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Oh, rats! You ought to have made that innings last longer!" exclaimed Figgins. "Mind, you're going to sit beside me at tea, and you're going to eat just a fragment. You can have a feed afterwards."

"But it's always best to lay a solid foundation—"

"Bosh!"

"I really think, Figgins—"

"Scat!"

And Fatty Wynn sighed and gave it up. There was evidently no convincing Figgins on that subject. Tea was served under the elm-trees before the Saints commenced their second innings, while the pitch was being rolled.

The Indians were so far ahead that it was clear St. Jim's would have to make a desperate effort to get level. That effort Kildare and his men meant to make, but it was very doubtful if it would be crowned with success.

CHAPTER 16.

The Victors.

KILDARE opened the second innings, with Monteith at the other end. He hoped to give the innings a good start, and put courage into his men. In that, to some extent, he succeeded. A batsman like Kildare was not likely to earn the dreaded "pair of spectacles"; the duck's-egg he had earned in the first innings was his only one. He piled up the runs now, and even Fatty Wynn found his wicket impregnable. Fatty, of course, could not expect to perform the hat-trick again, and he was not, of course, so fresh as he had been earlier in the day. Still, his bowling was splendid, and elicited cheer after cheer from the on-lookers.

The St. Jim's second innings was, all through, a brave and continued effort to retrieve bad luck; and it deserved to succeed. But there was too much against Kildare and his men. They had too much leeway to make up, and the Indians were keenly on the watch for every possible chance.

The wickets fell at a steady rate, and when St. Jim's were six down for eighty runs—Kildare's wicket among them—the Saints looked very grave.

As for the Indians, they were jubilant.

Fatty Wynn looked the most pleased of all. It was not because he was taking wickets, or because his side was winning. It was because the sooner the innings was over, the sooner he would be able to sit at the hospitable board that was ready for the entertainment and refreshment of the distinguished visitors to St. Jim's. The feed was to be a ripping one, and mental pictures of it danced before Fatty Wynn's brain, as he grew hungrier and hungrier.

Perhaps the thought of the feed to come bucked him up, for presently he bowled Rushden and Lefevre one after the other, the first for a two, and the second for a duck's-egg.

Kildare looked blue as they came out.

Eight down for eighty-two, out of the hundred and thirty that were wanted. Then Darrel went in, with Baker at the other end, and Darrel, who was a mighty hitter, retrieved matters a little.

Fatty Wynn, Blake, and Figgins himself pelted him in turn, without being able to move him, and the First Eleven score soared up.

It passed the hundred—it reached the hundred and ten—twenty!

Figgins's eyes began to gleam.

The First Eleven wanted ten more to tie—eleven to win! And they had two wickets yet to fall! And Darrel was hitting away like a machine! Another boundary—that was four to Darrel!

A hundred and twenty-four! The Indians would have looked as blue as the seniors had been looking, if their dusky complexions had allowed them to look anything but brown.

Figgins tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn again.

"You've got to get him out, Fatty!" he said, in a whisper.

"I'm hungry."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

NEXT
WEEK;

"BOUND BY HONOUR!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bully Gore. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"You fat boulder! Think of the feed we shall have if you take those wickets. The longer it lasts, the hungrier you will get."

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"Yes, I'm thinking of that," he said.

"Do your best, Fatty, old man."

"Right-ho, Figgy!"

And Fatty Wynn bowled with all his skill thrown into it. And for once Darrel was caught napping! His leg stump rolled over, and the balls were on the ground, and Darrel retired, amid a storm of cheering. He had scored well, and brought his side within easily measurable distance of victory. Six wanted to tie, seven to win! And nine wickets had fallen!

"Last man in!"

Fatty Wynn squared his shoulders, and his eyes gleamed. He had one more wicket to take to save his side. The first ball was swiped away for three, and the score stood at a hundred and twenty-seven.

"One more boundary!" murmured Kildare. "That will do it."

One more boundary would certainly have done it; but it was the tail of the St. Jim's side at the wickets now, not boundary-hitters! And their life was to be brief. Fatty Wynn sent down a ball that was his best, and it dodged in some mysterious way under a watchful bat, and there was the crash of a falling wicket.

There was a gasp from the crowd.

"How's that?"

"Out!" said the umpire grimly.

Last man was "not out." But the wickets were down, and St. Jim's First Eleven had been beaten by four runs!

Beaten!

Beaten, as they imagined, by the Indian team—beaten, as fifteen juniors knew, by the juniors of St. Jim's—the juniors of their own school!

The dusky cricketers yelled.

"Hurray! Hurray! Hurray! Bang! Bang! Bosh! Hurray!"

And St. Jim's generally gave them a cheer. They had fought well for their victory, and they had won it by a narrow margin. They deserved a cheer.

Kildare came up to the Rajah of Jal, with a pleasant smile on his handsome, sunburnt face.

"You've beaten us, sir," he said. "I suppose we couldn't really expect anything else, considering the reputation of your team. But it was a close thing at the finish."

"It was an honourable and splendid match, my young friend," said Figgins, inwardly quaking a little at his own audacity in calling the captain of the school his young friend. "It reflects equal glory upon both sides, and it is the fortune of war that the victory rests with us."

And he shook hands with the captain of St. Jim's very heartily.

"Very decent chap," Kildare said to Darrel. "There's something about him that seems familiar to me, too—something in his voice that I think I have heard before somewhere."

Darrel nodded.

"The same thing occurred to me," he remarked. "I dare say it's through seeing their photographs in the papers some time or other."

"Yes, perhaps."

But Kildare still looked a little puzzled.

As for the Indians, they retired to their dressing-room to change, and in the room they chuckled loud and long.

"Beaten 'em!" said Figgins. "Beaten the seniors! Oh, my only hat! If that doesn't fairly take the cake!"

"Yass, wathah!"

"And now for the feed!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 17.

Fatty Wynn Changes Colour.

THE sun was setting, and long shadows were stealing over the old quad. It had been a great day at St. Jim's; one of the longest and best of the day matches played by the First Eleven. And the margin of defeat had been so narrow, and their opponents were such a famous team, that the seniors did not feel much discomfited at losing. If they had known whom their opponents precisely were, their feelings would have been very different. But as yet they were in the state of ignorance which is bliss.

Kildare encountered Mr. Railton as he went in. It was time now for evening call-over, after which the boys had to go to their own Houses. But this was a special occasion, and an exception was made. There was supper laid in the senior common-room in the School House, and many New House fellows were coming, especially, of course, those who played in the First Eleven.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

"THE ONLY WAY!" is the Title of the Splendid, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. One Penny.

"Hard luck, Kildare," said Mr. Railton, with a nod, "but you very nearly pulled it off. That is a good bowler of theirs. I was watching him."

"Oh, he's splendid, sir!" said Kildare heartily. "Punar Singh, I think they call him. He's a little fat chap; but he's all there."

"They are a very small set of men to play cricket so well," the House-master remarked. "Only one of them seems to be man's size."

"Little but good, sir," said Darrel, with a smile.

"Yes, I suppose that is it," Mr. Railton said, with a puzzled smile. "They perplex me somewhat, I must admit. That stout little bowler is uncommonly like Wynn, of the Fourth. I have noticed Wynn's bowling many times, and he has the same delivery, and the same unexpectedness about the results."

"Oh he beats Wynn hollow, sir!" said Monteith. "I don't think Wynn could bowl like that to save his life!"

And some juniors who overheard that remark chuckled. Tom Merry & Co. walked solemnly into the senior common-room with Kildare and the rest, where a really handsome collation was prepared.

Punar Singh's eyes gleamed as he surveyed the well-spread table.

The seniors of St. Jim's had done themselves well in the way of providing hospitality for their guests, and the long, lofty room, with its old oak-panelled walls, was gaily lighted and decorated with flowers.

"My only hat!" the Rajah of Jal whispered to Chandra Das. "I've never been looked after this way before!"

And Tom Merry chuckled.

"It's ripping!"

Kerr leaned over to them.

"I say, what about calling-over?" he asked.

"Phew!"

The juniors looked dismayed. They had quite forgotten that. During the day the absence of Tom Merry & Co. had excited general remark among the juniors, and some of the seniors had noticed it. But that could be explained by the supposition that they had stayed out for the whole holiday, to make a day of it. But if they did not turn up to evening call-over, after a day's absence, the matter would become serious. And they certainly could not turn up. Mr. Railton was already taking call-over in the great hall.

Kildare, Darrel, and a few others, excused from call-over, were remaining with the Indian guests. The other fellows had crowded into the hall to answer "Adsum!" to their names. That it was impossible for at least twelve juniors to do.

Lumley-Lumley and Clifton Dane consulted on the subject. But they could think of nothing. They might have answered "Adsum!" once or twice for absence fellows, but they could not stand there and answer half-a-dozen times each in succession.

"I guess they'll be missed!" said Clifton Dane.

"I guess so!"

"There will be a bit of a row over this," the Canadian remarked. "Still, I don't see how they can find them now. They won't think of looking among the Indians in the senior-room at supper."

Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"I reckon not!" he said. "They're all serene so long as they keep close."

"Merry!"

"Tom Merry!"

"Merry!"

There was no reply. Tom Merry was marked down as absent, and he was only one of a dozen. Mr. Railton was frowning by the time he reached the end of the list.

"There are twelve juniors absent!" he exclaimed. "Three of them belong to the New House, and nine to the School House. This is too bad, even after a whole holiday! Does anyone here know where they are?"

"They all went out together, sir," said Reilly.

