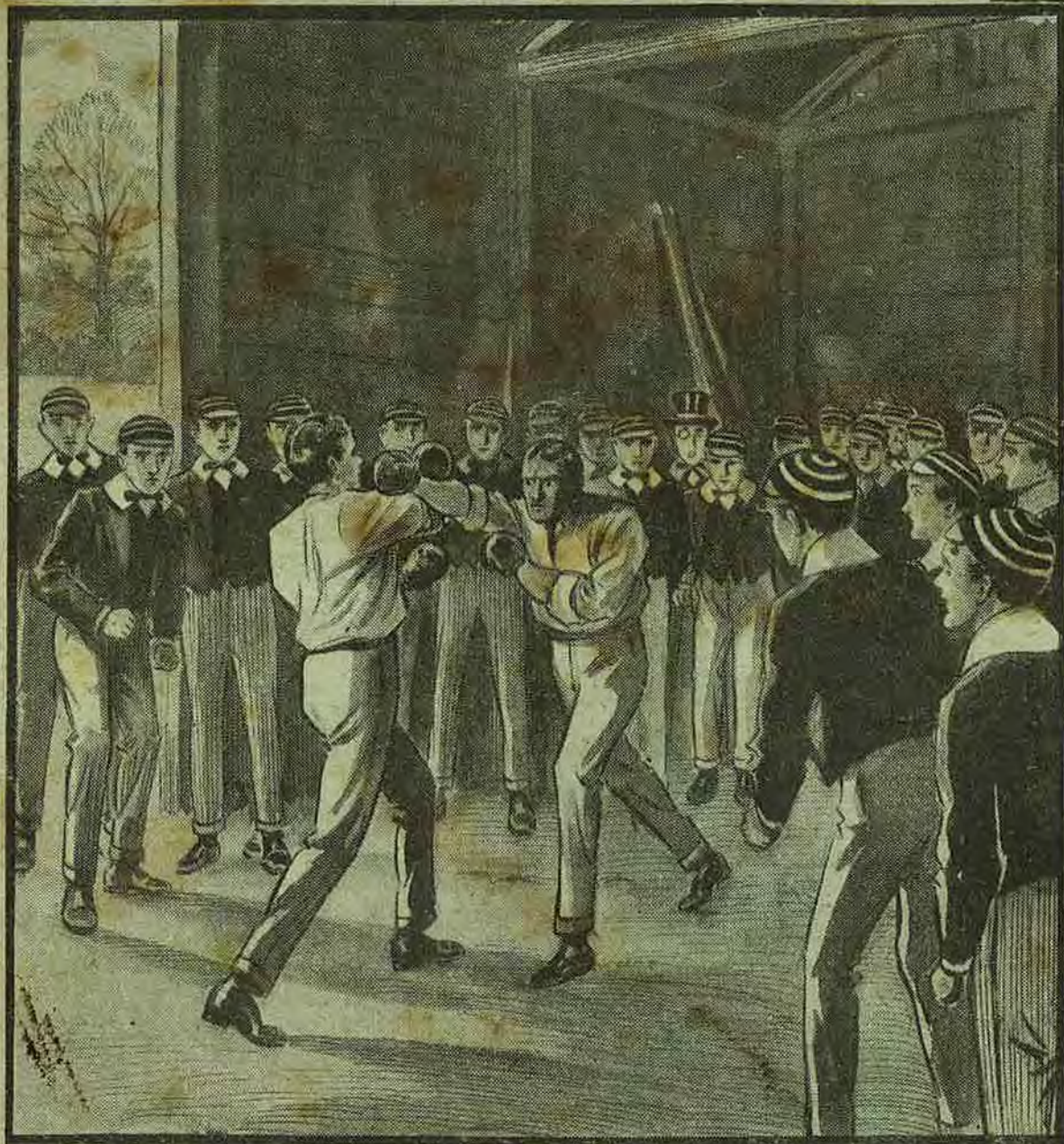


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of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



The chauffeur opened the door of the car, and the Jam descended. "Ahem! You are Koumi Rao?" said Mr. Ratcliff. "Yes, sir," said the new boy, in perfect English, much to the disappointment of the juniors, who had expected a flow of Eastern eloquence. (See Chapter 3.)

CHAPTER 1.

Quite an Accident.

FIGGINS & CO., of the New House, were punting a footer about the quad. when Tom Merry came out of the School House.

Figgins grinned at the Co., and murmured softly:

"Pass this way! I think I can get a goal from here!"

And Kerr and Wynn chuckled, as the latter sent the ball gently to Figgins's foot.

Tom Merry was standing on the top step of the School House. He was looking for his chums, Manners and Lowther, and had no eyes just then for the New House fellows. Figgins measured the distance with his eye, and took careful aim.

He was some distance from the School House, and Tom Merry's cheerful countenance was not a large mark. But Figgins was famous for his long shots. He calculated that

shot very carefully, while the Co. stood by and grinned with anticipation.

Whiz!

Just as Figgins kicked, Tom Merry, having failed to spot his chums in the quadrangle, turned back into the School House.

But the shot was not wasted.

An extremely elegant junior, in whose eye gleamed a monocle, stepped out of the house at the same moment, and descended the steps.

Or it would be more correct to say that he descended one step.

Before he could gain the next, the football reached its destination. Squash!

The football had been punted about for some time in the quadrangle, and in the course of its travels it had collected a considerable quantity of mud. It made a squashy sound as it biffed upon the aristocratic countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form.

Next Wednesday:

"STRAIGHT AS A DIE!" AND "THE CORINTHIAN!"

"Yawoooh!"

"D'Arcy of the Fourth gave a startled yell, and sat down suddenly on the top step.

His eyeglass jerked from his eye, and his beautiful silk topper slid off the back of his head. The football rolled down the steps, and Figgins & Co. made a rush to recover it. Tom Merry turned round again as he heard Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sit down.

"My hat!" he ejaculated. "That's a jolly queer place to take a rest, Gussy. Somebody might come out and fall over you."

"Gwooh! Some fowtful ass has biffed a footah at me!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, springing to his feet. "I am smothahed with mud—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass, there is nothin' to laugh at," shrieked D'Arcy. "I am smothahed with mud, and have been thwown into a dwoadful fluttah. Figgins, you wottah, did you biff that beastly ball at me?"

Figgins shook his head.

"No, Gussy!"

"Luckay for you, you New House boundah. I'm goin' to give the silly ass a feahful thwashin'. Did you see who kicked that wotten ball?"

"I did!"

"You! You stated that you didn't, you wottah—"

"I said I didn't biff it at you," explained Figgins politely. "I biffed it at the other chump. You came out just in time to get it. But I don't mind, not a bit. You are very welcome."

"Quite welcome!" said Kerr.

"Pleased!" said Fatty Wynn.

Arthur Augustus gazed at the New House Co., and pushed back his spotless cuffs. Then he charged at them.

"Run for your lives!" roared Figgins.

The New House trio started across the quad, at top speed, punting away the footer before them. After them Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, also at top speed.

"Stop, you uttah wottahs! You wotten funks, I ordah you to stop. I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin'! Stop!"

"Stop!" murmured Figgins.

Arthur Augustus was close behind, when the fugitives stopped—suddenly. Arthur Augustus ran right into Figgins's broad back. Figgins stood like a granite rock, and Arthur Augustus reeled back from the shock and sat down violently.

"Oh! Bai Jove! Ow!"

Arthur Augustus's silk hat rolled off, but Figgins picked it up and jammed it on his head—hard!

Then the New House Co. strolled away, smiling.

Arthur Augustus staggered up.

He had sat down in a puddle left by recent rain, and his beautiful trousers were dripping with wet mud.

"Oh, bai Jove!" he gasped, as he extracted his head from the jammed topper. "Oh, gweat Scott! The howwible wottahs! My twousahs are wuined."

He put up his eyeglass and glared round for Figgins & Co. But the cheerful juniors had disappeared into the New House, and vengeance had to be postponed. Arthur Augustus rushed back to the School House to change his trousers.

Figgins & Co., in the doorway of the New House, watched him go with many chuckles.

"Poor old Gussy!" sighed Figgins. "Always up against it! He will be looking for our scalps when he's got that mud off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Toby, the School House page, came out of the house opposite, and crossed the quadrangle. Figgins left off chuckling.

"Hello!" he murmured. "That looks like a message for us! My infants, now I come to think of it, Gussy sat down just in front of the Head's window!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"The silly ass!" said Figgins wrathfully. "Why couldn't he find somewhere else to fall down. And what did the Head want to be looking out of the window for? Well, Toby, what do you want?"

"You're wanted, Master Figgins," said Toby.

"B-r-r-r-r."

"The 'Ead wants you in his study at once, Master Figgins, and he's sent me to tell you," said Toby.

"What is it for, Toby?"

Toby shook his head.

"I dunno, Master Figgins; but he was looking werry serious."

Figgins groaned.

"Well, I'm in for it. Of course, he had to see me biff that footer at Gussy! All right, Toby, go and tell the Head I wouldn't keep him waiting for worlds, and ask him to be an old sport and lay it on lightly."

Toby grinned as he departed. He was not likely to deliver that message to the reverend Head of St. Jim's.

Figgins rubbed his hands in anticipation.

"We're coming with you," said Kerr.

"No good. The Head's sent for me. He must have seen me biff the footer."

"But we were in it too," said Fatty Wynn. "We're all coming."

"Better stay here; no good three getting licked instead of one," said Figgins, with a shake of the head. To which the loyal Co. responded simultaneously, "Rats!"

And the three juniors crossed to the School House with glum countenances. Inside the School House, Arthur Augustus was surrounded by a crowd of juniors, to whom he was unfolding his tale of woe. His eyes gleamed behind his eyeglass as he caught sight of the New House trio.

"Bai Jove! Here the wottahs are!" he exclaimed. "Blake, deah boy, pway hold my jacket. Herries, take care of my eyeglass, while I give them a feahful thwashin'."

"Pax!" said Figgins dismally.

"I wufese to pax—I mean I wufese to make it pax. You have twoteed me with gwoss diswospect. I am going—"

"We are going," said Kerr. "We're going to see the Head. He's sent for us—must have seen us from his study window. Why couldn't you choose some other puddle to sit down in, you chump?"

"Oh, bai Jove! I'm sowwy! If you've got into a waw with the Head, I will let you off that thwashin'."

"Thanks! Now I breathe again!" murmured Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hard cheese!" said Tom Merry sympathetically. "But lucky it isn't Ratcliff—the Head never lays it on hard. If it were Ratty—"

"Yass, there's a silvah linin' to every cloud, deah boys."

But the silver lining to the cloud did not seem to console Figgins & Co. very much as they took their way to the Head's study.

CHAPTER 2.

What the Head Wanted!

DR. HOLMES, the Head of St. Jim's, was certainly looking very serious as the New House juniors entered the dreaded apartment.

He glanced at them, and seemed surprised to see three of them.

"Ahem! I sent for you, Figgins," he observed.

"Yes, sir; but—"

"We were in it, too, sir," said Kerr.

The Head raised his eyebrows.

"You, Kerr! I do not quite—"

"Me, too, sir," said Fatty Wynn, promptly and ungrammatically. "It was all three of us, sir."

Dr. Holmes gazed at them.

"I sent for Figgins—," he said.

"So we all came, sir," said Kerr.

"By my sending for Figgins, you might possibly have guessed that it was Figgins I wished to see, and not a party of the Fourth Form," said the Head drily.

"We didn't want Figgy to stand it alone, sir."

"What!"

"We—we thought we ought to back him up, sir, and take the same as he got."

"You see, sir, we were all together," murmured Fatty Wynn.

"I really do not understand you," said the Head, bewildered. "Perhaps it is my fault. I have sent for Figgins in order to speak to him about a new boy who is coming into the New House, and there was no necessity at all for you to come, Kerr and Wynn."

"Oh!" gasped the Co.

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When the Form were dismissed, Arthur Augustus greeted the Jam in the passage. "Pway excuse my speaking to you without an introduction, deah boy!" he began. "Oh, we'll soon remedy that!" said Figgins cheerfully. "Jam, my boy, allow me to present Arthur Augustus Adolphus Plantagenet Fitz D'Arcy, direct lineal descendant of William the Conqueror's private barber!" (See Chapter 4.)

"Ha! You supposed I had sent for Figgins for some other reason—for some delinquency?" exclaimed the Head, a light breaking upon him.

"Ye-es, sir. You see—"

"I—I biffed a footer at him," stammered Figgins. "It was really an accident—"

"What? At whom?"

"Gussy—I mean, D'Arcy of the Fourth, sir; but—"

"Dear me! You should not have done that, Figgins! But if it was an accident—"

"Oh, yes, sir. I didn't mean it for D'Arcy—"

"Then, if you did not mean it for anyone, we will not mention the matter," said the Head benevolently.

"Ahem! I—I meant it for Tom Merry," stammered Figgins.

"Well, well, I did not send for you about that, Figgins, so we will let it pass. But you must be careful in kicking footballs about. I wish to speak to you about a new boy who is coming to St. Jim's, and whom I have decided to place in the New House."

Kerr and Wynn made a move towards the door.

"You may as well stay with Figgins," said the Head, glancing at them. "The new boy will be in the study in the New House which, I understand, you share in common."

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn gazed at the Head silently. If Figgins could have had his choice he would rather have been caned for footballing D'Arcy than have had a new boy planted in his study in the New House. For a long time Figgins & Co. had had that study to themselves, and, as Figgins elegantly expressed it, they did not want any strange dogs in the kennel.

But the Head's word was law, and he did not seem to perceive the heavy blow he was dealing at the New House Co. He went on pleasantly:

"I want you, Figgins, to listen to what I have to say very carefully."

"Yes, sir," said Figgins, in wonder.

He did not quite understand. New boys came to St. Jim's often enough, to either the School House or the New House. There was nothing remarkable about the arrival of a new boy, and why the Head should send for him—Figgins—to speak to him in private on the matter was a great mystery.

"This new boy," pursued the Head, "is someone a little out of the common."

"Oh!" murmured Figgins. The thought in his mind was that the Head was going to plant some giddy freak on him, and was going to ask him to deal gently with the obnoxious freak; but, of course, Figgins did not say that. He listened respectfully.

"The boy," resumed the Head, "comes from India. His name is Koumi Rao, and he is a Jam."

"A—a—a what, sir?" gasped Figgins & Co. in chorus.

"A Jam," said the Head, with a slight smile. "That is a great title in India. It is something like a nabob. Koumi Rao, the new boy who is going into the Fourth Form, is the Jam of Bundelpore—a prince in his own country."

"My hat!" said Figgins. "I—I mean, yes, sir. Does he speak English, or—or Bundelpore?"

"He speaks English, Figgins, as well as Hindustani. Now you will understand why I have sent for you, Figgins. You have much influence among the juniors in the New House—"

"Yes, sir. I'm leader," said Figgins proudly. "Reddy—I mean, Redfern—fancies that he is, but he's quite off-side there. Ahem! I mean—"

"Koumi Rao will be a little new to our ways," the Head went on. "It may take him some little time to fall into the customs of the school. Also, he may have peculiar

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customs of his country—religious matters, and so forth—which must not be interfered with or made a subject for mockery. I depend upon you, Figgins, to see that the new boy is not troubled or persecuted—ragged, I think you would call it—on account of any little national peculiarities of his own country. In fact, I should like to feel that Koumi Rao is in some sense under your protection."

Figgins looked a little blue.

To have a new boy shoved into his study was not agreeable; but to have to act as a sort of amateur dry-nurse towards that new boy, it was decidedly thick.

But it was impossible to decline the responsibility the Head wished to place upon him.

Requests from the headmaster were like invitations from Royalty. It was not possible to refuse them.

"I am sure, Figgins, that you will oblige me in this matter," said Dr. Holmes gently.

When the Head put it like that Figgins felt that he would have done anything for him. And he replied promptly and as cheerfully as he could:

"Certainly, sir. You may rely on me. I'll jolly well look after the new kid!"

"Thank you, Figgins!"

And Figgins & Co. left the Head's study.

They moved slowly down the passage, very busy with their thoughts. Tom Merry & Co. met them at the end of the passage with sympathetic looks. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had gone to change his muddy garments, but the rest of the School House chums were there, anxious to know how the New House fellows had fared.

"Licked?" asked a dozen voices.

Figgins shook his head.

"Lines?"

"No."

"Got right off?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Yes."

"Then what are you looking glum about?" demanded Tom Merry, in surprise.

"It wasn't about Gussy," said Figgins, with a sigh. "It was about something else. I've been greatly honoured by the Head."

"It hasn't cheered you up, then."

"How would you like to have a Jam planted on you in your study?" said Figgins gloomily.

"It's according to the kind of jam," said Tom Merry, puzzled. "Raspberry jam, taken internally, is all right. What are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about the Jam."

"Do you mean to say that the Head has ordered jam for your study?" asked Jack Blake.

"Fatty ought to be pleased!" grinned Lowther.

"It isn't a jam you eat, fathead!" growled Figgins. "It seems that there's a kind of prince in India called a Jam, and there's one coming here."

"By Jove!" said Tom Merry. "Yes; I've heard of such things. Ranjitsingh, the cricketer, became a Jam when he went back to India."

"This is a little Jam," said Figgins—"a Jam minor. He's going to be in our study in the New House, and in the Fourth Form. And the Head has asked me to look after him, and take him under my giddy wing. It will break up the happy home. But I suppose we shall have to stand it."

"Oh, you'll get used to it," said Tom Merry comfortingly. "You didn't like it when old Marmaduke was put in your study, but you chummed up with him before he left."

"It's a great honour to be asked a favour by the Head," said Manners. "All you've got to do is to play up and preserve the jam."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Figgins & Co. walked away towards their own House in a thoughtful mood. They wanted to oblige the Head. They felt kindly enough disposed towards the new fellow, but they would have preferred the caning they had expected when they visited the Head's study.

CHAPTER 3.

The Jam.

"HERE comes the Jam!"
There was a rush towards the New House at once.

Morning lessons were over at St. Jim's on the day following the Head's announcement to Figgins of the Fourth.

It was known in the school that Koumi Rao was to arrive that morning, and all the fellows were naturally curious to see him. As Blake of the Fourth remarked, it wasn't every day that a real live Jam came to St. Jim's. A fellow who was a prince in his own country, and rolling in money, was a fellow to take some interest in, Levison of the Fourth declared. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had a natural leaning towards princes, as he confided to Blake, being himself

of such extremely distinguished ancestry that he had a natural fellow-feeling for persons of that exalted rank. So all the fellows, in both Houses, were on the look-out for the arrival of the Jam.

Tom Merry was as keenly interested as anybody. Tom Merry's uncle was a general in India, and so Tom had a connection with that country—having been born there, and brought home to England at a very early age by his old governess, Miss Priscilla Fawcett. General Merry had been concerned at one time in some trouble in the native State of Bundelpore, of which Koumi Rao was Jam, as Tom had vaguely heard and almost forgotten; but it quickened his interest in the new boy. So Tom Merry was among the crowd of School House fellows who flocked over to the New House when the big motor-car swung in at the school gates.

The Jam was arriving in style.

The big car had brought him down from London, with his baggage—a very considerable amount of baggage, too. As the car halted before the New House, the fellows looked for the Jam.

"There he is!"

The Jam was there, sitting bolt upright in the car, with dark, gleaming eyes in a dark brown face, looking about him.

He was a slim lad, with handsome aquiline features.

Those of the St. Jim's fellows who had expected to see him arrive in all the native glory of a Jam—in flowing silken robes, with a blaze of jewels—were disappointed.

He was dressed in ordinary Etons, and wore a common-ordinary silk hat.

The only sign of Eastern magnificence about him was the diamond that gleamed in his tie; but Levison of the Fourth, who knew all about precious stones, murmured that the diamond was worth five hundred quid—a very impressive statement.

Koumi Rao looked over the crowd of juniors with scintillating black eyes.

Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster of the New House, came out to meet him.

It was the first time "Ratty" had ever been known to bestow such a mark of honour upon a new junior; but this particular new junior was a prince, and rich beyond the dreams of avarice, so perhaps that made a difference.

The chauffeur opened the door of the car, and the Jam descended.

"Ahem! You are Koumi Rao?" said Mr. Ratcliff.

"Yes, sir," said the new boy, in perfect English; and again there was a sense of disappointment among the juniors, who had expected a fine flow of Eastern eloquence.

"I am your Housemaster, Mr. Ratcliff."

Koumi Rao saluted.

"Salaam, sahib!"

"Bai Jove, that's wathah gwaceful!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, aside. "I wathah like his mannaahs, deah boys!"

"I don't like his chivvy," murmured Blake. "Looks like a wild-cat!"

"Pway don't be wuff on a new kid, Blake. He looks all wight, and his clothes are weally well cut. He turns up his twosahs, too!"

"Then he must be all right!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Pray come in!" said Mr. Ratcliff. "The porter will attend to your luggage."

"Thank you, sir!"

The new junior followed Mr. Ratcliff into the house, without taking any notice of the crowd of fellows. There was a haughtiness in his look that nettled some of the juniors at once. But, as Blake sagely observed, the Jam would soon get all that knocked out of him at St. Jim's.

Taggles, the porter, and the chauffeur laboured with the baggage. There was more of it than even D'Arcy of the Fourth had brought with him when he first came to St. Jim's.

The Jam having disappeared into the house at the heels of the Housemaster, the crowd proceeded to discuss him. Figgins and Kerr and Wynn were summoned into the Housemaster's study, where they found the Jam.

"Koumi Rao, these boys will be your study-mates," said Mr. Ratcliff. "This is Figgins—and Kerr—and Wynn—of the Fourth Form!"

Koumi Rao shook hands with the juniors in turn; but it was the kind of handshake that made them think of a dead fish, and it was very clear that the new boy was simply going through a ceremony, and there was no heartiness in his greeting. All three of the juniors began to feel a certain vague dislike of the Jam growing up in their breasts.

"I am sure, Figgins," went on Mr. Ratcliff, in a very significant tone, "that you appreciate the distinction of having Koumi Rao placed in your study. I am sure that you will be careful to treat him with the respect due to his high rank."

Figgins's eyes gleamed.

It was certainly not Mr. Rateliff's intention to make trouble for the new boy in Figgins's study; but if that had been what he wanted, he could not have chosen a more effective way.

The mere thought of being expected to toady to the new junior because he was a potentate in his own country got the juniors' "backs" up at once.

Mr. Rateliff might be a tuft-hunter of the first water; but Figgins & Co. had not the slightest desire or intention of making much of Koumi Rao because he was a prince.

If he took his place in the Form and the House as an ordinary fellow, and did not put on any side, they were prepared to be decent to him; but if he assumed airs and "side," there was not the slightest doubt that the nonsense would be knocked out of him on the spot. There was not a shadow of doubt on that point.

"We intend to make Koumi Rao comfortable in our study if we can, sir," said Figgins, as it seemed necessary to say something.

"Very well; you may go."

Figgins & Co. went, leaving the new boy with the House-master, to endure with what patience he could muster the great civilities of Horace Rateliff.

In the passage, the Co. looked at one another.

"Well, what do you think of him?" asked Figgins, after a long pause.

Kerr shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, give him a chance!" said Fatty Wynn, always kind and good-natured. "He's new here. He must have been toadied to awfully in his own country, and in this country, too, very likely. Old Ratty is bucking up to him already. No wonder the poor chap gets a swelled head!"

