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Every

Wednesday



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CHAPTER I. Fatty Wynn's Raid.

GINGER-BEER—was decent."
"Yes, Master Merry."

"Jam-tarts—lozane see, how trazy jam-tarts!"

"Ten Merry mediativly."

"Two dozen," said Mopsy Lowther.

"Right! And sandwiches?"

"Three dozen!" suggested Massers.

"And a cake," said Tom Merry.

"And shove 'em all into this bag, Mrs. Taggles."

Fatty Wynn, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, heard it all as he came up to the little tobacshop in the corner of the road. And Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened. Tom Merry and Massers and Lowther, the chums of the School House, were busily making extensive purchases, and the mere mention of sandwiches and jam-tarts made Fatty Wynn feel hungry. The mere mention of ginger-beer made him feel thirsty. Which was not surprising, for it was a blizzing August afternoon. The old quadrangle of St. Jim's was shimmering with heat, and the lawns on the cricket-field were red and scorching.

"Dozen ginger-beer, two dozen jam-tarts, three dozen sandwiches!" murmured Fatty Wynn, as he peered outside the tobacshop. "My hat! If Figgins and Keer were here, instead of lagging at blessed cricket, what a chance for a pal!"

Fatty Wynn grunted. He knew that a dozen or a hundred jam-tarts would not have fetched Figgins and Keer away from the cricket.

"They're getting the stuff ready to take over to Abbotsford to-morrow," murmured Fatty Wynn. "And only yesterday

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BY

MARTIN CLIFFORD.
(Charles Hamilton)

they raided my steak-pie—my lovely steak-pie! What a chance, if only some of the fellows were here!"

Fatty Wynn looked round the deserted quadrangle. But there were no New House fellows in sight—or School House fellows, for that matter. Everybody was on the cricket-ground or on the river. And in a few minutes Tom Merry & Co. would be coming out laden with tack, and the opportunity would be lost!

"May as well put in some dough-nuts," went on the voice of Tom Merry, inside the shop. "And a currant cake, Mrs. Taggles. And half a dozen lemonades."

"Yes, Master Merry."

"They've all got to go into this bag, Tommy," said Massers.

"That's all right. You can pack them in, Mrs. Taggles."

"Yes, Master Merry."

Fatty Wynn almost growled aloud. If only a few of the jokers of his own House had been within call! There was a stop under the old elms, and Fatty Wynn looked round hopefully. But it was only Curtis of the Fifth, going down to the gates.

Fatty Wynn felt that Fate was hard upon him. Only the day before the School House jokers had raided his feed, and here was a chance of retaliation going begging! Not that Fatty cared very much for retaliation, but he cared a very great deal for sandwiches and jam-tarts and ginger-beer. And justice was low with the New House chums, too. Fatty had just come off the cricket-field to see all his eloquence upon Dame Taggles, to induce her to treat him with one ginger until Saturday.

And now—

It was not of much use for Fatty Wynn to think of raiding the Terrible Three single-handed. But he could not tear him-

Next Wednesday:

"FIGGINS' FOE!" AND "THE CORINTHIAN!"

self away. Like a very fat Peri at the gates of Paradise, he layng round the doorway of the tuckshop, and listened to the voices within.

"And some milk-chocolate," went on Tom Merry's voice. "And some bismarck."

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Fatty Wyma, in anguish. "Pack them in, will you, Mrs. Taggles? We'll come back for 'em."

"Yes, Master Merry."

Fatty Wyma's eyes glittered. The three School House fellows were coming towards the door, and in a second Fatty Wyma had dashed round the corner of the shop. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther walked out cheerfully, and strolled off towards the cricket-ground, without observing the fat Fourth-Former passing round the corner of the tuckshop.

"That will be all right for to-morrow," Tom Merry was saying, "and it leaves us enough tin to hire a trap over to Abbotford for the Wallaby match. It will be a regular picnic. I—" His voice died away as the chains of the School House disappeared through the door.

Fatty Wyma grinned, and came out of cover, and rolled into the tuckshop. Dams Taggles was packing a cricket-bag that lay on the counter, and Fatty Wyma looked longingly at the good things she was packing into it.

"That's a jolly good order, Mrs. Taggles," said Fatty Wyma carelessly.

"Yes, Master Wyma."

"What's it for?"

"Master Merry. It's to take away to-morrow," said Mrs. Taggles; "and I 'ope the young gentlemen will have a pleasant day."

"Oh, it will be ripping!" said Fatty Wyma. "The First Eleven are playing the Wallabies, you know, and Kildare's lot are in top form. I shouldn't wonder if St. Jim's pulls off the match. Mrs. Taggles."

"I'm sure I 'ope so, Master Wyma," said Dams Taggles placidly, as she packed the last article into the bag, and closed it.

"Of course, there would be a better chance with some more New House chaps in the eleven," said Fatty. "Still, Kildare's done pretty well; he's got in five of the New House. Those kids coming back for this bag, I suppose?"

"Yes, Master Wyma," said Mrs. Taggles unobtrusively. "What can I get for you?"

"Lorree see," said Fatty Wyma thoughtfully, his eyes were leaving the well-packed bag. "—I say, is that bottle of ballpoop quite safe up there, Mrs. Taggles? Awful smash if it comes down, you know."

Mrs. Taggles turned round to look at the bottle of ballpoop, and as she turned her back Fatty Wyma clutched the bag from the counter, and in the twinkling of an eye was outside the tuckshop with it.

"It is all right, Master Wyma," said Mrs. Taggles, looking round again. "—why, my goodman! Master Wyma, where are you? Good gracious!"

The good dame surveyed the empty shop in astonishment. Fatty Wyma was gone, and the bag was gone. It took Mrs. Taggles some moments to realize that it was a ridiculous case of these little "japes" with which the juniors of St. Jim's contrived to amuse themselves.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Taggles.

"Ready?" asked Tom Merry, coming into the tuckshop a few minutes later. "Why, where's my bag, Mrs. Taggles?"

"Master Wyma—"

"What?"

"I'm afraid he's taken it away, Master Merry," said Mrs. Taggles, in distress. "But if you like I will return your money, and send the bill to him."

"Oh, no!—I need no thanks! It's a jolly sight I didn't see the fat heaver!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "It's all right, Mrs. Taggles. One good turn deserves another. But I'll soup that fat oyster! Manners! Lowther!"

And he rushed from the tuckshop.

Manners and Lowther were outside, under the sky. They stared at Tom Merry's excited face in amazement.

"What's the matter?" demanded Lowther.

"New House bounder—stole the bismarck bag!" gasped Tom Merry. "Fatty Wyma—he's bolted with it!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"After him!" yelled Manners.

Tom Merry swept the quadrangle with his eyes. There was no sign of Fatty Wyma there.

"Must have gone into the New House with it," exclaimed Tom Merry. "We're going after him. He can't have scuffed the staff yet. Come on!"

"Into the New House?" said Manners doubtfully.

"Yes. The chaps are all out. We shall find Wyma by himself, scoffing the tummy. I'll give him tummy! Come on!"

And the Terrible Three rushed away towards the New House. Under other circumstances it would have been perilous to pursue the enemy into his own stronghold, so to speak, but just then all the New House fellows were out of doors. The Terrible Three met no one as they rushed into the house, and snatched up the main in the Fourth-Form studies. They hastened into Kildare's study with a yell.

They fully expected to find Fatty Wyma there with the plunder. But the study was empty, and there was no sign of the miser or the loak.

"The—the fat rascal!" howled Lowther. "He knew we should come here for him, and he's gone off somewhere else!"

"We've got to find him!"

And, glancing only to ascertain the table, and pull up the study as usual, and pitch the bookcase over on its side—as a necessity of their visit—the School House juniors rushed out of the study and down the stairs again.

But their departure from the New House was not so easy as their entrance. They had been seen to come in, and Redfern and Owen and Lawrence and a crowd of other New House juniors had followed them in, and were waiting for them.

"Hallo!" said Redfern agreeably. "What are you School House chaps doing in a respectable house? Looking for thick ears?"

The Terrible Three exchanged a glance, and made a wild rush to escape. In a moment there was a wild and whirling struggle in the passage, and then, one after another, three whirling forms descended the steps of the New House, and pulled into the quadrangle. A yell of laughter followed them.

"Come back and have some more!" sang out Redfern.

But the Terrible Three did not accept the invitation. The steps were crowded with New House fellows ready to seize them and haul them forth again. They packed themselves up, dusty and dishevelled, and slipped away, and Redfern & Co. sent a yell after them.

"He—"

"Ow!" grunted Mopsy Lovelover. "This is where we got it in the neck—ow! Where is that fat beast with our tummy?"

"John answers 'where!'" growled Tom Merry.

Up and down and round about the school the Terrible Three sought for the rascal, but they found him not. In these same moments Fatty Wyma was seated under the shade of a hap-stuck quarter of a mile away, enjoying himself!

CHAPTER 2.

Cracked!

KILDARE of the Brits, the captain of St. Jim's, was standing outside the pavilion, with an expression of great contentment upon his handsome, sunny face. Kildare was looking satisfied.

The First Eleven of St. Jim's were at practice, and there was no doubt that they were at their top form.

And Kildare had reason to be pleased. On the morning the St. Jim's First were meeting the Wallabies, and for that match they needed to be at their topmost form.

The Wallabies, a travelling Australian team, were at Abbotford just then, and Kildare had been fired by the ambition of meeting them in a match.

The Australian team was certainly a "big order" for the School to take on, but Kildare had high hopes of a win. The Wallabies, having a vacant day, had consented to play, thereby filling the St. Jim's fellows with satisfaction.

From Kildare, the captain of the school, down to the smallest and skinniest lad in the lowest Form, nothing was talked of or thought of just then but the Wallaby match.

A win would cover the school with glory, and even a defeat would count as more than a victory in an ordinary match, for the Wallabies were famous for their form, and to meet them at all was a great honor.

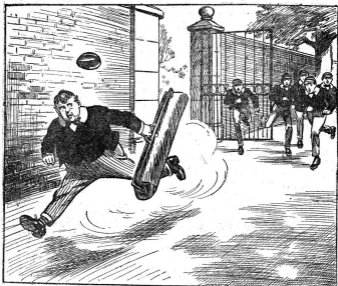
Tom Merry & Co., and the rest of the juniors, were almost as keen about it as the senior fellows.

They had agreed unanimously to put off their own House

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Fifty Wynn caught sight of the juniors bearing down on him, and made a dash for the New House. The juniors whooped in pursuit. "Hold on, fifty!" roared Piggins. "It is not a tea! You're wanted!" (See Chapter 4.)

match fixed for the same day, and to follow the First to Abbotford to watch the Wallaby game.

Which was a great distinction for the First Eleven—at least, from a junior point of view.

In honour of that great match, and in consideration of the desire of all St. Jim's to see it, the Head had granted a whole holiday for the famous day—a measure that filled to the full the cup of contentment.

Just now the hot practice before the great match was going as well as Kildare could have desired. Mostoath, the head prefect of the New House, was backing up Kildare with all his heart. All differences between them had been made for the great occasion. Kildare had selected five New House seniors for the team—Mostoath, Baker, Webb, Gray, and James major. The School House portion of the team was composed of Kildare himself, captain, and Darrel, Langton, Rashden, Leferre, and Gilmore—the last two being Fifth-Formers.

There was, of course, some dissatisfaction among players who had not been put in, for those were crowds who wanted to play on an occasion which would become historic in the annals of St. Jim's cricket. Keen, of the Sixth, had been very keen to play, and had taken his disappointment badly; and Catts, of the Fifth, too, was a passing candidate. But Kildare had made his selection on his own judgment, and that of the cricket committee, and all excepting the disappointed candidates agreed that the eleven was the best that could be found in the school.

Langton was at the wicket now, and Keen was bowling to him. Kildare was watching with all his eyes.

"Langton's in his best form, Darrel," he remarked. "My hat, all the fellows seem to be at top notch! Barring all luck, there's no reason why we shouldn't beat the Wallabies."

"It will be a record for us," said Darrel. "It's the biggest order we've ever taken on."

"All the more reason why we should pull it off."

"Right ho! We're all going to slug, anyway," said Darrel, laughing. "We're never put in an eleven better than this, anyway. There will be a surprise for certain parties at Abbotford to-morrow if we pull off the match—and not a pleasant surprise, either."

Kildare's brows contracted.

"You mean that there's been betting on the match?" he said.

Darrel nodded.

"Yes, rather. There are always bookies following the Wallabies, and I've heard that more money has been laid on them than on a good many races."

"Well, if they bet their money, serve 'em right," said Kildare.

"It's too rotten that a game like cricket should be disgraced by their fifty betting."

"Quite so," sighed in Mostoath. "But I fancy there are fellows in the school who don't agree with your views, Kildare."

Kildare's brow grew darker.

"You don't mean to say that any St. Jim's fellow has put money on the match, Mostoath?"

The New House prefect shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know for certain," he said. "But I think it's not very doubtful."

did not know—a harsh, unpleasant voice, with an expression, metallic ring in it.

"I've given five to one, Master Cutts."

"For me, as well as yourself?" asked Cutts.

"Yes, as you told me."

Fatty Wynn snuffed silently.

He understood now well enough. Cutts of the Fifth was meeting someone in that hayfield whom he would not have dared to meet within sight of St. Jim's. The haystack which sheltered Fatty Wynn on one side sheltered Cutts and his companion on the other.

It was an open secret to a great part of St. Jim's that Cutts of the Fifth was a "dog" of the first water.

He smoked in his study, he played cards for money, he had dealings with disreputable persons who never came to the school, and he was suspected of having paid visits to race-courses on half-holidays. More than once Cutts had made a "book" on specially big footer or cricket-matches played by the St. Jim's First Eleven—a fact which would have caused him to be immediately expelled from St. Jim's if the Head had known of it. But the kind old doctor was far from suspecting anything of the kind. Fellows knew, or suspected, many things about Cutts; but it was not their business to give him away. And Cutts went on his own course, till he should come a "cropper," as was pretty certain to happen sooner or later.

Fatty Wynn skirted a little unweary. He did not want to overstep Cutts's private affairs. He was not in the slightest degree interested in them, and he was naturally too honourable to listen.

But the weather was hot, and he had eaten more than was good for him. And he was very much disinclined to exert himself by moving—especially so, if the Twelfth Three were still looking for him, he might run directly into their hands by leaving his place of concealment.

If he left, too, Cutts would see him, and undoubtedly jump to the conclusion that he had been listening. And Cutts was a holly as well as a blackguard. Fatty Wynn did not want to have Cutts's malicious gaze lashing round his plumed limbs.

"Oh, blow!" murmured Fatty Wynn. "I'm sticking here! If they don't want to be heard, they can go and jaw somewhere else, the rotten!"

And Fatty Wynn closed his eyes again to continue his nap. The heat of veins was a good thing to send a chap to sleep, as he had sometimes remarked to Kerr, when that youth was reciting Shakespeare in the study of the New House.

But the remarks that followed, instead of sending Fatty Wynn to sleep as he expected, caused him to open his eyes again—very wide. He sat bolt upright, and all trace of drowsiness vanished from his face.

"It will be all right, Crows," Cutts was saying.

"But you're not in the eleven, Master Cutts."

"I shall be in it."

"You ain't sure of that."

"I am sure of it," said Cutts irritably. "I'm a reserve, anyway. And Kélaré has told me I'm to go over to Abbottsford with the rest."

"But that's only in case of accidents, I suppose, Master Cutts," said Crows. "From what I hear, the young gentlemen ain't likely to hit accidents 'appen. They are all keen to play the Wallabies."

Fatty Wynn disengaged a fat fist from the bag, clamped it, and shook it in the direction of the murmuring voices.

"Blessed rotter!" he muttered. "So Cutts is laying bets about the Wallaby match. And that's what he wants to be in the team for, to play to win his rotten bets. Yah!"

Fatty Wynn was far from the truth.

"Accidents happen in the best-regulated eleven," said Cutts, with a disagreeable laugh. "I tell you I shall play in the eleven."

"Will you manage it?"

"Leave that to me. Have you done all the business in Abbottsford?"

"Yes; but I could do more, if I was certain," said Crows. "Me and my pals are out for money. And there are a lot who have been watching the form of the school team. The Wallabies ain't up to full strength, as it turns out; two of their men are away, and Trunks will be playing reserves. It won't be the same team that beat Oxford. Men who've been looking at the school positively bely think St. Jim's will win."

"All the better. You can get the money on at lower odds."

"I believe it will be level money on the day, Master Cutts. And if I was sure that St. Jim's would be best—"

"You may be sure of that."

"But I say—"

"Never mind what you hear!" interrupted Cutts. "The Sports haven't a chance against the Australians—do you understand?—not an earthly! It would be safe to lay ten to one against those—a hundred to one, for that matter. Put your money on at three to one against St. Jim's, unless you can get better terms. It's safe as houses."

Fatty Wynn drew deep, deep breath of disgust.

"The great beast! Betting against his own side!" he murmured. "Laying money on a cricketer-catcher, the red! And laying it against his own team! If Cutts was a New House chap, we'd swing him, Fifth or no Fifth! Yah!"

"You're in it for twenty quid now, Master Cutts. That lets you out for stumpy pen if the Wallabies lose."

"I know it."

"Look here, Master Cutts, I don't mean anything again you; but this is the last chance we shall 'ave of talking about the match. But you've only got fifteen pence in my 'ack, and the rest is on your word. S'pose you have to pay up?"

"I can pay. I could get it from my father. But I tell you there isn't the slightest chance of School losing the Wallabies."

"I stand to be a 'undred quid out if they do, Master Cutts. And my pals are in it as deep as I am. We've locked the Wallabies on their record, and a week ago we'd 'ave given six to one. But the way the money has been taken—by Mr. Abbottsford and Wayland shows that the local men think a lot of the School's chance, and that makes us 'estate. I've been thinking it would be safer to hedge, unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless you can give me some proof that they will beat the School."

"I tell you it's a dead cert! Never mind what form the School is in. Never mind if the Wallabies are off colour—never mind anything! School will lose!"

"I'd like to take your word for that, Master Cutts. But—"

"You needn't take my word. You'd be on the ground to-morrow morning. I suppose!"

"You bet!"

"Then look over the St. Jim's team, and when you see who are in it, you can make up your mind. Time to hedge then."

"Well, that's fair. About petty' on more money for you—"

"Pat it on. Another ten, if you can find takers."

"I can find takers easy enough. I tell you the Wayland and Abbottsford men are keen to back the School, and I may be able to get even."

"All the better; though there's really no risk. Now buzz off! We mustn't be seen talking together—especially as I'm going to play in the eleven."

"You're sure of that?"

"Quite sure."

There was a sound of footsteps, and the voices were heard no more. The conversation between Cutts of the Fifth and the bookmaker had ended, and they were gone.

Fatty Wynn sat quite silent and still.

His plump, pink face had gone pale. He understood only too well what the talk meant. Cutts of the Fifth had laid heavy stakes against the School eleven. And if the School should win he would have to pay a sum that he could not possibly raise. That meant that he must have some means of feeling certain that St. Jim's would lose. Yet he was not in the eleven—Fatty Wynn knew that—and even if he had been, could he be such an awful outsider as to play against his team—help the other side? A single whisket would make an tremendous difference in a closely-contested match. And Cutts, if he was played in the eleven, would be played chiefly for his bowling, which was excellent, and which, of course, would enable him to give great chances to the other side if he chose. Could he be such a second-rate? Yet what else could his words mean?