"Ah, yes, they are probably together," assented Mr. Railton, remembering whom the absent juniors were. The three rival Co.'s of St. Jim's were doubtless together, but whether fighting or on friendly terms it would have been unsafe to say. "They should have returned before dark. Knox, will you send them to me when they return?"

"Certainly, sir!" said the prefect.

And the school dispersed.

Meanwhile, the two teams had sat down to supper in the senior room. More guests arrived after calling-over was finished.

The long table was crowded. In the place of honour sat the two captains—Kildare and the Rajah of Jal—on the best of terms. Tom Merry and Blake had D'Arcy between them, ready to put the stopper on it, in the enthusiasm of the moment, he should attempt to make a speech.

The dusky faces of the Indians gleamed round the festive

board. There was a merry fire of chatter, most of the fellows talking at once; and the Indians, of course, talked in their own peculiar language, excepting when they forgot, and then they showed a curious knowledge of English, and even of English slang.

The St. Jim's fellows who noticed it were surprised. It was only natural that the Indians, touring in England, should pick up English; but to make so much progress in a single day was very astonishing.

Still, there was the fact, however surprising, and the Saints had to believe their own ears.

There was one cricketer who did not talk at all. That one was Punar Singh, alias Fatty Wynn. He was too busy to talk. Several fellows tried to compliment him on his wonderful bowling, but Wynn had little or nothing to say.

"You might pass the pie," he said, and his English was remarkably good for a native of Jal, who was supposed to speak only the Jal dialect.

Kerr pinched him.

"Bang-bang!" he whispered.

"Oh, I forgot! I mean bang-bang."

"You do speak English—eh?" asked Monteith, with a curious look at the Indian bowler.

"Bhong kosh," replied Fatty Wynn.

"Don't you understand me?"

"Muckey chuckey walker."

"But you were speaking English just now," persisted the New House prefect. "You asked Rushden to pass the pie."

"Spooner schooner mop bang wallop."

Monteith looked very much puzzled.

Fatty Wynn buried himself in the pie, and was happy. He did not care whether his prefect was watching him suspiciously; all his thoughts then were of pie, and pie alone. Pie filled up the whole horizon for Fatty Wynn.

But when he had satisfied himself with pie, he wanted something to drink.

"Any lemonade going?" he asked, looking round.

Kerr pinched him again, and Fatty Wynn squeaked.

"What the—"

"Bhong clack bang?"

"Oh, yes! Wady halfa khalifa besh kosh."

"Here's the lemonade!" exclaimed Levison, hurrying up with a syphon.

Some of the fags had been given leave to wait at the table, as a great honour, and Levison had offered his services. He had given Dane and Lumley-Lumley the slip at calling-over.

Levison had his uncomfortable afternoon to avenge, and he did not dare to betray the Indian cricketers openly. But Levison was never at a loss for a cunning plan.

He hurried up to Fatty Wynn with the syphon of lemonade. He drew Wynn's glass towards him, and streamed the lemonade into it, and contrived to stumble and turn the jet of fizzing liquid upon Fatty Wynn's face.

There was a roar from the fat Fourth-Former.

"Yaroop! Ow! Yah!"

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" exclaimed Levison.

"Yow! Ow!"

Fatty Wynn jumped up, choked and blinded, kicking his chair over backwards. He put up both hands to his face, wiping the foaming lemonade from his eyes and nose and mouth. His face was drenched, and as he wiped his fat hands over it the colour came off on his palms and his fingers.

There was a gasp from the fellows who saw him. Whitish streaks appeared all over the dusky complexion of Punar Singh, and a great deal of his complexion had been transferred to his serviette.

"Great Scott!"

"My hat!"

Kerr clutched Wynn by the shoulder. There was a chance left yet.

"Bolt!" he whispered, fiercely.

"Right!" muttered the unfortunate Fatty.

He covered his face with his hands, and bolted.

CHAPTER 18.

"Adsum."

FATTY WYNN had rushed out of the room before the feasters had recovered from their surprise.

The door banged after him.

Half the company were on their feet now, in alarm and surprise, and there were exclamations on all sides.

"What's the matter?"

"What's happened?"

"What's been done to him?"

"It was an accident," said Kildare, turning a rather worried face upon the Rajah of Jal. "A boy squirted lemonade in his face, I am sure by accident. It was an accident, was it not, Levison?"

"Of course!" said Levison. "My foot slipped, and—"

"You can get out now, Levison. We don't want any more accidents of that sort. Leave the room at once."

"Very well, Kildare."

And Levison departed, hoping charitably that he had done sufficient mischief. Certainly, he had observed the change in Fatty Wynn's complexion; but the fat Fourth-Former's flight had been so prompt that Levison's plan had not been carried out. He had meant to show the junior up to the whole table as disguised, but he had not succeeded in that.

The Rajah of Jal looked perturbed.

"I hope Punar Singh is not offended?" said Kildare.

"Perhaps he is hurt," the rajah suggested. "After such an experience he may not care to return to the venerable feast. Will you follow him, Kumar Lal, and see whether he is damaged. Kong bong pushy tap sammy bang."

"Osh kosh!" replied Kumar Lal.

And he followed in the footsteps of Punar Singh.

The incident somewhat upset the cheerfulness of the company. Indians were supposed to be touchy fellows, with

all sorts of curious ideas about caste, and there was no telling what unknown offence Levison's action might have given. Besides that, quite half a dozen fellows declared, in mysterious whispers that soon ran round the table, that they had seen a change in Punar Singh's complexion when he wiped the lemonade off.

"He's not a nigger at all, that's what I say!" said Lefevre, of the Fifth. "It's a little game!"

"I'm sure of it!" said Monteith.

"I've suspected something all along. I couldn't quite make out what. I remember, now, that some of the Jal team were crooked; they were going to scratch the match because of that. They're playing substitutes—not Indians at all, but English chaps with their skin browned. That's my belief."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Rushden. "I was sitting just opposite him, and I'll swear I saw him change colour in streaks."

"So did I."

"It's not a fair game, then," said Monteith. "The rajah had a right to play substitutes, but he ought to have told us they were white men, and played them in their own colour."

"Yes, rather!"

"No good saying anything now," said Baker hastily. "The result would have been the same anyway, and we don't want to appear to be carping because we're licked."

"No; but—"

"It wouldn't be a bad idea to squirt some more lemonade, and see if any more of the complexions will come off," growled Lefevre. "That's what I say."

Monteith grinned.

"I've a jolly good mind to," he said. "Only—Hullo, here comes the fat chap again! He's got his complexion touched up. That's what he bolted for."

Blake led Fatty Wynn back to his seat.

Kildare called across to the fat bowler:

"I'm sorry for that accident, Punar Singh. I hope you weren't hurt?"

"Not a bit—ahem!—ram sing push bang kosh!"

"It's all right, then?"

"Bang-bang!"

"Good!"

"Oh, boggley, boggley! Wallah!" said Punar Singh.

And the supper went on cheerfully enough.

Mr. Railton came into the room and spoke quietly to Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's turning his head away from the table.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bully Gora. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WYNN:

"BOUND BY HONOUR!"

"Have you any idea where the missing juniors can be, Kildare?" the School House-master asked.

"Who are they, sir?"

"Nine School House boys and three New House boys are missing," said the House-master, with a worried look. "It is very strange. It is already an hour after calling-over, and there appears to be no sign of them. Knox has reported to me that they have not arrived."

"It is very curious, sir. I don't think I need ask which juniors they are—Tom Merry and Blake and Figgins and the rest, I suppose?"

"Exactly."

"I saw them going out this morning, sir," said Kildare, "as I was going down to the village to get the brake for the Indians. They had a number of bags with them, packed full of something, and they looked as if they were going camping out. I remember, though, I asked them, and they said they would certainly be present at the match, and would be on the cricket-ground the whole of the time."

"But they were not," said Mr. Railton. "I have inquired in several quarters, and it appears that not one of these juniors has been seen from the time that you received the telegram from the Rajah of Jal this morning—"

"It was just then that I saw them."

"And they have not appeared since."

"I can't understand it, sir. Tom Merry and Figgins never tell fibs, and they said most plainly that they would be at the match."

"Of course they might have changed their minds," said Mr. Railton. "But if they really intended to be at the match, it is curious that not one of them turned up. It seems to point to an accident of some sort. It is surprising that not one of them has returned. I will have them looked for."

And the School House-master retired.

The Rajah of Jal looked at Chandra Das and closed one eye. The thing had to be seen through now, and it could not be helped. Exactly how it was to end they did not know, but they meant to see it through to a finish.

At all events, they would get to the end of the feed and keep the game up till bedtime, and then give in at the last moment. But they were reckoning without the end of the Fourth.

Levison met Mr. Railton as he left the seniors' room. He stopped in his path, and Mr. Railton stopped too, thinking that the junior might have something to tell him of Tom Merry & Co.

"Have you any news, Levison?" he asked.

"Not exactly, sir; but I don't think you need feel anxious," said Levison. "I should not have spoken, sir, only I think you are feeling that there may have been some accident."

"Do you know anything about the matter?"

"I know they are quite safe, sir."

"How can you know that?"

"I know where they are, sir."

"Indeed! And where?"

"In the school."

Mr. Railton gave a start.

"In the school, Levison?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where?"

"In the seniors' room, sir. I—I can't say more, sir; it would be sneaking, and they would rag me afterwards," said Levison, hesitating. "I don't want to give them away, sir, but—but I thought I ought to speak, as you seemed anxious, sir."

Mr. Railton compressed his lips.

"I hope that was your motive, Levison," he said. "I shall not mention your name as my informant. You declare that the missing juniors are in the seniors' room?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then they are present at the supper?"

"Exactly, sir."