"We can take out the swelling for him," observed Figgins thoughtfully.

"Of course we can!"

"Oh, we'll give him a chance!" said Kerr. "He may turn out a decent fellow enough, when he's been knocked into shape."

"Anyway, we've promised the Head to look after him," said Figgins. "I begin to understand now why the Head jawed me on the subject. I suppose the old bird foresaw that there would be little difficulties. I'm going to keep my word. I'll look after Koumi Rao; and if he needs a hiding for his own good—why, I'm just the chap to give him one!"

"I don't think that was exactly what the Head meant," murmured Kerr.

"Well, that must be guided by circumstances," said Figgins. "But we'll be very nice to him to begin with. We'll see him through, and back him up, and stand by him generally, and put up with any silly Majesty bizney for a few days. He must feel pretty queer in a white man's country, talking a foreign language, and it's only fair to go easy with him!"

And the Co. agreed, though they were destined to discover shortly that it was by no means a simple thing to "go easy" with the Jam of Bundelphore.

CHAPTER 4.

Something Like a Scene!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY had his eye on the Jam that afternoon in class.

The swell of St. Jim's was greatly interested in the Jam.

The haughtiness of his manners was not a drawback in the eyes of Arthur Augustus, and otherwise the Jam's manners were certainly stately and graceful.

The Jam took his place in the Fourth Form-room that afternoon for lessons, with the other fellows, in the ordinary way.

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, was very kind to him; but he found that the Jam was quite equal to his Form work; and, indeed, the Form-master had the opinion before the afternoon was out that Koumi Rao would soon be "top of the class."

The Jam learned with the parrot-like facility of an Oriental, though how deep the knowledge went was another matter.

But he succeeded in more than satisfying Mr. Lathom, and the Form-master complimented him upon his proficiency—a compliment that Koumi Rao received with a stately salaam.

When the Fourth Form were dismissed, Arthur Augustus greeted the Jam in the passage.

"Pway excuse my speakin' to you without an introduction, deah boy," said D'Arcy gracefully.

The Jam looked at him.

"Oh, we'll soon remedy that!" said Figgins cheerfully.

"Jam, my boy, allow me to present Arthur Augustus Adolphus Plantagenet FitzD'Arcy, direct lineal descendant of William the Conqueror's private barber—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass wrathfully upon Figgins.

"You uttah ass, Figgy—"

"Haven't I got it right?" asked Figgins innocently. "Never mind—"

"I was goin' to wequest the honah of your pwesence at tea in the study, Koumi Rao," said Arthur Augustus.

"Too late!" said Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"The Jam is going to have tea in his own study with us," explained Figgins. "We're going to have a party to meet him—ain't we, Jammy?"

"My name is Koumi Rao," said the new boy.

"Jammy is good enough for me," said Figgins affably. "Come on, Jammy, old boy, and I'll show you round the football-ground before tea!"

"You play footer?" asked Kerr.

"I do not play any games."

"Oh, we'll give you something to cure all that!" said Figgins. "The Sixth are out at practice now, and you'll be able to see Kildare play. Come on!"

And Figgins & Co. marched the Jam away.

Arthur Augustus sniffed.

"I weally do not like those New House boundahs takin' possession of the Jam in that way," he remarked.

"Well, he's their Jam!" grinned Blake.

"It was wathah a mistake of the Head to put him into the New House. The wopwah place for a pwince is in the School House. I should have been vewy happy to welcome him in our study, deah boys!"

To which Herries and Digby and Blake, who had the distinguished honour of sharing Study No. 6 with the swell of St. Jim's, replied in chorus:

"Rats!"

"One of you is enough," Blake explained. "If we had two chaps in the study with family trees and pedigrees and things, we should get fed up. You must remember that we're jolly near fed up with you!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Well, how are you getting on with the Jam?" asked Tom Merry, as the Terrible Three of the Shell came down the passage from their own Form-room.

"I wegard him as bein' all wight, deah boy. Those New House boundahs have walked him off in a vewy cheeky way!"

"I hear there are going to be great doin's," said Tom Merry, remarking. "Fanny the best thing they can do for a new kid is to stand him a feed. We are to have the honour of meeting the Jam at cloase quarters, and Figgy said you fellows would be coming."

"Yes; I've fixed it with Figgy," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake, you did not mention it to me—"

"That's all right. Whither I goest thou wilt go," Blake explained. "I hear that there are going to be cakes and ale, galore."

"I twust Figgins will be satisfied with tea, and not bring in any intoxicatin' liquahs, deah boy."

"Ass! I was speaking figuratively. Figgy told me in class that the Jam wanted to stand the feed, so he can't be a bad sort. Of course, Figgy won't let him—but I dare say Fatty Wynn will let him later as often as he likes. I've often seen jam sticking to Fatty Wynn, and now we shall see Fatty Wynn sticking to the Jam."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And when teatime arrived, quite a little army of juniors arrived also in Figgins's study in the New House.

Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy, of Study No. 6, walked over with the Terrible Three, and Kangaroo, the Cornstalk, accompanied them. Redfern and Owen and Lawrence, of the New House, were also in the party, so, with Figgins & Co., the room was somewhat crowded. Junior studies were not planned for parties of upwards of a dozen. But the chums of St. Jim's were easily satisfied, and if there was a little crowding it was taken with good-humour and cheerfulness.

And the sight of the feed on the table brought smiles to all faces.

The juniors had sharpened their appetites at football practice, and they were more than ready to do justice to the spread provided by the hospitable Co.

Fatty Wynn wore a beaming smile.

The fat Fourth-Former was only too willing to distinguish the Jam by standing a feed in his honour. He would have been willing, at any time, to celebrate anybody or anything in the same way.

"Here we are again!" said Monty Lowther. "Where's the Jam? Produce your Jam!"

"Here it is," said Fatty Wynn, misunderstanding.

"We've got strawberry, and raspberry, and plum. But we were going to begin with rabbit-pie."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better start with the solids," said Fatty Wynn, surprised by the chuckle in the study. "In a feed, as in everything else, it's always a good idea to lay a solid foundation."

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NEXT WEDNESDAY—**"STRAIGHT AS A DIE!"** A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"I was referring to the other Jam!" explained Lowther. "Oh! Koumi Rao will be here in a minute. Ratty's talking to him. Ratty has taken a great fancy to him."

"Bow-wow!" said Lowther.

"He seems a decent sort of chap," said Figgins. "I was talking to him about the two Houses here being at war, and he seemed to enter quite into the spirit of it. He's ready to help us keep the New House at the top."

"Where?" demanded all the School House fellows immediately.

"Top," said Figgins. "As the New House is cock-house."

"Rats!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wats!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am weally surprised at you, Figgay, for misleadin' a new chap in this mannah!"

"Oh, don't let's have any ragging now!" said Redfern. "We've got to put on our best manners and customs in honour of the Jam."

"I jolly well wish he'd come!" said Fatty Wynn. "Tea's all ready, and I'm ready, too!"

"Might begin," suggested Lawrence, with a hungry glance at the piles of good things on the table. "No need to stand on ceremony with a chap in your own study."

"Good egg!" said Fatty Wynn. "Might as well—"

"Order!" said Figgins sternly. "Manners first, my infant!"

"Oh, don't mind me!" said Manners of the Shell, affably.

"Ass! I meant the kind of manners you don't have in the Shell!" said Figgins. "Hallo! Here he comes!"

Koumi Rao entered the study.

His dusky face was looking a little more genial than heretofore. Perhaps the hearty cordiality of Figgins & Co. had had some effect upon his cold nature.

"Here you are!" said Figgins. "I've got some of the fellows to meet you and make your acquaintance, Jammy."

"You are very kind!" said Koumi Rao. "Salaam, ehah!"

"Grand slam!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Shurrup, Lowther!"

the Jam only smiled.

most of these chaps already," said Figgins.

the Fourth. These other three belong

to the queen—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther."

The Jam started.

"What—what name did you say?" he asked. "Manners, Lowther—yes; but the other?"

"Tom Merry," said Figgins, startled by the expression that had come over the Hindu's face. "Tom Merry, captain of the Shell—one of the best, though he's a School House boundary."

Tom Merry held out his hand frankly.

Koumi Rao did not take it.

He drew back a pace, and put his hands behind him so deliberately that there was no mistaking his meaning.

Tom flushed red, and let his hand drop to his side.

There was an uncomfortable silence.

Figgins had intended, in his kind way, to let that little feed in his study break the ice, as it were, all round, and introduce the Jam on friendly terms with a crowd of fellows worth knowing in the Lower School.

But the Jam's peculiar conduct made Figgins's kind arrangement anything but a success.

"I—I say! What's the row, you know?" asked Figgins, blinking from the Jam to Tom Merry, in dismay and surprise. "You fellows been rowing already?"

"I've never seen him before," said Tom Merry.

"Then—then what—"

"I refuse to take his hand!" said the Jam distinctly.

"Look here!" exclaimed Figgins, turning very red.

"That isn't the way to treat a guest in my study, Jammy, and the sooner you understand it the better."

"I did not ask him here."

"You—you worm—I mean, what's the matter with you?" said poor Figgins, divided between his promise to the Head and an almost overwhelming desire to wipe up the floor with the princely new boy.

"I will not sit down to the table with him!" pursued the Jam. "I will not eat in his presence! If he remains, I go!"

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"You needn't bother about that!" he exclaimed. "I'm not likely to remain here, in company with a cad like yourself, Koumi Rao!"

And Tom strode to the door.

If Koumi Rao had not been a study-mate of his host, Tom Merry would probably have replied to his rudeness with something more expressive than words.

"I—I say!" stammered Figgins. "I—I'm sorry, Merry! Of course, we didn't know the fellow was going to be such a pig!"

"It's all right, Figgay," said Tom. "I know you didn't mean it. But I can't stay here after what he's said."

Tom Merry quitted the study, and Manners and Lowther promptly followed him. They had no intention of remaining where their chum had been insulted. And the other fellows in the study exchanged awkward and uncomfortable glances.

CHAPTER 5.

A Queer Customer.

Figgins's face was a picture of dismay and concern.

His little gathering was ruined now, there was no doubt about that.

All the fellows seemed to be edging towards the door. Even Fatty Wynn's eyes no longer lingered on the good things that were piled on the table. Everybody was feeling the acutest discomfort. And the lowering face of Koumi Rao did not tend to comfort them.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy exchanged a glance with his friends, and coughed.

"I twust you will excuse us, Figgay," he remarked. "Undah the cires, it seems to me that we had bettah withdraw."

"I'm not going to stay where a School House chap has been insulted for nothing!" said Jack Blake bluntly.

"Same here!" said Herries and Digby at once; and Kangaroo chimed in, "What-ho!"

"I—I'm sorry!" said Figgins.

"It's all wight, Figgay. We don't blame you. But I wecommend you to teach that wottah mannahs before you give anothah little party."

And the chums of Study No. 6 walked out, followed by the Cornstalk.

Redfern and Owen and Lawrence followed them out. Koumi Rao had said that he would not sit at the table with Tom Merry, and Redfern & Co. felt an equally strong disinclination to sit at the same table with the Jam. Redfern remarked to his chums as they went along the passage, that only regard for old Figgins kept him from wiping up the floor with the Jam.

Figgins & Co. remained alone in the study.

Kerr looked out of the window and whistled. Fatty Wynn, after some painful hesitation, sat down at the table and started on a pie. After all, he was hungry.

Figgins stared gloomily at the Jam.

"There goes our giddy party," he said. "And now, Koumi Rao, I'd be glad if you'd explain what you've mucked up our tea-party for."

"I suppose you know that we don't allow manners of that kind in this study?" said Kerr, looking round from the window. "But we'll give you a chance to explain before we bump you—if you buck up."

The Jam's black eyes blazed.

"You—you would lay hands upon me!" he exclaimed fiercely.

Figgins's lip curled.

"Lay hands on you! Why shouldn't we?"

"I am a prince—I am the lord of a hundred thousand people—I have a salute of six guns from the generals of the British Raj!"

"I dare say you're all that in India, and you may be Great Panjandrum of Timbuctoo, and Lord High-Bottlewasher of Borriwoola-Gha, for all I care," said Figgins, disdainfully.

"But here at St. Jim's you're Koumi Rao of the Fourth, and if you put on airs, they'll be thumped off you—see?"

"Hard!" added Kerr.

"And now, before we give you the licking you've been asking for, tell us what you insulted Tom Merry for," said Figgins. "What have you got against him?"

"I hate him!"

Figgins snorted.

"Oh, don't talk silly gas!" he exclaimed contemptuously.

"You're not in a novel or a play. People don't hate one another in real life. You might dislike a chap."

"I hate him!"

"Well, I say you don't, and if you contradict me, I'll punch your silly nose," said Figgins, his temper rising. "You might dislike him—but why? Have you ever met him before you came here?"

"Never."

"How can you dislike a chap you've never seen?"

"I hate him, and all his race. You do not know—perhaps he does not know—that his uncle, the Sahib General Merry,

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invaded my country, and overthrew my father!" the Indian boy exclaimed passionately. "Where my father was an independent prince, there is now a British Resident, and I—I am a prince—but when I come to my throne, I must reign in apron-strings. If I command the death of him who dispenses me, the Resident may countermand the order—I am a slave in the palace of my father's!"

Figgins whistled.

"Well, if that's the kind of use you put your power to, it was high time it was taken out of your hands, I should say," he remarked.

"But what has Tom Merry to do with that?" asked Kerr.

"He is of the blood of my enemy."

Figgins stared at him.

Such talk in an English boy would have made him laugh, but he realised that Koumi Rao, Jam of Bundelpore, was very different from an English boy.

East is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet, as it has been said, and Koumi Rao, in spite of an English education, English language, and English clothes, was still the son of the savage old Jam of Bundelpore, whose tyranny had caused him to be deposed by the British Government in India.

What would have been theatrical, high-flown, and ridiculous in a sedate Anglo-Saxon, came naturally to the passionate Oriental.

"Now, look here, kid," said Figgins, after a pause, more kindly. "You're not in India now. You're in England—a very different country. You're not a giddy emperor here—lord of ten thousand elephants, and fifty thousand spears, with Arabian-Nights fittings. You're just a kid in the Fourth Form. And the sooner you get all that silly rot out of your head, the better it will be for you."

"I shall always hate my enemy."

"Oh, talk sense. Whatever General Merry did, was done under orders from his superiors, I suppose, so you're turning your giddy wrath on the wrong party. The Government of India was the party to blame, and they represent England out there—and England—that's us!" said Figgins. "You might as well hate us for it."

And here Kerr chimed in:

"I suppose you mean Britain when you say England, Figg."

"And I dare say it was all the better for Bundelpore," went on Figgins. "You belong to the British Empire now, and that's better than being independent in a hole-and-corner little State goodness knows where. Now, isn't it?"

Kerr chuckled. He did not think that argument was likely to appeal to Koumi Rao, but Figgins went on earnestly.

"You've got to get all this piffle out of your head. Tom Merry is one of the best, and everybody at St. Jim's likes him. You'd better take the first opportunity of apologising to him for your beastly rudeness."

"Never."

"If you feel up against him, you can help us to make the New House cockhouse of St. Jim's," said Figgins. "That's better than a lot of play-acting rot, like you were spouting out just now."

"Bah! If he were in Bundelpore now, and I were there, I would command his head to be taken off!"

"Oh, crumbs! It's time you had a British regiment and a Resident there, then. I say, Kerr, what can I say to this silly ass."

"Blessed if I know," said Kerr. "He's too silly for me."

"Perhaps he's hungry," suggested Fatty Wynn. "Chaps often get ratty when they're hungry. Talk to him after tea."

Figgins rubbed his nose in perplexity.

"Blessed if I know what to do with him," he murmured. "We can't have this dramatic bosh going on in our study. It makes me tired."

The Jam scowled, and strode out of the study, slamming the door behind him. Figgins gazed at his chums in dismay. "What on earth are we going to do?" he exclaimed.

Kerr shrugged his shoulders hopelessly.

"Better have tea," was Fatty Wynn's suggestion. "The tea's getting cold."

Figgins grunted.

"Well, I suppose we may as well have tea," he said. "I'm hungry. But what a rotten end to a jolly party!"

"And all this blessed grub got in for nothing—sheer waste," said Kerr.

"Oh, that's all right," said Fatty Wynn cheerfully. "It won't be wasted, you can rely on that."

And it wasn't; Fatty Wynn proved quite reliable on that point.

CHAPTER 6.

Gore, the Champion.

TOM MERRY did not speak about the scene in Figgins's study; but the other fellows did, and before the day was out, the whole school knew it.

Fellows in the School House and the New House talked of it with the keenest interest.

Nobody, indeed, took it seriously.

The idea of the Jam of Bundelpore nourishing a bitter hatred towards Tom Merry of the Shell, because Tom's uncle had been the officer appointed by the British Government to reduce the Native State to order, struck the fellows as funny.

Some of them declared that he must have been joking; others that he was several sorts of an ass; and others that he might be a little bit rocky in the upper storey.

The School House fellows concurred that it was a lucky thing that the extraordinary youth was an inmate of the New House.

The New House juniors, on the other hand, would have been very glad to see him transferred across the quadrangle.

The Jam seemed to have no understanding of the feelings of a sportsman; and that was a trait in his character the St. Jim's fellows found it hard to pardon.

That the Jam took himself seriously was certain; and the juniors wondered what he would feel like when he discovered that his conduct was simply looked upon as "queer" by the school generally.

Bundelpore was too far away and too insignificant a place for anybody at St. Jim's to have heard of it, or to care a brass button what might have happened there.

The fellows anticipated, with some excitement, what would happen when the Jam came into contact with Tom Merry again.

As they were in different Houses and different Forms, they were not likely to meet often; but when they did—

Tom Merry had taken the Jam's insults quietly in the first place, because he was a guest in Figgins's study. But if Koumi Rao repeated anything of the sort on another occasion, Tom's temper was likely to break out. And the result of that, as the juniors sapiently observed, would be very painful indeed for the Jam. Great and glorious as a Jam might be in Bundelpore, at St. Jim's he was only a junior kid who might be licked by any other junior he treated with rudeness.

Indeed, some of the fellows thought it was up to Tom Merry to take further notice of the matter, even without provocation from the Jam. Tom Merry was chief of the School House juniors, and the Jam was a New House chap. Among the Lower School section of the School House fellows, therefore, there was a keen anticipation that Tom Merry would take the first opportunity of administering a licking to Koumi Rao.

And as Tom Merry showed no sign of intending to do so, some of the fellows ran him down in the common-room that evening, to question him with regard to his intentions. They were burning with curiosity, and they meant to have their curiosity satisfied.

"I hear you've had trouble with the Jam, Merry," Gore of the Shell remarked, by way of a beginning. Tom Merry was playing chess with Manners, and Lowther was helping both sides impartially with advice, so all three were busy—which was perhaps the reason why Tom did not appear to hear George Gore's remark.

"Did you have a row with the Jam over in the New House, Merry?" said Gore, in a louder voice. "I hear that he insulted you, and you took it lying down."

"Did you?" said Tom Merry calmly. "Check, Manners."

"Yes, I did," said Gore. "Is it true?"

"Find out!" said Tom calmly.

"Well, that's what we're trying to do," said Levison of the Fourth. "I don't think a School House chap ought to allow himself to be insulted. It's up against the House if he does."

"Hear, hear!" said Mellish.

"That's my opinion, too," said Gore. "The New House chaps oughtn't to be allowed to slang us as they like. What do you think, Tom Merry?"

"I think it's hard to play chess while silly asses are jabbering in both my ears," said Tom Merry sedately.

"But are you going to have it out with the Jam?"

"No!"

"You're not going to challenge him?"

"No!"

"You're going to let a New House kid insult you—hey—and take it quietly?" demanded Gore. "And you claim to be junior captain of the House!"

"Mind your own business!"

George Gore looked round for support.

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NEXT WEDNESDAY—**"STRAIGHT AS A DIE!"** A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"I think it's the business of all of us," he said. "The New House claims to be cockhouse of St. Jim's; and they'll jolly well make out their claim, too, if our blessed captain lets himself be slanged without saying a word! Why, they'll put it down to funk! Have you thought of that?"

"Faith, and they might!" said Reilly of the Fourth.

"Of course they will!" sneered Levison. "And my belief is that it is funk!"

Tom Merry glanced up.

"If you think so, Levison, I'm ready to prove to you that I'm not a funk," he said quietly. "Here, or in the gym, with or without gloves, just as you like!"

"Bai Jove! That's a vewy faish offah!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

It was a fair offer, certainly; but the cad of the Fourth did not seem disposed to close with it. Levison wanted to stir up trouble among others; but he was not looking for trouble for himself.

"Oh, I don't want to fight you!" said Levison, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I've had it out with you before, and you were too much for me—I admit it. The question is, not whether you're afraid of me, but whether you're afraid of young Cetewayo. And it looks to me as if you are!"

And Levison walked away.

But his remark was echoed among the other fellows, and a lively discussion went on, with cheerful disregard for Tom Merry's burning ears.

Tom had thought the matter out, and he had decided to let it drop. Koumi Rao was a queer fish, and Tom did not want to hammer a new boy—especially a foreigner whose manners and customs were so different from his own. And he knew that the Jam was no match for him physically. The insult he had received made his ears tingle whenever he thought of it; but, after careful consideration, he had resolved to do nothing in the matter—so long as Koumi Rao did not repeat his action or words. He intended to avoid the new boy, and have nothing to do with him, and so avoid further trouble. And in coming to that decision, Tom Merry was undoubtedly right.

But he found that other fellows considered themselves entitled to have a say in the matter.

Tom Merry was acknowledged leader of the School House juniors. Even Jack Blake was second to him. In all the alarms and excursions against the rival House, Tom was first in the field. And if he allowed himself to be insulted by a New House "kid" without an effort at retaliation, his followers considered themselves entitled to pass opinions on the matter. The New House would crow—they were sure of that. The New House would say that a School House chap had funkled.

And so public opinion in the School House common-room was decidedly against Tom Merry's line of conduct.

Tom heard the remarks that were made, as he played on; and some of his moves in that game of chess were very erratic, and it was not surprising that Manners mated at last, only Lowther's kindly assistance to him having delayed the end so long.

"Try again!" said Manners.

Tom Merry shook his head, and rose from the chess-table.

"Too much jaw here," he said. "Let's get out."

And the Terrible Three sauntered out of the common-room.

"May as well get our prep. done," said Lowther.

They went up to the study, Tom Merry's face clouded and worried.

His chums knew what he was thinking about, but they made no remark.

"Look here!" said Tom abruptly. "What do you chaps think? Koumi Rao was an insulting beast to me, and if it had been any other chap, I'd have knocked him into skittles. But do you think I'm called upon to hammer that queer foreigner—do you?"

"Oh, rot!" said Manners. "Let him alone. He may think you are a funk, but let him rip. It needn't worry you!"

"The other fellows won't think so," said Lowther. "They know you too well. The queer ass will find enough trouble here without a hammering from you!"

"That's what I think," said Tom Merry. "If he picks a quarrel with me, of course, it will be a different matter. But—but I could knock him into bits, you know; he wouldn't have an earthly against me. I don't want to fight a chap who isn't anything like my match. I think that would be more funky than letting him alone!"