"But he ain't in the team," said Fatty Wynn. "He was talking out of his hat. The reserves won't be wanted. Cutts and Knox are both out of it. I know now what they were so keen to get into it for. But they're out of it, the rash!"

And Fatty Wynn, his drowsiness completely driven away

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by what he had heard, rose slowly to his feet, and packed the remains of his food in the cricket-bag, and took his way back to St. Jim's in a very pained and thoughtful mood.

CHAPTER 3.
Cotts Gets His Cap.

"UTTA, dash bog, you're wanted!"
"Kildare wants you, Cotts."
Cotts of the Fifth had sauntered in at the gates of St. Jim's, and the juniors who were looking for him spotted him at once. The practice was still going on on Big Side, and the reserve was wanted more than ever, now that Darrel of the Sixth was "crooked."

Cotts looked curiously at the juniors.
"What am I wanted for?" he asked. "I'm not in the team."

"There's been an accident," said Jack Shihz.
"Yess, wathah! That stily an Knox—"
Cotts's eyes gleamed.

"Knox? What has Knox done?" he asked.
"He's crooked Darrel," said Tom Merry.
"Crooked Darrel?"

"Yes, wathah! Crooked him in bowlin'. Wathed a feeb-ble knock on poor old Darrel's leg, and Darrel wath't be able to play to-morrow," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I'm afraid Kildare is goin' to put you in, Cotts, unless he does the sensible thing and decides to play a pinch. I should be quite willin'—"

But Gerald Cotts was not flinching. He walked away quickly towards the cricket-ground. Monteith was at the wicket now, and Langton was bowling to him. Kildare met Cotts with a frown.

"Why wasn't you here?" he exclaimed. "I told you to turn up for practice, Cotts."

"I was," said Cotts calmly. "I've been down the river. I didn't think you would be wanting me, as there's no chance of a reserve being played to-morrow."

"I shall want you to-morrow, after all. Darrel's crooked," said Kildare shortly. "You'll be in the team."

"Oh, good! I hope Darrel's not much hurt?"
"He's lamed. That idiot Knox did it bowling. It's the rottenest luck that could have happened to us," said Kildare, frowning. "The best bat in the team crooked. It may make all the difference to-morrow."

"Well, I'll do my best for the side," said Cotts. "I'm jolly glad of a chance to play—though, of course, I'm very shent Darrel."

"Get on to the wicket!" said Kildare.
"Right!"

And Cotts went on to practice. Kildare's troubled brow cleared somewhat as he watched him. There was no doubt that Cotts was a fine bat. He was not up to Darrel's level, certainly, but he would do very well, and he would strengthen the bowling considerably. And he was a clever man in the field.

"Mayn't turn out so bad after all," Kildare remarked to Monteith. "Cotts is a good man, when he chooses."

"He will put his beef into it against the Wallahs," said Monteith.

"Yes, no doubt about that."
Tom Merry & Co. were looking on at the senior practice, and they passed comments freely on the form of the players. None of the juniors liked Cotts; but they all admitted that he was in great form, and the best man that could be found to supply Darrel's vacant place, unless, as D'Arcy suggested, Kildare should play a pinch.

"Well, I don't like Cotts," Tom Merry remarked; "but I must say he keeps his cool up well. And that late out of him is a daisy. He's standing up to Langton's bowling—and there are precious few chaps who can do that."

Langton of the Sixth was the champion bowler of St. Jim's, and he was Kildare's chief wicket, so far as bowling went, for the Wallace match. Figgins and Kerr loudly declared that his bowling was no better than Fatty Wynn's, and, indeed, allowing for the difference between senior and junior, there was little to choose between them. Fatty Wynn was a bowler of devoted skill, and he was often called upon to tag at bowling for the seniors in their practice—a duty he was always willing to perform.

"Figgins!" called out Kildare.

"Adman?" grinned Figgins, hurrying over towards the pavilion. "Want me to bat, Kildare?"

"The captain of St. Jim's laughed.
"No; I want that fat chum of yours to bowl!"
"Good! I'll dig him up," said Figgins. "I expect he's in the tuckshop."

"He jolly well he'll!" growled Tom Merry. "He's gone off somewhere two hours ago with a bag of tommy-cans!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we're going to scalp him when he comes in!" granted Monty Lowther.

"Scalping's off now," said Kildare. "You can scalp him to-morrow. Find him, and bring him here to bowl now! I want him!"

"Anything to oblige," said Tom.

"The juniors ran off to look for Fatty Wynn. It was an honour for a junior to be wanted even in practice against the mighty men of the Sixth. Figgins and Kerr, as Fatty Wynn's special chums, were likewise amiable at it.

"Here he is!" shouted Monty Lowther, as he caught sight of a phony figure coming in at the school gates. "And blessed if he hasn't got our bag with him now!"
"Collar him!"

Fatty Wynn caught sight of the juniors bearing down upon him, and made a dash for the New House. The juniors whirled in pursuit.

"Hold on, Fatty!" roared Figgins. "It's not a rag! You're wanted."

Fatty Wynn did not heed. He dashed on to the New House, and tossed the bag inside, and pulled on to Redfern to take it into his study. Then he turned round cheerfully on the steps to face the juniors.

"You botaniser!" gasped Tom Merry. "That's your bag!"
"Well, you can have the bag—when it's empty," grinned Fatty. "It was my strap-gun you scooped yesterday, you know."

"You're wanted to bowl, Fatty," said Kerr. "Kildare wants you. Come on!"

"It's past!" said Tom Merry. "Never mind the grab."
"Right!" said Fatty cheerfully. And he came down the steps. "One good turn deserves another, you know—and I'm back obliged for the feed. It was ripping!"

The juniors marched the fat Fourth-Former over to Big Side. Fatty Wynn jumped as he saw Gerald Cotts at the wicket.

"What's Cotts batting for?" he exclaimed excitedly. "He's not in the eleven."

"Yess, he is," said Arthur Augustus. "It's wet, you know—but he is! I reckon it would have been better to play a pinch."

"Come in the eleven!" roared Fatty Wynn.
"Yes," said Figgins. "Darrel's got crooked."

"Oh, my hat!"
"Knox did it—walloped him with a cricket-ball," said Tom Merry. "Why, what's the matter with you, Fatty?"

Fatty Wynn staggered.
"Oh, the blackguards!" he gasped. "The rotten! The rotten! Cotts—in the team—he can't—he shan't!"

"Buzzerok?" asked Monty Lowther sympathetically.
"Ginger-beer got into his head," said Shike.

Fatty Wynn looked at them almost wildly.
"—I told you I know something by it," he gusted. "It's a plot—a rotten scheme! I'll go and tell Kildare! I—"

Figgins caught his excited chattering by the arm.
"Hold on, Fatty! What do you know about it?"

"I know it's a put-up job! I know that Cotts—"
"Order!" said Tom Merry. "There's Kildare calling to you. If you know anything about it, Fatty, you'd better think twice before you tell Kildare—he would want plenty of proof before he believed it. Let's talk it over first, say?"

"Yes, not a word now, Fatty," said Figgins.
Fatty Wynn calmed down a little.

"I'll tell you follows later," he said. "Perhaps we'd better think over how we're going to put it to Kildare. But he must be told. All right, Kildare, I'm coming."

The captain of St. Jim's tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn as he came up.

"Give us some of your best bowling, Fatty," he said. "I know you can send down some wickets when you like."
"I'll send Cotts out," said Fatty Wynn vehemently.

And he went on to bowl with a face full of grim determination. The juniors watched him excitedly. They did not understand Fatty Wynn's alliance to Cotts, but they understood the look on the fat Fourth-Former's face.

And Fatty Wynn kept his word.
The first ball down was a "twister," and it was a little too much of a twister for Gerald Cotts. It whipped his leg-stump out of the ground without giving him a chance.

ANSWERS

Cutts's brow was very black as he looked down at his wretched wicker.

"Bravo!" yelled Figgins. "How's that?"
"Out!" yelled Kibbore. "All across, Cutts—don't look so blue. That was a ball that might have taken any chap's sides."

Cutts did not reply. But he favoured Fatty Wynne with a very dark look, to which Fatty responded with a glare of scornful defiance that surprised Cutts. He would have known the reason, for he had been aware that Fatty Wynne had heard his talk with Mr. Croove behind the haystack.

Fatty Wynne of a good deal of bowling, and to Figgins and Kerr's delight, he was at his top form. Kibbore patted him on the shoulder when he came off.

"Good, good!" he exclaimed. "You'll be champion of St. Jim's when you get into a senior form, Wynne."

And Fatty Wynne dined with pleasure. Praise from Kibbore was worth having.

"It was a rotten fluke, his getting my wicket like that!" growled Cutts.

"Easy!" said Fatty Wynne promptly.

"Yes, cheery eh?"

"Oh, jessell!" said Fatty Wynne. "Yes, you can scowl, you rotten red, but I'm not afraid of you! You ought to be kicked out of the school!"

"Come, come, shut up!" said Kibbore, pushing Fatty Wynne away. "You can't talk to a senior like that. It's his side off, Cutts! Do you hear? You shouldn't have called his name."

Figgins and Kerr dragged their excited chaps away. There was no telling what Fatty Wynne would have said if he had remained; the sight of Cutts seemed to have the same effect upon him as a red rag upon a bull. Cutts drove his hands deep into the pockets of his blouse, and strode away with a black brow. He did not understand the reason of Fatty Wynne's outburst—but perhaps Fatty Wynne's remarks went home to his conscience. He!

Figgins and Kerr and the rest rubbed Fatty Wynne off the wicket-ground. They were surprised and puzzled by the outbreak of temper on the part of a fellow who was usually the most placid and good-humoured at St. Jim's.

"What on earth's the matter with you, Fatty?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Have you gone off your rocker, or what?"
"I tell you, I've found out something, and I'm going to tell Kibbore," said Fatty. "I'll talk it over with you chaps first, if you like, but it can't be kept in. Come up to the study."

And the justices, in a state of great astonishment, followed Fatty Wynne up to the study in the New House.

CHAPTER 5. The Only Way.

POP! Fatty Wynne's first proceeding on entering the study was to open a bottle of ginger-beer, with which to dilute his drink. He turned on the contents of the bag upon the study table, and waded a fat hand towards them.

"Go it!" he said hospitably.

Matty Lowther inserted. It seemed to him a little too cool, to invite the School House fellows to "go it" with their own provender. However, the invitation was not declined. The ginger-beer and lemonade were refreshing on a hot afternoon, and there were some of the jam-tarts and cake left.

"So they've won it!"

"Now, then, Fatty," said Figgins, "what's the row? What have you been going for Cutts for?"

"Yess, wathah! Explain that, dear boy. I do not approve of Cutts, as he is a wathah! But I couldn't—"

"Ring off, Guss—"

"I wathah to wathah off, Blakoo—"

"Choose it!" roared Tom Merry. "Let's hear what Fatty's got to say—if he can spare a minute from the jam-tarts."

"Well, I've only had two," said Fatty Wynne. "I'm not really hungry now. It was a jolly good feed! I must say I enjoyed myself, and—"

"We don't come here to learn how you enjoyed your feed, you fat fraud!" said Manners. "What is the row about Cutts?"

"He's a rotten howard!"

"Comely does it!" said Figgins. "I dare say he is—in fact, you really know he is—but that's a strong expression, so go easy."

"Yess, wathah! I couldn't—"

"And a cur!" said Fatty Wynne, growling excited again.

"And a rotter! And a thief! And a scoundrel! And a—"

"That will do to go on with," remarked Kerr. "Let's get to the washing. What has Cutts done?"

"He's laid bets with a rotten bookmaker on the Wallyey match!"

"Well, we might have guessed that of Cutts!" said Tom Merry. "We know he does those things. It's no business of ours."

"He's laid his money against St. Jim's!"

"More fool he—he'll lose it!"

"Not if he can help it," said Fatty Wynne. "He's going to lose the match, and win the masey, if he can."

"What!"

"That's what he's in the team for!"

"Hold on," said Jack Blake gravely. "Go easy, Fatty! Cutts couldn't have known he was going to be in the team—he couldn't have foretold that Darvel was going to be crooked."

"Yes, he could—if he arranged with Knox beforehand."

"Great Scott!"

"But Jess?"

The justices stared blankly at Fatty Wynne. The half-formed suspicion in their own minds rose again. They had only half-believed that the "accident" on the cricket ground was an accident at all.

"Look here, Fatty," said Figgins, after a pause. "Tell us what you know about it. You say you've found something out. How did you find it out, and what is it?"

"Yess, wathah!"

Fatty Wynne disposed of a third tart, and another bottle of ginger-beer, and explained. The justices listened in silence while he told of what he had heard as he lay aside the boy. They did not interrupt him, and Fatty Wynne said all he knew, as near as he could remember, in the very words of Cutts and the bookmaker.

"Well, what do you think of that?" he concluded.

"But Jess! It takes the cake!"

"It fairly puts the lid on!" said Matty Lowther. "You're sure you heard Cutts say positively that he was certain to play in the team?"

"Of course I say."

"That settles that, then," said Figgins. "If any chap in the First Eleven was crooked, Cutts was to have his place—and he could only be certain of getting the place by knowing in advance that one of the team would be crooked. It's proven that it was a set-up job between Knox and Cutts. I suppose they've both got money on the match."

"But—but Cutts couldn't be villain enough to give the match away for the sake of winning fifty bob!" said Blake aghast.

"He's villain enough for anything," said Fatty Wynne.

"What else can he mean to do? He can't have arranged himself into the team for the sake of playing hard and losing through a pot of money."

"Wathah, wathah!"

"Besides, they've got an awful lot of money on it," said Wynne. "If the Wallyeys beat us, Cutts gets twenty or thirty pounds. If we win, he will be called upon to pay a hundred out. I know his people are rich—but he couldn't pay a sum of money like that—no fellow at school could. You see, he's laid money at odds—three to one. He is coming on St. Jim's being beaten, as a dead cert, and he will be ruined if we win."

"He must have got into the team to try and make St. Jim's lose," said Tom Merry, in a hoarse voice. "Blowed if I've ever heard of such a rascal. He ought to be in prison."

"Yess, wathah!"

"One twister in the side would be enough to make all the difference," said Figgins. "It means a wicked dance for scolding, or next is nothing, in each innings. It means wathah for being missed when Cutts is bowling, and may help for the other side to score off when he is bowling. And the match would be very close in any case. If Cutts is playing this game, he can give the match away."

"I don't know whether a single player could," said Tom Merry meditatively. "But they may be counting on another player getting crooked, and Knox getting in, too. It was between Knox and Cutts for Duvell's place. If another chap was crooked—"

"But the practice is over now," said Figgins. "They won't have another chance."

"No, that's so."

"You never know what dodge Cutts may have in his mind," said Fatty Wynne. "He may have some other scheme up his sleeve. Anyway, he's not going to play for St. Jim's against the Wallyeys. When Kibbore knows this, he will turn him out like a poisonous reptile—as he is!"

The justices looked at one another.

"When he knows it," said Figgins slowly. "But will he know it?"

"He'll know it when I tell him," said Fatty Wynne.

"Yes, but—but—"

Fatty Wynne flushed.

"I suppose you don't think it would be sneaking to tell Tom Merry—"

"No, that's so."

"I don't know what to do," said Fatty Wynne.

"You must tell me," said Fatty Wynne.

"I don't know what to do," said Fatty Wynne.

"You must tell me," said Fatty Wynne.

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"You must tell me," said Fatty Wynne.

"I don't know what to do," said Fatty Wynne.

Kildare a thing like this?" he exclaimed. "You don't want me to keep my mouth shut, and see the game given away, do you?"

"I wasn't thinking of that," said Figgins. "Only—only—will Kildare believe it?"

"Oh?" said Fatty Wynn. "Cutts will deny the whole story," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "He'll never be asleep and dressed in; or else— As a matter of fact, Fatty, it will be your word against Cutts's, and Kildare will want a lot of convincing before he'll believe that a St. Jim's fellow could be such an awful rascal."

"My hat?" said Fatty Wynn in dismay. "I didn't think of that. I—I suppose you fellows believe me, don't you?"

"Of course we do, and?"

"Yes, well, yes," said Fatty Wynn. "But it's different with Kildare," said Kerr. "He doesn't know you as we do, Fatty, and he wouldn't take a junior's word against a senior's, without proof. Couldn't expect him to. He might as well take Cutts's word, if Cutts bought an acquisition against you, if there wasn't to be any proof asked for."

"Oh, er—er!" said Fatty Wynn. "Cutts will deny it, of course," said Manners. "He would have to, and we know what a setter he is. He's served us rotten tricks ourselves."

"But—but we can't keep it dark, and let him go," exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "I tell you he means to play into the hands of the other side. It's not fair to them, either. They're a splendid set of chaps, and they'd be wild if they knew the game was being given away to them."

"I know that, but Kildare wouldn't condemn Cutts on your bare word—turn him out of the team because a junior made a statement about him which he would deny."

There was silence in the study. Fatty Wynn was looking dismayed. He had not looked at the difficulties of the matter before. But he saw them now. In common justice Kildare could not condemn Cutts without proof. He would be more likely to believe that Fatty Wynn, instead of waking up and hearing that talk behind the haystack, had remained asleep and dreamed it. He might even believe that it was a scheme to discredit Cutts, with whom the juniors were known to be on the worst of terms. The head of the Sixth, naturally, did not know Fatty Wynn personally as his own class knew him.

"But—but Cutts can't be allowed to play and betray the side?" said Fatty Wynn, breaking a long and painful silence.

"No, Joe! It's an awfully difficult business," said Arthur Augustus. "It's no good leaving it to me—I admit I don't know what to do."

"Well, we weren't thinking of leaving it to you, as a matter of fact," remarked Monty Leather cheerfully.

"Really, Leather— Suppose we see Cutts, and tell him that we know, and put it to him to play the game?" suggested Blake. "He might be scared off from playing the traitor then."

"He might," said Figgins doubtfully.

"Can anybody think of anything better?"

"Nobody could. There was no reply."

"Then let some of us go and see Cutts—not a crowd, but some of us," said Tom Merry. "I'll go with Fatty Wynn and Figgis and Blake. Four will be enough."

"Perhaps it would be better for me to go—"

"-Rats!" said all the juniors at once.

"I trust you will admit, dear boys, that what is required at the present moment is a fellow of tact and judgment."

"Yes, that's why we're leaving you out," said Tom Merry. "Come on, you chaps, and let's get it over. While Cutts knows that we know, he may be afraid to go on with his rascally scheme. It's the only chance, anyway."

"I couldn't—"

The four juniors did not wait to hear what Arthur Augustus considered. They left the study, and the other fellows anxiously awaited their return.

CHAPTER 6.

CUTTS STANDS HIS GROUND.

THE HEAD of the Fifth was in his study.

He was having tea, and Knox the prefect was with him. Cutts was looking very cheerful and satisfied, but there was a cloud upon Knox's brow. Knox was a rascal, but he was not quite so great a rascal as Gerald Crane, and he was far from knowing the iron nerve of the black-stroed of the Fifth. Cutts had lighted a cigarette, and pushed back his chair from the table, and he was surveying the clouded brow of his confederate with a grin of cynical amusement.