"If you are playing a joke in telling me this, Levison, I need not tell you that I shall punish you severely. I shall now proceed to ascertain whether there is any truth in your amazing statement."

And Mr. Railton stepped back into the room he had just left.

He glanced about the room. There was the long table crowded with feasters, white and brown, gay with lights and flowers, and there were a crowd of fags waiting on the cricketers, but not a sign could the House-master see of Tom Merry & Co.

But he was resolved to test the matter. Levison's manner had been convincing, though his statement was so peculiar.

The House-master called out Tom Merry's name in loud tones. The GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

tones. If the hero of the Shell was there, it was his duty to answer to his name when the House-master called.

"Merry!"

Chandra Das rose in his place at the table instinctively.

"Adsum!"

And there was a general gasp.

CHAPTER 19.

Something Like a Triumph.

"A DSUM!"

Tom Merry's voice sounded along the table. Mr. Railton stared blankly at Chandra Das, and every eye was turned upon the Indian immediately.

"How the—"

"What the—"

"What does he mean?"

"Oh, you ass!" murmured Figgins. "Oh, you frabjous ass! You've given the show away now, and no mistake!"

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!"

"The game's up," said Kerr calmly. "Never mind; it was a jolly good jape."

Monteith sprang to his feet.

"I understand now!" he exclaimed. "Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry stood dumb.

Mr. Railton advanced to the table. It was not only that Tom Merry had replied to his call, but he had recognised the familiar tones. In spite of the inky complexion, in spite of the name of Chandra Das, he knew that it was Tom Merry standing there. His face was a study as he looked at the pseudo Indian.

"Merry!" he exclaimed.

"Ye-es, sir?"

"What—what on earth does this mean?"

Kildare and Darrel and most of the others were on their feet now. Only one fellow was undisturbed. It was Fatty Wynn. He was wiring into jam-tarts at express speed. If the game was up, that was all the more reason why Fatty Wynn should make good time before he was kicked out with his comrades.

The room was in a roar. Mr. Railton held up his hand for silence, but it was some time before silence could be obtained.

Amazed exclamations, and some angry ones, were heard on all sides.

"The young bounders!"

"The spoofers!"

"Not Indians at all!"

"We've been done!"

"Make them explain!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "Let me speak."

And the hubbub died down at last. The House-master looked at Tom Merry, who was crimson under his paint, although his blushes did not show. "Now, Merry, kindly explain."

"Make the rajah explain," said Monteith sourly; "he's the leader."

"Yaas, wathah! Though, weally, I should have gweat pleasuah in explainin', and pewwaps you fellahs had bettah leave the talkin' to me. Undah the circe, what is wequired is a fellah of tact and judgment, and—"

"Silence!"

Figgins stammered and explained.

"You see, sir, we wanted to play the Indians, and Kildare was down on it. Of course, we don't blame Kildare; we—we never expect the Sixth to understand things—"

"You cheeky young rascal!" said Kildare; while some of the Sixth chuckled, and Mr. Railton could not help smiling.

"Well, sir, we always said we could beat the Sixth if we had a match with them, but they were too high and mighty to play the juniors. So as the Indians weren't coming, we worked it to come down as the Indians, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"Of course it was only a jape, sir, and Kildare will admit that it's been a jolly good match."

Kildare laughed a little awkwardly. To be beaten by a junior team was a bitter pill to swallow, even to the good-tempered captain of St. Jim's.

"Yes, it was a good match," he said; "but your cheek in playing such a jape on us—"

"Well, you see—"

"I—I never heard of such a thing," exclaimed Mr. Railton, in amazement—"never in my life!"

"We—we hope you will excuse us for not turning up to call-over, sir," stammered Figgins. "Under the—the circumstances it would have been awkward."

Mr. Railton burst into a laugh. He could not help it.

"Yes, I suppose it would," he said; "very awkward indeed."

"We're sorry we had to take you in, Kildare; but you

got a good match with a team quite as good as the Indians," said the Rajah of Jal. "And as for Fatty Wynn, I'll bet he's a better howler than any man in the real Jal team."

"Yaas, wathah! Undah the cires—"

"I think the young roffers ought to be flogged for their cheek!" exclaimed Monteith angrily. "You will punish them, sir?"

"Oh, stuff!" Kildare exclaimed quickly. "It was cheeky of them, but it was only a jape; and, after all, we've had a jolly good match, and it's been a ripping day. I suggest that they are let off, if Mr. Railton thinks proper. They are a set of young rascals, but—but, after all, it was up to us to see through such a jape, you know. We oughtn't to have been taken in."

"Yaas, that's quite twue. I must wemark—"

"I shall leave the matter to you to settle, Kildare, as you are the victim of this extraordinary practical joke," said Mr. Railton, laughing; and he walked out of the room, still chuckling.

The spoofed Sixth-Formers looked grimly at the disguised juniors. The Rajah of Jal and his team had drawn close together, Fatty Wynn with a jam-tart in either hand. They were rather expecting to leave the common-room as they had left Kildare's study the previous day. Monteith and some more of the Sixth were looking angry. But the more sensible

fellows realised that it would be much wiser to take the whole affair as a joke. It was a case of the least said the soonest mended.

Kildare pointed to the door.

"You had better go and get those complexions cleaned off, and get into some civilised clothes," he said. "And if you ever dare to jape the Sixth again—"

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Get out!"

The Rajah of Jal and his team got out. Outside juniors crowded round them in swarms to cheer them and laugh and laugh and cheer. It was a day of triumph for the juniors of St. Jim's. The juniors had beaten the seniors—had beaten Kildare and the First Eleven. It was incredible, but it was true. And the whole of the Lower School rejoiced greatly over the triumph that had been the result of the rally of the rival Co's.

THE END.

"BOUND BY HONOUR!" is the title of next week's grand, long, complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, by Martin Clifford. Also a splendid long instalment of "Deep Sea Gold," by Reginald Wray. Order your copy of "The Gem" Library Now. Price One Penny.

TWO POINTS OF VIEW.

"Good-morning, Jones?"

"Good-morning, Brown! Any news to-day?"

"Why, yes. You know my brother that works at a bank? Well, he went to business the other day and found one thousand pounds on the counter. And what do you think he did? Stole the money and tripped off to Canada. And when the news reached my father, it broke the old man's heart."

"That's funny! You know, my brother works at a bank; too, and when he went to the bank the other day he found one thousand pounds on the counter. And what do you think he did?"

"What—stole it?"

"No, took it straight to the manager's office. And when the news reached my father, it broke the old man's heart."

PUSH AND GO!

"My son," said the successful City merchant, whose son had recently started life in a shipping office, "you can't get on in this world without push. Luck is all very well in its way, and may give a man a helping hand now and again, but it's as unreliable as—er—the English climate, my boy. Take it from me, all the most successful men and women—Shakespeare, Newton, Kitchener, Mrs. Pankhurst—got on by push."

"But, father—"

"No 'buts,' Percy! Just bear my lesson in mind. It's push that does it."

"I know, father," said the son gloomily; "I got it this morning."

"This," said Mr. Cane, "is my photograph with my two poodles. You recognise me—eh?"

"I think so," said Mr. Softe. "You are the one with the hat on, aren't you?"

NO MELON, THANKS!

The bald epicure had dropped his caviare-on-toast. To let it lie seemed sinful. Stealthily he stooped to pick it up.

His absent-minded neighbour felt a slight touch on his arm. He turned, and, perceiving the bald pate on a level with his elbow, imagined a plate beneath it.

"No, thank you, waiter," he murmured; "no melon. I'll take a little pineapple."

BEEN A BOY HIMSELF.

Father: "I want a cheap watch for my boy—the cheapest you have."

Dealer: "I'm afraid I cannot warrant the very cheap ones to keep good time, sir."

Father: "Oh, that doesn't matter; just make it so that he can open the back of it easily."

Teacher: "Johnny, where is the South Pole?"

Johnny: "I dunno."

Teacher: "You don't know after all my teaching."

Johnny: "No; if explorers can't find it, there's no use me trying to."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

New Storyettes.

LUCKY FOR THE WINDOW CLEANER!

"Ya-as," drawled the Yankee, "I once knoo a man, sir, who fell off a window-sill in a flat twenty storeys high, and never hurt himself, beyond a few bruises."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the Britisher.

"True!" asserted the Yank. "Up there he was busy cleaning windows, and he fell right off."

"Oh, bosh!" exclaimed the other. "How could that be?"

"Waal, sir," drawled the New Yorker, "you see, he just happened luckily to fall inside."

FOR BOOTS OR BEDDING?

His car had broken down. It was ten o'clock at night. The rain was beginning to drizzle. Dash it, bust it, and likewise blow it!

There was an inn near by; it was only just an inn, but it was an inn. The landlord growled when he asked for a room, but at last conceded it. They put his motor in the garage, among the mangel-wurzels.

He didn't have any supper. He just looked at it. Then he went up to bed. A minute later he was leaning over the balustrade.

"Landlord!" he yelled. "Landlord, do you think I am going to clean my own boots?"

"Wot's up?" called back mine surly host.

"What's up? Why, what's that boot-polishing pad on my bed for?"

"Polishin'-pad!" yelled back the landlord. "That's not a polishin'-pad, young feller; that's the pillow!"

"JOHNSON—100 LINES!"

It was piping hot, and the Form-master was vainly endeavouring to teach his unappreciative class the rudiments of geometry.

"With this point as centre," he began, for the fifteenth time, placing one leg of the compasses on the point. Then he turned to the boys to make some explanation, and simultaneously the compasses slipped.

Immediately the black sheep of the flock raised his hand and waved it wildly.

"Yes, Johnson?" asked the Form-master.