"Let him alone," said Lowther; "and let Gore go and eat coke!"

And the Terrible Three, having come to that decision, settled down to their preparation.

But in the common-room the talk was still going on unabated.

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"Shouldn't have thought it of Tom Merry!" said Gore. "But it's a case of funk—sheer, utter, unadulterated funk!"

"Wats?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Oh, shut up, Gore!" said Kangaroo. "Why can't you let a fellow do as he likes? I don't see that it matters to you!"

"It matters to all of us—it's a question of the honour of the House!" said Gore loftily. "What we want is a new junior House-captain. A leader who funks fighting with a blessed nigger isn't the kind of leader I want!"

"No fear!" said Levison.

"The New House chaps will be crowing. I hear that the nigger actually refused to take Tom Merry's fist when he held it out, and wouldn't sit at table with him, as if he was a blessed leper!" said Gore. "I hear that he slapped his face, too!"

"I expect you heard that from Levison!" grinned Blake.

"I was there, and it didn't happen!"

"Wathah not!"

"I heard a New House chap say it," said Gore. "It was Pratt of the Fourth. He was bragging that they'd got a chap in the House now who could handle our giddy champion, and treat him as he liked!"

"Bai Jove! That's wotten!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Certainly the bwown wottah was vewy wude, and Tom Mewwy was extremely patient with him!"

"Too jolly patient, I think!" sneered Gore. "Look here, you fellows, it's up to some of us to stand up for the House, if Tom Merry won't. We're not going to have this House called a funk's asylum—that's what Thompson of the Shell was calling it."

"Bai Jove!"

"Somebody ought to give that nigger a licking, and bring him to his senses," said Gore. "If Tom Merry declines to take it on, it's up to somebody else!"

"Well, take it on yourself!" growled Blake.

"And so I will!" exclaimed Gore instantly. "I don't want to shove myself forward, but I'm willing to stand up for the House. If they've got a fellow over in the New House who punches Tom Merry's nose without getting anything back—"

"He didn't do anything of the sort."

"Well, the whole school will soon be believing that he did, which will be just as bad," said Gore. "The chap ought to be put in his place; and if our giddy leader won't do it, I'm willing to handle the nigger myself!"

"Hear, hear!" said Mellish.

"They're in the gym, now," said Crooke of the Shell, who had just come into the common-room. "Come on, Gore!"

"I'm ready!"

"Look here," said Blake, "better let him alone. He's a new chap, and you're bigger than he is; and he's a queer foreigner, too—"

"Well, I won't be hard on him," said Gore. "I'll give him a chance to say he's sorry, and to own up that the School House is cockhouse of St. Jim's. Otherwise, I'll wipe up the floor with him. Come on, you fellows!"

And Gore and Crooke and Levison and Mellish started off; and the other fellows followed them to see what would happen.

CHAPTER 7.

Gore Receives More Than He Bargains For.

FIGGINS & CO. were in the gymnasium, and Koumi Rao was with them. In spite of what had happened in the study, and its uncomfortable consequences, Figgins did not feel that he could abandon the new boy. He had given his word to the Head, and he meant to keep it. The Head, of course, could not have foreseen what had happened; but he had anticipated difficulties with the new junior from India, and for that reason he had asked Figgins to do his best for him. And that Figgins was loyally determined to do.

Koumi Rao seemed to have taken something of a liking to Figgins already; and, indeed, it was not easy to be with the frank and kind-hearted junior without liking him. And nobody else seemed to have any desire to talk much to Koumi Rao, so, without the kind attentions of the Co., he would have been left very much to himself.

Kerr was on the parallel bars, and the Co. were watching him, when Gore and his friends came into the gym., with a crowd of other School House fellows at their heels.

"Here they are!" exclaimed Gore.

Figgins looked round.

"Looking for the nigger!" Gore explained.

A dull, red flush came up under Koumi Rao's dark skin.

Gore planted himself directly in front of the Indian junior, and stared him in the face. And the juniors gathered round in anticipation of the trouble that was certain to follow.



Koumi Rao stood, with clenched fists and flashing eyes, facing Gore. "You have insulted me!" he exclaimed. "Were we in my kingdom, I would have you thrown to the jackals!" He evidently expected his princely words to be taken seriously, but the juniors roared, "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 7.)

"Look here," said Figgins angrily, "you can let the new kid alone, Gore. I'm not having any of your bullying, you understand!"

"Taken him under your wing—eh?" said Gore, with a sneer.

"Yes, I have, as a matter of fact."

"Then you'd better teach him manners while you're about it," said Gore. "If you don't he'll get lessons from the School House."

"Let his manners alone," said Kerr, from the bar above. "Tom Merry's the only chap who's got anything to complain of, and he hasn't complained."

"No; he's funking it, or else he's playing good little Eric," jeered Gore. "But this black bouncer isn't going to get his ears up against the School House. Tom Merry is going to take his cheek lying down, but I'm not. I'm going to give him a licking."

"Hands off!" said Figgins, with a glitter in his eyes. "If you touch him you'll have to deal with me, Gore!"

"Is the nigger going to hide behind you?" demanded Gore scornfully. "He was swanky enough talking to a fellow who was willing to let him alone."

"Mind your own business."

"Well, if the nigger is funking it—" sneered Gore.

Koumi Rao's answer to that remark was quick and unexpected.

He stepped rapidly forward. His open hand rang upon Gore's face with a crack like a pistol-shot.

"Ow!" gasped Gore.

He reeled back, and almost fell in his astonishment.

Koumi Rao stood with clenched fists and flashing eyes, facing him.

"You have insulted me!" he exclaimed. "Were we in my kingdom, I would have you thrown to the jackals!"

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Fatty Wynn. "He's on the high horse again!"

The Indian junior spoke with flashing eyes and vibrating voice, and evidently expected his princely words to be taken seriously. But from all the fellows who heard him there came a yell of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Koumi Rao ground his teeth.

"Oh, bai Jove, that is too wick, you know!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Weally, Figgay, deah boy, you ought to teach the chap not to talk like a silly ass!"

"He can't help it," groaned Figgins. "I suppose he was born like it. He talks like a character in a newspaper serial story."

"Well," said Gore, rubbing his cheek, "you can't have me chucked to the jackasses or jackals, or whatever they are, but you can stand up to me with the gloves on, you cheeky nigger, and the sooner the quicker."

"Bah!"

The Indian junior spat out the word with volumes of contempt in look and voice; but the Saints were not impressed. Levison, imitating the bleating of a sheep, repeated the monosyllable with ludicrous effect:

"Baa, baa!"

And the juniors yelled with laughter again.

"Are you going to put the gloves on?" asked Gore, approaching the Indian junior with his hands up. "You've smacked my face. I'm going to wallop you till you feel like a squashed orange—see?"

Figgins & Co. exchanged hopeless glances.

They did not want to see the slim Indian pitted against the muscular, burly bully of the Shell. Koumi Rao did not look as if he would have any chance of success. But after he had struck Gore in the face they could hardly stand between any longer. The matter had to be settled by a fight now.

But Figgins privately resolved to superintend that fight very carefully, and to stop it before Gore had had a chance.

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY—

"STRAIGHT AS A DIE!"

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

of hammering the Indian overmuch. A mild licking, Figgins thought, might do the Indian more good than harm, and might knock some of the majestic nonsense out of him. But Figgins did not intend to allow any bullying.

The Head had placed the new boy under his charge, and Figgins was faithful to the trust, difficult as he was finding it.

"You'll have to fight Gore now, Jammy," he said.

The Jam made a gesture of angry disdain.

"I do not fight, excepting with one of my own rank," he said contemptuously.

"Do you mean to say that I'm not as good as any blessed nigger that—that ever niggered?" bellowed Gore furiously.

"Don't talk out of your hat, Jammy, old man," implored Figgins. "Try to have a little sense. You can't biff a chap on the chivvy and then say you won't fight him. Gore's going for you, anyway, so you'd better put up your hands."

"Yes, you'd better," said Gore threateningly. "Not that it will be of much use, you skinny nigger!"

"Can you box, Jammy?" asked Figgins anxiously.

The Jam nodded.

"Yes; I have learned it. I can easily thrash that insolent dog!"

"Dog!" gasped Gore. "Why, the silly ass thinks he's in a play. We shall hear him swearing by the giddy halidom next."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put the gloves on, then," said Figgins. Redfern had obligingly brought out the boxing-gloves.

"I will not put them on."

"Let him come on without 'em!" grinned Gore. "He will jolly soon be sorry he didn't have the mittens on."

"The prefects will come and stop you," said Figgins.

"Perhaps that's what he wants?" sneered Levison.

"Put 'em on, Jammy!" urged Figgins. "Don't be a silly ass, not a bigger ass than you can help, I mean. Put your paws here!"

"And buck up!" said Gore, slipping on the gloves. "I warn you that I'm going to wipe up the floor with you!"

"Bah!"

"Baa-baa!" repeated Levison.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Jam put on the gloves, with an angry frown. Then, without waiting for the call of time, he rushed furiously at George Gore. Gore piled in at once. He did not think it worth while to have rounds. He did not expect it to take him more than two minutes to knock the slim Indian into the middle of next week, or still further along the calendar.

But the surprise of his life was waiting for the bully of the Shell.

Koumi Rao had said that he could box. But no one had dreamed that he was such a master of the manly art of self-defence as he now proved. Gore's sledge-hammer blows, any one of which was heavy and hard enough to knock Koumi Rao flying if it reached him, were warded with easy skill, and the Indian's right came home on Gore's nose, and as the Shell fellow staggered back his left followed, and Gore received it in his eye, and sat down with a bump that seemed to shake the floor.

And from the excited ring came a shout of surprise and applause.

"Well hit, Jam!"

CHAPTER 8.

The Jam's Challenge.

"HALLO! Wherefore this thushness?" ejaculated Monty Lowther.

The Terrible Three had come into the gym.

Tom Merry and his chums did not know what was going on when they came in. But they knew soon enough. They were just in time to see Gore rolling on the floor.

"A giddy scrap!" said Manners. "Come on! Gore's been looking for trouble again and finding it."

The Terrible Three cheerfully shouldered and elbowed their way into the crowded ring to see who Gore's opponent was. The voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth was heard raised in protest.

"Lowthah, you are tweadin' on my foot."

"Yes; I know that, Gussy."

"Pway keep your silly elbow off my wibs, Mannahs!"

"Pray keep your silly ribs off my elbow!" said Manners.

"Tom Mewwy, if you shove me in the back—"

"Sure, and who are ye shoving?" demanded Reilly.

"You, my son!"

And the Terrible Three reached a front place.

Tom Merry uttered an exclamation at the sight of the Jam, standing in his shirt sleeves, his dusky face glowing, and his eyes gleaming, and the boxing-gloves on his fists. He saw now whom Gore's opponent was. It was the Jam, and Tom Merry, like the rest, marvelled that that slim, lithe Indian

should have been able to deal the blows that had stretched the burly Gore on the floor of the gym.

"Fighting already, hey?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Gore started it," said Figgins. "He came and picked a quarrel with the Jam for nothing."

"He was taking it up for Tom Merry!" said Levison.

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"He might have minded his own business, then," he said. "I never asked him to do anything of the sort."

Levison and Crooke helped Gore to his feet. The bully of the Shell was looking somewhat dazed. There was a thin trickle of red from his nose. In spite of the gloves, the blows had been very hard and heavy, and Gore was damaged.

"My word! The nigger can hit!" said Levison. "But you're bigger and heavier than he is, Gore, old man. You'll lick him!"

"Of course I shall," muttered Gore, between his teeth.

"Bitten off a bit more than you can chew, Gore, I reckon," remarked Buck Finn, the American junior. "This is where you pass."

"Oh, rats!"

Gore was not beaten yet. But he knew he had a harder task before him than he had imagined, and he was much more subdued now.

"You'd better have this in rounds," said Figgins. "It isn't exactly the giddy walk-over you thought it was, Gore. I'll keep time."

"Just as you like!" growled Gore.

"Time!" said Figgins, taking out his watch.

And Gore stepped forward to face the Indian. Koumi Rao was standing in a cool and easy attitude, not in the least flustered by what he had gone through. And all the juniors, as well as Gore, realised that the slim Oriental was "hot stuff."

He showed it unmistakably in the second round.

He was not so large, so heavy, as Gore, and he was shorter in the reach; but he more than made up for these deficiencies by a wonderful litheness and quickness, and sheer skill in the art of boxing.

Gore prided himself upon knowing how to use the mittens, but he found that he was not in the "same street" with Koumi Rao when it came to that. His blows came heavily and clumsily, and his guard seemed useless against the quick hammering delivery of the Jam. Hardly a knock touched the dusky face of the Indian, while blow after blow crashed upon Gore's flushed, furious face and his heaving chest.

"My only hat!" murmured Monty Lowther. "That kid knows how to hit! Tommy, my son, he wouldn't be so an easy mouthful even for you!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"He could stand up to me, I suppose," he said. "I don't think he could lick me—but I'll give him the chance to try if he likes."

"I'm afraid you'll have to after this. Now he's shown he's such mustard, the fellows will really think you are funking if you keep clear of him."

"There goes Gore!" said Manners.

"Bai Jove! Poor old Goah!"

"Well hit!"

Figgins had been about to call "Time!" when Gore went down under a regular sledge-hammer drive from the Jam's right. He crashed upon the floor, and lay there gasping. Levison ran to pick him up.

Gore staggered up, and sank heavily upon the knee Crooke made for him. He was panting, and decidedly groggy.

Figgins & Co. were grinning with delight now.

They had expected to see the Jam hammered by the bully of the Shell, and had been prepared to step in and stop the fight when it had gone far enough. But it was evidently not the Jam who was destined to get the hammering. He was handling the bully Gore as if he had been a child. It was to be a victory for the New House; and at that thought they felt their hearts warm towards the Jam.

"New House wins!" chuckled Pratt of the Fourth. "Hurrah!"

Gore grunted.

"New House hasn't won yet, hang you!" he snapped.

"Are you going on?" asked Levison doubtfully.

"Of course I am, you ass!" said Gore crossly.

"Time!"

Gore simply staggered forward to meet his opponent. He was "done," as a matter of fact, but he had plenty of bulldog pluck. He would not give in to a "nigger" so long as he could stand.

But he was not able to stand very long. The Jam simply played with him. Gore got in one heavy blow—an up "cut" on the Jam's dusky chin—that sent him reeling. Before the Shell fellow could follow up his advantage the Jam recovered himself, and piled in fiercely, and Gore was driven back under a shower of blows. The round ended with the Shell fellow gasping on the floor again.

...and I have any more of your old buck—see?"
"You have defied me with your touch! I, a prince—the lord of Bundelpore—"

"Oh, come off!" said Figgins, in disgust. "Don't be funny! Don't I keep on telling you that you're not in Blundergore now?"

"My country is Bundelpore."

"Yes, I mean Bundelpore. Why couldn't you give it an easier name? You're at St. Jim's now, and you're Koumi Rao of the Fourth, and I'm your study-leader, and chief of the juniors in your House. See? If you back up against me, you get it in the neck! Understand that?"

"I do not wish to punish you. I would make you my friend."

"Well, I'm willing to be your friend," said Figgins, relenting a little. "But, for goodness' sake, don't be such a blessed wild-cat, and don't talk such silly piffle! Can't you see that you'll become a standing joke in the school if you keep on like that? You can't call fellows dogs and things here. That's only done on the stage in England. It's a custom in this country to talk sense."

"I would not quarrel with you," said the Jam. "I will learn your customs if I can. But you cannot be my leader. I am a prince, and I must command."

"That's just where you make a mistake," grinned Figgins. "You would be Number One if we were in your palace at Chundersnore, or wherever it is; but here, in this study, I'm your leader, and don't you forget it. You can lick Gore, but you can't lick me. And even if you could it wouldn't make any difference—I'm leader all the time. The fellows have chosen me."

"Bah! The slaves!"

"Come off!" roared Figgins. "I tell you we won't have play-actor talk in this study! Now, shut up, and pile into your prep."

The Jam hesitated; but Figgins was not to be argued with. Prince and Oriental as he was, Koumi Rao was beginning to learn things. In the Native State of Bundelpore, it was death to lay hands on the noble person of the prince—but it was evidently very different in Figgins's study at St. Jim's. And Koumi Rao found that he had to learn to accommodate himself to circumstances, since circumstances would not accommodate themselves to him.

So he "piled into" his preparation—and was glad of the kindly assistance of the Co. in teaching him the ropes.

When prep. was finished, good-humour reigned in the study; and Fatty Wynn produced a bag of chestnuts, which he proceeded to roast at the fire.

"I suppose you want to go on with that affair with Tom Merry?" Figgins asked, as he reposed from the labours of preparation, and devoured roasted chestnuts.

The Jam's black eyes began to gleam again.

"I will beat him!" he said, between his white teeth. "I will beat him—I will thrash him till the blood drenches him—till—"

"Now you're beginning again!" growled Figgins. "If you fight Tom Merry, you'll fight him with the gloves on, like a decent civilised chap, and there won't be any blood, unless you get a wallop on the nose."

"I shall beat him—I shall—"

"Well," said Figgins thoughtfully, "after the way you handled Gore, I think you've got just a sporting chance. Tom Merry is simply mustard in a scrap. I should have all my work cut out to handle him myself. You might pull it off—I don't say you wouldn't. If you do, it will be one up for the New House, and no mistake. Tom Merry has never been licked by a New House chap. I had some trouble with him once, and we had a scrap—but bless you, I got as much as I gave—didn't I, Kerr?"

"More!" said Kerr.

"Ahem! But if you want to tackle him, there's no objection, Jammy—but you've got to do it in a civilised way. And the sooner you get the silly idea out of your head that you hate him, the better it will be. We don't like that kind of thing at St. Jim's. It's no class!"

"He is my enemy—he, and all his race. His uncle, the sahib general, crushed my people!" said the Jam fiercely. "My cousin, Ahmed Dal, was corrupted by them, and he joined them—he wished to fill the throne when my father was deposed. My father is dead—he left me a legacy of hatred. Even now my throne is not secure. At the will of the British, my hateful cousin may be placed upon the throne—and I am powerless to prevent it. My troops may not march at my order—not unless the Resident consents. I may not command the execution of Ahmed Dal—it is forbidden. But he would slay me if he could, and take my throne by the favour of the British."

"What a happy family!" sighed Figgins. "I should like to live in Bundelpore—I don't think. Seems to me you ought to be grateful to the Indian Government for not

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"Bravo!"
Figgins slapped the Jam upon his princely back. "Good old Jampot!" he exclaimed heartily. "Blessed if I thought you had it in you! Good old Crosse & Blackwell!"
"Hurrah!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard that as a vewy good sewap," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I could not have handled Goah bettah myself."

"Go hon!" murmured Lowther.

"Take the mittens off," said Figgins.

But the Jam shook his head.

"I am not finished yet!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, you are!" said Figgins, in surprise. "Gore's given you best, and it's all over. What have you got in your head now?"

"I have chastised the insolent dog—"

"Stilts again!" groaned Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, come off, darky!" exclaimed Kangaroo of the Shell. "We don't like that sort of talk here. Talk sense."

"There is another whom I shall thrash!" exclaimed the Jam, his black eyes blazing. "He is here, and I challenge him to meet me!"

And with his gloved hand he pointed to Tom Merry.

Tom started a little.

"You want to fight me?" he exclaimed.

"Yes. I have thrashed your friend, and now I shall thrash you!" the Jam exclaimed arrogantly.

Tom Merry's lip curled.

"You wouldn't find that so easy," he said. "Gore isn't my friend, as it happens, and I had no idea that he was picking a row with you on my account. He's got what he deserves."

"Yaas, wathah."

"You cannot escape me, whatever you may say!" said Koumi Rao. "I shall make you fight me!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Figgins. "Tom Merry won't want any making."

"I'll fight you, if you want me to," said Tom. "I'll meet you any time you like. Not now; you're not fit to stand up to me after Gore. To-morrow, if you like."

"Here—and now!" exclaimed the Jam.

"I won't fight you now," said Tom steadily. "You're not fit to take on two fights one after the other, and you'd know it if you had any sense. You couldn't stand up to me now through one round. I'll meet you to-morrow."

"Coward!"

"Shut up!" roared Figgins. "Don't mind him. Tom Merry. He's a giddy savage fresh from the wilds, and he don't know what he's talking about!"

"I will fight him!" cried the Jam. "What General Merry has done to my people, that I will repay to Tom Merry—if he does not fear to meet me!"

"I don't fear to meet you!" said Tom contemptuously. "But I'll meet you when you're fresh—not when you're groggy, you silly ass!"

"Then I shall strike you!"

The Jam made a forward movement, his right hand raised. But just then Figgins chipped in. He grasped the Jam by the back of his collar, swung him round, and started him off towards the door. There was a yell of laughter, and the Jam struggled furiously in the grasp of the New House leader. But he struggled in vain. Figgins had an iron grip on the back of his collar, and he ran the Jam right out of the gym, by sheer force. They disappeared amid shouts of merriment.

Kerr picked up the Jam's jacket, and followed with Fatty Wynn. Koumi Rao was not seen in the gym, again that night. Figgins & Co. were evidently successful in keeping their strange and untamed study-mate in order for once.

CHAPTER 9. A Legacy of Hate.

KOUMI RAO gasped as Figgins plumped him down in the armchair in the study in the New House.

Figgins had not relaxed his grip all the way from the gym, to the study, and the Jam had had no choice about coming home.

He gasped, and his eyes gleamed with rage, as he sat in the chair, his hands clenching, and his features working convulsively.

"There!" panted Figgins. "There you are, and there you stay!"

"Dog!"

"Eh?"

"You have laid hands upon me!"

putting your cheerful cousin on the throne, as I... have done. It seems to me that you've got a lot to be thankful for."

"We cannot resist the British Raj!" said the Jam. "That is impossible. Some day, perhaps, you British will be driven into the sea—"

"And then you will start cutting one another's throats, in the good old way you had before we stopped you," said Kerr. "That is, until the Russians come down on you like a sack of coke and squash you."

The Jam was silent.

Figgins rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"You ain't a bad sort altogether," he said, cocking his eye thoughtfully at the Jam. "With a bit of training, and with some British ideas knocked into you, you will make a decent chap. But do learn not to ride the high horse, and don't be theatrical. If you want to fight Tom Merry, go in and win, if you can—but do it like a sportsman. My advice to you as a friend would be to leave him alone!"

"I shall fight him!"

"Then, if you're determined to bang your napper against a brick wall, you can go ahead. I'll go over and arrange with him."

And Figgins, in a very thoughtful mood, crossed the quadrangle to the School House, and looked in at Tom Merry's study.

The Terrible Three had just finished their prep.

"Just looked in for a minute," said Figgins. "I shall have to buzz off, as it's near locking-up. About that little scrap to-morrow—"

"You can arrange it," said Tom Merry.

"In the first place, I apologise for my man," said Figgins. "He's a bit of a wild-cat, and not quite New House style, but you must overlook that. He's got his good points, and in the long run I think he'll turn out all right. If you lick him, that may help him on the right road."

"I'll do my best," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"It seems there's some old family trouble," said Figgins.

"Your grandfather—"

"My uncle, fathead!"

"I mean your uncle. It appears that he was the chap appointed to squish Bundelpore when squashing-time came. Koumi Rao can't get over it. It seems, too, that he's got an affectionate cousin looking for a chance to murder him, and step into his shoes—in the beautiful Indian manner."