"What's the trouble?" he asked. "Aren't you satisfied with the way things are going?"

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Knox started out of his gloomy reverie.

"Well, yes," he said slowly.

"I'm in the team," said Cutts.

"I know you are."

"And you'll be in, to-morrow?"

"I'll all go well, yes."

"Why shouldn't all go well?" demanded Cutts. "All's gone well up to now."

"Some of the fellows are suspicious about the way Darrell got cracked. He happened to be there once before when I wanted to get into the team," said Knox uncomfortably.

"Yes, but you didn't get in this time—only made room for me," said Cutts, with a grin. "Nobody can see anything fishy in that. And you won't have a hand in dealing with Langton—you're safe there. Keep your pecker up."

"I—I wish we hadn't gone in for it," muttered Knox.

"Getting nervous?" asked Cutts. "I might have expected that. I stand to clear thirty quid. You stand to clear as much as you've got nerve to make."

"I'm not going to stake more than I could pay if we had had luck," said Knox. "You wouldn't if you had any sense. Seize your strength while it lasts."

"It's stink or stink with you," said Cutts, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I'm out for a big stake, or bust. It's the best thing we've ever done since—you can't deny that."

"I know, but—"

"There's risk in everything, but there's precious little risk in this. If we show up badly in the game, that won't look suspicious—nothing remarkable in mere schoolboys being clean bowled by fellows of the Wallabies' class, I suppose?"

"Well, no; but—"

"And if they were heavily off our heading, that will be put down to their wonderful batting. They're wonderful bats, you know."

And Cutts laughed heartily, and lighted a fresh cigarette. Knox looked at him with a kind of wonder.

"I've not got your nerves," he said.

"You haven't the nerve of a white rat," said Cutts.

"Be still yourself together. You're done your little bit, and it's gone like clockwork. The rest is for me to do."

"What are you going to do about Langton?"

"Don't ask questions; it's better for you not to know," said Cutts coolly. "You'd only have another attack of chicken-heartiness."

"It's too thick, Cutts. It's not only giving the match away—that's bad—but—but I wish it were well over."

"It will be well over by this time to-morrow, and I shall be thirty quid the richer," said Cutts. "I can do with it, too. The proceeds have been running away with too much of my bit lately."

"I—I say, Cutts, take it all in all, have you made or lost money by this kind of thing?" asked Knox abruptly.

Cutts smiled.

"Well, lost, I suppose, take it all in all," he said. "Things go wrong, sometimes—you never know. But this deal is going to let me square again. For goodness' sake—"

Cutts looked off as a knock came at the study door.

"Come in," he called out indistinctly.

The door opened, and four juniors came in—Tom Merry of the Shell, and Blake and Figgins and Fatty Wynn of the Fourth. Cutts stared at them. He was not accustomed to visits from juniors in his study, and with these especial juniors he was on the very worst of terms. Neither he nor Tom Merry had forgotten the time when he had attempted to invade the captain of the Shell into his own blackguardly ways.

"What do you want?" he demanded roughly.

"Only a word with you," said Tom Merry.

"Well, the word is all on your side," said Cutts. "You can see that. Shut the door after you."

"We're not going till we've said what we've come to say," said Blake. "We'll say it out loud for all the school to hear, if you like."

"You can say it as loud as you like," sneered Cutts.

"What's the row now?"

"Do you want Knox to hear it?"

"I don't care twopenny."

"Very well. It's about your dealings with Crowe," said Tom Merry.

Cutts jumped up. Knox of the Sixth sat quite still, looking at the juniors with rather creeping into his face.

"What do you mean, you young cad!" exclaimed Cutts furiously.

"Told him, Fatty."

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened as they met those of the angry Fifth-Former.

"I was by the haystack this afternoon," he said.

Cutts, in spite of his nerve, turned pale. For a moment there was terror in his face as he looked at Fatty Wynn.



The juncos held their breath. For a moment it seemed as if there would be a fearful accident; but the driver of the car saved the situation. With cool promptitude he turned the car upon the belt of grass beside the road, avoiding the runaway by a hair's-breadth! (An incident taken from "Self-Defence Week at Grayfriars," Frank Richards' splendid, long, complete tale of the chess of Grayfriars, which is contained in the current issue of our companion paper "THE MAZZINI" LIBRARY. Now on sale everywhere. Price One Penny.)

"You were—what—where?" he stammered.
 "I heard all you said to Crowe, and what he said to you," said the lot Fourth-Former steadily.

"You speak young scoundrel!"
 Fatty Wynn turned crimson.

"I wasn't spying!" he said indignantly. "I was there before you came, and I woke up and heard you talking."

"All of you happened to be there, and happened to be asleep?" sneered Cutts.

"I was there by myself," said Fatty Wynn.
 Cutts drew a deep, deep breath. That was what he had wanted to discover—whether the junior had any witnesses to what he had overheard. Cutts had been confused for a moment, but only for a moment. He was at once his cool, collected self again.

"So you say you heard me talking to Crowe?" he said calmly. "Who is Crowe?"

"I don't know. A bookmaker, I suppose."

"And you are in—oh!"

"I didn't see you—I heard you."

"A precious story," said Cutts, laughing, with no hearty a ring in his laugh that the juniors looked at one another deliberately. "You fall asleep by a haystack, and you then hear voices, and want to make out that one was more, talking to a man you don't know. You had better think of something a bit more likely than that. As it happens, I was down the river, and I could prove it if necessary."

"You were in the hayfield, talking to a man you called Crowe," said Fatty Wynn steadily. "You have been laying away against St. Jim's on the Wallace match, and you told Green that you were outside of playing in the match. When I got back, I found that you were in the team, because Knox had crooked Barrell with a crooked-bail. Then I knew it was a put-up job between you."

"You cheeky young rascal!" began Knox.

"And you've got the cheek to come here with a cock-and-bull story like that!" said Cutts, with an air of contemptuous amazement.

"You've got the nerve to tell it to a Fifth-Former!"

"You've got the nerve to tell it to a Fifth-Former!"

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Former and a prefect of the Sixth! I suppose you know that you'll get a beating!"

"The four juniors drew closer together.

"You won't raise anything by hitting, Cutts," said Tom Merry. "You know it's true. You mean to play to lose to-morrow."

"You think so?" said Cutts bitterly.

"I know it."

"And what have you come here to tell me this for?"

"To ask you to stand out of the team."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can give Kildare any reason you like," said Figgins, "but you can't play for St. Jim's, considering what we know of your intentions."

Cutts laughed scornfully.

"Do you see that door?" he asked. "Well, get on the other side of it—sharp!"

"You won't—"

"I won't hardly words with cheeky juniors!" said Cutts.

"You'll get out of my study, or I'll throw you out!"

"Is your way to go to Kildare and tell him?"

"My dear young man, you can go to Kildare, or go to the docks!" said Cutts, "but anybody you like! Shoot it in the passages! Tell it from the top of the houses! Only get out of my study! I'm fed up with you!"

Cutts picked up a cricket-stump.

"Are you going?" he asked.

The juniors exchanged dismayed looks. They had not been able to guess how Gerald Cutts would take it, but they had certainly not expected him to take it like this. Was it possible that his coolness and unconcern were merely a ruse? Or—or was it possible that Fatty Wynn had made some horrible mistake?

There was nothing for it but to go. They left the study, and they heard Cutts's laugh ring out as they went down the passage.

But when their footsteps had died away, Gerald Cutts turned to laugh, and a grim, dark look came over his face. Knox looked at him with a face still white.

"The game's up!" he muttered.

"Food!" said Cutts contemptuously.

"Look here, Cutts, suppose—suppose they go to Kildare?"

"What! Do you think they would have come to me at all, if they'd supposed that Kildare would believe such a story for an instant?" snapped Cutts.

Knax looked relieved.

"Well, I suppose there's something in that," he admitted. "That fat brute hasn't any witnesses. And Kildare wouldn't believe it, I suppose."

"Of course he wouldn't. They know that, or they wouldn't have come here. They were trying to frighten me—to frighten me," said Cutts contemptuously. "It's jolly unlikely that Wynn should have found anything out; but it can't be helped. As for the game being up, that's all over. I dare not turn back now, if I wanted to. If St. Jim's win the match, I'm ruined—sterile—done in. I should play the game out to the finish, if I were certain of being bowled out. As well be ruined one way as another."

"But—but!"

"You're as deep in the mud as I am in the mire," said Cutts coolly. "You're in it up to the neck, the same as I am. Don't look so scared, man. If those young chaps dare to repeat a word of that in public, I'll have them up before the Head and Figgins, for trying to spread a scandalous libel about me!"

"I—I believe you've got nerve enough, Cutts."

"They'll see that I have if they put me to it!" said Cutts grimly. "They know they can't hurt me, that's why they came here. If they told Kildare, he would soon have it out that it all rested on one kid's word, and that kid I kicked the other day, too, for being cheeky. Do you think he'd believe such a yarn? I should demand instantly to have it carried before the Head—in case of stake, and so forth. I'd make them sorry they ever entered the lists against me. They know it, too, and they dare not say a word."

"But—but when the match is lost—"

"They can say all the lies they like. If there's anything in their yarn, it ought to be said out before the match, not after."

"I—I suppose you're right. I—I wish I had your nerve," said Knax. "I suppose you'll finish up in prison, Cutts. You'd make a ripping criminal."

Cutts sneered. He did not pursue the subject. Perhaps there seemed to him something of a prophecy in Knax's remark.

"Have another cigar, and shut up!" he said.

And the two rascals lit good fresh cigars.

Meanwhile, the discomfited juniors had returned to Figgins's study in the New House, where they explained the result. THE GUN LANGUAGE.—No. 327.

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of their mission to Cutts. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy shook his head sadly.

"You see, it would have been better to place it in my hands, dear boys," he remarked. "I don't want to wab it in, but weakly—"

"The question is—what's going to be done?" said Tom Merry.

"I think I ought to go to Kildare," said Fatty Wynn; but very doubtfully.

"And suppose Cutts made the matter public—instituted upon an investigation by the Head—and brought some pretence witnesses to prove that he was down the river at the time you heard him talking by the haystack?"

"Oh, I—I—"

"He's got nerve enough for anything," said Figgins. "He's old news. If he wasn't such an awful rascal, one couldn't help admiring his nerve."

"There's no good. And Cutts is cunning enough to have witnesses, if he wants them," said Tom Merry. "Fatty, old man, you would get it in the neck. If you weren't looked on as a slanderee—"

"Oh, excuse!"

"You'd be supposed to have dreamed it. I—I say," added Tom Merry hesitatingly, "I—I suppose you didn't dream it, did you?"

Fatty Wynn gave a groan.

"Blessed if you're not beginning to believe me yourselves now!" he exclaimed. "I can see how much good it would be asking Kildare to believe me then. I'm ruin."

"But what's going to be done?" asked Figgins helpfully.

"We must think it over and see," said Tom Merry.

And the juniors thought it over, and thought it over again and again, but at the end of thinking it over they had to admit that they did not "see."

CHAPTER 7.

Bad News.

"W"HERE'S Langton?" "Haven't seen him."

Kildare wrinkled his brows a little, and Lefevre of the Fifth, to whom he was speaking, grinned. It had grown to be a joke among the members of the eleven that Kildare was as anxious about his team as a hen about her chickens. Considering the kind of match they were to play on the morrow, Kildare's anxiety was justified; but some of the fellows looked on it rather humorously.

"He ought to be in by now," Kildare remarked. "He went down to Todger's to see about the brake for to-morrow, that's all. Only it's his misery to-night to see lights out for the Shell. I can do it for him; but—but I wish he'd come in."

"Oh, he's all right!" said Lefevre. "He hasn't fallen into a ditch, you know, or been carried off by a wicked uncle. Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare laughed, too.

"I'm feeling anxious about the match," he said. "It's the biggest thing we've ever undertaken, and we've got a splendid chance of winning—of beating the Wolfhills. Darcy's getting crooked has got on my nerves, and that's a fact. It was rotten unlucky. I've got a feeling that something else may happen before to-morrow. Of course, there's nothing in it."

"That's what I say," said Lefevre. "There's nothing in it. Langton will be in in a minute or two—right as rain."

Kildare nodded, and walked to the door of the School House. Cutts of the Fifth met him there, and glanced at him curiously.

"You're looking downhearted, Kildare," he remarked.

"Not feeling that we're taken on too big a order—oh?"

"No. I'm thinking about Langton. He hasn't come in yet."

"Langton?" said Cutts. "Has he gone out?"

"You remember he was going down to Todger's to see about the brake?" said Kildare.

"Oh, was he?" said Cutts carelessly.

"Yes. Surely you haven't forgotten asking me if I'd arranged it, and I told you Langton was going down to tell them the time we wanted it?"

"I'd forgotten," said Cutts carelessly.

Kildare looked out into the quadrangle. It was a soft summer's night. The stars were sparkling in the deep blue heaven, and a light breeze stirred the foliage of the old elms and oaks.

"Looks like good weather to-morrow for the match," Cutts remarked.

"Oh, the weather will be all right."

"And the team will be all right, too."

"Yes, I hope so."

"Not getting doubtful at the last minute, Kildare?" asked

Catts, with his keen eyes close upon the face of the captain of St. Jim's.

A doubt crossed his mind for a moment as to whether Tom Merry & Co. had spoken to Kildare after all.

"No," said Kildare, "with Langton would come in. What happened to Dared had made me feel on tenterhooks a bit."

Catts smiled genially.

"Nothing's likely to happen to Langton," he said. "It's true there were some footsteps hanging round the lanes a week or two ago; but the police were hunting for them, and they have cleared out—so they say, anyway. I heard that they tried to rob Mary of the Shell in Rylands Wood; but they wouldn't be likely to tackle a chap like Langton, even if they are still in the neighbourhood."

Kildare started.

"I never thought of that," he said.

"Langton would take care of himself," said Catts.

"Yes, of course. I wish he'd come in, though."

Catts smiled again and strode away. He went into his study and sat down in his armchair, and took a little book from his pocket. There were mysterious-looking initials and figures entered in that little book; but they seemed quite intelligible to Catts, who read them over with great satisfaction.

He thrust the betting-book hastily into his pocket as the door opened, and looked up, frowning. But it was only Knox the pedlar.

Knox was looking pleased and worried, as he had been looking ever since the accident on Big Side. He came into the study and closed the door, and came over towards Catts. Catts lighted a cigarette.

"Better not let Kildare see you doing that, the night before the match, too," said Knox.

Catts shrugged his shoulders.

"Might be the night before Waterloo, by the time that's laid to rest," he said. "As a matter of fact, it will be Kildare's Waterloo. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't feel like laughing," said Knox. "Do you know that Langton went down to Rylands two hours ago, and hasn't come in yet?"

"Kildare's just told me so."

"He wouldn't have been gone more than an hour," said Knox.

"I dare say he'll turn up sooner or later," said Catts carelessly. "If he doesn't, it won't keep me awake all night any more."

"Look here!" said Knox. "Have you any reason to think that he won't turn up?"

"I? Of course not. How could I have?"

"I—I don't know. But—"

"In fact, I know he will turn up," said Catts calmly. "It's quite possible that he may run into a poacher trap in the lane, and there might be a tangle if the man tries to rob him; but he will come back safe and sound."

Knox turned pale.

"Catts, you—you awful villain!"

"Knox, you—you awful snark!" said Catts, imitating the pedlar's gasping voice. "My only hat, if I had no more nerve than you, Kneezey, I read 'Erie,' and take up kicking as a regular business—I would really! Little by little, or bit by bit!"

"Look here, Catts, you didn't tell me—"

"Ain't you glad I didn't tell you?"

"Well, yes, I wouldn't have had a hand in it. Catts, this is—this is thick. It's the kind of thing people get put in prison for," said Knox, in an agitated voice. "How can you be mad enough to run such risks?"

"I'm not running any risk."

"But—look you and a poacher chap attacking Langton—"

"I shan't know anything about it till it happens. The man may meet Langton by chance in a dark lane, may have a scrap with him, may fetch him a swipe with a cudgel on his arm or wrist. The result may be that Langton won't be able to get to-morrow; but I can't see that I can be connected with it in any way. I'm busy in my study all the time, talking to a prefect of the Sixth—a chap as much above suspicion as Caesar's wife."

Knox looked restlessly about the study. There was something very hot here in his face as he looked at Catts. The cold-blooded coolness of the counsel of the Fifth seemed to terrify him. Gerald Catts was of the stuff of which criminals are made.

There was no doubt about that, and at that moment Knox wished fervently enough that he had never entered into the address of the usually Fifth-Former.

Knox stopped suddenly in his agitated pacing of the study, and bent his head to listen. He held up his hand nervously.

"Hark! What's that?"

There was a loud buzz of voices in the passage without. Catts threw his cigarette into the grate.

"Langton came back, perhaps."

"Then—then something's happened—"

"I shan't's wonder. Let's go and see. For goodness' sake pull yourself together, man, and don't look like chalk or cheese! Do you want to be suspected?"

"I—I'll stay here," muttered Knox. "You can come and tell me."

"Perhaps you'd better," said Catts contemptuously. He left the study, and strode towards the hall. There was a buzzing crowd gathered there, and in the midst of them stood Langton of the Sixth—his face pale as ashes, and contracted with pain. He was speaking as Catts came along.

"The beast jumped on me in the lane—I suppose he wanted to rob me. I caught him coddle on my arm."

"You're hurt, Langton," said Kildare—and his face was as pale as Langton's.

"My arm is hurt, that's all. I—I shall have a 'game' arm to-morrow, Kildare."

"Then you're not hurt?"

"Oh, bow!," said Langton. "I'm sorry—more sorry than I can say, old chap. It's a thing that couldn't possibly have been foreseen."

Kildare groaned.

For the moment he was not thinking of Langton or his hurt—he was thinking of the Wallaby march, and it was probable. His best batsman was crooked, and now his best bowler was incapacitated. It was too much. The high hopes he had formed for the season seemed to sink down to zero.

CHAPTER 8.

To Speak or Not to Speak?

THESE was a buzz of voices round Kildare—in various tones of anger, and dismay, and indignation.

Langton was crooked.

That was the thought that was uppermost in every mind. The champion bowler of St. Jim's would not be available for the great match.

It was the crookedness of a real lock.

Tom Merry & Co. had joined the crowd there, and there was black suspicion in their minds, as well as anger and dismay.

The thought that flashed into their minds at once was whether this was a new ruse in Gerald Catts' treacherous game.

Tom Merry, and Lowther, and Manners, and Blake, and D'Arcy exchanged glances as they drew aside from the crowd. Figgins & Co., of course, were not there. They were in their own house, and knew nothing of the catastrophe.

"Langton crooked!" said Arthur Augustus in a low voice.

"I—I say, you chaps, do you think it was done on purpose?"

"Goodness knows," said Tom Merry.

"If Catts has a hand in it—," answered Blake.

"It's so good saying anything of the kind—there isn't an atom of proof," said Tom Merry. "It would sound absurd to say so."

"Yes, but—"

"I can't help suspecting it."

"Same here," said Blake.

"Man's the word!" said Monty Lovett. "It looks bad, but it's no good uttering mere suspicions. It would look like slandering Catts. Everybody knows that we're on bad terms with him, too."

"I can't quite think he'd be a villain enough for this, either," muttered Manners. "After all, you were tackled by a humped the other day, Tommy; and the same ruse might be still hanging about the place."