"Please, sir," came the prompt reply, "you're off your dot!"

HARD LUCK.

Goodfellow (as the ambulance goes by): "What's the matter?"

Ambulance man: "It's poor old Poircau, the sword swallower. He's been and choked himself with a fish-bone!"

NEXT
WEEK:

"BOUND BY HONOUR!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bully Gore. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DEEP SEA GOLD!

A Wonderful New Story of Amazing Adventure.

By REGINALD WRAY.



The First Two Instalments Explained Briefly.

Dick Dauntless and Jack Orde, chums at Weltsea College, are having a before-breakfast dip in the sea, when long, flexible steel arms, like the tentacles of some huge octopus, appear suddenly and mysteriously from the depths of the sea, and, seizing upon the chums, swiftly drag them down beneath the waves. Dick and Jack think their last moments have come as they are rushed down into the dark depths, when suddenly a trapdoor opens to receive them, and closes after them with a snap. Dick Dauntless and Jack Orde are in the power of Captain Flame, the Lord of the Undersea World, which he rules from his wonderful submarine motor-car, the Octopus. This amazing vehicle is Captain Flame's own invention, and enables him and his crew, which consists entirely of boys whom he has captured, just as he captured the chums of Weltsea College, to traverse the bed of the ocean as easily and rapidly as an ordinary motor-car travels over dry land.

The Octopus is bound for the Pacific, and, on the way, collides with a huge whale, which after overturning the vessel, comes to rest on top of its steel-clad foe. Captain Flame and Dick Dauntless go to see how matters stand. Leaving Dick near the whale the captain returns to the ship to call out the crew. Dick Dauntless, climbing on the whale's back, is suddenly startled to find that it is alive, and before he can understand what is happening, the whale leaps forward and rushes off with Dick as passenger. Eventually freeing himself of his strange steed, Dick finds himself on the edge of a weed forest, watching the receding form of the Octopus. He is on the verge of despair, when something touches him on the shoulder, and he turns round with a cry of joy. But his cry of joy turns to a moan of despair, when he sees what his companion is.

(Now read the third instalment of this breathless adventure serial.)

Pursued by Crayfish.

An enormous crayfish, raised two feet from the ground on long, hairy, claw-armed legs, was running its long, tapering feelers over Dick Dauntless.

Alarmed by the sudden movement of this strange invader in his ocean haunts, the crayfish drew back, its enormous eyes circling round on their long stems in a most grotesque manner.

Then it sank back on its broad, shell-protected tail, its front legs became rigid, and Dick instinctively flung himself aside, just as, launched like a stone from a catapult by a single movement of its huge tail, the crayfish alighted on the very spot Dick Dauntless had occupied a few moments before.

As it touched the ground its single claw closed over the stem of a cactus-like marine plant, and, despite his recent narrow escape, Dick laughed aloud as he saw the ludicrous surprise with which the crayfish's protruding eyes surveyed the weed it had seized in place of the solid flesh it expected.

His amusement seemed likely to cost him dear. With a side spring, as sudden as it was unexpected, the huge shell-fish flung itself upon him.

Fortunately for Dick, one of the creature's shell-encased legs struck him on the side, and sent him rolling several yards away.

Bruised and shaken, but otherwise unhurt, Dick Dauntless sprang to his feet, determined to be avenged upon his stupid but dangerous foe.

Whipping out his sword, he moved round to the side opposite to that on which the crayfish's large claw grew, then darted in and cut off one of the protruding eyes with a single slash of his keen blade.

Uttering a sound like steam escaping from a safety-valve, the crayfish raised itself on its long legs, then, arching its back, produced a strange, deep, drumming sound by striking its scaled body with its single claw.

In a moment the forest behind him was filled with similar sounds, which grew louder and louder, until at last the uproar became almost deafening.

Wondering and alarmed, Dick had already turned in the direction in which he had seen the Octopus disappear, when a clashing, like innumerable hollow gourds being banged together, caused him to glance over his shoulder.

The next moment he was running for dear life from a countless host of crayfish, which, evidently in answer to their wounded comrade's summons, were hastening to its assistance.

Their shells clashing together like an army of old-time warriors marching to battle, the crayfish followed in pursuit of the fleeing boy.

But though they could spring through the water a great distance, and at an almost incredible speed, they had to pause between each jump, and gather their tails together beneath them, ere they could repeat the performance.

This alone enabled Dick to maintain his lead.

Some of the creatures, crowded out of rank by their comrades, swam above this strange army, but these were soon left behind by the main body.

Dick soon found that he could easily outdistance his pursuers, so slackened his speed to a gentle trot.

Every moment he hoped the crayfish would relinquish the chase, but they hung on his heels with a grim persistency which, after a time, filled the boy with ever-increasing alarm.

As the reader knows, Dick Dauntless had been many hours without food. The exciting hours he had passed through since he had left the Octopus had also wearied him more than he knew, until he determined to make a final spury, hoping, when out of sight of his foes, to throw them off his track.

To this end he ran for the next few hundred yards at the top of his speed; then, looking back, and finding none of the shelled army in sight, he turned abruptly to the left, and after running until his breath came in short, quick gasps, his aching legs seemed incapable of carrying him a yard further, when he flung himself upon a soft bed of golden sand, which filled a cavity between two rocks.

An irresistible desire to sleep crept over him.

But barely had his head sunk on his arms than a strange sense of danger caused him to open his eyes and sit bolt upright.

A moan of despair escaped his lips.

The water around him was filled with the clashing of his remorseless pursuers, and glancing in the direction whence

he had come, he saw long, apparently endless lines of crayfish terribly close upon him.

How they had tracked him down he could not tell, but a fearful, hunted look came into his eyes. Instinctively he felt that, like beagles coursing a hare, they would follow him until he dropped through sheer exhaustion.

Rising to his feet, he forced his tired limbs to carry him forward in yet another burst, then, not daring to rest again, continued walking rapidly over the level sea-bed.

Gradually his wearied legs moved slower and slower.

Nearer and nearer crept his relentless pursuers.

Love of life lent him strength to stagger forward once more.

Twice was this manoeuvre repeated, but each time the distance between himself and his foes became shorter.

His legs felt as though encased in lead.

His veins throbbed as though they would burst.

His head seemed opening and shutting.

Surely the end was near.

With the dogged perseverance of the grand old British stock from whence he sprang, Dick Dauntless staggered on.

Gradually his head sunk on his breast.

Twice he stumbled.

The second time he sprang to his feet with a crayfish's gaping claw within a few inches of his outstretched heels.

Almost instinctively he staggered to his feet, and a frenzied struggle placed himself out of immediate danger once more.

But he knew it could be only a matter of minutes before he would fall to rise no more.

A cold shiver swept through his frame as fancy pictured his mangled body beneath the claw-armed feet of his ruthless pursuers as they tore him limb from limb by their larger claws.

With a fearful clashing sound a crayfish alighted close behind him.

Uttering a cry of horror, he threw himself forward, to find further progress barred by some solid obstacle.

He looked up with dazed eyes, to find that he had stumbled against the huge hull of an old-time galleon.

Her sides were covered with barnacles, long festoons of seaweed hung from her rotting timbers.

On a level with the boy's head was a gaping wound, where her timbers had parted as she settled down into deep water, and with one last despairing cry, Dick Dauntless sprang towards the opening.

How he gained the interior of the ship he could never tell.

He was conscious of one fierce, apparently endless struggle, of something—it was doubtless a crayfish's smaller claw—gripping his leg; then he fled through the aperture on to a mass of rotten bales and casks, held together by rusty iron hoops.

How long Dick Dauntless lay where he had fallen he could not tell.

It seemed hours. It could only have been a few seconds, for he was recalled to life by the beating of the crayfish's claws around the gaping wound in the ship's side, and saw, as in a dream, the loathsome creatures wedged into a solid mass in their eagerness to reach him.

Guided by the rays of his searchlight, Dick staggered along the hold until at last he reached an opening in the upper deck, through which he reached a narrow, small cabin, the door of which hung by a single hinge.

Exerting all his remaining strength, Dick Dauntless managed to shove the door to, then dropped with a weary sigh into an old-fashioned armchair screwed to the deck near a round table in the centre of the cabin.

The rotten woodwork gave to his weight, and he fell in a heap on the floor. Too exhausted to rise, he sank into a state that was half sleeping, half unconsciousness.

Spanish Gold.

Three hours later Dick Dauntless awoke.

A continuous tapping arose from beyond the wooden walls which hemmed him in.

Side, floor, ceiling alike resounded to the ominous blows. The crayfish were seeking to beat down the walls of his refuge to get at their prey.

Strengthened by the rest, though still weak and faint for lack of food, Dick Dauntless rose from the floor and surveyed his narrow prison, which, for all he knew, for all the hopes of rescue he dare indulge in, might yet prove his tomb.

To his left he noticed a small, square window, protected by stout, though rusty, iron bars.

The window was within a few inches of the ceiling, but immediately beneath it stood an iron-clamped chest. More for something to do than for any hopes of escape the prospect might offer, Dick clambered on to the chest to look out.

His foot sank through the rotten woodwork, and he sprang back just in time to save himself from falling.

The next moment he sprang eagerly forward.

Through the hole his foot had made came a wondrous vari-coloured, dancing flame.

A sudden excitement sending his sluggish blood flowing briskly through his veins, he thrust his hand through the opening, and drew out a handful of glittering stones.

For nearly a minute he feasted his eyes upon the scintillating gems, marking with delight their ever-changing colours.

Diamonds flashed back borrowed rays from rubies, rubies from emeralds, from sapphires, or from other beautiful stones, the very names of which he did not know.