"His cousin would be Jam of Bundelpore now, but for my uncle," said Tom. "General Merry saw fair play. Ahmed Dal joined the British, hoping to be made Jam after the trouble. I had it in a letter from my uncle, but I'd forgotten all about it. I've still got the letter, and I've been looking at it again. The old Jam was deposed for being a beast, and his infant son was made a ward of the Indian Government. Blessed if I ever thought I should see the kid at St. Jim's. I suppose he can't be expected to look at the matter as we do."

"Well, no," agreed Figgins. "He's got a lovely Oriental taste for bloodshed, and he would like to have his cousin crucified or something, whatever it is that they do to 'em in Bundelpore. Family relations must be a bit strained in that delightful country. We're going to knock all the rubbish out of him in time, I hope. We'll try. About your little meeting to-morrow, though. We're playing a Form-match in the afternoon, and footer can't be interfered with for the sake of scrapping. After the match, suppose you fellows stroll down to the old barn, and bring some gloves in a bag."

"Good enough!"

"Say about half-past five," said Figgins.

"We'll be there!"

"Right-ho! Good-night!"

And Figgins departed.

"I wish Figgys' joy of his new study-mate," yawned Monty Lowther. "I think I'd just as soon have Herries' bulldog in the study myself."

And the chums agreed with him.

CHAPTER 10. The Man from India!

THE following day was a half-holiday, and the great event of the day—to the juniors—was the Form-match between the Fourth and the Shell. The first eleven were playing a visiting team from Abbotsford, but that match loomed much less large in the eyes of the juniors. Tom Merry, and Blake, and the rest of the School House footballers, were thinking that morning about the game, and had no thoughts to spare for the Jam. But the encounter between Tom Merry and the new boy, which was to follow the football match, excited a great deal of interest.

That it was coming off that day, all the fellows knew; and they were keen to know when and where. But the

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barn when he... enough to witness the fight... course might lead to suspicions on the part of... and interference. Glove fights were not generally interfered with, so long as they were not carried too far—but Tom Merry realised that his scrap with the Jam would be something out of the common.

It was not merely a House row—not merely a common schoolboy quarrel. The Jam hated him personally—and was out for vengeance for imagined injuries. It would be, on the Jam's side, at least, a ferocious and bitter struggle. And Tom Merry wanted it to be a fight to a finish. He did not want it to be stopped, to be renewed later—for he knew that the Indian would renew it unless he was so soundly licked that he could have no hope of success in a second try. Tom's heart was not in it—he didn't want trouble with the Jam at all. But since Koumi Rao was determined upon it, and not to be balked, Tom wanted to finish the matter once and for all.

He felt that he was more than a match for the Indian—but even if he had expected a licking, it would have made little difference. He was a sportsman, and he was as willing to take hard knocks as to give them. He would stand up to his enemy and do his best, and nobody could do more than that.

He was thinking very little about the matter that morning. He was to captain the Shell in the match with the Fourth that afternoon, and that gave him plenty to think about.

Kick-off was not till three. After dinner, Tom Merry and his chums strolled out of the school gates. Tom did not want to meet the Jam, and precipitate matters. He knew very well that Koumi Rao would not control either his tongue or his temper if they met; and a fight before the Form-match was impossible.

The Terrible Three leaned against the stile in Rylecombe Lane, and chatted football, to kill time before the match.

Monty Lowther turned his head suddenly, and glanced up the footpath through the wood behind them.

Then he made a grimace.

"No go!" he said.

"What's that?" asked Tom Merry.

"The blessed nigger has followed us."

Tom Merry frowned.

"I really think Figgins might keep him in hand," he exclaimed. "I don't want to scrap with him before the match—it would put me off my form for play, of course. But I'm not going to run away from the cad. I've tried to keep out of his way."

"I don't see him," said Manners.

Lowther jerked his thumb towards the thickets behind them.

"I just caught a glimpse of him," he said. "Anyway, it was a Hindu, so I suppose it was the Jam. They don't grow many Hindus in these parts."

The Terrible Three looked towards the thickets. There was no one to be seen, but a bird rose fluttering from the trees.

"He's hiding there," said Manners. "That doesn't look as if he's come hunting for trouble."

"Perhaps it wasn't the Jam."

"It was a nigger, anyway," said Lowther. "Blessed if I see what he's skulking there for, and watching us. I'm going to have him out."

Lowther vaulted over the stile, and ran into the thickets. There was a sudden hoarse exclamation in some foreign tongue the juniors did not understand.

"My hat!" came Lowther's voice. "It isn't the Jam; it's another blessed ducky!"

Tom Merry and Manners hastily joined their chum. He was facing a Hindu, who stood with scowling face and glittering eyes in the trees. It certainly was not the Jam. The man was thirty-five years old at least, of a powerful frame. He was attired in English clothes, and extremely well dressed. His sharp, gleaming, black eyes wandered from Monty Lowther to the two new arrivals with a quick, catlike look.

"Hallo!" said Manners. "Who may you happen to be? Can you speak English?"

The scowl vanished from the man's face, and he assumed a smile. He took off his hat, and bowed to the juniors.

"I am a traveller," he said, in perfect English. "I hope I did not startle you."

"Well, you did a bit," said Monty Lowther; "but never mind. I took you for another chap."

The man smiled again.

"Surely there are not many of my race in this quiet country place," he said.

"He's a kid belonging to our school," Lowther explained. "Ah! You belong to the famous school yonder," said the Hindu. "I have come to this place to see it."

"Oh!" said Lowther. "Then I beg your pardon for jumping in on you as I did. And—for calling you a nigger. No offence—just a way of speaking, you know."

The Hindu waved his hand. "It is nothing," he said. The information that the dark gentleman was simply a traveller, who had been drawn to that district by a desire to see their school, naturally made the juniors feel cordially disposed towards him. And yet they could not help having a strange impression that he had been trying to keep out of sight.

"You can come in and have a look at the place if you like, sir," said Tom Merry. "We'll be pleased to show you round."

The dark gentleman shook his head. "Thank you so much, but I will not trouble you. I merely wished to see the school, and from the hill yonder I shall have a good view of it. And I must take the next train back to London. But I am very much obliged to you. Do you have many boys of my country at St. Jim's?"

"Only one; and he's a new chap," said Tom Merry. "I might know him," said the stranger musingly. "What is his name?"

"Koumi Rao."

"Ha! The Jam of Bundelpoore?"

"That's the chap."

"It is a famous name in India," said the stranger. "He is a ward of the British Government, since his father was deposed from the throne for tyranny over his subjects."

"You know the kid?" asked Tom, with interest. The stranger shook his head.

"Ah, no! I have never seen him. So he has come to your school?"

"Yes; he came yesterday."

"I have read much of your famous school," said the man from India, in a careless, chatty tone. "There is a 'History of Sussex' in which it is fully described. There are two houses—is it not so—in which the boys are boarded?"

"That's right—School House and New House," said Tom Merry.

He was not at all averse to giving information about the school to a polite and inquiring traveller who was interested in the place. It was not an uncommon thing for foreigners and American tourists to visit St. Jim's, and prattle about the ancient buildings with deeper interest than was felt by the boys who inhabited them.

"We belong to the School House," added Manners proudly.

"And you are pleased to have an Indian prince in your House?" the stranger remarked, with a smile.

"Oh, he isn't in our house. He's in the New House."

"That is the smaller house of the two, is it not so—on the south side of the quadrangle?" said the stranger.

"I see you know all about it," Tom Merry remarked.

"Yes. I have read much of the antiquities of St. Jim's and other public schools," said the gentleman from India. "I am deeply interested in the subject." He glanced at a big gold watch. "Thank you so much. I shall take away with me a very agreeable impression of the young gentlemen who belong to that famous school."

And he raised his hat again, and walked away down the footpath.

Tom Merry and his comrades returned to the stile. The form of the gentleman from India vanished in the wood.

"Jolly polite chap!" said Manners.

"Glad we were able to tell him something about the place," said Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry did not reply. His brow was wrinkled in thought.

"Penny for 'em!" said Lowther facetiously.

"I suppose he's all right," said Tom at length. "But—but what was he keeping out of sight for in the first place? He was simply hiding there, and he was scowling like a demon when we spotted him. And—and I wonder what he wanted to know so much about Koumi Rao for?"

"Well, I suppose he would be interested to hear about one of his giddy native princes being here," Manners remarked. "Yes, I suppose so; but"—Tom Merry paused—"I don't like him. I wonder if he was pulling our legs—piling it on about the famous school, and all that!"

"But why should he?"

Tom Merry shook his head. "Blessed if I know. I don't like his looks, that's all. But it's time to get back for the footer match. Come on!"

And the juniors walked back to the school, but somehow or other Tom Merry could not quite drive from his mind the remembrance of the man from India.

CHAPTER 11.

The Form Match.

KOUMI RAO came down to the football-ground with Figgins & Co.

His black eyes glittered at the sight of Tom Merry among the Shell fellows, but Tom did not seem to be aware of his existence.

He had no time to think of Koumi Rao and his black looks just then.

"You watch the game, Jammy," said Figgins affably. "It will give you an idea how we play footer. To-morrow I'll give you some tips in the game. There's nothing like watching a good match for a beginner."

"You play against Tom Merry?" asked the Jam.

"Yes; he's captain of the Shell."

"But the other boys—they are not in your House, yet they are in your team?" said Koumi Rao.

Figgins explained. "This isn't a House-match; it's a Form-match—the Fourth against the Shell. There are fellows of both Forms in both Houses, of course. We have a House-match on Saturday, and then these chaps will be against us."

"But you always play against Tom Merry?"

"Excepting in a School-match. You see, when the junior eleven plays another school, we play the best men from both Forms and both Houses. Tom Merry is captain of the junior eleven, and I'm vice-captain."

"But he is your rival?"

Figgins rubbed his nose thoughtfully. He wondered if it would ever be possible to make Koumi Rao understand that a fellow might have a rival, and yet be on the most cordial terms with him.

"Yes, in a way," he agreed. "Of course, we're up against the School House all the time. But when it's a question of standing up for St. Jim's, we let all that go."

"You like one who is your rival?"

"Of course I do, if he's a decent chap."

"Bah!" said Koumi Rao. "Listen to me!" He lowered his voice. "In this game you play against him—and I have heard that there are many accidents in the game of football."

"Accidents happen sometimes," said Figgins.

"If an accident should happen to Merry, you may become the captain of the junior eleven!"

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Then, if I were in your place, I should make it happen," Figgins stated.

"Make it happen!" he repeated.

"It would be easy."

It took Figgins some moments to understand. When he understood, his brow became so thunderous that the Jam backed away a pace involuntarily.

"Well, you awful rascal!" said Figgins at last.

"What!"

"You—you—" Figgins broke off. "Perhaps you don't understand. But don't say anything like that again. I should have to punch your princely nose!"

And Figgins stalked away.

"More trouble with the giddy Jam?" asked Monty Lowther, observing Figgins's expression.

Figgins snorted. "He's been giving me advice about the footer," he replied. "I don't know whether we shall be able to knock things into him, after all. What do you think was the tip he gave me?"

"Give it up!" said Tom Merry.

"Only to crock you in the match, Tommy, so as to become junior footer captain in your place," said Figgins.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I know whether to laugh or to punch his nose," said Figgins. "Of course, he doesn't understand things."

"He will learn," said Tom Merry comfortingly.

"He had better," growled Figgins. "He will find the New House a jolly warm corner if he doesn't."

And the footballers went on the field.

The Jam stood watching the play with keen interest.

Although Figgins's methods with him were somewhat of the rough-and-ready order, the Jam seemed to like Figgins very much, and, indeed, his precious advice to the New House junior had been dictated by friendship.

He watched Figgins's exploits in the Form-match, and cheered and clapped as loudly as any of the New House fellows when Figgins scored the first goal.

Figgins was in great form. The first half ended with one goal to nil for the Fourth.

Form, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy patted Figgins on the back when the whistle went for the interval.

"Jollay good, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "That was a vewy neat goal. I could not have handled that bettah myself."

Figgins put his hand on his heart, and bowed, and the juniors chuckled. They had the impression that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could not have handled that goal nearly so well.

In the second half the Shell attacked hotly, and Fatty Wynn, in goal, had plenty to do. But the fat Fourth Former was equal to his task.

A deadly shot from Tom Merry was just stopped, and, after that, the Shell did not have another chance.

They played hard right up to the finish, but the finish came without the score being changed on either side.

The Fourth Form came off the field winners by one goal to nil.

"Bettah luck next time, deah boy," said D'Arcy to Tom Merry. "I shall be playin' on your side next Saturday, you know."

Tom Merry grinned.

"Yes, I suppose that will mean another victory for Figgy," he remarked.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I did not mean that—"

"How do you feel, Tommy?" asked Figgins, coming up. "If you're fagged I'll make the Jam put off his little affair till to-morrow."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"That's all right—better get it over."

"He's hot stuff, you know," hinted Figgins.

"I will try to be hotter."

"Right-ho! The old barn at half-past five, then."

"Yes."

Tom Merry walked away with Manners and Lowther after the match. The match had been a gruelling one, and he was breathing a little hard.

Lowther gave a somewhat anxious glance.

"You don't want to risk being licked, Tom," he said. "They've licked us at footer, and we don't want two lickings in one day."

"Can't put it off any longer," said Tom, quietly. "Besides the Jam wouldn't have it. He would pick a row with me, and we should have to have it out. Besides, I'm all right. Come and have some ginger pop."

Soon after five the Terrible Three strolled out of gates, with Kangaroo and Clifton Dane, of the Shell, and the chums of Study No. 6.

They reached the old barn, at some little distance from the school, and found the New House party already there.

Figgins & Co., and Redfern and Owen, and Lawrence were with the Jam.

The glitter came into Koumi Rao's eyes again as Tom Merry entered with his friends. Lowther put down the bag he carried, and produced a pair of boxing-gloves. Kerr produced another pair from under his coat. The Jam uttered an exclamation.

"We are not in the school now—there is no need for the gloves. I prefer to fight without gloves."

"Shurrup!" said Figgins.

"If Tom Merry is afraid of being hurt—"

"Hold your silly tongue!" roared Figgins.

"I'll fight with or without gloves—I don't care a button," said Tom Merry.

"You'll fight with gloves," said Figgins. "This is a mill, not a prize-fight. And if Koumi Rao talks any more rot he'll fight me instead of you."

"I'll keep time for you," said Kangaroo, taking out his watch.

Again Koumi Rai had something to say.

"I do not agree."

The Cornstalk stared at him.

"You are a friend of Tom Merry, you shall not keep time."

"Do you mean that I wouldn't give you fair play, you inky son of darkness?" he demanded wrathfully.

"You— you worm!" said Monty Lowther. "Tommy, my son, I wouldn't soil my hands on such a chap if I were you. Take him away, and bury him, Figgy."

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Figgins looked worried.

"He can't help it," he said. "He was brought up in Borribhoola-Gha, and he doesn't know any better. Don't take any notice of his rot. Kangy can keep time."

"Not for that rotter," said Kangaroo, putting his watch away. "I don't want to have anything to do with him."

"Let a New House chap keep time," said Tom Merry. "It's all the same to me."

And that having been arranged, the gloves were donned, and the adversaries faced one another. Koumi Rao declined to go through the customary ceremony of shaking hands, and Tom Merry was glad enough that he did. Kerr called time, and the first round started.

CHAPTER 12.

Fairly Licked.

ROUND the walls of the old barn the juniors stood, looking on, giving the combatants plenty of room.

Before the fight had fairly started the number of onlookers increased. Fellows keen to see the "mill" had kept their eyes open, and they arrived in ones and twos. Reilly and Kerruish and Ray of the Fourth strolled in, and then came Rook, and Gore, and Vavasour, and Thompson, and Pratt and Glyn, and several more. The old barn began to be crowded before the first round was over.

"We shall have the whole blessed school here soon," murmured Jack Blake.

"Time!"

Kerr called time, and the first round was over. It had been warm, but owing to the gloves, no damage was done.

But the look of the Jam showed that, gloves or no gloves, damage would be done before he had finished.

The Jam was not so tall as Tom Merry, and he was not nearly so strong; but he had a tigerish quickness and lithe-ness that compensated for it. And in knowledge of boxing he was evidently the equal of the Shell fellow.

The crowd of juniors looked on with great keenness as the second round started. It was likely to be a fight that would be remembered in the annals of the Lower School. Tom Merry was easily the best boxer in the lower forms, and at last he had met a foeman worthy of his steel.

The Jam attacked hotly, and now punishment began to be given and taken on both sides. Just at the close of the round, with a lightning upper cut, he caught Tom Merry on the point of the chin, and flung him backwards.

"My hat! Tom's down!"

"Bai Jove!"

The Jam's eyes blazed. Kerr began to count, and the Jam rushed forward—and Figgins swung him fiercely back.

"Hold on, you fool. You can't hit a man when he's down!"

"Let me go!"

"Stand back!"

Figgins fairly flung the Jam backwards.

The call of time came fortunately for Tom Merry, though he would have been on his feet before the ten were counted. The heavy upper-cut had jarred him through and through, and he was staggering a little as he went to the knee Lowther made for him. Manners fanned his burning face.

"That was a bad break, Tommy," he murmured.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes; he is all there."

"Look out for his upper-cut with the left—it's a daisy," said Lowther.

"I'll look out," said Tom, with a faint smile. "It wants looking out for. He took me by surprise that time. I don't think it will happen again."

"Pile on him and squash him!" growled Kangaroo. "The black beast actually wanted to fall on you when you were down—the rotter! The New House chaps don't look proud of their giddy champion."

"Wathah not! Poor old Figgy looked awfully ashamed of the wottah."

"Time!"

Tom Merry stepped up briskly.

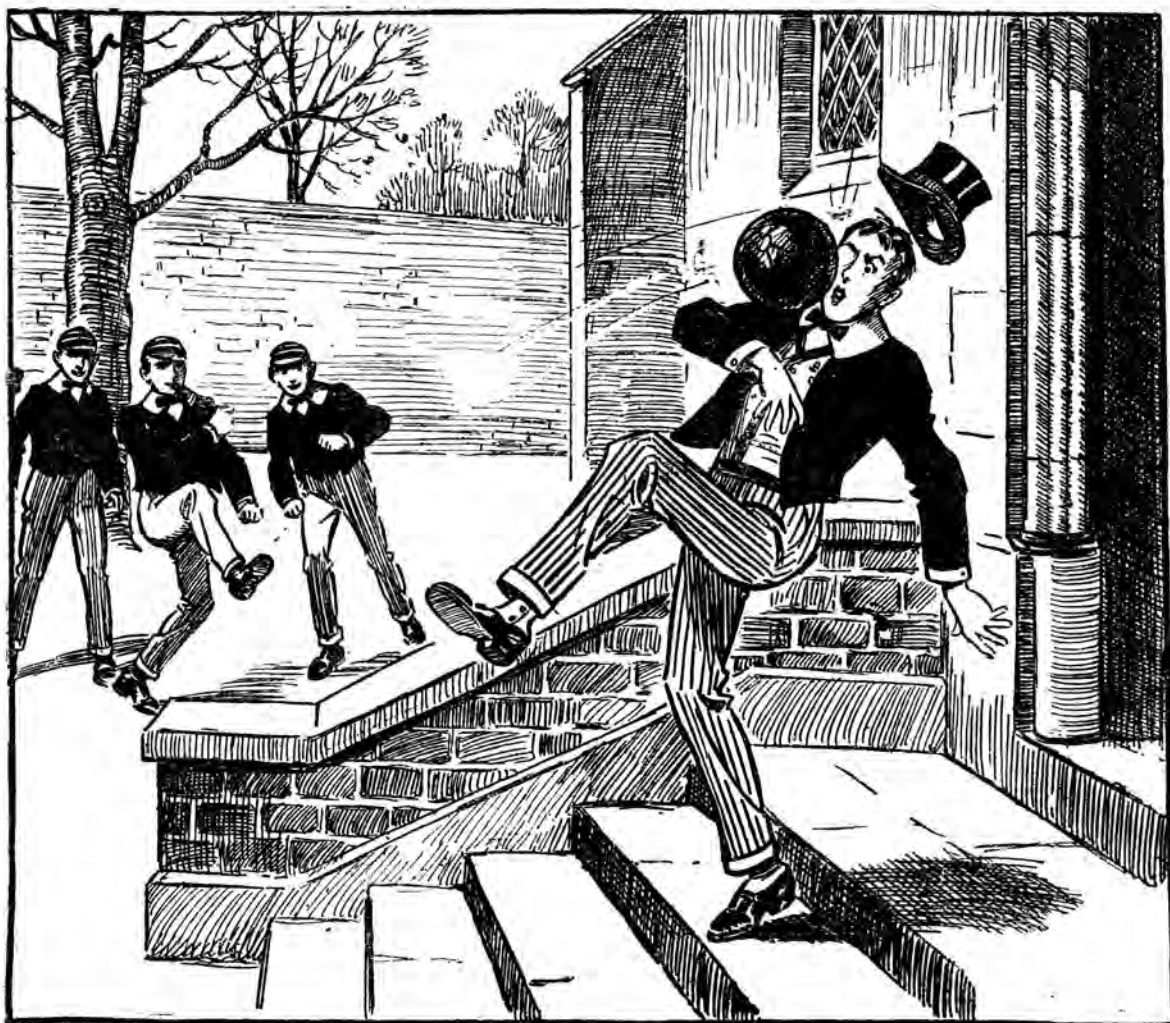
His heart had not been in the fight—but it was in it now. Something of the bitterness of the Indian seemed to have imparted itself to Tom Merry.

The gleam in the English junior's eyes showed that he meant business, as he faced his ducky antagonist again.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

STRAIGHT
AS
A DIE!

A Grand Story of the
Famous Chums of
St. Jim's.
Don't Miss It!
Order Early.



Just as Figgins kicked, an elegant junior, in whose eye gleamed a monocle, came out of the house and descended the steps. Before he gained the second step the football reached its destination. Biff! It made a squashy sound as it biffed on the aristocratic countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Yawwoh!" he roared, and sat down suddenly on the top step. (See Chapter I.)

Koumi Rao attacked hotly as before, and again he tried the upper-cut with his left, which had told so well once. But he did not take Tom Merry by surprise this time. His blow was stopped, and Tom Merry's right came home with stunning force right in the dusky face.

It was a sledge-hammer blow, and the Jam reeled backwards and went to the ground with a crash.

And from Arthur Augustus there came a cheery chirrup: "Bwavo!"

The Jam sprang to his feet. His nose was streaming red, and there was red on Tom Merry's glove. The Indian's head was reeling from the shock, and his eyes were blazing with rage. He flung himself upon the Shell fellow like a tiger.

Hammer and tongs now—hammer and tongs—and the on-lookers almost held their breath with excitement.

Blows were given and taken, but Tom Merry had the advantage all through the round. The Indian was groggy from that knock-down blow, and his ferocity did not save him. He was knocked all round the ring, and he was on the point of collapse when time was called.

Figgins drew him to his knee to rest.

"Let me go on," spluttered the Jam. "I do not want to rest. Let me go on."

"One minute rest," said Figgins. "That's the rule."

"But I—I—"

"Save your breath, old chap! You'll need it all in the next round."