"Of course, it's possible."

Langton, hearing heavily on Kildare's shoulder, went into his study. The crowd broke up, excitedly discussing the happening. Mr. Rallies, the governor of the School House, was at once informed of what had happened, and the house-master immediately rang up the police-station in Rylands, and telephoned information there. It was not likely to be of much use, as Langton was unable to give any description of his assailant, save that he was a beefy man, muffed up. He had swung upon the Sixth-Former in the lane, and had fed when Langton showed fight—after dealing that one blow with his cudgel. But whether the ruffian was caught or not mattered little to the St. Jim's fellows. What troubled them, was that Langton would have a "game" arm on the morrow, and would not be able to bowl against the Wallabies.

Tom Merry & Co. retired to the study in the Shell passage to use it over. They had taken a good many of their friends into their confidence over the matter—in the course of many days since the incident. Kildare, and Clifford Bawa, and Glyn, and Herries, and Dight, and Reilly, came to the meeting in Tom Merry's study.

But talking it over did not seem to help them at all. The juniors were ready to believe almost anything of Catts of the Fifth. But that he would set on a ruffian to "crook"

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A MONTHLY, LEGAL COMPASS TALE BY TOM MERRY & CO.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Langton, seemed, as Kangaroo remarked, a little too "thick" to believe without the plainest proof.

"And even if we believed it, Kildare wouldn't," said Kangaroo, with a shake of the head. "If you want to Kildare with such a suspicion, best ask what proof you had."

"And you haven't any," said Dicky.

"Excepting that Cutts is a rascal," said Clifton Dane.

"And Kildare doesn't know that as we do," said Mesty Leather.

"The fact is, if we told Kildare we thought that this had been arranged by Cutts, he would kick us out of his study for suggesting such a thing."

"I suppose that's so," said Tom Merry.

"Do you believe, yourself, that Cutts fixed this up?" asked Herries.

Tom Merry hesitated.

"It looks like it," he said at last. "But—but I don't know that I'd think so, even of Cutts, simply on suspicion."

Herries grinned a little.

"Well," he said, "you can't think of bringing an accusation that you don't quite believe in yourself, you know."

"I suppose not."

"Impose, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If there's any doubt about the matter, even a wassal like Cutts ought to be given the benefit of the doubt."

"Faith, and you're right," said Boffy, with a nod. "That's my opinion, entirely. It would be wiser to make an accusation you couldn't prove."

"And it wouldn't do any good now," said Kangaroo.

"The harm's done."

"Yess, wotnah?"

Tom Merry moved restlessly. He knew all that as well as his own mind; and yet he felt that it was "up" to the justice to do something, knowing what they did.

"Knox will play now, instead of Langton," said Dicky.

"That's what justice do look most suspicious—the place that goes to Cutts's chair."

"And suppose this isn't the end of it?" said Tom Merry.

"Suppose there is something more to come—some fresh accident or other."

"But Joss?"

"I don't see what we can do," said Marners.

"There's one thing," said Tom. "We know, as well as we can know anything, that Knox and Cutts intend to give the game away to-morrow. Can we keep silent and let them do it without warning Kildare?"

"He wouldn't believe."

"I wish now we'd let Fatty Wyas go straight to Kildare," said Tom Merry restlessly.

"But he wouldn't have been believed."

"Fatty will have to speak to him, all the same," said Tom freely. "We'll tell Fatty about this in the morning, and then he can go to Kildare. Whether he's believed or not, it's the best thing to do."

"Forwards you're right, dear boy."

"I must admit that I began to think myself, that perhaps Fatty had been deceiving," expressed Tom Merry. "But what's happened to Langton lets in more light on it. Cutts is simply a criminal! If—"

"If it could be proved," said Marners. "Only there's no getting out of the fact, Tommy, that we can't say anything of our own knowledge. It all comes on what Fatty heard behind the hayrack—it's simply his bare word against Cutts—and our opinion on the subject won't matter a straw."

"That's the worst of it," and Kildare will think we're likely to take the worst view, as we're an bad team with Cutts."

"Perhaps we are," said Leather.

"Well, yes. All the same, I believe every word Fatty told me, and I'm quite sure that those two scoundrels mean to give the match away to-morrow. Anyway, if Fatty does tell Kildare, we shall have it off our conscience—we shall have done everything that we could do."

"Yass, wotnah?"

"And that was all the decision the justice could come to. But they, wotnah? they slept in a worried frame of mind, and it was long before they slept. Knowing what they did, it seemed impossible to them to leave Kildare in the dark, and allow him to play two trailers in the most important match of the season—the match he had set his heart upon. And so there was the almost certainty that Kildare would not believe a word of such an accusation—and there was the very real danger that Fatty might be condemned as uttering a reckless slander on a fellow he was known to dislike. As for Tom Merry & Co., they, of course, could not expect to be believed to—they only knew what Fatty Wyas had told them.

The justice would have been a little more easy in their minds, perhaps, if they could have heard what passed in Kildare's study after they had gone to their dormitory.

Kildare, and Darrel, and Reshler, were there, in plain conversation, when Knox of the Sixth came in. The perfect

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had pulled himself together, and the fact that no suspicion had been excited had restored his courage. Whenever he felt that there was no danger, Knox was quite hand-in-glove with Cutts.

"I've just heard about Langton," said Knox. "It's a rotten thing, Kildare—the rottenest thing that could have happened to us!"

"It is," said Kildare shortly.

"I looked it to see whether you'd want me," said Knox. "As I'm a reserve, I suppose you'll be playing the now."

Kildare did not reply immediately. Knox watched his face anxiously. As he was a reserve, it was taken for granted that he would play in Langton's place, and he had only put the question to Kildare in order to have the matter definitely settled. But the expression on Kildare's face seemed to hint that it was not quite the certainty he had supposed.

"I—I say," stammered Knox, "I suppose you want me, don't you?" Cutts and I were put down as reserves, and Cutts is in the team now."

"I'll tell you to-morrow," said Kildare at last.

"But why not to-night?" said Knox softly. "The fellows are asking me whether I've got my cap for the Walshley match."

"I've got to think it over."

Knox set his lips tight.

"I don't see that there's anything to think over," he said tartly. "When a member of the eleven is crooked, it's generally a matter of course to play the reserves."

"I've given you my answer," said Kildare.

And Knox left the study, his brows knitted, and unassuming in his breast.

CHAPTER 9.

Fatty Wyas Speaks Out.

TOM MERRY & CO. turned out at the first clang of the rising-bell the following morning.

It was a glorious summer's morning, and the St. Jim's fellows turned out in a state of unusual cheerfulness. It was a whole holiday that day, and a day without lessons was always welcome. After morning prayers, the fellows had the day to themselves till evening preparation, and that prospect was enough to make them feel very cheerful. And the great Walshley match would fill up the day in the most agreeable possible manner.

The St. Jim's fellows eagerly discussed the form of the Wallisley-Trailis, their skipper, the James bat, and Kelly, the great bowler, and the rest. And there were few fellows at St. Jim's who would not have given half a term's pocket-money to see the school beat the famous Australian team. But win or lose, it was certain to be an exciting and clearly contested match, and it was looked forward to with the greatest keenness.

The unfortunate "croaking" of Darrel and Langton were, as Leavelle-Lemore of the Fourth put it, the only blot on the page—the only clouds on the horizon, as Marners expressed it more elegantly.

It was taken for granted that Knox of the Sixth would play. And there was some surprise that his name was not already upon the list in the hall.

Figures & Co. learned of Langton's accident quite early—before breakfast. Their views on the subject were the same as Tom Merry's. They traced Cutts's hand in it, and they realized that it was useless to say so.

But Fatty Wyas had never up his mind now.

"I'm going to see Kildare, and tell him what I know," he said. "I've got to do it, and I don't care if he doesn't believe me—that's his business. If he chooses to play those rotteners after what I tell him it's his look-out, and not mine. But I've got to get it off my mind. I can't keep it dark, and let those rotteners give away the side."

"Yass, I quite approve of the flesh, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If you like, I will come with you and do all the talking."

"I'll go and see Kildare after breakfast," said Fatty Wyas, apparently not hearing D'Arcy's kind offer. "He can do as he likes about it, but I'm going to tell him."

And the whole collection of anxious jokers agreed that it was the best thing to be done, if Fatty Wyas was willing to do it.

Fatty was more than willing, he was determined, and when the Welsh justice made up his mind, argument was wasted. But no one wished to say him nay on this occasion. It was the only thing to be done, though the justice could not help feeling that it would be useless.

After breakfast Fatty Wyas presented himself in Kildare's study. The captain of St. Jim's was talking those with Darrel and Langton and Monteth of the New House. There was a wrinkle of troubled thought in Kildare's brow. He

was discussing with the seniors whether Knox was to be played, and he was not pleased at being interrupted.

"Cut it, you young son of a—!" said Monteth, as Fatty Wynn marched in. "Kids like me wanted here! Clear!"

"I want to speak to Kildare," said Fatty Wynn sturdily. "Don't bother now, kid," said Kildare, kindly enough.

"Been off! Another time!"

"Another time won't do. It's about the Wallaby match. I know something that you ought to know," said Fatty. Kildare looked impatient.

"Well, look sharp, then, and get it over!" he said.

"There's a chap in the eleven who's going to give away the match if he can," said Fatty Wynn, plunging head over heels into his subject.

The Sixth-Formers stared at him blankly.

"Are you dotty?" asked Langton.

Kildare pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said briefly.

"I—I say, I've got to tell you, you know," stammered Fatty Wynn, rather taken aback. "It's true, Kildare. I tell you I heard him talking it over with a bookmaker."

"What utter rot!" said Monteth irrevocably. "If you're saying a thing like that about a fellow of your own House, Wynn—"

"It's a School House fellow," said Fatty.

Monteth looked a little more placable. Although he was as the best of terms with Kildare now, it was possible that he would not have been sorry to hear anything to the discredit of the School House. Monteth had not quite forgotten the time when he had opposed Kildare for the captaincy of St. Joe's, and had been beaten hollow in the election.

"Let him get it over, Kildare," said the prefect. "If he's talking out of his hat, I should recommend a licking with a cricket-stump."

"Of course he's talking out!" growled Kildare. "Do you think I'd believe such a thing of any St. Joe's chap; never mind his House!"

"It's true!" howled Fatty Wynn. "It's Cutts of the Fifth!"

"Rubbish! Cutts didn't know till yesterday that he was going to be in the team at all!" snapped Kildare.

"Yes, he did. He fixed it up with Kees to croak Darrel."

"What?" exclaimed Darrel.

"Nonsense," said Kildare, but he spoke too decidedly now. He remembered the vague suspicion that had come into his own mind when that unlucky ball placed Darrel out of the running for the Wallaby match.

Monteth closed the study door.

"You'd better cut with it," he said.

"Don't lose him, Kildare," said Langton. "He's got something in his silly head, and you say as well hear it."

"Well, cut with a sharp, then!" said Kildare.

And Fatty Wynn blurted out his story.

The four seniors listened with incredulous looks. Fatty Wynn gasped it out breathlessly, afraid that he would be interrupted before he could finish, and perhaps his account was a little incoherent.

"You say you heard all this yourself?" said Kildare, when the fat Fourth-Former came to a breathless stop at last.

"Every word."

"Have you told anybody?"

"No; all my chums."

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

"We talked it over, and agreed that you very likely wouldn't take much stock in it," said Fatty Wynn readily.

"We went to sit in the room, to try it in him, that he had better get out of the eleven, as we knew about him."

"And what did Cutts say?"

"He—he said he'd kick us out of his study," confessed Fatty Wynn.

"No wonder. The wonder is he didn't do it, you young son of a—!" said Kildare. "Did he ask you not to tell me, or seem alarmed?"

"Well, no. He said I could go to you, or go to the deacon."

"That doesn't look as if he was afraid, does it?"

"Oh, it was bluff!" said Fatty Wynn confidently. "He's got heaps of nerve. He thought he would bluff me into coming to you. And—and perhaps I wouldn't have come, only for what happened to Langton."

"What on earth has that got to do with it?" demanded Langton.

"You've cracked, too, and that's let Knox into the team," said Fatty Wynn. "I don't say there's any proof; but it looks jolly suspicious."

Kildare frowned darkly.

"You're not, assuming Cutts of having set that foot on Langton last night, are you?" asked roughly.

"I say it looks jolly suspicious!" said Fatty Wynn. "It

made me decide that I'd better come and tell you what I know."

"It doesn't seem to me that you know anything," said Kildare. "You say you were asleep behind the haystack, and you had been feeding."

"Yes."

"Overcoming yourself as usual, I suppose, and having dreams," said Monteth.

"Oh, I say, Monteth, I don't over-eat myself! I—"

"Even if you heard all this, what it amounts to is, that Cutts said he was certain to play," said Kildare. "It doesn't prove that he knew anything was going to happen to Darrel. He might have been talking out of his hat. A good many fellows thought they were certain to play, and they weren't."

"But he's laid money—a heap of money—against the side," urged Fatty Wynn.

"Did you actually hear him say that a member of the team would get crooked to make room for him?" asked Darrel.

"No. He didn't say that; but as soon as I heard of what had happened to you, and that Cutts was in the team, then I knew—"

"—I don't know," said Kildare. "You suspected. It's worse than that; not that you were half-asleep, and mistook what you heard."

"Oh, no, I didn't! I—"

"Are you willing to repeat all this before Cutts?"

"Yes, rather; I'm not afraid of him!"

"Call Cutts here, will you, Monteth?"

Monteth left the study. Fatty Wynn waited unshaken for the rascal of the Fifth to enter. He was not afraid of Cutts, as he had said; but he could not help realising that his story had not made much impression upon the senior. Such an accusation required the plainest possible proof, and of proof there was a little or none.

Cutts came into the study a few minutes later with Monteth. His manner was perfectly calm and composed. He glanced carelessly at Fatty Wynn, as if surprised to see a junior there, but took no more notice of him.

"Monteth says you want to speak to me, Kildare," he said.

"Wynn has just told me a yarn," said Kildare. "I want you to hear it, too, as it concerns you."

Cutts laughed.

"No need for that—I've heard it," he said. "I suppose it's the same yarn you told me in my study yesterday, isn't it, Wynn?"

"Yes," said Fatty, with a glare of defiance at the Fifth-Former. "And true, every word of it, as you know jolly well."

"I suppose you haven't sent for me to ask me if it is true, Kildare?" said Cutts quietly. "I should take such a question as an insult."

Fatty Wynn sneered.

"Be quiet, Wynn," said Kildare. "I don't believe it, Cutts; but I'm bound to take some notice of it. I suppose it isn't true that you're been making bets on the match?"

"Of course not."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

"Do you know a man named Crews at all?"

"Not that I remember."

"Were you in the place Wynn has named yesterday?"

"No."

Fatty Wynn gasped.

"Oh, he ought to be hung!" he said. "Only hanging's too good for him! How a chap can roll out for him that—"

"Hold your tongue!" said Monteth.

"I think I can explain this," said Cutts calmly. "I gave Wynn a licking the other day, and he owes me a grudge for it. When he found that Darrel had been crooked, and I'd got his place, I suppose he saw an opportunity of scoring over me, or thought he did. So he made up this yarn."

"More likely he dreamed it all," said Monteth. "I don't think Wynn is a kid to tell barefaced lies. He's a silly young son of a—; but I can't think he'd do that."

"Denounce or lie, it's all the same to me," said Cutts.

"There's not a word of truth in it. He came threatening me yesterday that he would tell Kildare, and he can tell you how I answered him. The young duffer thought he would be able to frighten me into standing out of the match. He didn't know me."

Kildare looked very worried.

"If you think there's anything in it, Kildare, you'd better turn me out of the eleven, said Cutts coolly. "But to condemn a chap on the bare word of a kid who has a spite against him, I must say—"

"I'm not likely to do that," said Kildare gruffly. "I've told you that I don't believe it. Wynn must have dreamed

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"THE PERRY POPULAR,"

Every Friday.

it, or he heard somebody else talking, and thought it was you. You don't say you saw Catts, Wynn?"

"No. He was round the haystack."
 "Then you only knew him by his voice?"
 "I know his voice well enough, don't I?" said Fatty Wynn.

"It's easy enough to be mistaken in voices—especially when you're half-asleep and drowsy," said Kildare. "I should want some better proof than this before I condemned a cat for stealing milk. But to make all clear, would you mind telling us, Catts, just where you were at the time Wynn fancied he heard you talking behind the haystack? I should like Wynn to be satisfied that he's made a mistake."

"No fear of that," said Fatty Wynn.
 "What time does the young idiot fancy he heard me there?" asked Catts.

"It was about half an hour or three-quarters before I looked for you in the practice, Kildare," said Fatty Wynn.
 "That would be about half-past five," said Kildare.

"You might tell us where you were at half-past five yesterday, Catts? You were out, remember. I wanted you for the cricket practice, and you couldn't be found."

"I was down the river," said Catts. "I told you that when I came in."
 "I hope there was somebody with you!"

Catts laughed.
 "Perhaps it's just as well that I can prove an alibi," he remarked.

"You can't!" yelled Fatty Wynn.
 "That up, Wynn!" said Kildare angrily.

"But he can't prove that he wasn't where he was," gasped Fatty Wynn. "It ain't possible. I tell you—"

"Will you hold your tongue?"
 "There wasn't anybody actually with me," said Catts. "But, as it happens, I met a St. Jim's fellow on the towing-path, roughly about half an hour before I got in here, and you say he was on the cricket-ground. It was a Fourth-Form kid—"

"Levison!" muttered Fatty Wynn.
 "I don't know whether Levison remembers it, but you can ask him," said Catts. "I didn't mind the thing being put to the proof."

Fatty Wynn gave a snort of yell.
 "You've found that out since I spoke to you yesterday. Levison is a liar—he'd say anything for a bob—and you've very thick with him, anyway. You've arranged it—"

"That's enough!" said Kildare.
 Catts shrugged his shoulders.

"It seems that everybody in a line who says anything that doesn't agree with your yarn, Wynn," he remarked. "Now, look here, you've said too much already, and you'd better hold your tongue. It's willing to believe that you went to sleep and dreamed it, or that you heard somebody else talking and fancied it was I. But you've got to ask my pardon for having made this accusation."

"Catch me!" said Fatty Wynn dishonourably.
 "You'd better, Wynn," said Kildare.

"I'm not going to ask pardon for telling the truth," said Fatty Wynn.

"Well, kick him out, and have done with it," said Muteink.

"Hold on!" said Catts gravely. "That doesn't satisfy me! I've been accused of having dealings with bookmakers—and having money against the team I'm playing in—of all kinds of rotten conduct! I'm not going to take it lying down! Kildare Wynn will withdraw his words, here and now, and beg my pardon, or the matter must be taken before the Head!"

CHAPTER 10.

Knox Left Out!

THE RE was a grim silence in Kildare's study. If Catts had been innocent, undoubtedly he was taking the right course; and if he was guilty, it showed a nerve on his part that was almost incredible.

It only needed his word to convince the seniors, if they had had any doubt before, that he was innocent of what he was accused of.

Even Fatty Wynn was staggered. For if the Head should hear of the matter and make an investigation, and facts should cease to light paving the accusation against Catts, there was only one thing that could happen. He would be expelled in disgrace from St. Jim's.