Dropping on his knees beside the chest, he flung the rotten wood aside with frenzied haste, then gazed in delight at the store of wealth the riven wood revealed.

On a network of gold wire which had once been richly embroidered, lay a small jewel like those he held in his hand.

Cautiously he lifted one corner of the threadlike gold. Beneath it were richly-jewelled chasubles, cups, and plates, their lustre dimmed by the action of the salt water, but all of the finest gold.

He could not even guess at the value of his find.

All he knew was that he was rich!

Rich beyond the dreams of avarice!

And yet—

The jewels he had seized with such avidity dropped unheeded to the floor, as he remembered his hopeless position.

Though the galleon itself was packed with gold, it would avail him nothing.

Would he not willingly have exchanged the wealth of the whole world for one drop of water to moisten his parched lips, one mouthful of food to lessen the pangs of starvation which gripped him?

The delight with which he had regarded the rich hoard now turned to repugnance. He moved slowly to the further end of the room, and, leaning wearily against a bulkhead, became lost in thought.

Deadly despair was sapping the very desire to live from his heart.

Death did not seem so terrible in that lonely cabin beneath the waves, as it had done when fleeing from the remorseless pursuit of the giant crayfish.

Suddenly he started, his ebbing strength renewed by a sudden wild hope. The fearful hammering of the crayfish's claws on the wooden walls of his refuge had ceased abruptly.

The silence which ensued was almost as startling as the constant dinning had been.

Breathlessly he awaited what fresh surprise fate had in store.

Nor had he long to wait.

A sudden white glare filled the cabin.

"Thank Heaven, it is the Octopus's searchlight!" cried Dick Dauntless, as he rushed to the window through which the light had come.

But as with ruthless heels he trampled on the glittering gems and golden vessels within the chest, the light vanished, and his heart almost ceased to beat as the fearful thought that his friends had once again passed by, filled his mind with terror.

Almost unconsciously he hurled frenzied, despairing cries for help through the water.

There was no response, and Dick's loud appeals died away in low moans of despair.

Resigned to the worst, Dick Dauntless was about to turn away from the window, when his hopes blazed into renewed life, for once again the sea was illuminated with bright white beams, so fierce and dazzling that he involuntarily placed his hand before his eyes.

Again he raised his voice in a loud hoarse shout of:

"Jack Orde, Captain Flame! I am inside the old galleon! Help! Help!"

His eyes, grown accustomed to the blinding beams, pierced the water beyond the light.

Instead of the towering bulk of Captain Flame's car, appeared a round, glistening object, some six feet in length, propelled by a swiftly-revolving screw in its stern.

"A torpedo!" muttered Dick, as the strange object drew nearer. "It will strike the wreck, and then—"

He ceased speaking, pressed the glass of his helmet nearer the bars that protected the window, whilst a loud, joyous shout burst from his lips, for close to a glass shield immediately beneath the searchlight's powerful lens, appeared the white, strongly-marked features of Captain Flame.

Sounding like the sweetest music in Dick's ears, came the words:

"Dick Dauntless, my dear lad, thank Heaven I have found you!"

Dick opened his mouth to reply, but instead of the words of grateful greeting he would have uttered, a hoarse, frenzied

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

try of warning escaped his lips. Thrusting his hand through the window, he pointed to where a huge blanket-fish was poised, like a hawk about to strike, immediately above Captain Flame's strange torpedo-shaped craft.

Back in the Octopus.

As with the swiftness of a falling stone, the blanket-fish—known in Californian waters as the bat-fish—dropped through the water, Captain Flame wheeled his curious, torpedolike craft round, in a vain attempt to escape the threatening mass of flesh and sinew.

Too late!

Already the blanket-fish's huge sides were touching the sandy bottom of the sea. The next moment its enormous body, weighing several tons, settled down upon the imprisoned inventor.

With breathless horror, Dick Dauntless watched the tragedy through the window of the old galleon.

He gave Captain Flame up for lost.

No human being could hope to emerge alive from beneath that enormous mass.

With Captain Flame, his last chance of escaping from certain destruction disappeared.

So close was the blanket-fish to the window, that Dick could plainly see its fearful head, surmounted by a huge, projecting frontal bone, on either side of which appeared dark, glistening eyes, whilst its body, from which protruded the single spinelike point with which it protects itself from its foes, looked like nothing so much as a huge hummock of black mud.

Horror-stricken, yet unable to withdraw his gaze, Dick watched the mighty monster. Suddenly he saw the huge frame quiver, its bulk contracted, and the next moment it rose in the water, writhing in fearful agony.

As, propelled by slow, inward sweeps of its enormous fins, the blanket-fish disappeared in the distance, Captain Flame glided up to the window.

"A near go, Dick. It is not often the blanket-fish releases its prey once it has got it fairly beneath him," he laughed.

"I thought it was all up with you, sir," confessed Dick.

"How did you make it leave go its hold?"

"Simply by charging the hull of my boat with electricity. Our huge friend did not seem to appreciate the shock," explained Captain Flame. "Now to find the Octopus, and bring her up. You can hold out a little while longer?" he added.

"I'll try, sir," assented Dick. "But I do hope you will not be long. I am so hungry."

"I expect you are. But courage! Your troubles are nearly over!" cried Captain Flame, ere he made his strange craft sweep gracefully round, then shot off at a speed which soon took him beyond the imprisoned boy's limited range of vision.

It seemed hours to Dick Dauntless before, her approach heralded by the bright beams of her searchlight, the Octopus hove in sight.

It was the first time Dick Dauntless had had a good sight of Captain Flame's huge car moving over the ocean bed from without, and he watched the mighty structure's approach with an admiration that made him, for the moment, forget hunger, thirst, and weariness.

The bottom of the ocean over which the Octopus travelled was full of dips and sandy mounds, and interspersed here and there with outcropping rocks; but, thanks to the strongly-sprung discs on her huge wheels, she negotiated every obstruction with the greatest ease, her body remaining as steady and level as though traversing a well-metalled road on dry land.

As the car drew nearer, Dick Dauntless could see his comrades, headed by Jack Orde, peering at the galleon through the Octopus's glass walls.

Dick waved his hand from the window, and though he could not hear through the thick glass walls, he knew by the action of their mouths, that they were cheering vigorously.

Presently the Octopus came to a standstill alongside the galleon, and, diving-helmet on head, Captain Flame and Jack Orde hastened across the intervening sands to the opening in the riven hull by which Dick had entered.

Almost beside himself with delight, Dick hurried forward to meet his friends.

Hearty, indeed, was the greeting Dick received from his chum.

Even Captain Flame seemed moved out of his customary calm, as the boy seized his hand and pressed it gratefully.

So delighted at the prospect of breathing fresh air once more, and, above all, of rejoining his friends was Dick Dauntless, that he quite forgot the treasure-chest until they were about to re-enter the car.

Then he told Captain Flame of his discovery.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

"THE ONLY WAY!"

is the Title of the Splendid, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. One Penny.

The inventor's eyes flashed greedily.

Signing the boys to enter the Octopus alone, he hastily retraced his steps.

Dick Dauntless was greeted by MacIntyre and his future comrades as one risen from the dead.

Mopsa nearly strangled him in an all too warm embrace.

The other boys crowded round Dick, eager to hear his adventures, but Mr. MacIntyre would not let him speak a word until he had swallowed a big bowl of strong broth.

Dick would gladly have had another plateful of the nourishing soup, but, knowing the ill effects of too heavy a meal after a long fast, the engineer would not hear of it.

Although Dick had been forbidden to talk whilst he ate, no such embargo was placed on Jack Orde's tongue.

From him Dick Dauntless learnt that Captain Flame had emerged from the Octopus just in time to see the whale, with Dick clinging for dear life to the harpoon, vanish in a swirl of water.

Realising the perils which would menace a boy wandering alone in the trackless depths of the sea, the occupants of the Octopus had worked like Trojans to right the car, with the result that some ten minutes after their comrade's disappearance, they were moving swiftly in the direction the whale had gone.

Hour followed hour, day followed night, yet no trace of the lost one could be found.

At length Captain Flame summoned a council of war, at which, to Jack Orde's surprise, he notified his intention of continuing the search in one of the Octopus's boats.

Seeing Jack's look of blank amazement, Captain Flame had led him into a room in which were three torpedo-tubes, in each of which lay what Jack believed to be a torpedo, until his host opened one, disclosing a cavity in which a man could just lie at full length, his body resting on his elbows, and his face pressed close against a glass screen.

Convenient to the hands were a number of switches which controlled the small but powerful engine which worked the propeller.

The feet rested against movable pedals, by pressure on which the torpedolike craft could be steered.

Entering one of these strange boats, Captain Flame had fastened the lidlike top on from the inside, the torpedo-tube was closed, a trigger pulled, and the torpedo was shot forth on its journey of exploration.

Jack Orde had not finished his narration when Captain Flame entered, staggering beneath the weight of a large bag in which he had placed the contents of the treasure-chest.

"Well done, my boy!" he cried, as he deposited his load on the floor. "At the most modest computation your find is worth a hundred thousand pounds, and as the finder gets a tenth of what is garnered from the sea, you are already some ten thousand pounds the richer for your sojourn in the Octopus."

A Shooting Party.

Dick Dauntless slept the round of the clock, then arose none the worse for his exciting experiences beneath the waves.

Time passed very pleasantly on board the Octopus.

There was always something to be done—floors to be scrubbed, rooms to be cleaned, arms to be polished, or the machinery to be scoured and kept so bright that the workers could see their faces in the cranks and piston-rods that sent the huge motor-car careering over the ocean bed.