"I shall beat him."

"You won't if you lose your temper, and fight like a wild-cat. Try to keep your head."

"I will beat him—I will beat him!" hissed Koumi Rao.

"Save your breath, you ass," said Fatty Wynn.

"Bah!"

"Time!" called Kerr.

The Jam had not profited by Figgins's advice, as he showed plainly enough in the fourth round. He did not keep his head. He piled in furiously, thinking only of attack, and of getting at his foe.

That was not a way to beat a cool, steady fellow, and a good boxer. In the fourth round Tom Merry simply played with him. His heavy drives came home again and again on the dusky, savage face, and the round finished with a driving right-hander that lifted the Jam fairly off his feet, and flung him into the arms of his second.

"I guess that finishes it," remarked Lumley-Lumley, of the Fourth, who had just come in, with two or three more keenly-interested individuals.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He can't go on," said Redfern. "My hat! That giddy drive would have knocked a prize-fighter out, I should think."

"Time!"

Koumi Rao staggered into the ring. He had refused to listen to Figgins's advice to "chuck it." He would fight as long as he could stand; but already he was feeling that he was doomed to defeat. That thought roused all the ferocity in his nature, and he attacked Tom Merry like a tiger.

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Tom Merry would willingly have spared him then, but it was impossible. He had to hit his hardest in self-defence.

Several of the Jam's blows came home, and Tom Merry's nose was streaming red now, and his mouth had a queer, crooked look. His left eye was winking and blinking incessantly, and a shade of purple was growing round it.

But the punishment he received was little compared to that taken by the Jam.

One of the Koumi Rao's eyes was quite closed, and bruises were showing all over his dark skin, and he was panting madly for breath.

Still he kept on.

"Time!"

At the call of time, Koumi Rao declined to stop—and Figgins & Co. had to drag him out of the ring, struggling.

"My hat!" said Manners. "A blessed tiger! What he wants isn't a fight, but a jolly good ragging."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in utter disgust. "He hasn't the slightest idea of playin' the game. And to think that I was prepared to take that fellow up and make a friend of him! Bah Jove!"

"Lots of pluck, though!" said Kangaroo. "He's coming on again."

The Jam reeled forward for the sixth round. It was plain to all that he was "done," but he refused to admit it. Whatever chance he might have had, he had thrown away by yielding to the savage promptings of his temper. He had no chance left now, but he meant to go on till he could go on no longer.

The sixth round finished with Koumi Rao gasping on his back. Figgins & Co. did not have to urge him to come off then. He could not even rise to his feet.

"Time!"

"Don't let him go on, Figgins," called out Kangaroo.

"I will go on!" screamed the Jam. "I will beat him—I will beat him! I will kill him."

"Koumi Rao—"

"Let me go!"

Figgins shrugged his shoulders hopelessly.

The Jam staggered into the ring. He was swaying from side to side, and he blinked round uncertainly for his foe through his closing eyelids. Tom Merry kept his hands down to his sides.

"He can't go on," he said. "Take him away, Figgins, I won't hit him again."

"You shall—you shall—" hissed the Indian.

He attacked breathlessly. Tom Merry contented himself with warding off the blind, furious blows, that no longer had any strength behind them. Koumi Rao could not touch him, and he was exhausting himself in vain. He realised it, and with a sudden snap of the teeth, he dragged off the gloves, and flung himself with bare hands upon Tom Merry—striking, clawing, scratching like a wild-cat.

There was a shout of wrath and disgust from the juniors, and they closed into the ring. Koumi Rao was seized by a dozen hands and dragged off.

They pitched him to the floor, and would have bumped him, too, but Tom Merry interposed.

"Let him alone! He's had enough, poor beast!"

"You'd better take your man away, Figgins," said Monty Lowther savagely. "The beast isn't fit to be with decent chaps at all. Take the rotter home!"

And Figgins & Co. helped Koumi Rao out of the barn.

The fight was over, and Tom Merry was the victor. He was the victor. He was good for three or four more rounds yet, if there had been any more to face. Koumi Rao had been licked—and among the spectators of the fight, there was a general satisfaction in his licking. New House fellows as well as School House agreed upon that point—that if ever a chap deserved a thorough hiding, Koumi Rao did—and they were glad that he had had it.

CHAPTER 13.

A Disgrace to the House.

KOUMI RAO sat breathing heavily in the armchair in Figgins's study.

He looked a wreck.

Figgins & Co. had done their best for him—but it was little that they could do.

His dusky face had been bathed, and Figgins had obtained a raw beefsteak to put on his eyes. With the steak bound over his eyes, the Jam made a curious figure as he sat in the armchair.

Figgins & Co. were looking very grim.

They were utterly ashamed of their study-mate, and Figgins felt that he had come to the end of his tether. He had promised the Head that he would do his best for the new boy from the Far East. But what was to be done with a fellow who did not seem to understand the first principles of fair play? A fellow who wanted to pile on his adversary

when he was down—who snatched off the gloves and started clawing in a fight? Figgins felt that there was nothing to be done, and he was fed-up with the Indian—fed right up to the chin, as he gloomily confided to Kerr and Fatty Wynn.

The silence in the study was broken by a groan from the Jam.

"Feel bad?" growled Figgins.

"Yes, very bad."

"Then why couldn't you leave off when you were licked?"

"I lost my temper."

"Br-r-r."

"But next time I shall beat him."

Figgins snorted.

"There won't be any next time, Koumi Rao. Do you think any decent fellow would fight you again, after what you did?"

Koumi Rao gritted his white, glistening teeth.

"I will force him to—I will strike him—"

"You won't!" said Figgins curtly. "If you try to get at Tom Merry any more, you'll be ragged. A fellow isn't bound to fight a wild-cat. You clawed at him like a tiger. Why, I saw a big scratch on his face when he left the barn."

"I wish I had killed him."

"Shut up!"

"I hate him!"

"Hold your silly tongue, will you?"

The Jam gasped for breath.

"If you bother him any more, you'll get a ragging," said Kerr. "Do you know what that is? You'll be frog's-marched and bumped and ducked in the fountain."

"Bah!"

"And if you 'bah' at me, I'll jolly well start on you now!" said Kerr, his temper rising.

"You've disgraced us, and disgraced the house. Time you shut up."

The Jam was silent.

He did not fully understand the thoughts and feelings of the St. Jim's fellows; but he could understand the scorn and contempt he had read in every glance thrown at him since the fight in the barn.

That was painful enough to a proud nature accustomed to respect and servile attention, but there was more than that.

For the Jam had begun to entertain a sincere friendship for Figgins of the Fourth—and Figgins of the Fourth was precisely the fellow who seemed most utterly disgusted with him.

With a complete disregard for his feelings, the New House Co. discussed in his presence the possibility of getting him put into some other study, and mentioned, as a possibility too good to be expected, that he might be got transferred to the School House. Indeed, they did not seem to think that he had any feelings at all now. A fellow who would not fight fairly could not claim to be sensitive on any point, according to the ideas of Figgins & Co.

"It is all the fault of Tom Merry!" the Jam muttered at last.

"It's all your own fault!" snapped Figgins. "It isn't as if you were a funk. You've got plenty of pluck. Why couldn't you fight fairly?"

"It isn't in him!" said Fatty Wynn, with a shake of the head. "You know what Shakespeare says—"

"Blow Shakespeare!" muttered Figgins crossly.

"East is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet!" pursued Fatty.

"That isn't Shakespeare, fathead! That's Kipling!"

"I don't care who it is; it's true," said the fat Fourth-Former. "I suppose after this you won't want to take him under your wing, Figg?"

"Of course not."

"You've done enough, said Kerr.

"More than enough, I think."

"It was rotten, planting him in this study at all. It wasn't fair on us," said Kerr. "Ratty seems to be awfully fond of him. Let Ratty have him, and be hanged!"

"If we could only get him put into the School House!" sighed Fatty Wynn. "I'm ashamed of belonging to a House that's got such a wild-cat in it."

"He ought to have been put in the School House in the first place," growled Figgins. "They would have been willing to have him before they knew him."

"There'd be a row over there if he were planted on them now," said Kerr, with a shake of the head.

"Well, I suppose we couldn't expect 'em to stand it."

"No fear!"

"But why should we stand it?" exclaimed Figgins.

"We've got to, I suppose."

"It's rotten, I think."

"Rotten isn't the word," said Kerr. "It's sickening. At least, we can try to get him put into some other study."

"Would that be fair on the chaps there, though?"

"Might have a study to himself, though," suggested Fatty

Wynn. "The other fellows wouldn't mind crowding a bit, so as not to dig with him."

"That's a good idea!"

The Jam sprang to his feet. He could stand no more. He tore the beefsteak from his eyes, and hurled it to the floor, and turned a dark and passionate glance upon the New House juniors.

They looked at him grimly. His anger did not matter to them, and they were quite prepared to rag him if there was any outbreak of temper.

They were, as Figgins said, quite fed up with him. They had taken him up out of kindness, and had been good to him in spite of his queer ways, and he had repaid them by disgracing them and their House. That was the limit, and their patience was more than exhausted.

"You do not want me in this study?" the Jam exclaimed passionately.

"Of course not!"

"You say that I disgrace you—I, a prince, the lord of a great land in India—I, whose nod is a command to a thousand slaves!"

"Oh, blow your thousand slaves! If there are slaves in your country, it only shows it's high time you got it in the neck, and had the place taken out of your hands."

"I will not stay here to disgrace you, then," cried the Jam.

"I will go!"

"Well, that's about the only decent thing you can do," agreed Figgins.

"If you'll do that we're willing to overlook the rest you've done, and say no more about it," said Kerr, with a breath of relief.

The Indian's features worked. Figgins, as he glanced at the bruised face, and saw the dusky features twitch, felt a pang of remorse. After all, the boy was a savage. He was a prince, but by blood and breeding he was not on a level with the poorest "kid" who pushed a trolley or carried a grocer's basket in England. They were the heirs of a thousand years of civilisation, and was it just to judge, according to their standards, this son of a race of tyrants and shedders of blood?

"Here, I say! Don't blub, you know!" said Figgins awkwardly. "I—I didn't mean to rub it in too hard. But—but—"

"You have said that you would be my friend," said the Jam, with a break in his voice. "I have said that I will try to learn your ways—I, a prince, will try to learn of you. But you despise me."

"I—I can't help that," said Figgins. "I suppose you don't understand. Why, a blessed hooligan in a slum in this country wouldn't fight as you did."

"I will not do so again."

"You'd be pretty well slaughtered if you did," said Figgins. "You put yourself right outside the pale. And the worst of it is, that you don't understand."

"I will try," said the Jam humbly.

Figgins looked dubiously at his chums. Figgy had a very tender heart, and when a fellow gave in to him Figgy immediately felt inclined to take back all he had said. To be hard on a fellow who threw himself on his mercy was impossible to Figgins.

"What do you say, you chaps?" asked Figgins hesitatingly.

"I'd like to give him a chance if it would be any good," said Kerr, with equal hesitation. "But—but would it? Look here, Koumi Rao, if you don't understand how badly you've acted, you can take our word for it, I suppose?"

"Yes, yes," said the Jam.

"Then tell Tom Merry you're sorry you did it, and stop all your silly rot about hating him, and we'll call it square." The Jam's eyes blazed.

"Never!"

"But you are sorry, ain't you?" said Figgins.

"No! I hate him!"

"That's enough for me!" said Kerr, rising. "I'm fed up!"

Kerr left the study without another word. Fatty Wynn glanced doubtfully at Figgins, and followed Kerr out. The Jam watched them go, and then his dark eyes turned upon the study leader. Figgins was hesitating.

"And you," said the Jam in a low voice—"you will not be my friend?"

"I can't," said Figgins honestly. "It's impossible. I wanted to, but you won't let me. I think you ought to apologise to Tom Merry for clawing him, and you ought to stop all that stage-play rot about hatred, and so on."

"I cannot."

"You can't want my friendship very much if it's not worth enough to you to make you do a decent thing," said Figgins tartly.

And Figgins followed the Co.

The Jam remained alone in the study. He stood in silence

for some minutes, and then threw himself into the chair in a passion of tears. But suddenly he sat upright, his wet eyes gleaming, his dusky hands clenched, his glistening white teeth hard set.

"It is all due to him—to Tom Merry!" he muttered. He was muttering in his own language, and there was no one at St. Jim's who could have understood the wild words that followed, even if they had been heard. "He is my enemy—my enemy always! His uncle robbed my father of his kingdom, he has robbed me of my friend! Shall he live to triumph over a prince of Bundelpore?"

A terrible look came over the dusky face.

Jameson of the Third, who was passing the study, glanced in as he heard a muttering voice in a strange language, and he started and shivered at the sight of the Jam's face, and hurried away. As he afterwards confided to his chums in the Third, the fellow's chivvy simply gave him the creeps, and he was of opinion that Koumi Rao wasn't quite right in his head. But Jameson would have had a worse attack of the creeps if he had known the dark and terrible thoughts that were passing in the Jam's mind.

CHAPTER 14.

Mr. Ratcliff is Disappointed.

MR. RATCLIFF, the master of the New House, half rose from the table when the Jam came into the dining-room in the New House to tea.

His eyes were fixed upon the bruised and damaged face of the Prince of Bundelpore.

The Jam came in alone.

Figgins & Co. had gone over to tea in Study No. 6 in the School House, and they had not even thought of taking the Jam with them. They had not spoken to him since that exceedingly plain talk in Figgy's study.

The Jam, feeling lonely and miserable, and little comforted by the savage thoughts of vengeance that were in his mind, came into the dining-room. And immediately the Housemaster spotted his damaged visage, and inquired into the matter.

"You have been fighting, Koumi Rao!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said the Jam defiantly. He supposed that he was about to be punished, or at least reprimanded, and he was in a mood to be insolent to the Housemaster.

"You have been treated very badly," said Mr. Ratcliff.

"It was wicked of any boy here to attack a new junior in such a savage manner! Was it Figgins?"

"No, sir."

"Point out the boy who has treated you so shamefully."

"It was not a boy of this House, sir."

The Jam's eyes were glinting now. He understood that the tuft-hunting Housemaster did not intend to punish him, but his adversary, and it did not even occur to him that the fellows expected him not to sneak. The juniors who were in the room glanced at him very expressively, but he did not understand, and he would not have cared if he had understood.

"Give me the boy's name," said Mr. Ratcliff.

"It was Tom Merry, sir."

"A bigger and older boy than yourself," said Mr. Ratcliff, who had had many a little trouble with the hero of the Shell. "It was brutal and cowardly of Merry to attack you."

"If you please, sir," spoke up Redfern, who happened to be having his tea in the dining-room, funds being low in the study. "Merry didn't attack him, sir. It was a fair fight, and Koumi Rao challenged Tom Merry."

"I did not ask you to speak, Redfern!"

"No, sir; but—"

"Kindly keep silent."

Redfern bit his lip, and kindly kept silent. But his eyes gleamed with scorn at the Jam of Bundelpore.

"I shall report this matter to Merry's Housemaster," said Mr. Ratcliff. "After tea, Koumi Rao, you will come with me."

"Certainly, sir!"

"Oh, you rotten sneak!" muttered Redfern in the Jam's ear, as Koumi Rao sat down to the table. "Why don't you tell him it wasn't Tom Merry's fault? Do you know that you will be getting Tom Merry into a row with his Housemaster if you don't own up that you forced him to fight you?"

"That is what I desire."

"Well, you—you—" Redfern almost choked with disgust. "Oh, there ain't a word for you! You're a disgrace to the House!"

"What are you saying to Koumi Rao, Redfern?" came Mr. Ratcliff's acid voice.

"I—I was giving him some good advice, sir," stammered Redfern.

"Indeed? Kindly repeat what you said!"

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NEXT WEDNESDAY— "STRAIGHT AS A DIE!" A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Redfern's eyes met the Housemaster's fearlessly.

"I advised him to own up that he forced Tom Merry to fight him, sir. It's only fair to Merry. He didn't want to fight."

"Is that all you said?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"What else did you say?"

"Rotten sneak!" said Redfern.

Some of the fellows grinned, but Mr. Ratcliff's brow was like thunder.

"Indeed? You will take a hundred lines, Redfern, and if you speak in abusive terms to Koumi Rao again I shall cane you!"

"Oh!" said Redfern.

When tea was over Mr. Ratcliff signed to the Jam to follow him, and crossed the quadrangle to the School House. A crowd of New House fellows watched them go with feelings too deep for words.

"That's what the New House is coming to!" groaned Thompson of the Shell. "He's not satisfied with fighting unfairly; he's got to turn sneak and informer as well. What did they want to put him in this House for?"

"We'll jolly well make the House too hot to hold him!" growled Redfern.

Koumi Rao, careless and indifferent as to what the juniors might think of him, crossed the quadrangle at the heels of his Housemaster, and entered the School House. Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, was just coming out of the dining-room.

"A word, Mr. Railton," said the New House master, detaining him.

"Yes. What is it?" asked Mr. Railton, with a curious glance at Koumi Rao's sullen and damaged face.

"Look at that boy's face!"

"Well?"

"Is that the way you consider a new boy, and a stranger from a distant country, should be treated on the second day he passes at this school?"

"I should say not, Mr. Ratcliff."

"I am glad you agree with me. I have come over to report Tom Merry's conduct to you. I venture to suggest a severe punishment."

"I must first ascertain which was to blame," said Mr. Railton coldly. "Tom Merry is not the boy to make an unprovoked attack, especially upon a younger lad than himself. Blake, will you kindly call Merry of the Shell?"

"Certainly, sir!"

Jack Blake ran up to Tom Merry's study, where the Terrible Three were at tea. He burst into the room excitedly.

"Hallo! What's wanted?" asked Tom Merry.

"You are!"

Tom Merry sighed.

"More trouble! What's the matter now?"

"Ratty's brought the nigger over to show his chivvy to Railton. Looks to me as if the beasily worm has been sneaking!"

"Might have expected it," said Monty Lowther.

"Well, he couldn't keep the state of his face a secret," said Tom Merry indulgently. "And Ratty is just the kind of old bird to nose it all out. Come with me."

The Terrible Three went downstairs with Blake. A crowd of fellows had collected in the hall, including Figgins & Co., who had had tea in No. 6.

"You have been fighting with Koumi Rao, Merry?" said Mr. Ratcliff, scanning the face of the Shell fellow, which showed unmistakable signs of the punishment he had received in the fight in the barn.

"Yes, sir."

"It is against the rules to fight without gloves, Merry, as you know very well; although perhaps the new boy does not."

"We had the gloves on, sir."

Mr. Railton raised his eyebrows.

"Then the fight must have been a very brutal one, for so much damage to be done to your faces—especially to Koumi Rao's."

"We fought it out, sir," said Tom.

"And what quarrel had you with the new boy?"

"None, sir."

"Do you mean that Koumi Rao quarrelled with you?"

"I don't want to say anything, sir. I suppose we were equally to blame," said Tom.

"That is scarcely possible," broke in the New House master unpleasantly. "You are a bigger boy than Koumi Rao, and he was new here. It was utterly cowardly of you, Merry, to attack him as you have done."

"Does Koumi Rao say that I attacked him?" asked Tom very quietly.

"Yes," said Mr. Ratcliff at once.

Koumi Rao was silent, giving a tacit assent to the declaration of the Housemaster. His only desire was to see Tom THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 297.

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Merry suffer, and he thought of nothing else. But there was a shout of indignation from Figgins.

"It's not true, sir!"

"Silence, Figgins!" said Mr. Ratcliff, frowning.

"But it's not true!" persisted Figgins. "A dozen fellows know all about it, and they'll tell you the same!"

"Leave this House at once, Figgins!" ordered Mr. Ratcliff.

The New House junior had to go, but there were plenty of School House fellows to speak in his place. They had nothing to fear from Mr. Ratcliff.

"It's true, all the same," said Blake. "Koumi Rao simply forced Tom Merry into it. If he says anything different he's a liar!"

"Yaas, wathah! I was a witness of the whole mattah, sir," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy indignantly. "Koumi Wao challenged Tom Mewwy, in the first place. He insulted him first, and Tom Mewwy passed it ova in a weally magnanimous way, but he had to accept his challenge. And Koumi Wao insisted on fightin' aftah he was beaten."

"That puts quite a different light on the matter," said Mr. Railton drily. "Merry appears to be the injured party here."

"I do not believe that gloves were used, since so much damage was done," said Mr. Ratcliff acidly. "Do you assert, Merry, that gloves were worn all the time?"

Tom Merry did not answer. He had worn gloves all the time, and Koumi Rao had not, but he did not wish to say so. But Mr. Ratcliff misunderstood his silence, and persisted in his demand for explicit information.

"Answer my question, Merry!"

"I have nothing to say, sir."

"I insist!"

"You have no right to insist, sir," said Tom Merry, with a flash in his eyes. "I am answerable to my own Housemaster."

"Please reply, Merry," said Mr. Railton.

"Very well, sir. I had gloves on all the time."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Mr. Railton gave Tom Merry a quick look.

"Does that mean that Koumi Rao did not have the gloves on all the time?" he asked.

"I'd rather not say anything, sir."

"I must ask you to reply."

"Well, he pulled 'em off in the last round, sir," said Tom reluctantly.

"And you did not?"

"I? Certainly not, sir!"

"Very well. Koumi Rao appears to have been the aggressor all the time, and to have acted very badly," said the School House master. "I do not see any reason for punishing you, Merry. You agree with me, Mr. Ratcliff?"

"No, sir," said the New House master sharply; "I do not! I do not believe Merry's statements!"

"There are plenty of witnesses," said Blake. "There were a dozen chaps of your own House there, sir, and they will tell you the same."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I believe every word Tom Merry has spoken," said Mr. Railton quietly. "Koumi Rao has told, or at least implied a falsehood. He was the aggressor, and he should have admitted it. If he belonged to my House I should punish him. You are at liberty to do as you think, Mr. Ratcliff. The matter is ended so far as I am concerned."

And Mr. Railton walked into his study as a very plain hint that the matter was indeed ended.

There was nothing left for Mr. Ratcliff to do, but to beat an inglorious retreat; and he did so. And as the sullen-faced Indian followed him out of the School House, there was a derisive howl from the whole crowd;

"Sneak!"

CHAPTER 15.

For Vengeance!

THE next day the Jam realised to the fullest possible extent the "bad break" he had made.

Even in his own House, the fellows would not speak to him.

Figgins passed him by with a clouded brow.

As if what the Jam had already done was not bad enough, he had added to his iniquities by sneaking, and trying to get Tom Merry into trouble with the masters.

He had not succeeded, but that did not make any difference. He had tried, and he had in so doing earned the scorn of every fellow in the school. As Figgins said to the Co., even Levison or Mellish would have stopped short of what the Jam had done without the slightest hesitation.

"He's a rotter all through!" was Kerr's comment; and Figgins had to agree with him.

After morning lessons that day, the Jam lingered in the passage, in the hope that Figgins would speak to him. But Figgins walked by without appearing to be aware of his existence.

The Jam followed him out into the quad., and caught him by the sleeve. His dark face was very miserable as he looked at Figgy's scornful countenance. Figgins jerked his arm away.

"Don't touch me," he said.

"You will not speak to me?" muttered the Jam.

"No, I won't!"

"Because—because—"

"Oh, what's the good of telling you whys and wherefores," growled Figgins. "You wouldn't understand."