Was it possible that, guilty, and knowing himself to be guilty, he could have the iron nerve to face such a test?

For a moment Fatty Wynn wondered whether, after all, he had been dreaming, or had mistaken somebody else's voice for Gerald Catts'.

"Well, what do you say, Wynn?" said Kildare at last.

Fatty Wynn parried, and tried to pull himself together.

"I say that every word I've said is true!" he exclaimed.

"Catts is willing to let it go that you were mistaken."

"I wasn't mistaken."

"Will you beg Catts's pardon?"

"No, I won't!"

"That settles it," said Catts. "You will come with me to Dr. Holmes, Wynn, and repeat your yarn before him. You had better come too, Kildare."

"I'll repeat my yarn before anybody you like," said Fatty Wynn defiantly. "I'm not afraid to tell the truth!"

"Very well, Catts!" Catts turned towards the door.

"Hold on!" said Kildare. "We haven't time for all this, Catts. Have you forgotten that we have got to get to Abbotsford, and the match begins early?"

"My reputation is more important than a cricket match—over the Wallaby match, I hope!" said Catts.

"Well, yes, but—"

"And I can't have that young liar repeating that yarn up and down the school. He's said it to the juniors already, I suppose. It will be all over St. Jim's soon."

"It will be against Wynn, and not against you, for nobody will believe it," said Kildare. "I shall show my opinion of it by playing you in the team just the same."

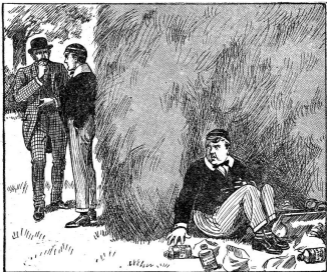
NUMBER 14.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 15. NEXT WEDNESDAY
 Mr. Linton, Buck Finn,
 Darrel.



1. MR. RAILTON.
2. JOE FRAYNE.
3. MONTEITH.



Fatty Wynn was in the midst of his feed when he was startled to hear voices near at hand. One of the voices he recognized as that of Cutts of the Fifth, and what the unsuspecting farmer heard brought a flash of anger to his face. "The vetter!" muttered Fatty. "So Cutts is betting on the Wainaby match!" (See Chapter 5.)

Cutts, I really think this matter ought to go no farther. Wynn has made a silly mistake, and he ought to own up to it."

"He's got to own up to it," said Cutts.
 "Wynn, you must beg Cutts's pardon," said Kildare.
 "You've made a bad mistake, and you owe it to him."
 "I haven't made a mistake."

"Obstinate little cad!" said Cutts. "We'll see how the Head will deal with him for bringing an accusation like this against a Fifth-Farm chap."

"Will you let it drop, as a favor to me, Cutts?" said Kildare. "I've special reasons for not wishing Wynn to get into trouble to-day."

"I will, if Wynn begs my pardon," said Cutts indignantly.
 "Now, Wynn—"

"I'm not going to do it," said Fatty Wynn, nearly huddling in his agitation. "I came here to warn you, Kildare—to do you a service—and you oughtn't to treat me like this. Nobody's ever called me a liar before."

"I don't call you a liar," said Kildare. "You've made a ridiculous mistake, and I think you will see it yourself in time. Wynn, I will tell you the reason why I want you to do the right thing now. You know Langton isn't playing, and we haven't a bowler. I want you to bowl for the First Eleven."

Fatty Wynn almost fell down.
 "You—want—me—?" he muttered.
 "Yes, I have decided to play you as a bowler."

"Oh, cranks!" gasped Fatty Wynn.
 "We were talking it over when you came in," said Kildare.
 "We had already decided that your form as a bowler was better than Knox's, and we're strong enough in batting. I

know it's a bit out of the common to play a junior in the First Eleven—especially in the most important match of the season—but we want a bowler. And if you bowl to-day as you bowled yesterday, we shan't be sorry we played you."

"Oh, cranks!" repeated Fatty Wynn dazedly.
 The prospect overwhelmed him.
 To play in the First Eleven—and against the Wallabies! It seemed too good to be true. And there was no wonder that the fat Fourth-Former was awestruck, and wondered whether he was dreaming.

Cutts's face was a study.
 With all his self-possession, he could not restrain the look of fury that flashed over his hard face as Kildare spoke the latest words.

"But—but, Knox?" Cutts exclaimed. "You're playing Knox, Kildare?"

Kildare shook his head.

"I had already decided against Knox?" he said.
 "But—but a junior?"

"He looks your weight."

"That was a fake—a rotten fake!"

"No, it wasn't a fake, Cutts! Wynn has taken my wicket in practice bowling, too. Of course, his batting won't be much use against the Wallabies, but we've got good bats. We want him simply to bowl; and he will be useful to us now Langton's crooked. Langton agrees with me."

Langton nodded.

"I suggested it," he said.

"But—but what will the Sixth say, as a Sixth-Former being left out to make room for a junior?" exclaimed Cutts.

"This is the first time I've heard you worry about the Sixth," said Kildare dryly.

"Well, the Fifth, then. There are lots of fellows in the Fifth who—"

"Excuse me, Cutts; this is my business," said Kildare. "I believe I'm captain of the First Eleven."

Cutts let him slip till it almost had.

"But you've fully decided not to play Knox?" he asked.

"Yes. After the way he crooked Darrel yesterday, I don't care to play him."

"What! You believe—"

"I believe it was an accident. But I don't like such accidents—and I'm not going to risk crippling one of the Wallabies with Knox's previous handling."

"Knox has a right to—"

"Knox has no rights in the matter whatever. The rights are to the best players."

"And you say that kid is better than Knox—"

"I'm not going to play him because he's worse, certainly."

"I think it's not!"

"Thank you. I don't care to hear your opinion," said Kildare coldly.

Cutts made a great effort to control himself. It required all his nerve and determination not to display his rage. His cunning device had succeeded in one half—he was in the team in Darrel's place. But the worse risk and dangerous trick had been utterly useless. Langton was out of the team, and his place, instead of being given to Knox, was handed to a rank outsider.

It was enough to enrage Cutts. The best-laid schemes of men and men going all agley, a great post has told us. And Cutts's scheme had "gassed away" in the most unexpected manner.

But he realized that the worst thing he could do for himself was to show his rage in Kildare's presence. It would not alter the captain's determination, and it might cause suspicion, if he showed how heavily bent he was upon having Knox in the team. It might even kind colour to Fatty Wynn's accusation.

"Well, you'd do as you think best," he said shortly. "I was only speaking for the sake of the team—as I see the matter. But that doesn't show what we were speaking about. I expect an apology from Wynn, whether he's in the First Eleven or not."

"You jolly well won't get it!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Yes, well tell Cutts you are sorry, Wynn," said Kildare.

"I order you to, as head prefect of your House. I'm satisfied that you've made a mistake, and that's enough. Tell Cutts you are sorry."

"Or cease with me to the Head?" said Cutts.

Fatty Wynn passed.

"If you order me to, Kildare, that's another matter, but I don't do it of my own accord, and I don't mean it!"

"Oh, get it over, and shut up!" said Kildare.

"Well, I'm sorry—as you say I'm to say it!" said Fatty Wynn.

"That's enough."

"It's not enough for me!" said Cutts grimly. "I'm going to have a proper apology without any concessions, or else an appeal to Dr. Holman."

"You can be satisfied with that," said Kildare. "I hope you won't give me the impression that you're trying to make trouble, and to get the match necked up."

Kildare's look and voice were very stern now, and Cutts realized that he had gone far enough. Kildare made a gesture to Fatty Wynn, and the Fourth-Former left the study.

"Well, if you want me to drop it, I'll do it," said Cutts after a pause. "If you think it's plainly enough established that there isn't a word of truth in the accusation, I'm willing to let it go at that."

"I shall show you what I think, by playing you against the Wallabies," said Kildare shortly. "I've said that already."

"Then I'm satisfied."

And Cutts left the study. He smiled as he went down the passage. He had bluffed his way through poor Fatty's accusation, as he had told Knox that he would. But the wile died off his face as he remembered the news he had for Knox. The prefect was waiting for him in his study with an anxious face.

"Is it all right?" he asked.

"I've settled that young fool!" said Cutts contemptuously.

"Kildare made him apologise to me."

Knox drew a deep breath of relief.

"Then it's all plain sailing," he said.

"Yes, so far as that goes. But you're not in the team."

"Yes," said Kildare so?

"Yes."

Knox gritted his teeth.

"Hang him! Hang him! Who's he put in, then?"

"That fat kid, Wynn."

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"Impossible!" howled Knox. "He couldn't—he wouldn't dare to put a Fourth-Former in the First Eleven, over my head! I—I wouldn't stand it!"

"You've got to!" said Cutts shortly. "Kildare's made up his mind, and told Wynn. You've left out, Knox; and I shall have to work alone. It's rotten, after all the trouble we've taken. But who could have foreseen a thing like this?"

"You couldn't," sneered Knox. "So this is the end of a good spell to a rough; and Langton knocked out. And the result started snafus about my business. This—"

"Hold your tongue, you fool! Walls have ears! It's rotten that you can't get into the team. But a silly prophet couldn't have foreseen that Kildare would play a junior in the place of Langton. How could anybody guess that?"

"It's a rotten shame! It's childish! The Sixth ought to make a row about it! To put a junior over my head!"

"Oh, never mind the gas!" said Cutts. "Kildare's doing a cleverer thing than he knows in leaving you out."

Knox growled.

"But I'm in," said Cutts. "I shall manage it—you'll see. They're going to make that fat beast clear bowler. But I'm second fiddle, at least, and the Wallabies will score enough off my bowling to knock the School sky-high."

"I've told you all along that—"

"Oh, how what you've said me all along! I tell you, it will work out all right!" said Cutts irritably. "It isn't the certainty we reckoned on, owing to that freak of Kildare's, but it's as safe as houses. And you run less risk, too, by keeping out of the team."

"It won't do any good."

Knox stamped out of the study without answering. He went at once to see Kildare; but his angry face, when he left him a few minutes later, showed that he had not prospered.

CHAPTER 11.

Wynn of the First Eleven.

TOM MERRY & Co. passed round Fatty Wynn as he came out of the School House. The round, plump face of Fatty Wynn was very like a full moon to look at now. It was beaming with excitement and anticipation.

"Well, it is all right, dear boy?" asked Arthur Argus D'Arcy.

Fatty Wynn nodded cheerfully.

"Right as rain," he said.

"Cutts isn't playing?" asked Figgins eagerly.

"Oh, Cutts! Yes, he's playing."

"Playing!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Didn't Kildare believe you, then?"

"Not a word."

"But Jerry, I really fail to see what you are lookin' so extremely chippy about, dear boy, unless the circus!"

"Cutts denied it, of course?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes, the matter. He's got an abn. Levison of the Fourth saw him on the training park at the time he was talking to the booksie at the hayrack. Of course, he fixed that up with Levison after we visited him yesterday. We all know Levison."

"Jolly deep of him," said Menners. "But it will see him through. So Kildare's playing him after all!"

"Yes. They all agreed that I dished it, or else mistook somebody else's voice for Cutts," said Fatty Wynn.

"Kildare ordered me to tell Cutts I was sorry."

"Great Scott!"

"But you didn't!" exclaimed Figgins and Kerr and Redfern at a breath.

"I had to—captain's orders. But I explained that I didn't mean it, so that's all right. They can't say I didn't say it out plainly."

"Is, he, ha!"

"Well, it comes to this, then," said Tom Merry. "They're allowed that you didn't make up a yarn about Cutts; but they don't believe either, and he's going to play for St. John's to-day all the same!"

"That's it," said Fatty Wynn.

"Then what do you mean by coming out as if you were walking on air?" demanded Tom Merry indignantly. "You made me think it was all right."

"Yess, wotah?"

Fatty Wynn chuckled a fat chuckle of satisfaction.

"So it is, all right," he said. "I haven't told you all about it yet. I'm to play."

"What?"

"Knox has got left," grinned Fatty Wynn. "Instead of Knox being put in in Langton's place, I'm going in. Mal! Myself! What do you think of that?"

"Garrison!"

"Rat!"

"Wags!"

"Honest Injun," said Fatty Wynn seriously. "I'm going over to the New House for my tags now. Kildare told me I was to play. He's got it up against Knox about crooking Darrel, you see, and he doesn't want him to crook the Wallabies. And I'm a better bowler than Knox, any day in the week. I shan't I'm not up to Langton's form; but I'll bowl against any other chap in the Sixth, and chance it."

"So you want, old son?" roared Figgins, giving his fat chin a scratchy clap on the shoulder, which made Fatty Wynn yell. "My only but, this is news, and no mistake! Of course, we all said all along that what they really wanted was a junior in the team."

"Yess; but a School House chap—"

"New House—New House!" grinned Kerr. "This is gorgeous! Fatty, you fat brawler, if you don't do the trick to-day, we'll scarp you bald-headed!"

"Yess, watah!"

"Well, I'm jolly glad to hear this," said Tom Merry heartily. "I'd have given a little, too, to play myself. And if they'd wanted a fat, I might have had a chance. But I'm glad you've got your chance, Fatty, and I wish you luck."

"Thanks!" said Fatty Wynn. "If I don't get stage fright, I shall do all right, I think. Better than Knox, anyway—especially as he was going to lose, if he could."

"Bravo, Fatty!"

"These cheers for gallant little Wags!" roared Figgins.

"Horeah!"

"And another for the gallant little Whale!" said Monty Lover.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got a suggestion to make, Wynn, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You are really thinkin' of the school in this match, and not of yourself?"

"Both," said Fatty Wynn, after a moment's consideration.

"But you ought to think most of the school, dear boy."

"H'm! P'raps!" said Fatty Wynn. "What are you getting at, anyway?"

"I was thinkin' that for the sake of the school, you might point out to Kildare that there is a really more suitable all-round cricketer in the Fourth-Form."

"But there isn't!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Waddy, Wynn— You might point this out to Kildare, I say, and offer to resign in my stead."

"Oh, this is a wicked match, and a screening force, you know," said Fatty Wynn cheerfully; and he walked away with Figgins and Kerr, leaving Arthur Augustus almost speechless.

"But Jove," ejaculated D'Arcy at length, "I regard that remark—"

"The team is going to start soon," said Tom Merry. "We'd better take a bag of grub with us, as we're making a day of it. I don't grudge Fatty that food now—his's welcome to it—especially as it doesn't make any difference now. But we want some honey."

"I was speakin', Tom Merry—"

"Yes; you generally are. This way to the tuckshop."

The news that a junior was to play in the First Eleven soon spread over St. Jim's. Many of the fellows refused to believe it at first.

But it was soon beyond doubt, for a crowd watched Kildare pin the list up in the hall, and there was a rush to read the names, and among the names was that of Wynn of the Fourth.

That settled it.

The school simply buzzed with the news.

The Fourth Form were delighted—in fact, almost all the juniors rejoiced, irrespective of Form or House.

Two or three, like Leeson and Moffish and Credge and Goss, were found to sneer, but they were ignored in the general satisfaction.

Among the seniors, however, the satisfaction was by no means the same.

Fellows in the Fifth and the Sixth who had been passed over felt the indignity, and they webbed at the idea of a junior doing more than they could do. Knox was furious, and a good many fellows shared Knox's feelings.

Even those who fully relied upon Kildare's judgment felt that he was taking a very risky and serious step.

Indeed, several fellows in the Sixth ventured to remonstrate, and Kildare was patient enough to listen. They pointed out, that Fatty Wynn was only a kid, and a very fat kid into the bargain, and added expressions of their own scornful remarks.

"You see, how can a junior kid bat against bowlers like the Wallabies?" Pride of the Fifth objected. "Now, my batting—"

"I don't want him to bat," said Kildare. "He will go

in hot, and stave-walk as long as he can. I want him to bowl."

"The Australians will cackle when they see a kid like that in the team," said another.

"Let 'em cackle," said Kildare, unmoved.

"It's jolly hard on Knox!" said Redburn.

"It's hard on every chap who can't play," said Kildare.

"If the Wallabies would agree to play a team three hundred strong, I'd show it every blessed chap in the school. But they wouldn't, you know."

And with that humorous reply Kildare walked away, and the discussion ceased.

The quadrangle was crowded when the break came to hear the eleven and their companions over to Abbotford.

There was a loud cheer as the crowded brake rolled off. After it went a score or more other vehicles, lined by the fellows, to take them over, and an army of cyclists followed them.

The rival jockeys—all rivalry being abolished on this great day—expressed themselves into a big trap, and drove off with a blare of tin trumpets and mouth-organs. Tom Merry, too, Manners and Lovelace, and Keogh and Dan and Glyn, Herbie and Blake and Digby and Arthur Augustus, Figgins and Kerr and Redburn and Owen and Lawrence, Reddy and Keogh and Ray and Rock, and two or three more were either in the vehicle or hanging on to it, and the crowding may be imagined. The two horses then dragged the crammed vehicle proceeded slowly, in spite of the urging of the excited jockeys to "go up." Fatty Wynn had an earned place in the cricketer's brake, and sat fat and smiling and contented among the mighty men of the Sixth. And on that great occasion Fatty Wynn might truly have said with the Horatian poet of old, "Sulmitem ferunt sedes vertice," only there were, of course, no stars in the daytime.

CHAPTER 12.

The Wallaby Match.

TRALICE, the Wallaby captain, greeted the St. Jim's eleven with great cordiality when they arrived on the ground at Abbotford.

He was a big, handsome Irish-Australian, with a hearty manner. It was just possible that the Wallaby captain regarded the schoolboy match somewhat in the light of a harmless experiment, and did not anticipate any difficulty in disposing of them after a little run, so to speak. He had not taken the trouble to have his team up to its full strength; but the Wallaby eleven, as it stood, was an extremely difficult nut to crack. They had recently won three matches with first-class counties in succession, and so it was really rather a "big order" for St. Jim's First to tackle them at all.

And yet that the Saints were not the only ones who believed that they had a chance was proved by the betting on the match, if anyone had cared to look into that wretched side of the affair.

The miserable spirit of gambling, which has utterly ruined so many sports that once were beloved, and which is spreading its unclean tentacles over modern football and cricket, was not absent from the scene.

There was a big crowd of spectators to see the famous Wallabies play, and among them were two or three loudly-dressed gentlemen who were not above turning a dishonest penny on the result of the match.

And partners who wanted to put their money on the famous Wallabies found that there were local enthusiasts ready to take them up at very slight odds.

Mr. Cross, in sight among the crowd, when Catts of the Fifth looked round for him. The two men could not, of course, venture to speak to one another in a public place; but the bookmaker grinned when he saw that Gerald Catts was in the eleven, and he made a sign that was only perceptible to Catts, to intimate that he had carried out his instructions.

And Catts smiled to himself.

When the Wallabies had won that match he would have between thirty and forty pounds to draw from persons who had backed the travelling team, and that was an exceedingly pleasant prospect to Catts.

The only drawback was that as he had had to lay the money at odds, he would have to pay out a hundred pounds or so if the Wallabies were defeated. And he could no more have paid a hundred pounds than he could have flown.

But the risk did not portend him; his calculations had succeeded, and he was in the team. And in such a closely-contested match one traitor would be sufficient to lose the game, even if St. Jim's looked at any time like winning, which Catts doubted very much would be the case.