But though there was sufficient work to prevent the boys from growing slack, they had also plenty of time for games, study, etc., or, what both Dick and Jack liked best, to sit before the glass walls of the car watching the teeming life of the ocean.

Now some frightful monster would glide into view which made the boys recoil in terror from the glass, now a swarm of fish of as many hues as gaily-plumaged tropical birds would flash past, whilst there seemed no end of the strange creatures they saw crawling sluggishly over the sea bed.

From the first the chums had been treated differently to the other boys, and, shortly after Dick's ride upon the whale, Captain Flame announced that Dauntless and Orde were to act as first and second-lieutenant of the Octopus respectively, under Mr. MacIntyre and himself.

The announcement was received with enthusiasm by three of the five boys who composed the crew of the Octopus. The others, however, only ventured to express their dissatisfaction by dark looks and muttered growls, which Dick deemed it wiser to ignore.

Whether the boys owed their promotion to the old friendship that had existed between Captain Flame and Dick Dauntless's father, or because the chums were older, and, with perhaps the exception of Will Avery, more manly than

the other boys, they could not tell, though probably an event which took place shortly after Dick's involuntary ramble beneath the waves had something to do with Captain Flame's choice.

It happened thus.

Dick Dauntless and Jack Orde, their work for the day done, had retired to the chart-room to feast their eyes on the wonders the glass walls of the room revealed and to chat over their school days, when they were astonished to find the constantly-shifting panorama before them moving slower and slower, until at last it remained stationary, and they knew that the Octopus had stopped.

So accustomed had they grown to the slight hum of the machinery and the gentle swaying motion that movement gave to the body of the huge vehicle that they were looking at each other in alarm, when Captain Flame entered.

"Mr. MacIntyre has stopped to make a few necessary repairs to his engines. It will take him two hours. What do you say to a short shooting excursion?" he asked.

The boys gazed at the speaker in amazement.

"Shooting at the bottom of the sea!" gasped Jack Orde.

"Why not? We have the guns, and my preserves are always well stocked," replied Captain Flame, with a smile.

"But how do we keep our powder dry?" asked Dick.

"My powder shoots the better for getting wet," laughed the inventor. "Call Will Avery, he deserves a treat, and meet me in the armoury in five minutes!" he added as he left the room.

"Well, I'm stammered, as they say in Suffolk!" gasped Jack. "Who ever heard of shooting beneath the sea?"

"Whoever heard of walking about under the sea as easily as on dry land, for the matter of that?" retorted Dick Dauntless. "Come on; I'm dying for a shot at the partridges!"

Laughing and excited, the chums hastened to the crew's living-room, where they found Avery carding some of the seaweed wool of which their clothes were made.

"Chuck down your tools, Will, and 'Fall in and follow me!'" sung Dick. "Captain Flame's compliments to Mr. William Avery, and he requests the pleasure of his company for a day's shooting!"

"Bully! That's splendid!" shouted Will, springing to his feet, his eyes glistening with pleasure.

"Then you've had some before?" queried Jack Orde.

"Rather!" declared Avery.

Hastening to the door, he threw it open, bawling:

"Mopsa, you yellow-skinned, almond-eyed Celestial, hurry up; the captain wants you!"

A ball rolled so swiftly into the room that Will, unable to get out of the way, was sent floundering on the floor.

Then the ball uncurled itself, and Mopsa appeared, smiling before them.

"What the matter?" he demanded.

"Shooting's the matter. Dick, Orde, and I are going out with the captain."

Mopsa indulged in a weird war-dance of his own invention. The three boys did not applaud.

It was not that Mopsa did not show agility, but because every other step was performed on the toes of the spectators.

"Welly good dance! Welly well danced!" said Mopsa complacently, as he ducked to avoid Dick's avenging arm, and diving between Jack's outstretched legs, darted from the room.

"The little beast! Why did you call him, Will? Captain Flame did not say he was to accompany us!" growled Dick, his naturally sweet temper somewhat ruffled by his aching toes.

"Oh, he always goes with us to carry the game!" explained Will, limping after the mischievous Chinese.

The boys followed, and a few seconds later entered the armoury, where they found Captain Flame in the act of unloading a case, from which he took four guns with large bores, but without cocks or triggers, small round knobs, where the thumb of the right hand rests against the stock, taking the place of the latter.

"Here you are, my lads! I think you will find these guns neither miss nor hang fire. You'll find bandoliers in that box," he added, pointing to a chest near the gun-case.

Dick Dauntless secured a bandolier filled with cartridges similar to those he had often used on land, but larger, and without the usual percussion cap in the base.

"Show them how to load and fire, Avery!" directed Captain Flame.

Will obeyed.

Slipping open a slide in the top of the breech, he thrust in a cartridge, then explained how the gun was fired by pressing the knob on the stock.

Dick examined his weapon with interest.

It was very light, and fitted into his shoulder as though built specially for him.

The little party then donned what the Octopians—as Will Avery had long since dubbed the occupants of the submarine

motor-car—called their sea suits, and, passing through the water dock, commenced their strange shoot.

Immediately before them appeared a steep hill of weed-covered rock, up which they mounted to a large plateau so close to the surface that the sun shone with almost unbearable heat upon them.

Presently, her huge bulk scarce causing a ripple around them, an ocean liner passed overhead.

"Look out, lads! Here comes our game!" cried Captain Flame.

Glancing upwards, Dick Dauntless saw a huge bird with wide, outspread wings glide swift as an aeroplane over the crest of the waves.

In a moment Captain Flame's gun was at his shoulder.

There was a muffled report, and the bird, beating the waves in its death struggles, fell into the sea.

Jack Orde turned as something shot like a rocket to the surface.

It was Mopsa retrieving the game.

A minute later he returned, dragging an enormous albatross after him. With a satisfied grin he slung the huge bird over his shoulders.

Two men had witnessed the albatross fall from the stern of the liner.

"Sharks!" declared one, as Mopsa drew the bird beneath the waves.

"Perhaps," replied the other thoughtfully. "But it was no shark that killed it. If ever I saw a shot bird, that was one!"

The first man laughed.

"Come in out of the sun, my friend! You will be saying there are submarine sportsmen beneath our keel next!" he cried.

Even as he spoke a graceful sea swallow folded its wings and fluttered helplessly on the waves.

It had fallen a victim to a snapshot from Dick Dauntless's gun.

"Well done, my lad; that was as pretty a shot as I have seen for a long time!" declared Captain Flame. "With the outer layer of fat removed, the sea swallow is as good eating as a nice plump pheasant."

With an elfin laugh, the Chinese boy dashed upwards, returning shortly afterwards with the bird slung over his shoulders alongside the albatross.

A common gull and tern were next secured by Jack and Will respectively, and promptly retrieved by Mopsa. Then the seabirds following the liner passed on, and, with a "Now for nobler game!" Captain Flame led the way into deeper water by the simple process of striding to the edge of the hill, and springing to the lower slopes some two hundred feet below.

Will Avery followed the captain's lead without hesitation, but Dick and Jack held back, until the former, seeing that his companions had alighted safely on the slope of the hill, and were evidently waiting for him to follow, sprang forward, and found himself falling so slowly that the sensation was a decidedly pleasant one.

Suddenly Jack Orde felt himself seized round the middle, and tumbled headlong over the precipice.

As he sank through the clear water he saw, to his horror, a cruel hooked beak apparently jabbing at his neck.

With a scream of terror, he grasped the long neck to which the beak was attached, and squeezed it with all his might.

It was not until he alighted on the shell-strewn slope between Dick and Captain Flame, and heard the mischievous laughter of Mopsa ringing in his ears, that he realised that he had been gallantly maintaining a fearful struggle with the dead albatross.

Joining in the laugh against himself, Jack waited his opportunity, and, swinging the bird round his head, brought it down with all his force upon Mopsa's pate.

The result was amazing.

For a moment the Chinaman was hidden from his companions by a mass of feathers. Then the albatross bounced from the ground, and Jack gazed at his companions in speechless amazement.

Mopsa had disappeared.

At first Jack and his companions thought the agile little Chinaman had glided aside, and was hiding amongst the weeds at their feet, but the next moment Dick pointed to a round, smooth hole, crying:

"He has fallen into that pit!"

Even as Dick spoke loud cries for help arose from the rock at their feet.

"Mopsa! Mopsa! Are you hurt?" cried Jack, kneeling by the side of the pit and trying to pierce the depths below.

Even in that terrible moment—and how terrible it was none could guess—the Chinaman could not help a joke.

"No. 'Course not! Mopsa crying because he likes to be eaten by—"

The half-laughing rebuke finished in a very real howl of terror.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

NEXT WEEK: "BOUND BY HONOUR!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bully Gore. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

So fear-laden was the cry that Dick Dauntless thrust Jack aside, and, holding his gun ready for immediate action, sprang through the narrow opening.

The distance must have been considerable, for he was several seconds falling through the water.

But ere he reached the bottom of the pit he had a foretaste of the terrors that awaited him.

A round something, like nothing so much as an elongated bladder, brushed against him, and he felt a sharp twinge of pain, as though a dozen needle-points had been inserted into his leg.

As he reached the sandy bottom Mopsa dashed up and flung his arms about him.

"Good boy, Dick—brave boy, to come to poor Mopsa's help! Little Chinaman so frightened!" moaned the nannikin.

Dick Dauntless looked around him.

The glare of his searchlight lit up a strange scene—a scene so terrible that for the moment the brave British boy's heart quailed.

He could scarcely believe such fearful creatures existed outside a madman's delirium-haunted dreams.

Wherever he looked, to right or left, before or behind, swaying to and fro on the ground, perched on shelves in the rocky sides of the shaft pit, on every protruding rock, on every jutting crag, appeared a hideous, grotesque head.