"But, I—"

"What did you want to sneak to Ratty for?"

"The sahib master asked me."

"Why didn't you own up it was your fault, then?" said Figgins. "Ratty wouldn't have licked you. He's too fond of titles to lick you."

"I did not think of that."

"You were afraid of being licked?"

"No, no!"

"Then what did you do it for?"

"I wanted Merry to be punished."

Figgins surveyed him with a look of utter disgust. "Punished! He wasn't to blame. You drove him into fighting you; he let you off first, after you insulted him, when many fellows would have wiped the floor with you. Then you worried him into fighting you, and got the licking you were asking for. And then you wanted him punished for licking you in a fair fight—fair on his side, at any rate. What are you made of?"

"I hate him!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Then—then you will not speak to me?"

"No, I won't. You make me sick. If you want decent fellows to speak to you, you will have to be decent. Why, you were practically telling lies, to get Tom Merry punished."

"I would do more than that!"

"The best thing you can do is to get back to India," said Figgins scornfully. "We've no use for fellows of your sort in this country."

"You despise me?" muttered the Jam.

"Why, of course, I do," said Figgins. "Don't you know that a fellow oughtn't to tell lies and tell tales?"

"In India it is different."

"I suppose it is," grunted Figgins. "That's the only excuse there is for you. You gas a good bit about your blessed dignity as a prince. Why, there isn't a kid of the lowest possible class in this country who wouldn't be ashamed to do what you've done."

The Jam's lips quivered.

"I am not English," he said. "But—but I admire your ways; I should like to learn to be like you, if you will be my friend."

"My hat! I wish you wouldn't put it like that," groaned Figgins, whose tender heart was moved again. "You make me feel as if I were in the wrong to be down on you, when it's you that's in the wrong all the time. I don't want to be unfriendly. I'd like to help you. But how can a chap be chummy with a sneak?"

"I did not know—I did not understand. I will never do so again. I will be cut in pieces first."

"Well, that's better," said Figgins. "If you want to stop your blessed tricks, I'd like to help you, certainly. Look here, Tom Merry is a jolly decent sort, and anybody might be proud of knowing him. He never bears malice. I won't ask you to apologise to him, if that's so much against your giddy princely dignity. But go to him—I'll come with you—and tell him honestly you won't play the giddy goat again, and ask him to shake hands and forget all about it."

The Jam seemed to shrink within himself.

"Take his hand—his! Never!"

"Why not?"

"I hate him!"

Figgins snorted.

"There you go again! You say you want to be better, but you always come back to that silly rot. Look here, I'm willing to be your friend, but so long as you say you hate anybody, I'm up against you. Understand that. It's rotten—it's un-British." That was the strongest term of condemnation Figgins could think of. "If you want to be on good terms with me, make up your mind to leave off hating Tom Merry. And the sooner the better."

"If he was gone," said the Jam slowly. "If he were not here, then I should hate nobody, and you would be my friend."

Figgins gave a short laugh.

"I suppose Tom Merry isn't likely to leave St. Jim's id please you," he said.

"He might!"

"Oh, rats! Blessed if I don't think you're half off your silly rocker."

"But if he did—"

"But if he did, I suppose things would be different—unless you turned your confounded play-acting on to somebody else," said Figgins irritably.

"I hate nobody else. If he were not here, you would be my friend."

"Oh, perhaps; I don't know."

The Jam walked away without speaking again. But his thoughts were very busy, and they would have alarmed Figgins if he had been able to guess them.

The Jam did not speak to Figgins again. He seemed to have accepted his exclusion from the Co. with patience. The Co. learned with satisfaction later in the day that Mr. Ratcliff had assigned Koumi Rao a study to himself. The Housemaster had intended to gratify Koumi Rao by that concession; but probably he gratified Figgins & Co. more than the Jam.

The Jam had his tea in the hall, and after tea he wandered out into the quad. by himself. His eyes glittered at the sight of the Terrible Three in the quadrangle. He came towards them, and the Shell fellows moved away. Their thought was that the Jam was looking for more trouble.

"Let me speak to you," said the Jam quietly.

"Well, what is it?" asked Tom Merry, as civilly as he could.

"There is something I want to say to you," said the Jam.

"But I wish to say it to you alone."

"Look here, if you want more trouble, you'll have to look further for it," said Tom Merry bluntly. "I'm not going to fight you again, I've had enough of you!"

"It is not that!"

"Then what is it?"

"Will you not walk a little way with me, that I may speak to you? I am a stranger in this land, and perhaps I have done wrong. But it is not to fight you that I wish you to come with me."

Tom Merry hesitated.

But he was good natured, and he felt that it would not be just to be so much "down" on the Jam as he would have been upon any other St. Jim's fellow who had done as Koumi Rao had done.

"If you chaps don't mind—" he began.

"Right-ho; we'll expect you on the footer ground," said Monty Lowther, and he walked away with Manners.

"Now, what is it?" asked Tom.

"Will you not come with me where we can speak quietly?" asked the Jam. "I have something to say that is very important."

"Blessed if I know what it can be," said Tom Merry, puzzled. "But I don't mind taking a stroll, if that is what you mean."

"You are very good."

Tom Merry, puzzled and perplexed, walked with the Indian to the gates, and they took the lane towards the village. The Jam crossed the stile into the footpath, and Tom Merry paused there.

"Is there any need to go further?" he asked.

"Yes, yes."

"But why?"

"I will explain."

Still more puzzled, the junior crossed the stile, and followed the Indian into the wood. Koumi turned from the path. There was a rustle in the trees, and a dark face looked at the juniors for a moment and vanished. Tom Merry caught a glimpse of it, and recognised the man from India. But the face was gone in a moment.

"Is that a friend of yours?" asked Tom.

"What? Who?"

"That Hindu chap."

"I did not see him."

"He saw you, and he looked as if he knew you," said Tom Merry.

The Jam did not reply. He was evidently too busy with his thoughts, whatever they were, to think about the unknown Hindu. He led the way on, and stopped at last in a deep and dusky glade. Tom Merry was growing more and more impatient.

"Look here!" he exclaimed. "Tell me what you've brought me here for. I've got to get back for footer practice, and there isn't much time before dark!"

The Jam turned and faced him. The glitter in his eyes struck Tom Merry, and he started back a little, in spite of himself.

"I will tell you," said the Jam, in a low, vibrating voice. "Stand where you are! If you attempt to flee—"

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NEXT WEDNESDAY—**"STRAIGHT AS A DIE!"** A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Tom Merry laughed scornfully.

"I'm not likely to run from you!" he exclaimed. "If you're not mad, tell me what you want!"

The Indian laughed—a cold, low laugh, that made the junior start again. Koumi Rao's hand was hidden in his breast. It came out, and there was a flash of steel in the shadows of the trees. Tom Merry's eyes opened wide. It was a knife that gleamed in the dusky hand of the Indian.

"I have brought you here," said the Jam, in a low, concentrated tone—"I have brought you here, my enemy, to your death!"

CHAPTER 16.

Good for Evil!

TOM MERRY gazed at him. There was no fear in the Shell fellow's face; although, after one quick look, he realised that the Oriental was in deadly earnest, and that his words were no empty threat.

There was hate and murderous determination in the gleaming, black eyes now, as they looked at Tom Merry over the knife.

To run was impossible, even if Tom had thought of it. He was alone in the deep wood with the Indian, and the savage Oriental was armed. To run was to invite a blow in the back. But Tom Merry did not think of running. His face had become a little pale, but there was no fear in his looks.

"I think you must be mad," said Tom, in a low, tense voice. "Don't you understand that you are in England now, not in India?"

"In India I would order you to be strangled by one of my slaves," said the Jam.

"But here—"

"Here I will slay you with my own hand."

"You madman! Put up that knife!"

The Jam smiled—a fearful smile. His dark eyes scanned the junior's face, and he seemed disappointed that he did not read terror there.

"You are brave!" he muttered. "Perhaps it is better. I would not stain my hand with the blood of a coward!"

"You won't find it so easy, knife and all," said Tom, watching the Jam closely, and ready for attack. "But if you have any sense, you won't try it. Do you know what we do with murderers in England? We hang them!"

"They will not dare to hang a prince!"

"Well, as you are a kid, you may be shut up in a lunatic asylum instead," said Tom Merry.

"They cannot lay hands on me! I am a Jam—a prince of India!"

"That's where you make a mistake. One chap is as good as another in this country," said Tom Merry coolly. "I suppose you could do a thing like this in India, and get off scot-free, though it's horrible to think that such things are possible anywhere! I think it was time my uncle dropped on Bundelpore and squashed it, if you are a good sample of the kind of chap they grow there!"

"You are an enemy, and I will kill you!"

Tom Merry could scarcely believe that the dark-skinned, savage-eyed Indian was in earnest; and yet he evidently was so.

Incredible as it seemed, the Hindu had brought him there to kill him—as he might have done with impunity under the deodars in the native State of Bundelpore. Koumi Rao had not yet learned the difference between his own country and the country he had come to, and, to his half-savage, half-childish, Oriental mind, it would have been incomprehensible that a prince and a peasant should be regarded as exactly the same in the eyes of the law.

Tom Merry cast a quick glance round for something to use as a weapon. But there was nothing. He had only his bare hands to oppose to the deadly weapon of the Hindu. Yet he did not despair.

Koumi Rao was watching him like a cat. Tom knew that a spring was coming—a spring like that of the Indian tiger, whom in so many respects the Jam resembled.

It came!

With a sudden bound, the Jam leaped at the boy he hated, and the clear steel flashed in the air.

But Tom Merry had not played football for nothing, and he knew how to avoid a charge.

A quick leap aside saved him from the Indian's rush, and the sweep of the knife cut through nothing but the foliage round him.

Koumi Rao reeled forward a little, carried over by his own impetus.

He recovered himself in an instant, and swung round. But he was not quick enough. Tom Merry knew that his life

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was at stake, and he did not lose a second. While the Indian was yet reeling forward, he struck out with all his strength.

Koumi Rao faced round just in time to get the blow full in the face instead of on the side of the head.

Crash!

The Jam fell as if he had been shot.

In a twinkling Tom Merry was upon him. As the Jam tried to rise, another crashing blow in the face levelled him with the ground; and then Tom Merry's knee was on his chest, and his grasp was on the dusky wrist.

The Indian struggled like a wild-cat.

Hurt and dazed as he was, it would still have gone hard with Tom Merry if he could have released his right hand.

But Tom took care of that. His grip on the Indian's wrist was like iron. He twisted the wrist till a shriek of agony burst from Koumi Rao's lips, and the knife fell into the grass from his relaxing fingers.

A moment more, and Tom Merry seized it, and leaped to his feet.

Koumi Rao, his dusky face convulsed with fury, rose on one elbow.

"Strike!" he hissed. "I do not fear you! I do not ask for my life! Strike!"

Tom Merry panted. Serious as the situation was, tragic as it had so nearly been, he felt a strange inclination to laugh. The idea of his using the knife, now that he had it in his possession, was ludicrous.

"You fool!" he said. "You uncivilised fool! Do you think I am going to hurt you? Lie where you are!"

He turned away.

Koumi Rao leaped to his feet. He was dazed and dizzy, and he staggered, and held on to a tree for support.

"What are you going to do?" he hissed.

Tom looked at him steadily.

"I've stopped you," he said. "I'm going to throw this knife into the river as I go back. And I must report what has happened at the school. I'm sorry, but you can't be allowed to stay at St. Jim's; you're not safe. The Head will have to know what you have tried to do, and he will send you away. I think you ought to be put in a lunatic asylum!"

He strode away without another word.

His face broke into a smile as he reached the footpath. He thrust the knife into his pocket; he did not want to be seen carrying such a weapon.

"The fool!" he muttered. "Did he think he would be allowed to stay at St. Jim's unpunished if he had stuck me with that thing? He must be potty!"

Then the junior started.

Under the trees, in the growing dusk, he caught sight of the man from India, watching him. Had the man seen that curious happening in the wood, without interfering? Tom Merry wondered. He knew now that the stranger had lied the other day when he had said that he was a tourist, and returning immediately to London. He was evidently still hanging about the neighbourhood of the school—for what?

The man disappeared into the wood.

Tom Merry went on slowly towards the stile.

The Hindu had gone into the trees, in the direction of the glade where Tom Merry had left the dazed and defeated Jam.

Was he a confederate of the Indian junior? Had he been there to aid in the murderous deed? Tom dismissed the thought as it came into his mind, for the man had not lent his aid. If he knew what was happening, he had kept clear of it.

But Tom Merry felt strangely uneasy.

The Hindu was after no good—he was sure of that. Was it possible that he meant harm to the Jam? It was about Koumi Rao that he had asked so many questions the other day.

Who was he? What did he want there?

Tom Merry's steps slackened.

From the deep shadows and stillness of the wood there came a sudden ringing cry—a cry so full of terror and fury that it made the junior's blood run cold.

Tom Merry stopped dead.

He knew who had uttered that cry.

It came from the lips of the Jam; he was sure of that.

But what—

In the silence of the wood, still and deserted in the falling night, there came a sound of a furious struggle.

Tom Merry did not hesitate.

He dashed into the wood, running at top speed in the direction of the sound, breaking through thorn and thicket, careless of scratches.

In a few seconds he came out upon the glade where he had left the Jam.

Two forms were rolling over and over in the trampled grass in a desperate struggle.



As the Bounder tore along on Coker's motor-bike, a policeman leaped into the road, and raised a majestic hand. But the desperate rider slackened not a whit, and the policeman just had time to leap aside again as the Bounder rushed on! (An incident from the grand tale of Greyfriars School, entitled "GAME TO THE LAST!" by Frank Richards, which is contained in the current issue of our splendid companion paper "THE MAGNET" Library. Now on sale everywhere. Price One Penny.)

One was the Indian junior, and the other was the man from India! And in the dusky hand of the pretended tourist gleamed a weapon. Koumi Rao had grasped his wrist—as ten minutes before Tom Merry had grasped Koumi Rao's own wrist to stop a deadly blow.

But the boy was almost powerless in the grip of a strong man, and his struggle could not have lasted many minutes.

At that moment, Tom Merry did not think of the treachery of the Indian junior, of the dark and deadly purpose for which Koumi Rao had brought him there.

He did not stop to think at all.

He dashed into the fray, and his right fist, clenched hard, struck the man from India behind the ear, and he fell helplessly upon his victim.

In a twinkling Tom Merry had seized the dagger.

The ruffian, dazed, half-stunned by the sudden and unexpected blow, staggered to his feet. His dark face was writhing with fury. He sprang towards Tom Merry, but he reeled back as Tom raised his hand with the dagger in it.

"Keep your distance, you hound!" said Tom, between his teeth.

Koumi Rao leaped to his feet, panting.

"Give me the knife!"

"Has he hurt you, Koumi Rao?"

"No, no. Give me the knife! He is Ahmed Dal. He came here to kill me! Give me the knife. He shall die!"

"A precious pair of you!" said Tom Merry. "I shall not give you the knife!"

"He will escape—"

The man from India settled that question as Koumi Rao was speaking, by dashing into the bushes. Tom Merry would not have struck him, but if Koumi Rao could have obtained a weapon at that moment his cousin and rival for the throne of Bundelpore would never have escaped from the wood alive. The crashing of the thickets died away in the distance as the Hindu fled.

Koumi Rao ground his teeth.

"He has escaped!"

"Let him!" said Tom Merry. "You can inform the

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NEXT WEDNESDAY—"STRAIGHT AS A DIE!" A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

police, and he will be arrested. He will get five years for this, the rascal. So he is your cousin?"

"Yes; he is Ahmed Dal."

There was a pause. The face of the Indian junior was working strangely, and Tom Merry was surprised by the change in it.

"You have saved my life!" he said, in a strained, husky voice.

Tom Merry nodded.

"I suppose I have," he assented.

"After—after what I did. I would have slain you!"

"Well?"

"Yet you came to my aid. Do you know what Ahmed Dal would have done if you had not been so quick? He would have killed you, too, rather than have allowed me to escape!"

"Yes; he looked that kind of merchant," agreed Tom Merry. "Lucky that I was too quick for him, as well as for you, Koumi Rao!"

To Tom's surprise, the tears came into the dark eyes of the Indian junior.

He came towards Tom Merry, and knelt at his feet, and, taking the junior's right hand, placed it upon his forehead.

Tom Merry watched him in amazement.

"Look here, what's the little game?" he demanded.

And Koumi Rao replied:

"You have risked your life to save me. I am a prince of India, and I am grateful. My life, my land, and my slaves, they are all yours!"

"Oh!" murmured Tom Merry.

"I have wronged you. I have hated you, and sought to kill you!" said the Jam brokenly. "And for revenge you have helped me and saved my life. How can I reward you? Say what you will!"

"My dear chap," said Tom Merry, moved in spite of himself, "that's all right."

In an English boy the actions of the Jam would have been ludicrous. But in the dark, passionate Oriental they seemed quite natural. And he was evidently in deadly earnest. His heart, brave and generous in spite of the many faults of race and training, was overflowing with gratitude and shame for what he had done. He seemed to wish to abase himself in the dust at the feet of Tom Merry.

"You will forgive me?" he said.

CAN YOU SOLVE THIS PUZZLE-PICTURE?

"Certainly! That's all right. Let's get back to St. Jim's," said Tom Merry, afraid that the scene, which was so solemn to the Jam, would make him burst into a laugh, which would have wounded the Jam's feelings cruelly. "It's all serene."

"Will you be my friend?"

"If you like."

The Jam rose to his feet.

"I am your friend," he said. "I, the Prince of Bundelpore, the lord of a thousand spears, swear friendship with you and yours. If you should come to Bundelpore when I am come into my kingdom my palace shall be as your own."

They linked arms as they walked back to St. Jim's.

"Keep it dark," said Tom Merry, as they came to the school gates. "You must tell the Head about your cousin. He must be hunted for by the police. But about what happened before that not a word."

"You wish me to be silent?"

"You must be. You'd have to leave St. Jim's if the Head knew," said Tom Merry. "I'm quite willing to forget all about it, but—the Head wouldn't think of it like that. Mum's the word!"

"As you will, my friend."

Figgins & Co. met them as they came in. At the sight of Tom Merry and the Jam walking with linked arms, Figgins & Co. nearly fell down.

"Is—it a giddy miracle?" gasped Figgins.

Tom Merry laughed.

"The Jam and I have had a little explanation," he said.

"We're good friends now, ain't we, Jammy?"

"For life and death!" said the Jam solemnly.

"Well, I'm jolly glad to hear it," said Figgins, in great relief. "And I'll keep my word. I'm your chum now, Jammy, if you like. You're one of the Co.!"

"Hear, hear!" said Kerr and Wynn cordially.

And in spite of all that had passed from that day forward Tom Merry had no more devoted friend than the Jam of St. Jim's, who had once been called a Disgrace to his House!

THE END.

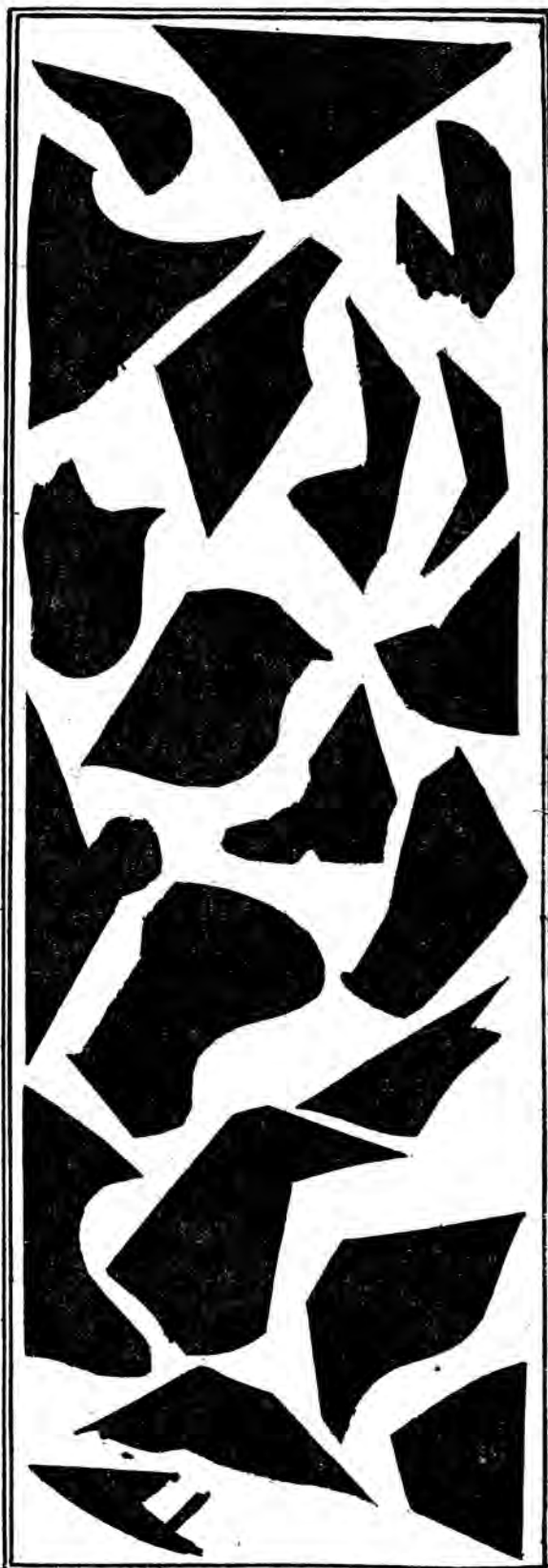
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THE CORINTHIAN.



A Magnificent New Story of the Old-Time Prize-Ring. By BRIAN KINGSTON.

READ THIS FIRST.

Hilary Bevan, a sturdy young Britisher of gentle birth, who has been living in the country, walks to London

TO SEE HIS FATHER,

Sir Patrick Bovan, whom he has not met for three years. Arriving at his father's house, Hil learns that the latter has been absent for three days at the house of Sir Vincent Brookes, one of the leading bucks of the time. He also learns that Sir Patrick has earned the nickname of

"PLUNGER" BEVAN,

and is heavily in debt, having dissipated his fortune.

Bending his steps to Sir Vincent Brookes' house in Grosvenor Street, Hilary

FINDS HIS FATHER AT THE GAMING-TABLES,

where he has been for three days and nights.

Sir Patrick rises from the table an utterly ruined man. Hilary's next act is to accept a challenge offered in the prize-ring at Moulsey Hurst. His opponent is a Jew pugilist, Barney Isaacs by name, while Hil, fighting under the name of Harley, beats him, and awakens the interest of a young Corinthian named D'Arcy Vavasour.

Hil decides to adopt the prize-ring as a career, and at a supper which is attended by the leading patrons of "The Fancy" Vavasour matches him for a thousand guineas against any boxer of his weight that Sir Vincent Brookes may select.

Other wagers are also to be decided between the two bucks by a cock-fight and a shooting-match.

In the latter, Vavasour's nominee fails to turn up at the appointed time, owing to an accident, and but for Hil's presence, the buck would have had to pay forfeit. Hil, however, shoots for him, and beats Sir Vincent Brookes' man. Immediately after the contest, Sir Vincent tells Hil that his father is lying dangerously ill at Burnham. Without hesitation, Hil springs on a horse and makes for Burnham.