The money was so good as in his pocket. If Knox had been in the team, too, it would have made assurance doubly sure; but Catts felt sure enough as it was.

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4 North-West, Lond. Complete Tels. of Tom Merry & Co. by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

It was a glorious day, and there was a crowd of people from Alhambra and Wayland and Rykomba, as well as nearly all St. Jim's, and a crowd of fellows from Alhambra School, and a crowd more from Rykomba Grammar School. Tom Merry & Co. had selected a good position and occupied it, and stretched themselves there, as it were. And when Gordon Gay and his comrades from the Grammar School tried to rush them, they were repulsed with ease.

But all rigging and shipping ceased when the serious business of the day began.

Kildare won the tea, and started to bat first. And he covered the innings himself with Cutts of the Fifth at the close end.

The bowling was to Kildare first, and he hit out at it in a way that made the St. Jim's crowd yell with delight.

That over gave Kildare twelve, and it made the Wallabies open their eyes. The schoolboy team was evidently a little tougher than they had anticipated.

When the field crossed over, Tom Merry & Co. had all their eyes upon Cutts of the Fifth. Cutts stood up to the bowling very well, and knocked away the first two balls of the over very neatly, though without scoring.

The third ball whipped his middle stump out of the ground. Then the juniors looked at one another.

"Wicket down for nothing," said Tom Merry. "If that doesn't make Kildare open his eyes, they were opening with a closed."

"Yes, wallosh!"

"It's jolly good bowling, though," remarked Kangaroo. "The wicket might have gone down if Cutts was doing his best."

"It might!"

"Yes; but we know, Kangaroo, deak boy, it's the game the wicket is playin'. We know he'd lose his wicket for a deak's egg."

"Serve in the second innings, I'll bet you," said Mossy Lowther.

Kildare gave Cutts a single sharp look as the Fifth Premier went off the pitch. The Australian bowling was undoubtedly good, and the wicket might have been honestly hit. But St. Jim's captain was the most consequence of fellows, and he would have seen nothing to remark in the occurrence but

for the commendation Fatty Wynn had made. Cutts's utter want of success certainly coincided with Fatty Wynn's assertion.

But Kildare had already resolved that there was nothing in that, and he would not allow suspicions to wake in his mind. And as Cutts passed him, he called out cheerily:

"Hard throw, old man!"

Cutts nodded and smiled as he went on to the pavilion. It is possible that even the blackguard of the Fifth felt ashamed of himself at that moment.

The crowd were cheering the bowling, and a strident voice was audible near where the juniors were crammed together at the ropes.

"Brayvo! Brayvo!"

Fatty Wynn looked round quickly as he heard that voice. Fatty Wynn was with his chains now till he was wanted to bat. He had been put down the last man in, so it was likely to be some considerable time before he was wanted.

The fat Fourth-Former fixed his eyes upon a stout man in a fancy waistcoat and a white hat, from whom the strident voice proceeded.

"The rotter! the pig!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn.

"Hallo, what's the matter with you, Fatty?" demanded Figgins, in astonishment. "What's the chap done to you?"

"That's him!" said Fatty Wynn, emphatically and ungrammatically.

"Oh! He's what?"

"The man who was talking to Cutts behind the haystack yesterday. I know his voice again. Sounds like sharpening a saw," said Fatty. "I'd know it anywhere."

All the juniors looked at the man in the white hat. Monty Lowther moved a little towards him, and touched him on the elbow. The stout man looked down at him.

"Would you mind telling me if you are Mr. Crews, sir?" asked Lowther, with great civility.

The white hat nodded.

"That's my name, young gent."

"Thank you, sir!"

"What did you ask him, Monty?" asked Tom Merry curiously, as the stout fellow copied his comrades.

"Whether his name was Crews," said Lowther coolly. "He says it is. You're quite right, Fatty. He's the man

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right enough. If we could get Kildare to know this, it might make a difference."

"Too late now," said Tom Merry. "Catts is in the team; he's hit, and he can't be shifted out now. Hello, there goes Kildare's stick!"

The captain of St. Jim's was out for twenty-four, not a bad score against bowling like Kildare. Bisher of the New House took his place, Webb being at the other end. The innings went on, with ups and downs, the St. Jim's fellows keeping their end up very well, and certainly better than the Wallabies had expected. Gray followed, and then Rashden, and then Monteth.

"Five down for fifty-six," said Tom Merry.

"There goes Rashden!"

Lefevre was in next, and then Gilfeare. Monteth was still keeping his end up. Fatty Wynn left his chance, and joined the batsmen outside the pavilion. Last man in would be wanted soon.

He was wanted when the score stood at sixty-two. Fatty Wynn, looking a little red and nervous, came out on the pitch, and there was a great crowd at the crowd at the sight of the jester. Monteth spoke to him as he passed.

"Keep a stiff upper-lip, kid, and stonewall as much as you can. Keep your end up, and leave me to get the runs."

"Right be, Monteth!" said Fatty.

And Fatty Wynn, with the eyes of all the jesters of St. Jim's upon him, faced the deadly bowling of the Wallabies. An accidental nervousness had departed, and he was as cool as a cucumber. He was not there to distinguish himself by hitting—he knew that. So long as he kept the innings open for Monteth he was satisfied. And there was a cheer from the jesters when he had lived through an over.

"Good old Fatty!" roared Figgins. "Keep it up!"

In the next over Monteth started with three, which gave Fatty Wynn the bowling again. At the next ball Fatty stole a single run with great cleverness, thus giving the bowling to Monteth again. The jesters clapped like clockwork.

"Good old Fatty! He's beaten his duck, at any rate!" cried Figgins.

"And there goes a good one from Monteth."

"Break!"

Fatty Wynn was playing a cautious game, and he played it well. Monteth was a brilliant batsman on his day, and this seemed to be one of his days. He had brought the score up to eighty, when Fatty Wynn was bowled at last.

"All down for eighty," said Tom Merry. "Not so bad!"

Kildare clapped Fatty Wynn on the shoulder as he came off, and so murmuring.

"You've done very well, kid," he said gratefully. "You've beaten Monteth, and that was what was wanted. Some kids would have got a swollen head, and been bowled out at the first ball. You've done well—very well indeed."

And Fatty Wynn's fat face was glowing with pleasure as he rejoined his chance. They simply hugged him.

"If it had been Kinn, the innings would have ended at sixty-two instead of eighty," said Blake. "Fatty, old man, you're doing them in the eye."

"Yess, wathah!"

"But wait till he bowls," said Figgins. "That will be an eye-opener for some parties."

And, indeed, as it turned out, it was an eye-opener for all parties.

CHAPTER 13.

Fatty Wynn in the Fane.

THE Wallaby innings opened, and Fatty Wynn went out with the rest to field. Kildare had given the ball to Catts for the first over. He impressed upon Catts the necessity of bowling as he had never bowled in his life before, and Catts appeared to be very keen. He went to the crease with a manner of great determination; but there was great suspicion in the looks of Tom Merry & Co. as their eyes followed him there. The suspicion was justified.

Certainly the batting was good; but even an unprejudiced observer might have fancied that Catts was trying to give the batsmen chances. Heavy ball he sent down was knocked away with perfect ease, and the batsmen crossed and recrossed the pitch at a great rate, taking threes and fours whenever it was not a bosh-bow.

That single over gave the Wallabies twenty-one runs—more than a quarter of the score in the total of the School's first innings.

The St. Jim's faces looked rather blank now.

Kildare told Fatty Wynn to take the ball for the second over. He did not distrust Catts, but he was disappointed in him, and put him on to field, selecting Monteth to change bowling with Fatty Wynn.

Fatty Wynn did not take a wicket in that over; but no runs were taken, so after the unpleasant beginning, he well deserved the cheer his friends gave him.

Then Monteth bowled. A wicket fell to Monteth, and the batsmen gave a cheer of relief. It was a start, anyway.

Then Trales, the Wallaby skipper, came in to bat. Monteth bowled the over again, and in it, Trales knocking the batsman where he liked. Then Fatty Wynn tried his hand as Trales, with the same result. As the field crossed over once more Catts approached the captain of St. Jim's.

"Give me another chance, Kildare," he muttered. "I hadn't got my hand in in the first over, and the batting is hard to beat. You can see that that junior's so good. If you put me off the bowling, it looks as if you don't trust me, after what's been said."

"Try another over," said Kildare shortly.

Catts took the ball again.

Tom Merry groaned aloud as he saw it.

"I'd hoped Kildare was bowing to the game," he muttered. "Here goes another twenty for the enemy! Rotten!"

Tom Merry was right. Catts, whether purposely or not, was bowling in a way that would have given poor batsmen good chances. And he was dealing, not with the poor batsmen, but with first-class men. His bowling was knocked for and wide, and the over added thirteen to the Wallaby score, without the loss of a wicket. The total was now nearly fifty, for one wicket.

"I'm sorry, Kildare," Catts remarked, as the field crossed. Kildare looked at him hard. In spite of himself, the suspicion against Catts was taking ground in his mind. A duck's egg in his innings, and then failure as a bowler, after the form Catts had often shown in practice! If Fatty Wynn had never accused Catts, Kildare would have attributed it to nervousness in playing a celebrated team—though Catts was not given to nervousness as a rule—or else to sheer bad luck. But as it was, the captain of St. Jim's could not help an uncomfortable feeling of suspicion rising within him.

"Well, you're off your horse," he said. "I shan't want you to bowl again this innings."

"Don't be too rough on me. I've had bad luck."

"So has the side. Don't say any more."

And Catts went to his place in the field with a clouded brow.

But he had done harm enough. Monteth bowled again, and the Wallaby score leaped to seventy. Then Fatty Wynn was given the ball, Kildare not appearing to notice the glance Gerald Catts gave him.

And now came the surprise of the day.

Fatty Wynn sent the ball down to Trales, who was perhaps getting a little restless from inaction previous. If so, he paid dearly for it. There was a click, and the leg-stump was an in a trice, Fatty's ball were down. And from all the St. Jim's fellows there came a wild cheer.

"How's that!"

And he of the white smock answered promptly:

"Out!"

"Bravo, Fatty!"

"Well bowled, St. Jim's!"

"Hurrah!"

The Wallaby skipper carried out his bat. Next man in, to his great astonishment, found his ball knocked by and wide and wide, besides being so. And the batsmen cheered wildly. But that was not the end, for the next man in, who was looking for the slow trapper that had dismissed his predecessor, failed to be on his guard against a lightning ball that came down like a four-point-seven shell, and whipped his middle stump out of the ground before he knew what was happening.

Then the batsmen let themselves go! There was a roar of voices, a clattering of hand-claps.

"Well bowled!"

"The best trick!"

"Bravo, Fatty!"

And Fatty Wynn grinned at his friends, and closed one eye, as the next batsman came in. The over finished without a run, and the next over was a maiden, and in the next other that Fatty Wynn bowled again, and added another wicket to his list of wickets.

"What did I tell you?" chattered Figgins gleefully. "Didn't I tell you that the New House would put the lid on, hey? Didn't I tell you that Fatty would wipe 'em all over the ground—what?"

"I'll not remember your talk," says wicket to that effect, Fatty.

"Well, I make 'em now," said Figgins. "Bravo, Fatty! Good old cyster!"

The tail of the Wallaby innings was running out now. Very much to their surprise, the Wallabies forced their innings over in time for lunch. They finished with a level hundred for their score—twenty ahead of St. Jim's—but as they had intended to declare for a couple of hundred, and save having a second time, it was quite clear that St. Jim's had done remarkably well.

Kildare shook hands with Fatty Wynn as he came off.

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A Night's Rest, Last Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Thank you, Wynn," he said. "Thank you, kid. You're done better than I could have expected. I ain't forgot this, if ever you want me to do anything for you, kid, I'll only have to say the word."

"Good egg!" said Fatty Wynn promptly. "I'll hold you to that."

Kildare laughed.

"You want to ask for something?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"Go ahead, then."

"Don't let Catts bowl again."

Kildare knitted his brows.

"No, that's not fair, Wynn. Look here, kid, are you still sticking to what you said about Catts?" said Kildare in a low voice.

"More than ever! Doesn't his play prove what I said?"

Kildare was silent. Distrust and suspicion were alien to his frank nature; but he could not help admiring the ferocity of Fatty Wynn's words.

"But whether you believe it or not, you can see that Catts is no good, Kildare," Fatty Wynn urged. "If he isn't playing the tractor, he's playing the guilty cat!"

Kildare smiled a little.

"He certainly scores off his form," he said.

"Leave him out of the bowling, then, I'll bowl for you like Billy-oh! And Monteith is a good change bowler; so is Bushday."

"I'll think about it," said Kildare shortly.

Fatty Wynn, half-satisfied, went away to join his chums. Catts of the Fifth stopped him on his way, with a strange look on his face.

"You are getting a lot of leads for those flukes, you cheeky cat!" he remarked.

"Flukes be blasted, and cub yourself!" retorted Fatty Wynn. "I'm not playing against you, Catts! I know you are trying to lose the match, and I'm going to prevent you if I can! See?"

Catts clenched his hands.

"Yes, you see, and I'll roll the chums up, and we'll keep you before the crowd!" said Fatty Wynn coolly. "I'm not afraid of you, you tractor!"

Catts turned away grating his teeth. The skill of doubt was retiring into his heart now, and a dreadful thought haunted him. What if the Wallabies should be beaten after all? And at that thought, Catts would willingly have headed the fat Fourth-Former with his hat. But that, fortunately, was not practicable.

CHAPTER 14.

Catts Does His Worst.

FROM MERRY & CO. surrounded Fatty Wynn during the lunch interval, very much like boys' subjects surrounding a great prince. Fatty Wynn was the hero of the hour, and there was not a spark of jealousy at his success. The trainer rejoiced at the triumph of a Fourth-Former, and the New House Indians, specially rejoiced. Everybody knew that only Fatty Wynn's "bat trick" had prevented the Wallabies from running up a terrific score, that the Saints could not hope to have beaten. If Fatty Wynn had not been a level-headed youngster, his head might have been turned. As it was, however, he was thinking chiefly about lunch.

But at lunch his admirers turned themselves into keepers. Fatty Wynn was prepared to distinguish himself even more at lunch than at cricket, but Fatty Wynn said his say, and the other fellows vigilantly backed up Figgins.

The great bowler was not to be allowed to spoil his form for the afternoon by stuffing himself with pastry; and Figgins and Kerr carefully considered every helping before he was allowed to touch it.

Fatty Wynn gazed in vain.

Figgins was not to be denied, and the indolent Fatty had to content himself with only enough for two ordinary lunches.

"Think of the food you're going to have afterwards," said Tom Merry consolingly. "We're going to celebrate this in the School House, you know. We've staked up for it, and when you've finished your food tonight, Fatty and Kerr will have to roll you home across the quad."

"But I'd like a bite or so now," said poor Fatty. "I'm peckish, you know. I've only had a cold chicken and a chop."

"Must be famished!" said Blake sympathetically. "But we want you to bowl, Fatty. We don't want you to roll the pitch with you know?"

"He, he, he!"

"We'll fill you up to the chin after the match, dear boy," said Arthur Argenson. "I'll see you." "Think of cold chicken, the Cox Library.—No. 227."

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and sweetbreads, and mashed potatoes, and fried oysters, and nice gammon sandwiches—"

"Oh, don't!" groaned Fatty. "You're torturing me!"

"And ham and eggs, and seed cake, and new-sett cake, and jam tart—"

"Sherring!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"I wouldn't care to be in Catts's shoes now," Monty Leather remarked. "Look at him over yonder—talking to Kerr. Look at their chums!"

The juniors looked at Knox and Catts. Certainly they did not look very cheerful. Knox's face was clouded, and Catts was biting his lip, and there was a restless gleam in his deep-set eyes.

It was easy enough for the juniors to guess the desperate thoughts that were in his mind. If the match was lost by the side he had backed, he was ruined—he was in a "hole," from which all his coolness and cunning could hardly extricate him. And now, with his coal-scuttle left out of the team, and with no one to help him, and the unexpected recruit showing wonderful nerve, and Kildare distrusting him and perhaps refusing to let him bowl again, Catts's prospects looked very dark indeed.

And yet, the wretched scoundrel said to himself again and again, the Wallabies must win. Even without touchers on the St. Jim's side, the heroes team must win on their form.

It was probable enough, and yet—

Yet there was a doubt, and that doubt was like a ranker in the scoundrel's breast—a towering thought that would not leave him. Catts had learned by previous experience, that the way of transgressors is hard. But he had never found it quite so thorny as he found it now.

"You will be last man in, Catts," Kildare said abruptly, when the Saints were getting ready for their second innings. He turned away without waiting for Catts's reply.

The innings opened with Kildare and Monteith. It started well, both the batsmen being in great form, and having taken the measure of the bowling in the first innings. Monteith's wicket was the first to fall, but not till the partnership had added up thirty runs. Baker went in to join Kildare, and after his usual flourish, the score piling up slowly. There were two bad shows for old Kildare when the fourth wicket went down, and he was still in.

"First in and not out—let you say but!" said Blake. The Wallabies were exerting themselves now. Rather late in the day they were realising that they had dangerously underrated their schoolboy opponents.

But the best of the bowling could not touch Kildare's stumps.

He was down for eighty runs when at last Kildare was caught out by Truher himself.

"Seems down for eighty," said Tom Merry. "Well, it's better than the first innings. Three more to go down—"

"Two!" said Figgins. "Catts will throw his away."

"Yea, wadsh!"

"Go it, Leffer!" shouted the fellows, as the captain of the Fifth went to the wickets.

Leffer was a good, steady batsman, never to be tempted into recklessness, and he had Gray for a partner. The run piled up.

"If only old Darrel were there!" sighed Blake. "Darrel would make the far fly now! What would you give to swing Kerr for croaking like that?"

"But how I'd give a fresh, dear boy."

"So would I," said Monty Leather. "I'd give Guss's five, or anybody's five."

"Leffer's keeping his end up," said Kangaroo. "I didn't expect so much of him. My hat! There goes a boundary! Deava, fifth!"

By the time Leffer's wicket was down, the score was ninety-four. Fatty Wynn was next man in, and his chums gave him an encouraging yell.

"Go it, Fatty! Roll on!"

Fatty Wynn grinned, and rolled on.

Catts stood grinning his teeth. He stole a glance at Kildare's face, but it was impassive. Did the St. Jim's skipper suspect him at last? It looked like it. If he letted Fatty Wynn at the wicket, it would not do so much harm if he threw his wicket away, so far as his partner went, for Fatty was not expected, externally, to score against the Wallaby bowling. As it happened, he came in as Fatty's partner, Gray being bowled when the score was at a level hundred.

He smiled at Fatty Wynn as he passed him going to the wicket.

Fatty glared back defiantly.

"Thank it away!" he called out, loudly enough for fifty people to hear. "We all know you're going for a duck's egg!"

Catts swung round on him angrily.

Fatty Wynn took a business-like grip on the cane handle of his bat, and it was so evident that he would bat Catts if

the Fifth-Former touched him, that Catts changed his mind, and went on his way.

"Play up, Catts!" shouted the St. Jim's fellows. "No duck's eggs this time!"

Catts's face was flushed. He felt Kildare's eyes upon him. He could not take a duck's egg, and turn his score into a "pair of speeches" without danger of betraying his real intentions. But he dared not score. Bangsica, confident, would not be so laid as allowing St. Jim's to win the match.