There were no bodies or limbs, simply greyish white heads, huge, gaping mouths, and dull, lustreless eyes set on either side of broad, distended nostrils.

The fearful creatures looked like nothing so much as the heads of bald-headed men, cut off close under the chin.

Every eye in this fearful circle was fixed upon the two humans, and Dick felt almost relieved when one of the creatures rose slowly in the water and floated towards them, blinking beneath the glare of the electric light in a most ludicrous manner.

Suddenly Dick Dauntless burst into a loud laugh as he noted a fringe of short, sucker-armed tentacles, hanging beneath the floating figure.

"They're squids, Mopsa. Nothing but common or garden squids," he cried.

"No, no! They heads of all the bad men that have sailed the sea ever since the world began!" shrieked Mopsa.

His usually fearless heart was filled with a terror of the supernatural that almost robbed him of his reason.

Dick Dauntless made no reply.

The approaching squid was rising above his head, evidently with the intention of settling upon him.

In a moment his gun flew to his shoulder, and he lined the sight on the squid's globular body.

"Don't shoot! On your life, don't shoot!" cried a warning voice immediately above him.

It was Captain Flame who spoke.

The warning came too late.

Already Dick's thumb pressed the trigger.

He saw the hideous body shiver as the bullet passed through its sac, leaving a wide, gaping hole behind.

Then as the creature collapsed like a pinched bladder, a stream of inky fluid poured from out its wound.

In a moment the boy, Dick Dauntless, Mopsa, and Captain Flame, who had alighted beside them, were plunged into darkness.

It was as though a thick black curtain had been drawn around them.

Their searchlights only served to intensify the hideous blackness which surrounded them on all sides.

"Back to back! Out with your swords, and lay about you!" ordered Captain Flame.

Encouraged by his master's voice, Mopsa soon recovered his wonted courage.

Back to back the three struck blindly at a foe they could not see.

Now and again a slight tremor told when a blow had gone home.

Nor were their foes idle.

They swarmed round the three humans in all directions, settling down on arms, legs, heads, and shoulders, and though whenever either of the three felt a tentacle-armed sucker close over him, he promptly slit open the soft, yielding body with a thrust or cut of their keen blades, the tentacles clung to them until they could scarcely move their sword-arms, so weighed down were they by the clinging bodies.

If possible, it was darker than ever, for every dying squid yielded up its quota of liquid opia.

Presently Dick Dauntless uttered a loud, warning cry. His sword had encountered steel in the darkness.

(This grand adventure serial will be continued in next week's issue of the "Gem" Library. Order your copy now. Price One Penny.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

Concluding Instalment.



A splendid tale dealing with the thrilling adventures of a trio of Brittishers

The Arrival at Rio.—Conclusion.

Bob Harding controlled the car as though in a nightmare. His eyes were staring, his face pale, and in every limb he was shivering with emotion and nervous excitement. Strong as he was, both in will-power and muscle, he could scarcely stand the strain of what had occurred during the last awful hour or two.

What a finish to their expedition! What a double tragedy! But a few hours previous they had all been cheerful and full of hope. Now—Bob almost choked as he thought of his chums' fate. The task had been accomplished—and more than accomplished—but at what a cost—what a terrible cost!

"What a fool he was," muttered Bob feverishly—"what a reckless fool! If he had taken my advice he would never have been hit. But I can't blame him, poor old chap: he wanted to have a last shot before we cleared the town. Well, he had one, but it wasn't what he expected."

He drove on and on, forgetful of the time, the road, and everything except the injuries to his two comrades. After half an hour he suddenly recovered his nerve, and became, in a way, calmer than before the commencement of the whole night's work. He remembered that Ralph might be dying, and brought the car to a sudden standstill.

The rain had ceased by now, and the heavy stormclouds were dispersing, disclosing the clear sky here and there. Hardly a breath of wind stirred, and it could be plainly seen that the night would soon turn out to be a beautiful one, in spite of the deluge which had lately fallen.

But Bob Harding never gave a thought to the weather. What thoughts did fill his aching brain were ones of bitter anguish for the two staunch friends who lay unconscious so close to him. They had been chums since boyhood, and now this calamity, coming with such drastic suddenness, had ruined every one of their plans—perhaps it would mean the death—

But no! Bob still had hope, for both Tom and Ralph still breathed. But the alliance? That was shattered, in any case, for it was impossible to carry out any further plans for Mr. Fortescue. The two years of adventures together they had talked about so cheerfully was now quite out of the question—quite an impossibility.

Bob flashed the light from his electric torch upon Ralph Chesterton's face, and then uttered a low cry of horror. The rifle-bullet had entered his skull, and his forehead was in a terrible state. Strangely enough, there had been scarcely any loss of blood.

"Good heavens, he'll never get over this!" muttered Bob distractedly. "It is too much to hope he will. Poor old Ralph—poor old Ralph!"

Bob was nearly heartbroken, and was in danger for a moment of breaking down completely. But he realised how much depended upon him, and pulled himself together in time. Ordinarily, he was as cool and collected as any man on earth, but this was enough to drive many people frantic. Two of his best friends—in fact, the two best chums he had—lying before him seriously injured, perhaps dying. It is a wonder Bob remained so calm.

Tears stood in his eyes as he bound a handkerchief round poor Ralph's head, and the lump in his throat seemed too big to allow him to breathe. He cut a pathetic figure as he stood there in the motor-car, bending over Ralph, his usual smiling and healthy face pale, drawn, and deadly serious.

Tom was lying back, covered by a waterproof sheet, half asleep and half awake. He watched Bob in a dazed kind of way, but did not speak.

Suddenly the latter became active. He had glanced at his watch after feeling the Army officer's heart, and reckoned how long it would take him to reach Rio. There would be a hospital there, and the sooner he arrived the better the

"THE ONLY WAY!"

Is the Title of the Splendid, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. One Penny.

chance of Tom and Ralph recovering from their wounds. In a second his own coat was off, and this he laid upon Ralph.

Then, starting up the engine again, he leapt into the driver's seat and slipped the clutch in. It was a race now—a race for life, and Bob Harding meant to win if it were within the bounds of human possibility to do so.

Through the night he rushed, crouching behind the steering-wheel, taking risks which would have made his hair stand on end had he been at home in England. His one thought was to reach Rio—to reach the hospital—to reach a place where a doctor could attend his two wounded fellow-travellers.

It was a race for life with a vengeance!

"Another half an inch, Mr. Harding, and your friend would have been killed on the spot!"

These words were uttered by Dr. Milner Thurston as he stood in his private office at the Burlington Private Nursing Home in Rio de Janeiro. It was a British establishment, and Bob had been very pleased at finding it.

A week had passed since that memorable night-ride from Elvasgo. To Bob it seemed like a hideous nightmare, and he himself was now practically in his usual spirits. His face, however, was still pale.

"But Mr. Chesterton will not die now?" he inquired eagerly, in response to the elderly doctor's remark.

"Oh, no; he's quite safe now. At one time I feared that it was useless to hope for recovery, but after extracting the bullet I found it had entered his head at about the only spot where it could have done so without being fatal. For four days, while he was suffering from concussion of the brain, I thought he would knuckle under, but yesterday he took a distinct turn for the better, and recovery is now merely a matter of time."

"Thank Heaven for that, doctor!" exclaimed Bob fervently. "I had given up hope almost, and this news has put new life into me. So old Ralph will live! By Jove, it sounds almost too good to be true! Is he conscious?"

"Quite," smiled Dr. Thurston, "and very anxious to see you. I have promised him you shall pay him a visit this morning. It is quite safe."

"That's ripping! And Tom—Mr. Manton? How is he?"

"The young beggar is one of the healthiest fellows I have ever seen," replied the doctor, "and is very impatient at having to lie in bed so still. He is getting along splendidly, but it will be a month or two before his shoulder allows him to leave the building."

Bob's eyes gleamed thankfully.

"And I thought they would both peg out," he murmured. "After these days of suspense, Dr. Thurston, I feel as light-hearted as possible now. It's splendid news you've given me this morning! When can I go to their room?"

The doctor smiled.

"Now, if you wish," he replied.

"Then I won't lose a minute," cried Bob, moving towards the door. Then he paused. "Perhaps you'd better go first," he added, "and prepare them for my visit."

"Very good; I shall not be a minute."

Bob stood in the office tapping his foot impatiently on the floor while the doctor hastened to the private room which had been allotted to Tom and Ralph. He had not to wait long, for at the expiration of three minutes a nurse appeared and asked him to follow her.

He did so with alacrity, his face glowing, his eyes shining. To him it seemed almost as though his friends were back from the dead. As long as he lived the memory of that awful night in Elvasgo would remain embedded in his mind. He stepped into the sick-room almost on tiptoe, and met the smiling doctor.

"I will leave you alone with your friends for a few minutes," he exclaimed softly. "You must not excite them, or let them talk too much."

"Trust me for that!"

Truth to tell, Bob had hardly heard the other's words, and he stepped over to the two beds, smiling and expectant. Ralph was sitting up in bed, his head bandaged and swathed thickly, while Tom, with one arm bound tightly to his side, struggled upright, and grinned as cheerfully as possible under the circumstances.

"You lucky brute!" he exclaimed, as he grasped the visitor's hand.

"You're right, Tom," said Bob gently. "I've come through without a scratch. By Jove, Ralph, old man, I had almost given you up for dead!"

"There's plenty of go in me yet," replied Ralph, in a weak voice. "But tell us how you got on after I stopped that beastly bullet. I fell out of the car, didn't I?"