Arrived there, he finds that nothing is known of his father, and that Sir Vincent has deceived him. Before he can return, however, Hil is caught by a press-gang and sent to sea. In a fight with a French privateer, he is captured, but later manages to turn the tables on the Frenchmen, and returns to Burnham.

(Now go on with the story.)

A Strange Re-union!

Fifteen days had passed since Hil's hurried departure from the shooting-ground at Amptill, and under conditions by no means satisfactory for one about to engage in a battle in the Ring.

What Hil had been through during the time was not to be recommended as training; and, unless his calculations were at fault, the next day but one the fight with Fennel was to take place. Well, he was feeling none the worse physically for his odd experience, but in mind he was disturbed. He could not consider himself blameworthy for what had happened, and was hopeful Mr. Vavasour, when the truth was told him, would be indulgent.

It was late evening when Hil reached Temple Bar. Leaving the mare at a livery stable by the Haymarket, he went straight to St. James's Street. A servant opened the door, and passed him on to Mr. Vavasour's valet, who, without manifesting the slightest surprise, civilly asked him to sit down while it was ascertained if his master were at home.

D'Arcy Vavasour was sitting alone in a small room, ornamented with various sporting trophies. He had dined at his club—Arthur's—and had returned but a little while before, in an irritable and peevish temper.

"A person to see me! Tell the person that I see no one!" he instructed the valet.

At Arthur's he had met Sir Vincent Brookes, Captain Barclay, Squire Oliver, Sky-Blue Brayne, and other gentlemen, and the conversation had not been soothing. He had been reminded of the forthcoming Ring battle, and Brookes had made polite inquiries after Ned Harley.

Outwardly, Vavasour had maintained his composure, quietly assuring Sir Vincent that he had no need for apprehension. So successful had he been that he had conveyed the impression that he was informed of Ned Harley's whereabouts; and Mr. Brayne had declared after his leaving that the dandy Corinthian had been actually privy all along to Harley's queer action in disappearing, and that the boxer had vanished simply to gratify his patron's love of drawing attention to himself.

"The fellow would be unhappy did he not believe everyone to be talking about him," Brayne asserted. "He delights in creating surprises. He ought to have been an actor!"

"Were he, he would be a good one, sir, which you, for all your striving, never will be!" retorted Squire Oliver bluntly.

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NEXT
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"STRAIGHT AS A DIE!"

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And when young Mr. Brayne angrily inquired precisely what Mr. Oliver meant by his remark, the squire informed him he meant precisely what he said, and if Mr. Brayne could not arrive at the meaning, then he was unfortunate.

But, once inside the house, D'Arcy Vavasour's air of composure had vanished. He was angry with Hil, the more because he had felt a genuine liking for the lad whom he felt certain to be the son of his friend.

When given his message, the valet coughed discreetly.

"The person is most anxious to see you, sir," he ventured.

Mr. Vavasour was too irritable not to look surprised.

"Have you taken leave of your senses?" he inquired coldly.

"Or is it that your hearing has become affected?"

"Neither, sir," the man said respectfully. "I beg your pardon, sir, but the person is, I fancy, under some obligation to you for to-morrow."

"The less reason for seeing him. Take my message!"

"Sir, the person is—"

The valet stopped suddenly at the expression that came into his master's face. He retreated precipitately.

"My master refuses to see you," he told Hil.

The blood rushed to Hil's face; a sharp rejoinder came hotly to his lips; but, by a mighty effort, he controlled the angry impulse that rushed upon him. He had a pride of his own.

"Very well," he replied simply.

Turning on his heel, he went down the half-dozen steps, and at a sharp pace along the street, head high in the air.

Hil was bitterly angry—angry as only can be one of proud, high spirit who suffers an injustice. Without seeing or hearing him, Mr. Vavasour had condemned him—of what crime he neither knew nor cared. But of one thing he was very certain—not a second time would he attempt to thrust himself upon Mr. Vavasour. He was the victim of a misfortune—of an enemy's scheming brain and lying tongue; and, instead of the treatment that he felt he had a right to expect from a man whom he had believed his friend, he had been offered a disgraceful insult.

It was intolerable! He, at least, would not submit to such treatment. But it would recoil upon the head of Vavasour himself. If he—Hil—met Ephraim Fennel, there was a chance—and, Hil was of opinion, a good one—of Vavasour bringing off his triple bet with Sir Vincent Brookes. If the two fighters did not go into the ring, Vavasour would not only lose the match, but the wager as well.

And after the rebuff Hil had received he would be justified in not entering the ring. Had Vavasour thought of that?

It was a play or pay match, and if his man did not appear at the scratch Mr. Vavasour would be the laughing-stock of sporting society, especially when it became known that his man had been ready and willing to enter the ring.

Very well, Vavasour had made his decision; let him abide by the result.

So thought Hil as he strode through the quiet, ill-lighted streets, too full of thought, too hot of head to be observant of where his feet were carrying him. Whether he turned to right or left he was not aware. He must be moving. His blood was too hot for him to think standing still.

But presently a fresh thought flashed into his mind. What would be said of himself when, as must needs be after Vavasour's downfall, he would be seen again by those who knew him? Would it not be whispered there was a reason for his absence and the failure to enter the ring against the man with whom he was matched? And what reason would be suggested save that he was a coward, afraid, had shown the white feather? He would be unable to silence such traducers. Did he then tell the story of his capture by the press-gang and his adventure at sea, would he be believed?

No.

For his own sake the battle with Fennel must come off. It should come off, but not with himself as the man backed by D'Arcy Vavasour.

And as he walked Hil conceived a scheme. He would ascertain where the fight was to take place. He would go down there without being recognised. He would wait until Fennel was in the ring and the time had expired for the production of D'Arcy Vavasour's man. Then when it was announced that Vavasour had lost by forfeit, he—Hil—would enter the ring and offer to fight Fennel, for love if no other stake could be found.

So would D'Arcy Vavasour be fittingly punished for the insult he had put upon Hil, and the credit and courage of Hil—or Ned Harley—redeemed against the galling charge of poltroonery.

His pace was slower by now, and, having entered a short, wide street, he turned about and walked back again. He did not recognise where he was, but presently he saw ahead of him a man come down the steps of a house and walk slowly forward, his head bent, and hands clasped behind his back. He went in the same direction as Hil, but on the

other side of the street. Listlessly Hil's eyes followed him. And then Hil noticed a dark figure come from out the shadow of a doorway beyond the other walker, and stand as though waiting for him to draw near. The two met, the man from the doorway evidently a beggar appealing for alms.

All at once Hil suddenly grew alert, his muscles swiftly tensed. Behind the person appealed to had suddenly appeared a third man, who had sprung apparently from nowhere, and with swift, noiseless tread was approaching the unconscious victim, a short, knobbed stick in his right hand. Plainly the meditative saunterer was to be assaulted and robbed. A blow on the head from behind while his attention was being engaged by the man in front of him would place him in a condition to be robbed with impunity.

A shout of warning broke from Hil as he ran rapidly across to the man's assistance. He, the victim, found himself abruptly attacked by the assumed beggar, who had thrown both arms around him, imprisoning his limbs. The ruffian behind actually had his arm raised to deal a stunning blow when Hil came alongside him. The lad's clenched fist shot out, it caught the striker on the side of the head, and, taken completely by surprise, he was hurled violently into collision with the near railings. The rascal in front, seeing his accomplice's downfall, released his grip, taking to his heels with the speed of a hare.

Hil and the man whom he had befriended came face to face. But the words they were about to utter halted; both stiffened suddenly, and they mutually stared.

"Mr. D'Arcy Vavasour!" Hil said quietly.

"Ned Harley! Is it Ned Harley?"

There was a long silence. Then:

"I think, Ned, I am indebted to you for my personal safety," said Vavasour.

He glanced at the fellow whom Hil had knocked down and was sprawling on the pavement just where he had rolled. Then he again looked gravely into Hil's set face.

"Your coming, Ned, was, I think, Providential," said Vavasour. "Will you accompany me to my house?"

The words were calmly courteous, almost cold, but there was the faintest of tremor in the voice, and in the speaker's eyes an expression that gave to them a meaning words could not convey.

"I shall be very pleased, sir," Hil replied.

The two turned, and without another word walked slowly along the street to Mr. Vavasour's house.

Going to the Fight.

Hil had made a miscalculation. The match with Ephraim Fennel had been fixed to take place on the day following the evening when he had called at Mr. Vavasour's house and had been sent away; not, as he thought, on the day after that.

From a sound slumber he was awakened by a touch on the arm, and found Vavasour standing beside his bed, in the same room in Vavasour's house as he had occupied before taking up his quarters at Jem Rider's cottage.

"Eleven o'clock, Ned. Do you feel equal to turning out?" asked his awakener affectionately.

"Eleven o'clock! And I am to fight at three!" Hil sat up in bed as though touched by a galvanic wire.

"There is plenty of time, Ned. The battle takes place at No Man's Land, in Hertfordshire, and the journey may be done within two hours. I would not permit you to be awakened. After what you have gone through, my dear fellow, sleep is necessary. It was imperative you should do yourself justice, since you have determined to appear in the ring."

"Why, of course, Mr. Vavasour." And Hil laughed happily as he sprang from the bed. "Of course I mean to fight. What else? I had meant to fight Fennel whatever happened. Did I not tell you so last night?"

"You did, Ned. That you mean to do so is a proof of a noble spirit, of a better nature, and a more honourable mind than I am able to allow to myself. Had one thought of me as I have thought of you—"

But Hil, already in a great tub of cold water behind a screen in one corner of the bed-room, interrupted him hastily.

"There is no need to say that, Mr. Vavasour. I thought the wretched business had been settled last night when we talked. It would please me never to refer to it again. I have told you the circumstances that prevented me from reaching you earlier than I did, and—"

"And you, Ned, accepted the apologies I tendered. You are right. Between gentlemen an apology sincerely given and frankly accepted cancels all, except the memory. Ned As you say, we will refer to it no more, but I shall not forget. And yet the matter cannot be ignored entirely. Last night

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you gave me but the barest outline of your adventures, merely sufficient to stimulate a jaded appetite. Some time in the future you must go further."

"Yes. 'Twill be more pleasant in the telling than the doing."

"There should be a second listener, Ned—Sir Vincent Brookes. And now I will leave you. My man will be waiting to bring you all you need, do you but ring, and breakfast is ready as soon as you are."

"And that is now, sir," laughed Hil. "I promise you I will not delay."

Very different was the Hilary Bevan of that morning from the Hilary Bevan of the night before. He sang and hummed gay tunes as he went through his ablutions and dressed. Never had he felt in better and higher spirits. The clouds had rolled away, and the future was inviting. The bitterness of mind while he had walked the streets had vanished. The talk with Vavasour following the return to his house had been brief enough, but sufficient. Closer friends than before were now the young boxer and the strange compound of dandy and sportsman known as D'Arcy Vavasour. And both were filled with the common hope and intention of thwarting and humbling the well-bred scoundrel who was enemy of both.

Full of health and strength and with an easy mind was Hil, and he bent and stretched his powerful young body, below the white smoothness of whose skin the big, supple muscles rippled and waved with every movement. From the long and restful sleep, ten hours right off the reel, he had risen like a young giant refreshed, without a trace of stiffness in any part of him. The sea air had benefited him. His arms and shoulders and loins had been exercised at the pumps as thoroughly as they would have been had he not left the cottage. And, as the men of the press-gang would have testified, he had not been deficient in fist practice.

He felt he could win. He meant to win. For winning meant not only credit to himself, but the discomfiture of the man who hated him and the advantage of the man who was his best friend.

Not boastful nor over-confident was he, but Ephraim Fennel would need to be good indeed that day to knock him out of time.

"I have been thinking, Ned, that a late departure from London will be in our favour," Vavasour said to him when he descended to make his first meal since noon the day before, and his last before entering the ring. "You tell me none has recognised your return. The impression will be that you are still away, and the greater Sir Vincent Brookes' chagrin when he learns the fight will actually take place."

"But will it not be thought there will be no fight at all?" asked Hil. "My disappearance is known. Who will go to No Man's Land in such case?"

"Another battle is to be decided beforehand. Young Randall is going to give a taste of his quality against a sailor boy. Do not feel that our triumph will not be complete, Ned. I have a few enemies as well as one or two friends, and these will not omit to be present to be witnesses of my expected humiliation. Some already have honoured me with a call this morning, and I have informed them I shall certainly be on the ground this afternoon. Curiosity has been whetted. But these are trivial matters. How feel you?"

"Never better in my life."

"That is well! And confident?"

"I shall do my best."

Vavasour nodded.

"No man can do more. Your weight? The agreement is neither contestant shall exceed twelve stone."

"I have not tried, but I expect to be a few pounds lighter than I fought before."

"We must risk the chance. I would not have anyone should know you are to fight until you step into the ring. Gad! But the sight of Sir Vincent's face will be worth twenty guineas! "But, Ned"—Vavasour was carefully arranging the ends of his wonderfully-starched cravat—"what suggested to Sir Vincent Brookes that it was your father whose life was in danger? Can you tell? Are they acquainted?"

Hil looked up quickly, but Vavasour's face was innocence itself.

"My father and he are acquainted but too well," he answered.

"So!"

"And now I would ask you a question, Mr. Vavasour. Would you have gone to-day had I not been able to come to you?"

"Assuredly, my dear fellow! I notified Jackson that everything should be carried through just as though there were no mystery concerning yourself. All has been arranged. Your seconds have been chosen—old Tom Owen

and Joe Ward—and the Honourable Berkeley Craven has agreed to act as umpire for our side. The office has been given, and I intended driving to St. Albans as though I had no care in the world."

"And when I did not appear?"

"Then, Ned, I should gracefully have admitted my ignorance of your whereabouts. I should have paid forfeit to Sir Vincent. I flatter myself I might even have created a worthy precedent to be followed by gentlemen whom Fate has treated unkindly, and who yet have the desire to show that a man of birth and spirit is able to rise superior to his misfortunes. Happily, thanks to you, this need not be done now. But the world will have lost a lesson."

It was one o'clock when Hil and Mr. Vavasour left St. James's Street. The latter drove high carriage, but Hil travelled in a closed barouche. Late though it was, traffic along the North Road was brisk, and dozens of all classes of vehicles were hurrying forward so as not to be too late for the fun. There were nods and polite "How d'ye do's?" for Vavasour from the occupants of swell drags and dashing phaetons with high-stepping blood cattle between the shafts; and more exuberant but none the less hearty greetings from the tradesmen's gigs and coster carts with quick-pacing ponies; but scant notice was taken of the sober-looking barouche with its invisible occupant.

And after Vavasour had passed, between the gentry and the commoners as well, winks and low-voiced comments were passed.

"Has he found his man yet?" one would inquire.

"No telling from his face. He'd look no different if he had him tucked inside his pocket instead of being the deuce knows where," was a likely answer.

The stream of traffic turned off the main road and into the narrow lane giving upon the wild, open space known as No Man's Land. In spite of the rumours prevalent, three or four thousand persons had already gathered about the ring that old Bill Gibbons had pitched under the superintendence of Mr. Jackson himself.

A place had been reserved by the inner ropes for Mr. Vavasour, and deafening was the shouting when he was seen to be making his way there attended by a man dressed in a long coat and a wide-brimmed hat. It had been freely said he would not come. That no one knew where was Ned Harley was common property.

Ephraim Fennel was known to be on the ground; he had been seen driving in an open barouche with his backer, Sir Vincent Brookes. The time was already nearing three o'clock, and a restlessness that might easily become something more dangerous pervaded the crowd.

Sir Vincent Brookes, faintly smiling, surrounded by his friends, noticed Vavasour's arrival. The two men came close together. Each bowed as Vavasour went by. The baronet ostentatiously consulted his watch.

"Five minutes to three, Sir Vincent," observed Captain Barclay, whom both parties had agreed to for the important position of timekeeper. He crossed to where stood Vavasour. "May I inquire, Mr. Vavasour, if you have your man on the ground?"

"Is it necessary he should appear before three o'clock? There are still five minutes to the hour, I believe?" asked Vavasour.

The captain looked at him curiously. His face was more than usually pale, but with no sign of discomposure.

"No necessity," he agreed; "but it is usual, sir. The public believe there will be no fight," he added tentatively.

For answer Vavasour shrugged his shoulders. The man in the coat near him was attracting some attention from those nearest at hand, but seemed anxious to hide his face. One of the keepers of the ring had raised an objection to him following Vavasour, but had given way. The man had whispered to one of his fellows his belief that he was the Regent and wished not to be noticed.

Then Mr. Jackson entered the ring, and from one side of it a hat was chucked across the ropes, and a man of burly figure and middle height ducked into the ring. This was Fennel, and from the crowd came a thundering yell. The fighter's name was shouted with that of his backer.

Then came a noiseless pause. Every eye was turned upon Mr. Jackson, and he was looking to where stood D'Arcy Vavasour, immovable of feature, hands in the pockets of his coat.

"The opponent matched with Ephraim Fennel and nominated by Mr. D'Arcy Vavasour, by name Ned Harley, has not answered the challenge," cried Jackson in his deep bass voice that was audible all about the vast ring. "He should be in the ring by three o'clock. If not, the match by default goes to Ephraim Fennel, and the wager and stakes to Sir Vincent Brookes. It is now within thirty seconds of the hour. In thirty seconds—"

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Not thirty feet separated Vavasour from Brookes, and across the intervening space the men's eyes met for a couple of seconds. Sir Vincent was openly smiling.

"Ned Harley will be declared—"

Jackson's words fell loudly and distinctly upon the still air.

D'Arcy Vavasour made a faint movement towards the man at his elbow.

"Loser by—"

A broad-brimmed hat suddenly arose in the air, hung for an instant, and dropped almost at Jackson's feet.

"Default," completed Jackson.

"My man is here, Mr. Jackson!" remarked Vavasour.

And then it was seen that a man was entering the ring, ready peeled, clad in white stockings, drawers, and black boots. It was Ned Harley, and, clear of the ropes, unconscious that every eye was turned upon him, he moved towards the centre. And the silence was oppressive.

"It seems that we have been well smoked!" exclaimed a dandified gentleman by the inner ropes.

And then the crowd, part angry, part astounded, but wholly pleased that the fight would be a certainty after all, gave tongue.

The Fight.

With the principal contestants ready and waiting, the prospect of a battle not to be quickly finished, and a second fight afterwards, the officials took care that no time was wasted. The umpires were ready, the Hon. Berkeley Craven for Ned Harley and Sir Henry Smith for Fennel, while Sir Thomas Aprece accepted the difficult post of referee. Tom Owen and the veteran Joe Ward were in Hil's corner, and Caleb Baldwin and Bill Richmond, the black, made things comfortable for Fennel.

But before Hil took his place he walked to the corner-post to which Fennel had tied his colours—a dark-blue handkerchief with white spots—and over these he tied his own colours—pure white with a thin red stripe running around the border. Then he crossed to where Fennel was resting and held out his hand.

"Good-afternoon! I hope you are feeling well?" he said frankly.

"Pretty tidy, thankie! Hope you're the same?" replied Fennel, with a grin, gripping the offered hand.

The tossing for choice of corners had already taken place, and the winner—Fennel—had made his selection. But there was little of advantage to be gained, for though the day was fine, the sun had not been able to get out.

Time was called, and both fighters advanced to the scratch, Hil with a light and springy step, his opponent more slowly and deliberately. Separated by half a dozen feet, they took careful stock of each other.

It was then the first tentative wagering commenced, and, although Fennel was little known in London, while there were plenty to recall the battle between Ned Harley and the Jew, it was evident there were some who had a good opinion of the provincial milling cove.

And his figure was one to inspire confidence. For a man under twelve stone, his torso was enormous, shoulders wide and heavy, chest broad and deep, well-muscled under the arms, while his upper limbs were round, hard-looking, muscular, and astonishingly hairy.

Wide-shouldered, he was somewhat slight by comparison below the hips. The thighs were narrow, the calves of poor shape, although muscular, in noticeable contrast to those of Hil, which measured a good sixteen inches.

Hil, too, was longer in the lower limbs; his thighs were long, indicating greater activity. He appeared lesser bodied than his adversary, but largely by reason of a smaller waist measurement. His flanks, too, were leaner. But he had well-sprung ribs and an arching chest. In reach he held some advantage, though the muscles of his arms, especially below the elbow, were less prominently developed. And, although his back was not so solid-looking, and his neck less like a bull's than Fennel's, good judges around the ring noted that the flesh was in the right place for hitting—that is to say, about the lower part of the shoulder-blades.

Certainly he did not give the impression of strength equal to that of the Birmingham man, perhaps by reason of his white skin against the other's brown; but he looked as though he possessed the quality of endurance.

After steadily eyeing his man for several seconds, Fennel began to creep closer. His pose was more stiff than Hil's, and he held his arms somewhat nearer his face; the hands were raised a trifle higher. All at once he bent his knees as though gathering himself for a spring; then he leaped smashing his right fist forward with a semi-chopping blow aimed at Hil's left eye.

(A long instalment of this grand serial next Wednesday.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 297.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

A NEW FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns are those of readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

Colonists sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondent is required—boy or girl; English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

J. B. Valli, Golden Square, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers interested in stamps.

P. Maytham, Box 133 Queenstown, South Africa, wishes to correspond with girl readers.

E. W. O'Callaghan, 5, Peter Street, South Yana, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with girl readers, age 18—21.

C. J. Dawson, P.O. Box 369, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the British Isles, age 16—17.

G. L. O. White, 132, Harrison Street, Clifton, Johannesburg, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in County Cork, Ireland, age 17.

Gunner Green, No. 8, Mountain Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, Quetta, India, wishes to correspond with a girl reader interested in postcards, age 19—21.

G. J. Milner, Lichtenburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 17—18.

Miss Ruby Williams, "Garthowen," 135, Head Street, Elsternwick, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, age 17—19.

Miss G. H. Hunt, Union Bank, Lydiard Street, Ballarat, Victoria, wishes to correspond with readers, age 16—19. Miss C. C. Deppe, of the same address, with readers over the age of 20.

J. Ralston, 16, Jenkin Street, South Fremantle, West Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader living in New York, U.S.A. interested in postcards, age 17—18.

L. S. Ailwell, 126, Forest Street, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers interested in stamps, living outside Australia.

C. Marchant, St. John's Avenue, New Town, Tasmania, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers all over the world except Australia.

Miss G. Sculthorpe, care of Messrs. Snashalls, Ltd., Bellevue Avenue, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in the British Isles, age 15—17.

Miss E. Pyne, 32, Thomas Street, Redfern, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader living in Ireland or England, age 17—18.

A. Majid, Sydenham P.O., via Durban, Natal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers interested in stamps.

Miss M. Williams, Azalea Street, Prospect Adelaide, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader in Ireland, Canada, or South Africa, age 14.

R. J. Dixon, care of Edmund Dunlop & Co., Clarence Street, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader in Canada interested in postcards.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

Mistakes Young Captains Make

by J.W. BACHE

Captain of Aston Villa and Seven Times English International.



One of the biggest mistakes made in connection with this matter of football captaincy is to imagine that the post is an easy one to fill, and that any Tom, Dick, or Harry in the side will do for the job. I know there is an impression abroad that the captain of a football team has about the softest job in the world.