The bowling was to Fatty Wynn, and he blocked it, that was all. Then Kelly delivered an over to Catts.

Catts stopped half after ball, but took no runs. The St. Jim's fellows began to shout to him to back up.

"Play up, Catts!"

"Hit at it!"

"Don't go to sleep!"

Catts did hit at the last ball of the over, and missed it, and his middle stump was wiped away. There was a groan from the school crowd.

"Out!"

"Pair of speeches, by thunder!"

"Bottom!"

Catts came off the pitch with a sullen brow. St. Jim's were all down for a hundred in the second innings.

"Not out, Wynn?" grinned Figgins. "Fatty Wynn not out? Come and be hugged, Fatty!"

"I'd rather have some ginger-beer," said Fatty.

"Here you are, duck boy," said Arthur Augustus.

"Duck, peppy, duck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The ginger-beer gurgled down Fatty Wynn's throat.

"Got any jam-tarts?"

"You can have a sandwich," said Figgins, after due consideration.

"I say, Figg, I must buy a solid foundation, you know, if I'm going to do any really good bowling," urged Fatty Wynn.

Figgins checked.

"That's just what you're jolly well not going to do," he remarked. "You can have one sandwich to last you till the next interval. It won't be long, my fat top."

The sandwich disappeared in the twinkling of an eye.

"Hunched and eighty for the two innings," Tom Merry remarked.

"They've got to get eighty to tie, eighty-one to win. Fatty, if you let them get eighty-one, we'll boil you in oil!"

"We want another hot-trick, Fatty," said Figgins. "Or rather, two of 'em, or three if you can manage it. Or four—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Figgins.

"Well, I don't see where four hot-tricks are to come from in one innings, unless Fatty bowls one of the umpires," grinned Tom Merry.

"Well, there will do," said Figgins, laughing. "Three, Fatty, or we'll scalp you! Think of Catts's chivalry when the bowlers come round asking for their cash."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But Jove, it will be worth a lesson to Catts!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "I trust he will profit by it."

"It's the only profit he'll get out of this match, anyway," said Monty Lowther. "That is if I'm a prophet."

"Oh, don't!"

"Get another sandwich, Figg!"

"Not a glass of one," said Figgins. "Look out, the Wallabies are going in again! Remember, you've got a standing order for hot-tricks!"

"Yess, wethish!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Kildare led his merry men out to field, to play out the last round of that exciting game.

CHAPTER 15.

A Close Finish.

THE excitement on the Abbotford Athletic Ground was intense now.

The crowd had thickened as the news spread of the stand the schoolboys were making against the famous Wallabies.

If the latter did not improve on their first innings they would beat the school only by a wicket or two. And it was

quite well known that they had expected to have an innings to spare.

And if they did not improve upon it, then the Wallabies would have found their Waterloo at the hands of the St. Jim's First.

That thought was enough to fire the Saints to tremendous exertions. They went on with the determination to do or die.

Kildare tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn for the first over as a matter of course. Fatty was on his motto. Hot-tricks are not so common as blackberries; but when Fatty could not take wickets he could keep down the runs, and that was the next best thing. The over proved a blank, and then Monty howled. Then the runs began to come, Treble starting with a leer for the Wallabies.

Having broken their duck, the Wallabies paled in, and the run went up fast. But there was a check when Fatty Wynn was bowling again. Then Rashden took the ball, and the batsmen made the far fly once more.

When the field crossed once again with thirty scored for to wickets, Gerald Catts came over to Kildare.

"You want me to bowl sometime, I suppose?" he said. "You can't leave me out of it, Kildare. I'm in better form now. Give me a chance."

Kildare shook his head.

"Wynn's the man," he said. "He's jolly near up to old Langton's form. And Monty and Rashden are good for change bowlers."

"Then I'm not good enough even for a change bowler to a Fourth-Former kid?" said Catts, with a bitter sneer.

"No," said Kildare.

"I suppose that means that you don't trust me?" said Catts, between his teeth.

Kildare looked him squarely in the face.

"I don't know what to say to that," he said. "But as you ask me, I'll speak out. I don't take any stock in what the kid said against you. I proved that by playing you. You've lost both your wickets, and you're bowled like a duffer in the first over. It begins to look very queer. I don't say I suspect you, Catts. It would take a lot to make me suspect any St. Jim's chap of such flimsy treachery. I can't believe it of you. But you're not bowling a single over in this match, and that's that."

Catts would have spoken again, but Kildare walked away from him, and the result of the fifth had to go to his place in the field.

He went with a black brow. His chance was gone; he had to trust to luck now. Only by attempts at obstructing the field could he contribute to the success of the other side, and by missing any catches that came his way.

He felt that he owed it all to Fatty Wynn. Kildare, though he would not admit it to himself, was suspicious. But even without being suspicious, the captain of St. Jim's would have been more than justified in refusing to give another chance to a bowler who had failed so signally to do any good to his side.

It all depended now on Fatty Wynn.

Without his brilliant bowling the game was lost. If only Knox had been played instead of the junior! Catts ground his teeth as he thought of it. Like many clever fellows, he had been a little too clever.

To wait and watch the chances of the game, with so much at stake upon it, was anguish to the pluming Fifth-Former.

But he had to endure it. In spite of his self-control, his rage and chagrin were visible in his face. Most of the fellows who observed his looks attributed his bad temper to the fact that the bowling had been taken away from him. Tom Merry & Co. knew better, and they did not pity the racial whose schemes were swelling on his own head.

Catts's face brightened somewhat as the innings went on. Cricket is a game full of glorious uncertainty. And it seemed as if the fickle goddess Fortune intended to favour the tratter. Fatty ran for one wicket looked very promising for the Wallabies. They wanted now forty-one to win, and had ten wickets in hand at the ten interval.

But then came a change. Fatty Wynn was bowling, and a mighty cheer rang over the ground as the stumps went far and wide.

"Well bowled, Fatty!"

"Go it, St. Jim's!"

Another wicket down.

"Herrah!"

All eyes were on the next ball. The batsman edged at it, and it ran, and a Solomon was just where he was

wanted to catch it. Up went his hands, and the fellows were ready to clear the bat-trick again. But that fieldman was Catts of the Fifth.

The ball glided from his fingers and fell to the ground. St. Jim's groaned as one man.

"Muffed, by George!"

"Oh, rotter!"

"Choked away!" said Tom Merry, his face pale with anger. "If that isn't plain enough to Kildare, he must be blind."

"Yas, waiyah!"

Catts did not dare to meet his captain's eyes after miffing that catch. His heart was beating hard now. He knew that that wicket saved to the enemy might mean all the difference in the Sixth.

Fatty Wynn looked again, and there was a roar:

"Out!"

And Kildare's face cleared.

Four down for Fatty. And they were four of the best. In the next few overs the runs crept up, and the wickets went down, fifty for six wickets. Fifty-five, fifty-seven, sixty, sixty-one. Twenty wanted to win.

Mozzoth was bowling again. Away went the ball from the Walsley bat—away, away, and the batsmen were running; but there was a roar:

A plump down had leaped into the air, a fat hand swept up. Swoosh! Fatty Wynn held up the ball.

"How's that?" shrieked Figgins.

"Out!"

"Well caught! Herrah!"

Seven down for stony. Then more runs; then a splendid catch by Kildare. Eight down for seventy. Eleven wanted to win, and two more wickets to fall. Then a smart ball from Mozzoth that caught the batsman napping. Nine down for seventy-four.

"Look out, in!" gasped Figgins. "Oh, my hat. I feel as if I were at the dinner!" Fatty—Fatty, you fat boomer, don't let 'em get the other seven!"

"Dad Jove, seven to win!" said Arthur Argus. "It will be feighfully close if they beat us. I feel in an awful fustah, dash boys."

"Three goes a boundary!" growled Blake.

Seventy-eight; then a single, seventy-nine.

"One more to tip, two more to win, and they're as fresh as daisies!" growled Arthur Argus. "Somebody hold us up."

The excitement was intense as Fatty Wynn went on to bowl again.

All knew that this over was the Sixth—victory or defeat for one side or the other. Hearts thumped like hammers as the ball went down.

Click! And it was stopped dead on the pitch.

"Oh, Fatty!" screamed Figgins.

"If they get that otab was, I shall say dash!" gasped Arthur Argus D'Arcy.

"Look out, there he goes!"

"Look!"

"Oh, cravels!"

"The middle-stump—the middle-stump!" roared Figgins.

"Fatty, you tallp! Oh, my hat! Here, I want things somebody!"

"Yasoooh!"

"Herrah! Herrah!"

"How's that?"

"Out! Out! Out! Eeoff!" shrieked Monty Lowther.

"Well bowled!"

"Hip, hip, herrah!"

No wonder they roared and yelled and raved and tossed their caps into the air, not caring in the least whether they ever came down again.

For the last wicket was down, and St. Jim's had won that historic match by a single run! They had beaten the Walsleys! It was glorious!

The field, up to then dotted with white-clad figures, was black now with a yelling, sweating crowd.

Fatty Wynn was gripped in the hands of his enthusiastic crowd, and bore bodily off the ground.

They shook hands with him, they thumped him on the back, they patted him in the ribs, they held out glasses of ginger-beer and lemonade by the dozen.

Fatty Wynn grinned and enjoyed himself.

All St. Jim's was rejoicing—with perhaps two exceptions. Catts of the Fifth changed out of his flannels, and strode away, almost dazed. He went with a few so white that people turned round in the streets to look at him. Catts did not notice them. He was conscious of nothing but his own black thoughts, and the grim grin that stared him in the face. He had played for a leg stake—and lost. And he groaned and clenched his teeth, as he thought of the rain that must come.

But none of the rejoicing fellows gave a thought to Catts, or to the rain his calamity had brought upon him.

The cricketers bade good-bye to the Walsleys on the best of terms. The ladies and the other vehicles, and the army of cyclists, rolled home to St. Jim's in the greatest of spirits.

And at the old school the rejoicing was renewed.

The dix quadrangle rang with the cheers of the returning cricketers and their comrades.

The Head himself came out of the school, and congratulated Kildare, and shook Fatty Wynn by the hand when he learned how much the Fourth-Former had contributed to the glorious victory.

"Well done, my lad!" said the good old Head. "Well done indeed!"

"Well done, porpoise!" said Monty Lowther, as the juniors marched Fatty Wynn into the School House. "This is where we celebrate. Roll up, all of you! Gussy, whose's that giddy frog?"

"Here you are, dash boy!"

"This way, Fatty! Carry him up!" yelled Tom Merry.

"Oh, I say—" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Shoulder high! Up the stairs!" said Manxey. "It will beat the stairs if he falls, but never mind the stairs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Up the stairs, shoulder high, went the hero of the hour. He was swept into Tom Merry's study in triumph—and with a narrow escape of being brained in the doorway. But little things like that did not matter at such a moment.

They thumped him down, gossing, in the armchairs, and the best of them were proud to get as walsley just then, and supply the wants of the fat hero of the Fourth.

To judge by the juniors rejoicing, Fatty Wynn might have beaten the Walsleys single-handed, without any assistance at all from Kildare and the First Eleven. Indeed, in the bias of enthusiasm the juniors almost believed that he had.

An ecstatic smile overpowered the plump rings of Fatty Wynn, as he gazed at the good things spread upon the table before him. He did not gaze long—about a second—and then his jaws were busy. And to all subsequent remarks addressed to him Fatty Wynn replied only with a sound of steady champing.

"Bel Jove!" said Arthur Argus, in the midst of the rejoicing. "I wonder what that wretch Catts thinks of it!"

"Probably saying things by this time!" grinned Tom Merry. "Perhaps making up reasons why he can't receive visits from his friends the bookies."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind Catts," said Figgins. "He's got it in the neck! And it was Fatty that did it! Good old Fatty!"

"Yas, waiyah! Herway!"

"It was Knecks for Catts, and a Wynn for us!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

And in their joyous bumper the juniors crowded Monty Lowther's pen with a laugh. And all their roared in the quad, or the passage, or the studies, cheering would break out in spasms, as the St. Jim's fellows celebrated their victory in the great Walsley match.

THE END.

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READ THIS FIRST.

Hilary Bevan, a sturdy young Britisher of gentle birth, who has been living in the country, sets out to walk to London.

TO SEE HIS FATHER.

Sir Patrick Bevan, whom he has not met for three years. Arriving at his father's house, Hilary learns that the latter has been absent for three days at the house of Sir Vincent Brooke, one of the leading backs 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 Brooke's house in Grosvenor Street, Hilary finds two sheriff's men waiting outside to arrest his father when he should come out. The lad enters the house, and

FINDS HIS FATHER AT THE GAMING-TABLES,

where he has been, without intermission, for three days and nights. Among the circle of faces round the tables, Hilary recognizes a friend in Squire Oliver, a big leopards' flesh his neighborhood. There is a sudden silence in the room as Sir Patrick, who has not observed his son, speaks.

"I believe

I HAVE STILL FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS

in my possession. Will someone cut against me for that sum? Sir Vincent, will you oblige?"

"With much pleasure," came the smiling answer. "We will have a new pack of cards. The proposal is worthy of it."

(Now go on with the story.)

CHAPTER 2.

The Player's Look.

The other players rose from their seats, leaving Sir Patrick, in front of whom his opponent calmly seated himself. Hilary drew back, but to where he could see his father, who was still oblivious of his presence. By his side he found his friend, Squire Oliver.

"Lad," the squire whispered in his ear. "I have marked you here. I would advise you to go immediately. Surely you would not see your father raised? No, even those odds which are used to it can barely keep a vein on themselves, and it is too much for your young head."

"If my father wins," whispered back Hilary. He was feeling alternately hot and cold.

"He may keep going until things mend."

"And should he lose?"

"Heaven help him—and you! And he will lose. Fate is against him," added the squire, in a whisper.

The new pack was brought, each player shuffled the cards, and a coin was tossed to decide the first cut. It fell to Sir Patrick. Quickly his fingers gripped the cards; he cut, turning the picture bottom upwards. He had cut a king. Men craned forward, breathing quickly.

"Are high or low?" asked Sir Vincent, bowing.

"As you please, sir."

"Then high," declared the other; and he cut.

The exposed card was the ace of hearts. Sir Vincent bowed gravely.

Hilary waited for no more. He saw his father's face; he remembered the two men waiting on the look. If only for a breathing space his father might be saved, and it was for himself to see him. From the servant he obtained his coat, opened the door, and hurried down the steps.

The two officers were close at hand, heard the door close, and came forward at a run. They recognized this was not the prey for which they were waiting, but the presumed truant who had tried to get in ahead of them. They had no doubt he had contrived to serve his warrant inside the house, and was now going for a coach in which to remove his

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 202.

A Magnificent, Large, Complete Tale of Tom Terry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"FIGGINS' FOE!"

prisoner. This was not to be allowed; he must be stopped by force, and they proceeded to do it, unconsciously playing into Bill's hands.

"Step him! Down him!" they shouted angrily. "You don't get past us, my covey!"

CHAPTER 3. MILLING COVES.

THE first man staggered back from a face that exhibited him considerably. The second craved a blow, and put in a return that was well blooded.

"A milking covey—oh? We'll sell him, Bill!" the latter shouted; and the two worthies put up their fists.

It was a period when fatalities were not confined to the regular followers of the ring; almost every other man was good to take a hand in the game. The thousands, slipping off their coats, set about Bill like tradesmen. But they met more than they had bargained for. Bill had set good against a hoodlum; for a man who had fought a dozen battles in the ring was the keeper of the inn at Colchester, and he had been only too proud to have for a pupil a gentleman, and one who displayed an aptitude for the game. Harassed by his coat though he was, but owing a science of which they had no knowledge, in five minutes of merry milking Hilary had the precious couple crying for quarter. Snatching up their coats, they fairly took to their heels.

Not until then did Bill become aware that the impromptu pugilistic encounter had had a witness. There were ten, in fact; one who had been standing on the steps of No. 21; a second, a man of lanky build, and with an enormous breadth of shoulders, who had been watching from the centre of the road. The latter stepped forward towards Bill.

"Young man," he said, in a deep, pleasant voice, "may I ask if milking is your trade?"

"Why, no," answered Bill, moving slightly so that the feeble light from a nearby lamp fell upon his face.

"I beg your pardon, sir," the big man said quickly. "You will accept my apologies. I had not seen you clearly. I was mistaken. But you used your hands in such workmanlike fashion I was deceived. Believe me, sir, it was your capability of attack and defence that led me astray. There are many men who second themselves clever with their hands who would play second fiddle to you if inside the ropes. I wish you a good-night, sir!"

With a profound bow, the big man moved away at a remarkably swift pace. Then the man on the steps descended and approached Bill.

"Well, young sir, and you have made an impression, it appears," he said, in a bluff, hearty voice that Bill at once recognized as that of his friend Squire Oliver. "Such a compliment as that I heard given you is given to but few men. And he who spoke was a judge."

"He knows the men of the ring?" asked Bill.

"He should," the Squire chuckled. "He has lived well of it these many years."

"Who, then, is he?" asked Bill curiously.

"Gentleman Jackson, Bill; and a better fighter or judge of one and a truer gentleman none stepped. And he does not give praise lightly. And where now are you for, Bill?"

"I hardly know."

And Bill spoke truly. He had no intention, no desire, for anything. For the time being his father was safe; of himself he had not thought. Would his father be glad to see him, did he go home? He doubted it. Bill had come, and Bill guessed that for the present his father would prefer to be absent. He was half tempted, late as it was, to turn his feet in the direction of Colchester.

"The night is yet young—as those in London Bay," looks in Squire Oliver. "Come with me, lad. There is a mill to-morrow between two good men of their weight, and I would not miss it. I am now for Bill Warr's, the One Ton, to hear where it is to take place. Tom Oliver, the young man Cripp thinks of so highly, is due for a set-to with George Cooper, and I am anxious to learn where it is to take place. Will you come along with me?"

And Bill went willingly enough, though more to distract his mind from the terrible scene he had witnessed in the house of Sir Vincent Brown, than from curiosity. The excitement of the man-up with the titmouse had gone, and back to him had come the recollection of his father's white face; the terrible look of despair that had flashed into the tired eyes for a moment when Sir Vincent had cut the ace which determined his transformation from a man of consequence into a beggar.

"It's but a short walk, Bill, and you'll see that which you have never seen before," said the squire, taking him by the arm.

He held the lad. The finest sportsman in England, as people named him, he had been first attacked by Bill's son Tom-Gun Lomax.—No. 282.

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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

spirit, his absolutely fearless riding, his straight going, and love of all sport. He had been glad to see Bill in his livery; those times and again he had asked himself what the son of Sir Patrick Brown was doing in the house of a small farmer, and why such a lad to be proved as was not by his father's side. If only such a lad had been his own son!

Jermyn Street was quickly reached, and the squire was greeted by gruff-voiced but respectful welcomes from the mob of thick-set, hard-faced men who crowded the garden, red-curtained bar.

"Bill's in the parlour, your honour?" "Makin' glad to see you, squire, if I may be so bold!" "Run an' tell Bill Squire's here!" "All well and hearty, sir, I hope, sir!" "Come for the office, sir!" These and other remarks were made as the men made way for the squire, not without kindly sympathetic and appraising glances at Bill. And the squire answered readily enough, calling a man here and there by name.