"Yes," returned the engineer, taking a seat between the

two beds. He told them exactly what had happened, repeating, for Tom's benefit, the story of the fight in the main street. In spite of the young men's injuries, they both displayed evident signs of pleasure at hearing how successfully the affair had been brought to a conclusion.

"That's jolly good!" exclaimed Tom. "I'll bet old Fortescue will be pleased. His plans have been carried out without a hitch."

"Without a hitch?" repeated Bob. "Don't you call it a hitch to have both you chaps half killed? How about the two years? How about the adventures we were to pass through together?"

Tom sighed.

"That's all off, of course," he said regretfully. "Still, that Tecsaguayan business is satisfactorily completed. What are our little injuries compared to the thousands of deaths which would have resulted if we hadn't chipped in and stopped their little game? It's only the fortunes of war, after all, and I'm not grumbling in the least because I happened to get a little scratch. What do you say, Ralph?"

"Nothing," replied the other, with a smile; "you've said it all, Tom. I can only agree heartily. We're not killed, so there's nothing to worry about—at least, nothing except the thought of our spoilt plans. But tell me, Bob, what's happening in Tecsaguay now?"

"Nothing unusual. The President's fangs have been drawn, and with his battleship gone and his magazine blown up, he's incapable of doing anything. The war's at an end, Argendor having got the upper hand at the last moment."

For a few moments there was silence in the room; then Tom spoke again.

"Well," he said, "I suppose it'll be some months before we get out of this fix. There's nothing for you to do, Bob, but to go back to Cairo and report to Mr. Fortescue."

"That's all, I suppose," replied Bob thoughtfully. "The Alliance of Three is, of course, dissolved, for we can't go on with our plans."

"Well, we mustn't grumble," exclaimed Tom. "We're all alive, thank goodness, and shall soon be kicking. I hope." Then a twinkle appeared in his eyes as he continued: "Well Bob, you've won."

"I've won?" repeated Bob perplexedly. "What do you mean?"

"What did Mr. Fortescue say? The one of us who distinguished himself the most was to take the prize, and as you've come out untouched, you've certainly proved yourself to be the best of the three. She's yours, old man!"

A light of understanding dawned in Bob's eyes, and he coloured slightly.

"You mean Helen?" he said quietly. "It's hardly fair to say I've won her, for it was all a matter of luck my coming out like this. No, old chaps, it's not been a fair test."

"Rot!" exclaimed Ralph. "You know jolly well, Bob, that what Tom says is right. Go back to Cairo, tell Mr. Fortescue everything that's happened, and he'll admit readily enough that you're the proper man to marry his daughter. You haven't been two years, but as the Alliance is finished with, that doesn't count. We two are out of the running, anyhow."

Bob thought for a moment.

"Well," he said, with a smile, "I shall never admit that I've done better than you have, for it was purely a matter of luck that I came out so scatheless. I shall start for Cairo this week, wiring to Mr. Fortescue beforehand. I shall tell him straightforwardly everything that has occurred, and if he thinks I'm worthy of becoming his son-in-law—well, I sha'n't refuse."

"Good!" cried the other two together heartily. "We wish you the best of luck, old man!"

"That's jolly decent of you, but somehow it seems rather a shabby trick to leave you fellows here in hospital while I go and—"

But the others would not hear him out.

"You're too modest, Bob, that's what it is," laughed Tom, laying back in his bed, trying hard not to show the twinge of agony it cost him. "Ralph and I knew all along that Helen was for you. In fact, we made up our minds to tell you just before the two years were up that we shouldn't think of taking her from you. Now, don't deny it, Bob—you're head over heels in love with her!"

And the light in Bob Harding's eyes as he stood before them, looking rather uncomfortable, and unusually red in the face, told them as clearly as possible that the Naval officer had exactly hit the right nail on the head.

THE END.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 186.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bully Gore. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BOUND BY HONOUR!"

OUR NEW WEEKLY FEATURE



Next Thursday.

"BOUND BY HONOUR!"

Bully Gore breaks out afresh at St. Jim's, and as a result, his father comes down to the school with a threat.

Gore junior must curb every feeling of aggressiveness for four full days—he must not raise a fist either in attack or defence. And if he breaks the promise he is obliged to make to his unjust father, then it means an office stool in a stuffy town, in place of the comfortable study and pleasant surroundings in the Shell Form at St. Jim's.

Unfortunately for George Gore, Levison overhears the interview between him and his father, and the moment Mr. Gore has gone Levison makes good use of the information he has gleaned by his cowardly and sneaking behaviour. Thus does Gore have to go through a hard time when he is

"BOUND BY HONOUR."

You must not miss reading this story. Neither must you miss reading the next long instalment of Reginald Wray's amazing adventure story

"DEEP SEA GOLD."

You will do your Editor a good turn if you order your copy of *The Gem* Library early. As I said last week, it simplifies matters very much.

A Reader's Request.

Quite a number of letters have reached me lately on the subject of our popular serials, "The Iron Island" and "The Brotherhood of Iron," and not a few of my correspondents express the earnest hope that they will be given the opportunity to read these thrilling stories again in book form. Here is what one reader writes to me on a post-card, expressing the wishes of so many of his fellow-readers.

"Kidderminster.

"Dear Editor, — I should very much like to see 'The Brotherhood of Iron' printed in book form. I am sure it is one of the finest tales ever written. I have not missed reading it for a week since it started. I am sure I should do my best to obtain it if it was published in book form. I don't know whether it is possible, but I hope it is.

"I remain, yours truly,

"PERCY S.

"P.S.—Tom Merry & Co., of course, is also very good."

Yes, Percy S., it is quite possible for me to publish this favourite serial in book form, and if a sufficient number of readers request me to take this course, I shall certainly consider the matter. By the general popularity of the story, I think that readers may confidently look forward to its being republished at no very distant date.

HOW TO RUN A FOOTBALL CLUB SUCCESSFULLY.—II.

Having dealt with the business-side of running an amateur football club, we will now get on to the more practical side of the great game.

The captain of the eleven should have been elected to his position not merely because of his exceptional prowess, but because he possesses the more-or-less rare knack of holding men together. A club must be "united." This especially applies when the game is in progress, for it only stands to

reason that without combination match after match is bound to be lost, and a good captain can do much in getting the best possible out of each individual in the eleven.

A captain must also show patience and tact, for many trivial but unfortunate incidents crop up in the course of the season when a little coolness and diplomacy from the "skipper" will set things right and clear the air.

The rules of the game should be "read, marked, and inwardly digested" by the captain of the eleven, so that he can at once set any matter right which may crop up while a match is in progress. Unfortunately, disputes during the course of the game are not rare, and although the matter must, on every occasion, be left in the hands of the referee, there are times when the skipper may be called upon to restore peace by disillusioning any player at fault with the laws of the game.

A diagram is reproduced on this page, showing the usual scale of a football-pitch marked out for a League match. In addition to the measurements shown in the illustration, it should be known that the goalposts must be eight yards apart, and the crossbar eight feet from the ground. The penalty-kick mark must be opposite the centre of goal, and twelve yards from goal-line. Each corner-staff flying a flag must not be less than five feet high. The kick-off circle must be in the centre of the pitch and have a radius of ten yards.

The committee of a club entertaining a team on their own ground should see to it that a slice of lemon is handed round to each member of the opposing eleven at half-time. Such hospitable actions help to give a club a good name.

The committee should endeavour to meet on Mondays in order to discuss the performances of the players. By so doing, promotions and suggestions can be discussed before the next match takes place.

The rules of the club should be drawn up in the following style, and should be printed on the fixture-cards, and sent to each member early in the season by the secretary:

RULES.

1. That this club be called the _____ Association Football Club.
2. That the officers of the club consist of a captain, vice-captain, honorary secretary, assistant-secretary, and treasurer, and three (or four) committee-men, in whom the entire management of the club shall be vested, such officers to be elected for one year at the general meeting, to be held in _____ (state month).
3. That only persons introduced by present members be eligible for membership. Such membership to be obtained by giving their names to the secretary.
4. That the annual subscription be _____ (state sum), payable on joining the club. No member shall be entitled to the privileges of the club, or allowed to play in any match, unless he has paid his subscription, and discharged all liabilities to the club.
5. That no alteration or addition be made to these rules, except at a general meeting. Such general meeting may be called by any five members upon giving the secretary seven days' notice in writing.

A club run as suggested in these two short articles should be a successful one, and should be unbeatable!

(A New Article on an Interesting Subject Next Thursday.)
[THE EDITOR.]

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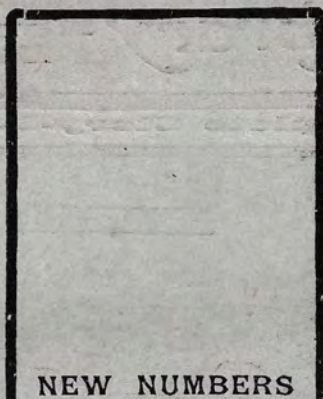
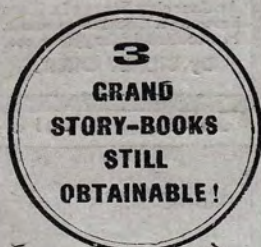
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Courtney strode up and down the study, his brow dark with angry thought. Yes, he had made a solemn promise to the coward's sister! He had to keep his word! If Rupert had not the courage to save himself, Courtney had to save him! The prefect halted at last. He had made up his mind to receive his chum's terrible thrashing. "Very well," he said quietly—very quietly, "pull yourself together, Rupert. I'm going." Valence raised his head. "You're going to take the flogging, Arthur?" he gasped. "Yes," replied Courtney. "It's the only way."



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