If you ask the average looker-on at a football match what the captain of the side does he will probably tell you that he leads the men on the field at the commencement of the game and again at the interval. Further, he will admit that the captain as a rule tosses for choice of ends, and if he wins decides which way his side shall kick for the first forty-five minutes. After that, I am afraid the average man has a very small idea of the duties of the football captain.

Believe me, however, the football captain who does no more than the foregoing is not worthy of the name of captain. Anybody could do the things mentioned. Personally, I think the captain of a side, who has plenty of experience, can do quite a lot towards increasing the effectiveness of his men. He cannot, of course, make a good side out of poor players, but he can, by the exercise of his judgment, get the very best out of the material which is in the team.

It is a big mistake for the captain to allow his team to just jog along, and trust to luck. He should have a large say in the policy which is adopted by his side. If the game they are playing is not suited to the conditions or to the particular style of his opponents, it is the captain's duty to see that a change of tactics is made. Last season, I am quite certain that we won the Cup, and came near to winning the championship as well, because we adapted our play to the ground conditions, and to the style of our opponents. Let me explain what I mean.

Sometimes, in the course of our Cup games, I would, as captain of the side, see that we were adopting the wrong tactics if we hoped to get home in front of our opponents. It is not necessary for me to explain that, particularly in Cup-ties, any fault must be detected quickly, because one defeat means you have finished with the Cup for another season.

As early in the game then, as possible, I tried to decide whether we were playing the game which was most likely to bring us home first. Sometimes I decided that we were playing too much of the close-passing game, or it might be the other way about. Then I would pass the word along, and very often the change of style brought with it more success. These are the things the captain must watch if he hopes for his team to be really successful. When teams of equal merit meet on the field, it is very often a question of tactics as to which sides comes out on top.

In the same way do not overlook the importance of finding out the strong and the weak places in your opponents' side, and acting on that knowledge quickly. In most teams there are one or two "star" performers, and the captain should give instructions that these stars should be carefully watched, so that the amount of damage they are likely to do in the course of an afternoon will be reduced to a minimum.

And on the other hand there are sure to be weak places in the opposition. Possibly your outside-left will be much too good for the opposing half-back and full-back. In such a case your outside-left should be given the ball frequently, so that the greatest possible advantage may be taken of his superiority over the other fellows. All this is a part of the captain's business, so obviously he must have his eyes open all the time, and his brain working, too.

But although it is necessary for the captain to communicate his ideas to the other men, he should not make the mistake of shouting all the time as some captains do. As little talking as possible on the field is my motto, and I have what I consider very good reasons for the adoption of such a policy.



The average football spectator imagines that a captain's only duty is to toss for choice of ends!

The point comes in here. If you shout to your own men you must of necessity be warning your opponents at the same time, and you know the old proverb which declares that forewarned is forearmed—it is true in football. Let your opponents know what you are about to do, and if they know their business they will straightway take effective steps to prevent the doing of it. The word as to a change of policy should be passed along quickly and softly from man to man. It is much more effective than shouting instructions which can be heard the whole length of the field.

Those who have the idea that the captain of the side is a figurehead and nothing else should recall last season's Cup Final. No sooner had the game started than it was evident that it was to be one of the hardest and most exciting Finals on record. In the first place, on such an occasion the captain of a side has to keep cool—no light matter that.

Then there was a crisis for our side in the second half. Our goalkeeper was injured so badly that he had to leave the field. Here was a situation to be faced if you like! A side without a goalkeeper and a Cup Final in which neither team had up to then scored a goal!

To replace the goalkeeper meant taking a man from the half-back line, and to fill the place of the latter a forward had to be called back. If we had lost our heads there would have been no Cup winning for us that time; but we all put in a little extra effort, and managed to hold out until our goalkeeper had sufficiently recovered to be able to turn out again, and then we won the match.

That was a change of positions necessitated by the circumstances; but when he thinks he can serve the purpose of his side by so doing, the captain should not hesitate to change the positions of his men in the course of a game. If a match is going against you, and your forwards are not shaping as though they will score goals, it is often a good policy to change

one or two of the men—to let the inside-right go centre-forward or something of that sort. But do not change unnecessarily. Consider the matter carefully, but having once made up your mind that the change might be for the good of the side, then make it quickly.

Above all things the captain of the side should be a player who plays the game in the true sense of the word. If the captain of the team does not play a fair game then it cannot be expected that the rest of the team will do so, and on the very lowest grounds I am convinced that in the long run it is fair play that pays. Apart from that foul players get a team a bad reputation.

For the same reason the captain should be a worker all the time. I do not know whether you have noticed it, but it seems to me there is nothing quite so infectious as zeal. If you see a side in which the captain is working at top speed from start to finish, not sparing himself one little bit, you may then safely look for the rest of the side following his example. And it is the team which goes hard at it all the time which wins.

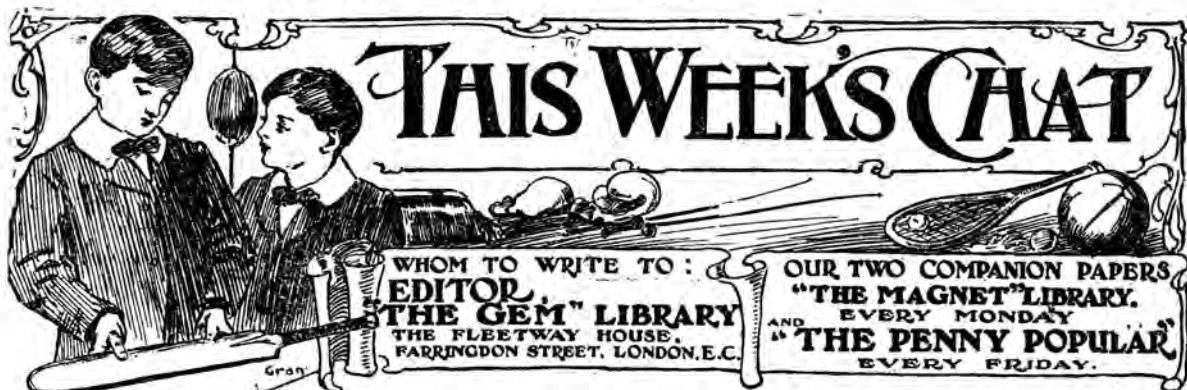
I think I have said sufficient to show that the captain of a football side must be carefully chosen. In the first place it is obvious that a player of experience is necessary, but this does not mean that the eldest man player in the side should always be chosen. Above all, the captain should be popular with the rest of the men, and when he has been appointed he must have no favourites. He must share out the praise in equal proportions. On the field and off the field he must have the respect of the players who are under his captaincy.

Jos. W. Bache

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 297.

NEXT WEDNESDAY: SPECIAL ARTICLE BY JOE HODKINSON OF BLACKBURN ROVERS.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



For Next Wednesday.

"STRAIGHT AS A DIE!"By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

This, our next grand, long, complete tale of the famous schoolboys of St. Jim's, opens with the ever-courteous Arthur Augustus D'Arcy taking a "new boy" under his wing in his kindly way, and finding him a very decent fellow indeed.

As soon as he gets a chance, Lynn, D'Arcy's new friend, explains his position, which is not exactly what Gussy had first supposed it to be. Lynn has an uphill fight before him at St. Jim's, and naturally Levison and his caddish cronies do all they can to make it harder for him. But Tom Merry & Co. and the chums of the Fourth Form sympathise with him and back him up. Rising superior to all difficulties and temptations, Lynn proves himself throughout to be

"STRAIGHT AS A DIE!"

and a boy no decent fellow would be ashamed to own as a chum.

A ROMANTIC DISCOVERY.

From what one of my Australian chums tells me this week, in the letter published below, I can claim another feather for the cap of that popular "Gem" Library feature, the "Free Correspondence Exchange." The story of my chum "Austral's" romantic discovery of a long-lost cousin through the medium of the "Exchange" reads like a chapter from a modern novel. I will let "Austral" tell it in his own words:

"Geelong, Victoria, Australia.

"Dear Editor,—I have been a constant reader of 'The Gem' for the last three years, and I feel that it is my duty to write to you and explain what I think of the stories I have read. Well, I think they are something splendid, and if these people who think that every penny book they see is unfit for a boy to read should happen to read any one of the 'Invincible Trio,' they would say that those books were exempt from that rule, I am certain.

"If every person in the British Empire was as manly as Tom Merry and his friends, I think the British race would be a fine lot of people. There is one improvement I think you could make, and that is, to have more competitions for your Colonial chums.

"The new 'Correspondence Exchange' is another splendid feature, as this story will show. A long time ago my name was published in 'The Gem,' to exchange postcards, and a boy with the same name as myself answered it. We have been writing for a long time now, and I have found out that his grandfather ran away from home a long time ago out in Australia. His relatives never heard any more about him till I found out all about it through corresponding with the boy, who, I find, is a cousin of mine. This tells what a wide sphere of usefulness 'The Gem' has.

"I am enclosing the two coupons, so as to get my name published in the 'Exchange' again.

"Wishing long life and prosperity to you and your magazines, I will close.—I remain, your Colonial reader,

"AUSTRAL."

Many thanks for writing me, "Austral." I am more pleased than I can say that the "Free Correspondence Exchange" has done you such a good turn, and I will see that your second "notice" goes into the "Exchange" in its turn.

"GEM" LEAGUE NOTES.

Will Maurice Cathie, of Muswell Hill, please write and let me know how things are going with "The Gem" League he started recently in Muswell Hill?

HOW TO WRITE A SHORT STORY.—No. 7.By a **Successful Author.**

Beginnings.—The beginning of a short story is perhaps the most important part of all, for upon it depends whether the story is to be read or not. Short story readers like to be interested in the characters or the plot from the very first paragraph. Therefore, it behooves you to pay particular attention to the opening words. "Oh, I am so tired of it all—so very, very tired!" exclaimed Marjory. Take that for a beginning. If you read it in a magazine, you would immediately ask yourself, "Well, I wonder what she is so tired of?" and, as a natural consequence, you would read the story to satisfy your curiosity.

There you have one of the most powerful elements in short story writing—that of exciting curiosity or interest. But once this interest is aroused, take good care that it is **NOT** TAINED until the very last paragraph. A bright beginning is of no earthly use if the interest is going to flag halfway through the story. Here is another type of beginning, which is more or less in the nature of a character study, in the familiar raconteur style: "Johnny was an ass of the first water! Everybody knew it, and everybody told him so. You had only to look at his face for confirmation; but, all the same, he was a good sort of an ass, and that, by the by, is the subject of my story. He and I digged in the same study very happily together, until one day a new chap—a big, powerful-looking fellow with a squint and a lantern jaw—came to disturb our peace."

In that short opening paragraph you have learned to know two distinct characters. The one an easy-going, brainless, but good-natured fellow—the other a bully with a squint. Take particular note of that squint, and remember that it is invaluable to the short story writer to be able to give his characters some peculiarity of this nature, whether it be concerned with the person, speech, or temperament. You all remember Mr. Micawber, in "David Copperfield"—if you have not read "David Copperfield," then I advise you to do so at once—and whenever you think or speak of "wa" for something to turn up," Mr. Micawber instantly comes to your mind.

Endings.—The ending of a short story should be suggested rather than explanatory. A fatal mistake common to story writers is to drag out an otherwise good story past its anti-climax. There is always a point in a short story where the interest stops, and by studying the styles of writers such as Kipling, Barry Pain, W. W. Jacobs, etc., you will learn a great deal on this subject.

Supposing you have a story of a schoolboy who is an absolute outsider, until one day he retrieves his reputation by risking his life to save another. The time to end your story is when the hero is receiving the congratulations of those who previously scorned him. Do not carry the story on to show the fight he has to keep straight. That, by the by, would make quite another and interesting story.

(Another of these interesting articles next week. Order "THE GEM" in advance.)

The Editor

Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE!

NOT TAKING ANY.

To little Johnny Briggs, who had spent all his life in the city, it should have been a magic time. He actually had been offered the chance of spending the week-end in the country, but, to the astonishment of everybody, he firmly refused to avail himself of it.

"But why won't you go to the country?" somebody asked him at last.

"Because," replied Johnny, "they have thrashing machines out there; and it's bad enough here when it's done by hand!"—Sent in by M. Bucknall, Carlisle.

MIXED.

"Malone," said the officer to his servant, "here's a shilling to get me some tobacco, and here's another to get me some cigarettes."

Taking the two shillings in his hand, the servant ran off. But in a few minutes he returned, fumbling with the coins in his hand, apparently in great distress.

"Well, what's the matter?" demanded the officer.

"Shure, sor," answered the servant, "O've got the shillings mixed, and don't know which is fur the tobacco and which is for the cigarettes!"—Sent in by T. Clark, Kirkealdy.

HE DIDN'T KNOW.

Tommy: "Father, didn't you tell me this morning that it's cowardly to hit anyone smaller than yourself?"

Father: "Yes, certainly. And so it is."

Tommy (slowly): "Then I wish you would write and tell teacher, 'cos I don't think he knows."—Sent in by R. L. Angell, Southampton.

WAIT AND SEE.

Nervous Old Invalid: "Really, Mrs. Mene, I think it is quite time the passage walls were re-papered."

Landlady: "Parding, sir, but I'm waiting to see 'ow your 'ealth goes on. Coughs is such things to knock the paper off coming downstairs!"—Sent in by W. S. Duntun, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

EASILY EARNED.

"What do you make a week?" asked a magistrate of an organ-grinder, who was summoning a man for breaking his musical instrument the other day.

"Your pound, sare."

"What! Four pounds for grinding an organ?" gasped the magistrate.

"No, sare, not vor grind—vor shut up, and go away."—Sent in by H. Gaddard, Nottingham.

THE BOBBY'S ANSWER.

The old lady was taking an interest in the policeman at the corner of the street, much to that individual's disgust.

"What do you carry white gloves about for, constable?" she asked.

"To show we have some!" growled the bobby.

"And why do you wear your belt outside your coat?" she farther questioned.

The answer was a grunt.

"What do you have a strap on your helmet for?" she went on undauntedly.

"That," said the officer of the law emphatically, glancing at the old lady as if he wished her at Timbuctoo—"that is to rest my jaws on when I've finished answering silly questions!"—Sent in by J. R. Housby, Wigan.

THE EASIEST WAY.

Small Brother: "What are you going to do with all that stuff, Tom?"

Tom: "I'm going to make a fowl run."

Small Brother: "A fowl run? Wouldn't it be easier to creep up behind it and say, 'Shoo!'"—Sent in by V. Franklin, Belvedere.

"Excuse me," said the funny man in the train, "but why did Peterborough?"

"To Bury St. Edmund's," replied his fellow-passenger.

The funny man laughed loud and long, until he awoke the gentleman in the green tie, who inquired:

"Whom did Hampton Court? Do you know?"

"Possibly Mayfair," replied the funny man.

"Ph! Then why was Barking barking?" asked the stout man.

"Because he heard Horne Bay," said the funny man.

"Why was Chipping Norton chipping Norton?"

"Because Rottingdean was rotting Dean."

"Can you tell me how much was Portland's Bill?" again queried the funny man.

"Oh, Ashbridge?" said the fat man.

And then the train ran off the lines.—Sent in by E. Nutten, Trillickley, near Manchester.

FREE FOR SELLING 12 BEAUTIFUL XMAS CARDS AT 1d. EACH.

As an advertisement we give every reader of this paper a splendid present absolutely FREE simply for selling 12 cards at 1d. each. Xmas and New Year Gold Mounted, Embossed, Folders, Glossy, etc. Our new Prize List contains hundreds of different kinds of free gifts, including Ladies' and Gent's Gold and Silver Watches, Ostrich Feathers, Cycles, Telescopes, Chains, Rings, Accordions, Cinemas, Gramophones, Air Guns, Engines, Toys, etc., etc. All you need do is to send us your Name and Address (a postcard will do) and we will send you a selection of lovely cards to sell or use at 1d. each. When sold send the money obtained and we will immediately forward gift chosen according to the Grand List we send you. **Start Early.** Send a postcard now to—**THE ROYAL CARD CO., Dept. 9, KEW, LONDON.**



FAR TOO SHORT.

"There's one thing I like about Jones's shop, you can order your goods through the phone, and after a short wait have them delivered."

"That is just what I don't like."

"What?"

"The short wait!"—Sent in by F. Wilson, Stockwell.

In an hotel an American was bragging about the way the Yankees were cater to in business matters than Englishmen.

"It is impossible to 'do' a Yankee," he said, and he guessed he would come off best in any business transaction.

"Well," said an Englishman quietly, "I'll sell you for a penny something for which I paid twopence, and yet make a penny profit over the transaction."

The American agreed, and handed over the penny, whereupon the Englishman presented him with a twopenny tram ticket.—Sent in by A. Hawkins, Tonbridge.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or Short, Interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the senders will receive a Money Prize.

ALL POSTCARDS MUST BE ADDRESSED The Editor, "The Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

THIS OFFER IS OPEN TO READERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

No correspondence can be entered into with regard to this Competition, and all contributions enclosed in letters or sent in otherwise than on postcards, will be disregarded.

PAIN'S "GUARANTEED" BARGAINS.

IT'S YOURS FREE!

Free for the asking—our NEW BARGAIN CATALOGUE with PRETTY ART COLOURED CALENDAR for 1914—Dug & Warner Design, illustrating thousands of the Biggest of Bargains By Post, for Nov. Xmas & After, from 6d. to 43 each. Reliable Watches from 2/6. Reliable Clocks from 2/6. Jewellery, Musical Instruments (including latest Improved Gramophones at Half-Prices, from 2/6), & Double-sided Records from 1/6. Plates, Cutlery, Domestic Articles, Novelties, Fancy Goods, Toys, Xmas Cards, Picture Post Cards, Albums, etc., etc. It also contains TESTIMONIALS & PRESS OPINIONS. Drop us a letter or post-card to-day for this GUIDE TO BARGAIN BUYING & we will send it to you, post free to any address "On Earth." We guarantee safe delivery; for return post of all goods to your door, & take all risk—YOU RUN NO RISK.



BARGAIN NP112. Gent's strong pigskin leather Purse (tan colour), has 4 safety pockets & 3 patent fasteners. Size 4 1/2 by 2 1/2 ins. closed. 1/6 post free. Worth 2/6. Will wear for years!



BARGAIN NP117. The "Right-Time" Half-price "Gent's" Watch. Keyless. Extra strong works, dust-proof cap & bright Nickel-silver case. The cheapest reliable watch made. Priced by thousands. Cash price, 2/6 only, post free. Lady's Nickel-Silver "Always-Right" Keyless Watch, cash price, 3/6 post free. Warranted Perfect Timekeepers. (For a Further Assortment, write for Illustrated Catalogue post free.)

2/6
POST FREE.

NO MORE TO PAY!

RIGHT-TIME

SATISFACTION OR MONEY BACK.



BARGAIN NP118. The "Gent's" Box of Paints. Black Japanese metal box, size 8 by 4 ins., 12 paint-pots, 12 tubes moist colours & good brushes. 1/3 post free. (For a Further Assortment of Toys, etc., write for Illustrated Catalogue, post free.)



BARGAIN NP119. Lady's Strong Purse, real leather (black), lined brown leather, has 3 openings, joined 4 grain, nickel corners & lock. Size 4 1/2 by 2 1/2 ins. when closed. 1/6 post free. Worth 2/6. Will wear for years!



BARGAIN NP165. The "Brite-Lite" Powerful Electric Pocket Lamp, new, large & improved shape, imitation crocodile leather body, with nickel-plated ends & large, powerful bulb. Gives 5000 brilliant flashes. Guaranteed. Size 2 1/2 by 4 1/2 ins. 10d. postage 2d. extra. Worth 2/6. Re-fill batteries, 6d. each, post free.



BARGAIN NP106. Leather case of 2 Gent's Half-Watches with black enamel backs & white dials. Strong black leather bands. Usual sizes. 2/11 post free. Price



BARGAIN NP170. Lady's up-to-date Hall-marked Silver Keyless Wrist Watch, small size, with silver-finished leather strap. Warranted a Perfect Time-keeper. 6/11 post free. Worth 1/5. Nickel Silver 4 1/2. Gold 2/6. For a Further Assortment, write for Illustrated Catalogue, post free.



BARGAIN NP145. Writing Case, made to stand up (as shown), dark green imitation crocodile leather, fitted with Note-paper, Envelopes, Post-cards, Pen & Blotting Pad. Size 10 1/2 by 5 1/2 ins. when closed. 1/3 post free. Worth 2/6.



BARGAIN NP69. "Miss Daisy Pate." Very pretty, un-dressed Doll, has curly hair, real fire-crystal eyes, unbreakable head, & washable leather body. Dressed in long, Height 14 ins. 1/3 post free. (For a Further Assortment, write for Illustrated Catalogue, post free.)



BARGAIN NP166. The "Easy Cut" Hair-clipper. Clipper, made of fine quality steel, & most accurately adjusted, so that "Anyone" can "Trim" with perfect ease. Length of blades will last a lifetime. Full instructions sent. 1/11 post free.



THE "BIG-VALUE" XMAS PARCEL 1913

BARGAIN NP204. The 1913 "BIG-VALUE" PARCEL contains 12 of the dearest of Xmas goods, also 13 FREE GIFTS of lovely Xmas Cards all chosen by hand, & well illustrated, plus post free, an approval of 13 post-free stamps. Satisfaction or Money Back. Don't miss this Bargain! The "Biggest Value" on "Earth." Just fancy! All the following Appliances: Nov. 12 & 2 TWO REAL CELLULOID CARDS, ALONE WORTH NEARLY HALF THE 1/3, both Beautiful Floral Designs. No. 2. Sparklingly Jewelled & Gold mounted Masterpiece. No. 4. Charming View of Country Cottage, etc. No. 5. Quaint Old English Design. No. 6. Embossed Fairy Design. No. 7. Lovely Picture-Mounted Design. No. 8 to 11. Four Beautiful Floral Designs. No. 12. Pretty Country View. (Nos. 1 & 3 are illustrated in miniature). In addition, we give entirely free of charge 13 FREE GIFTS of Xmas Cards (making 25 Cards in all—the 13 alone being worth more than the small amount charged for the entire parcel), & include Delightful Floral, Choice View, Sweet Golden, Artistic Gold-embossed, etc. Designs.

ALL 25 ARE GUARANTEED GOOD 12, 23, 24, & 44. **BOOKLET XMAS CARDS**, all are finished with Silk Cord or Ribbon Bows, & have Seasonable Greetings, mostly in Gold, & well-chosen Verses or Quotations, also spaces for writing names. Several are the favourite Art-Parchment Cards, & all are different. There are cards for all tastes.

FREE ENVELOPES—To save you trouble & expense, envelopes are included free, for all cards that will not go in envelopes of ordinary size.

25
XMAS CARDS
POST FREE

13
FREE GIFTS

BARGAIN NP142. The "Horus" Superior Repeating Alarm Clock. Rings 7 times. Nickel-plated case, large bell. Reliable brass works—20-hour lever movement. Height 9 ins. Warranted a perfect time-keeper. 2/11 post free.

BARGAIN NP11. "Be Your Own Printer." Outfit consisting of five rows of good rubber type (small & capital letters, type-holder, self-inking pad, tweezers, cards, gold dust, etc.) in neat box, size 5 1/2 by 4 1/2 ins. 1/4 post free.

PAIN BROS., The "Presents House," HASTINGS, ENG.