Bill followed into an inner room, small and stuffy, reeking of tobacco, and fully crowded, though not more than seven or eight were present. Bill Warr, retired prize-fighter and lately, moved his ponderous bulk forward, vacating his chair so that his distinguished visitor might be seated.

"Good-evening, sir!" he said heartily. "Best respects to you!"

"Good-evening to you all!" said the squire. "Ah, Bekker, glad to see you. Found any more good ones yet? Ekshole on this to an elderly-looking, though really quite young man—"keeping the weight down! Randall, you won't develop steams in this atmosphere." He had a word for all.

Bill, for the first time in his existence in such company, glanced curiously from one head, rugged face to the other. He had not seen a man of them before, but he knew the names his companion called them by, and he was aware he was in the company of men well known in the Ring. The name of some dated many years back, as Tom Bekker, brother of the celebrated Jen, who had fought his first battle ten years before, defeating the son of Bill Warr; others, such as Randall, were just beginning to make a name for themselves. But none spoke to him unless he addressed him. He was a gentleman, a friend of the squire, and therefore a person to be treated with respect. For the pugilists of the old days were men who rarely presumed. They did not consider themselves as the equals of those of wealth and rank who patronized them. They would take insult or hard words from none, poor or peasant, but the "swelled head" of the successful professional boxer of to-day was not then developed.

To the conversation that went on Bill listened with interest. He heard discussion upon the two men who were to battle the next day, learned that both were in good fettle, but understood that Cooper's science was thought so highly of that Oliver—good, game, and strong feller as he was—held but a poor chance. Best, at least, was Bill Warr's opinion.

"All over inside six rounds—eh?" asked the squire.

"Well, I hope the place where they'll fight isn't far away, or the mill won't be worth the journey. Where is it fixed, Warr?"

"Moulsey, sir!" the stout landlord said, in a hoarse whisper. "Two, two o'clock!"

"Then you ought to fix up another to come after, or there'll be disappointment if the battle lasts no longer than six rounds." "Haven't you got any tight, lively possessors who'd be glad to show as what they're made of?"

"No fear of that, sir," laughed Warr. "There's a marry'd give a lot for the chance o' showing the goods what they can do. Put 'em up a bit of the right stuff, and I engage you'll find a couple clamouring for it."

"Ay," added Tom Bekker, looking at a lightly but strongly-made youth, with an open, good-humoured-looking face, who was standing near Bill. "Hoss's Jack Randall, squire; he'd oblige an' willing."

"Looks light!" said the squire, ranning his eyes over the young fellow. "Is he a tom-stoner?"

"Found or two more, sir. But what's there's good—eh, Jack? Knows how to mill, too. Why, squire, he was no more than fourteen when he licked Tom Leonard in three-quarters of an hour. Geyen man, too, was Leonard, and a full stone heavier than Jack."

Bill looked with greater interest at this fighting material, who in a few years' time was to be known as the most scientific man who ever entered the ring.

"As I got a lad, too," whizzed the landlord. "But he's too big for Jack."

"Well, I hope someone will be there to show as what you sport. You must see what you can do, Warr. Have no fear for the money being ready. reckon me here for ten

guinea, and Mr. Beane, as when I was speaking this evening, told me he would be good for another ten."

"Thanks, squire!" half a dozen voices said heartily. "Where the livest is, sir, there'll be the boys to mill for it."

"Well, Ill," his friend said, as, having wiped the scum off his forehead, they turned into Jeremy Street, "you've seen some of our men of the Ring. What if you think of them? Think you could polish them off as you did the two fellows in Grosvenor Street?"

He spoke chaffingly.

Ill laughed.

"My boxing, sir, has been confined to a few lessons from a man who has long been out of the ring," he answered modestly. "I cannot say."

"But you think you might, and you wouldn't mind having a try—ah, Ill? That's the spirit, lad! A modest confidence in yourself, and the pluck to go on until one does win will pull a man through almost anything. And I've never doubted but that you have pluck—the good English kind that thinks nothing impossible and never knows when it is beaten."

But Squire Oliver had no notion that his half-laughing query was but the putting into words of a thought that actually was in Illary's mind.

It had come when he heard the men gathered in Bill Watt's surgery suggesting a second battle to follow the mill between Cooper and Tom Oliver, and for which a prize of twenty guineas would be guaranteed. Twenty guineas! So much to be gained by the giving and taking of a few hard knocks. And twenty guineas was the amount for the inability to pay which his own father was liable to endure the ignominy of arrest, to be thrust into the debtors' prison. He had secured his father's escape from the waiting officers, but although the vessels had taken to their heels the warrant still held good. His father might be arrested just as soon as the sheriff could find him.

And the possession of a healthy twenty guineas would save him—who that evening had picked and lost five thousand pounds on the score turning up of a single card.

Twenty guineas for a bet in the ring! And Jackson, the man whose opinion of a boxer's merits was valued above all others, had complimented him—Illary—upon his skill, brief as the display of it in his last run.

Should he try to win those twenty guineas? His father's liberty would be secured. Where was Maudslay Hunt, where the fight was to take place? He did not know, but he had a string to ask with whom would he be called upon to do battle? He would learn at the ring-side.

Walking the silent streets—for he had declined Squire Oliver's offer of a lodging—Illary came to a great determination. He would risk much, more perhaps than he was aware of, but the prize was worth the risk.

When the will is strong obstacles vanish. By the aid of his trousers and his strong legs Ill found himself the following afternoon at the celebrated scene of so many pugilistic encounters. Resolution and the free use of elbows and shoulders was his place close to the outer ring, and from there he watched, eager-eyed, the big contest. It lasted longer than was anticipated, and not until the thirteenth round did the loser strike his colours, and contrary to expectation the loser was Cooper.

Then came the announcement of a prize of twenty guineas for any two who could enter the ring. The words had scarcely left John Jackson's lips when a black felt hat flew over the ropes and alighted at his feet. Jackson picked it up.

"To whose does this belong?" he cried loudly.

It is mine.

And Illary Ewan stepped into the space between the ropes and the outer ring, pale-faced, his nostrils quivering, but resolve to meet the man, whoever he might be, accepting his bold challenge.

CHAPTER 6.

The Baptism of the Ring.

Twenty guineas was a sum well worth winning, and half a dozen hands followed Ill's into the ring, while their owners hovered a way through the crowd, and brought themselves into action. Ill, unconscious of the attention he had already attracted, glanced at them with interest. Four of them appeared to be old hands at the game, and their faces bore the marks of earlier battles. One was a man fully forty years of age. Of the rest, one appeared to be led near to his own age, the other was a strapping fellow in the dress of an agricultural labourer.

What troubled Ill was the fear that he might not be one of the pair selected. But Jackson quickly allayed his of this apprehension.

"Your hat was the first in the ring," he said to Ill, and in his face was no recollection of their previous meeting. "It shall be decided who is to be your opponent. What is your name, young man?"

"Ned Hades," Ill replied quickly.

He was by no means ashamed of what he was about to do, but had good reason for not wishing to enter the ring under his true name.

"Well, Ned Hades, the next thing is to provide you with a name," Jackson said, with a kindly smile, running his eyes over the lad's upright, athletic figure. "We have a selection here. How do you like the choice of your own?"

Ill looked over the other claimants to the prize, one or two of whom returned his gaze with anything but a friendly eye, as though resentful that by getting his hat into the ring before them he had won the right to be one of the pair of fighters.

"There are two here whom I would prefer not to meet," Ill said.

"Yes. Which two?"

Illary indicated the youngest of the six, a short, lightly built, sharp-faced man, about thirty years of age, dressed in a bright green coat.

"And why not those two?" asked Jackson; and those short him, several men well dressed, in high-crowned hats, and high colored coats, patrician patrons of pugilism, as well as two shabby-looking men whom Ill recognized as having acted as seconds in the big fight, glanced curiously at Ill for his answer.

"Because they are too light," declared the lad. "They will weigh as much as ten stone. My weight is above eleven stone. If I beat them, there would be little honour to me in the victory; and if I were to be defeated by one lighter than myself, my disgrace would be keen."

"Gad, but it's a paltry young covey!" piped a Corinthian, a young man dressed in a coat of sky blue, lifting an eyebrow through which to view Ill the better, although not six feet separated the two. "He weighs vastly well."

"And needs his comb cutting?" growled a little man, who had seconded Tom Oliver, whom all ring followers knew as Caled Baldwin, the boxer, and who, in twenty years of selling had had to admit of but one defeat. "How me ducky, but I'd do it myself for a guay."

There was a general laugh, and one of the heaviest, a slim, conspicuously dressed gentleman whose person was perfumed with lavender-water, turned to the beflagged little veteran.

"Why, Calk, he's drawn in a high-pitched, artificial voice, surely you wouldn't quarrel with a man for having a preference to fight with bigger ones. I had supposed you displayed a weakness for the same yourself!"

"And you're right, Mr. Vavasour; the bigger they was the better I liked 'em," the little man answered, amid an outburst of laughter.

"Well, Mr. Jackson, and why should not our leading champion have his choice?" inquired the gentleman addressed as Mr. Vavasour. "He looks vastly well. There is even a sign of blood about him; and that, as you know, will tell, whether in man or horse or beast."

"Quite true, Mr. Vavasour," Jackson replied obediently; "but it is a fight we are wanting to see, not a slaughter. Young man," he said, turning to Ill, "have you been inside the ring before?"

"No."

It was not for Ill—nor was it the time—to speak of the several battles into which accident had led him; not even of the ten-up one afternoon with Elias Hades, a ballying, fourteen-stone toiler, who called himself champion of Surrey, and was known as the most inveterate and dangerous pugilist between Ipswich and Horsham. That had been a battle fought without witnesses, and Hearn, after twenty minutes' desperate selling, had been only too willing to admit himself licked, strong and hardy rascal as he was, by the straight and severe hitting of his youthful opponent.

"You see," said Jackson, turning to Mr. Vavasour, "he is a novice."

"They all have to start that way," interrupted another of the group.

"True, my Lord Yarmouth, but it is hardly well to put up one who knows nothing whatever of pugilism against one whose powers have undergone a trial. I will do my best to make a fair match, according to my judgment, if—if it is agreeable to leave the matter in my hands; but I would prefer that the two gentlemen who have so kindly subscribed the purse should assist me. Mr. Hrane"—Jackson bowed slightly to the owner of the eyeglass—"knows a fighting man when he sees one, and I would take Squire Oliver's judgment as equal to that of any man in England."

This was the thing that Ill had feared. In the surprise of recognizing him, the squire might reveal his identity to the

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son of Sir Patrick Bovan, to whose care it was not difficult to imagine that rescue would come in the name of His appearance in the prize ring. The meeting must be prevented.

"Sir," said Bill, stopping forward hastily, and addressing himself to Jackson, "I am content to leave the selection of my opponent in your hands."

"Moreover, Jackson," added Mr. Vavasour, "I believe you will discover a difficulty in finding the squire. I saw him drive away in the coach of Sir Bellingham Gisham immediately the previous contest was decided."

So the gentleman Jackson felt the selection, aided by the valuable advice of Mr. Algebran Brane, a young gentleman who had recently succeeded to an immense fortune, and was doing his best to spend it as fast as he could in the patronage of the turf and the ring, of neither of which he had the slightest knowledge; but he pretended to a vast amount, as was necessary to a gentleman who aspired to be considered, in the language of the period, "a noble, slap-up Corinthian."

As a proof of his right to the title, he entered into a long discussion with Jackson upon the respective merits of the sports.

The argument was still in progress, and some of the more impetuous spirits among the waiting crowd were protesting at the delay, when the gentleman Bill had heard addressed as Mr. Vavasour approached him.

"Young man," he asked, in his high, drawing voice, that was not entirely lacking in tenderness, whether intentional or not Bill could not say, "are you, may I ask, about to perform in the ring for a wager?"

Bill answered very shortly that his gentleman was mistaken. Living in the country, this was the first time he had been brought into contact with one of that strange class of men, affected in their speech, fawning as to their clothes, and somewhat reckless, who frequented about the period of the Regency. Of these fops and dandies he saw a prominent specimen in Mr. Harry Vavasour, and his first feeling was of antipathy and contempt. Vavasour received his answer coolly.

"I had suspected you a gentleman; you speak as though some education had been your way," he said indifferently. "Here, appearance are not usually deceiving."

And then Jackson called to Bill. A decision had been arrived at, and the man with whom he was to battle was pointed out to him. This was a black-haired, sallow-faced, greasy, not to say dirty-looking fellow, with features that gave him the appearance of one of the Hebrew tribes of Whitechapel and Petticoat Lane, and Hoardochick, which had furnished many a game and skilled performer in the prize-ring. Barney Isaac was given as his name, and he looked at Bill with an oily smile on his thick lips, that told of a complete confidence as to which of them would shortly be handling the twenty guineas.

"Get ready!" directed Gentleman Jackson.

"Get ready!" repeated Isaac, laughing loudly, as he walked towards the ring. "Ye, I'm ready already, Mister Jackson. I don't take of my clothes nor dere ain't no need for it." Whereat there was a roar of laughter at Bill's expense.

The corner he was to occupy pointed out to him. Bill was coming to it, when a brisk, sharp-eyed, short-whiskered man of middle-age, leaving Mr. Vavasour, with whom he had been talking, caught him up.

"Get anyone to second you?" he asked.

"No! I come here by myself."

"Then I'll take care of you if you like. My name's Tom Owen; and Dick White'll be bottle-holder if I care him."

"It's very kind of you to offer, and I shall be only too pleased." Bill said gratefully; for the name of old Tom Owen was a second rank in high that it was said a fighter who had Tom in his corner was provided with a third hand.

"First fight!" asked Owen hesitatingly, as he named his principal to strip.

"In the ring—yes."

"Humph! Well, him you're fighting with, Barney Isaac, was born miffing since he was a boy. That big one who's seconding him's Boy Britton, or Scraggins in hobbie's the bottle. He's a fighter; is Barney; his like a ton o' bricks, but he's 'ead—no 'ead on him. He'll go eleven-stone-eight when he's stripped. An' you?"

"Twelve-stone-four as I stand."

"Humph! You're strong, an' you looks quick, an' Barney's been on the lashing-by since Jack Ford knocked me all to bits on Hayes Common last December. His wind ain't good for much. If only you could fight a bit, you might do something—if Barney didn't put you over time in the first two rounds."

"He won't do that!" said Bill quietly.

(To be continued.)

THE GUN LIBRARY.—No. 257.

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.

We shall be correspondents sent with each notice two copies, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Copies will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two copies will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertiser direct. No correspondence with the advertiser 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."

W. Baldwin, 424, 11th Street, Hillhurst, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 15-16.

W. Dunn, Pyana Street, (Citywell, Goskwa, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a reader interested in sports, age 15-16.

J. Ryan, Central Avenue, Maryland, Perth, West Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the British Isles, age 18.

D. Abraham, care of E. D. Basson & Co., Shanghai, China, wishes to correspond with readers, age 17-18.

W. W. Wynn, care of Seaton Studio, High Street, Maryborough, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader—Scotch preferred—age 17-18.

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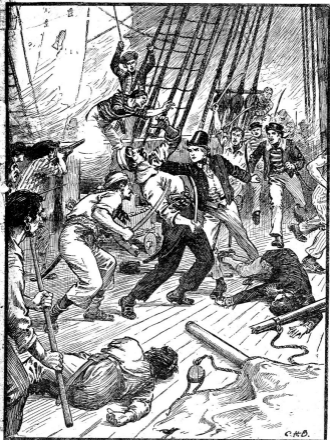
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The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

FAMOUS FIGHTS FOR THE FLAG. No. 14

Specialy drawn for "THE GEM" Library by C. H. Blake.

and the great naval battle of St. Vincent, which took place on February 14th, 1797, a British ship engaged with a Spanish frigate, and a party of Americans under the first lieutenant at once engaged on the deck of the frigate. The leader of the British, however, had taken but a few steps when he was stopped by a falling spar, and for a moment his life was in imminent danger. Mr. Michalopoulos, Bartlett, however, at once sprang to the rescue, and though he did not see the frigate, he continued to defend his helpless superior officer, using only his bare fists, until the danger was past.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



For Next Wednesday.

"FIGGINS' FOE!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In this splendid long, complete story of the drama of St. Jim's, Miss Oswald—now Cassia Rittel, as she is universally called by the St. Jim's jacks—plays a very important part. Figgins' efforts, in fact, are, of course, very much to the fore, as he always is when Cassia Rittel is concerned.

In this case, however, his real opponent is his discretion, and leads him on to quite the wrong track.

Brooks, the hard-working day-boy at St. Jim's, is placed in a false position, and finds himself with more than one fight on his hands before the matter is cleared up. Is

"FIGGINS' FOE!"

my readers will find a really splendid story of school life, while Cassia Rittel's part is especially appealing to my many girl readers.

NEXT WEEK'S SPECIAL NUMBER.

Next Monday's issue of our splendid companion paper, "The Magnet" Library, will be, of course, a Special Summer Number, substantiated among other grand features, by a 50,000-word long story of the famous drama of Grayfriars, entitled:

"SHUNNED BY THE FORM!"

By FRANK RICHARDS,

and a magnificent complete story of love, the Tarl, and its sequel, entitled:

"FOR NAME AND FORTUNE!"

By PETER BAYNE.

Also a special innovation which will be of particular interest to my Special readers, consisting as it does of the reproduction of some splendid photographs of the

GREAT SCOUT RALLY.

This splendid Special Number will be further distinguished by a

GRAND COLOURED COVER.

printed in many tints on special art paper.

Altogether, the Special Summer Number of "The Magnet" Library will provide a grand treat to all lovers of good reading-matter, and, in view of the exceptional demand anticipated, all my readers are advised to order next Monday's Special Number of "The Magnet" Library from their newsagents well in advance.

Note.—Will James A. Barbara, of Glasgow, who some time ago sent me a story in criticism, kindly let me know his address, which he forgot to enclose with the story!

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

K. Hazard (Farnham Hill).—If your contracted tendons cause no inconvenience, do not touch them.

"A Reader of the Iris" (Boston).—The books you mention are out of print, therefore unobtainable from this office.

"A Hall Reader."—Please send your full address, and I will send you the recipe for making a copygraph.

Will the following readers please accept my best thanks for their letters and helpful suggestions: Miss G. Inall (New Zealand), W. Sell, (Johannesburg), "A Loyal Reader" (Crown Vale).

HOW TO BECOME A CINEMA PIANIST.

Whether you are an accomplished pianist or a beginner, the advice contained in this article will be applicable, the only thing being that if you are a pianist now, you are nearer becoming a cinema pianist if in the early stages. Should you be only a beginner, it would be wise to inform your teacher of your intention to become a cinema pianist and receive his or her advice.

Do not think that only girls can be pianists. Of the cleverest accompanists to pictures are men, settled in your own mind that you want to be a pianist, the first step towards this is to take an interest in pictures, however generally, and later, to the best motion picture pianist you can find. Study carefully the style of music they play to different pictures, and if possible, get in conversation with the pianist at your nearest theatre. You should have no difficulty in this. If you ask to see a pianist at your local show, he will probably object.

You may possibly have a chance of playing to the piano one day when they are being run through by a cinema, write to readers (if there) and if the pianist thinks you good, ask her, or him, if you can occasionally relieve her.

Things would have to be arranged with the manager of the piano himself—we will say "Mr. J. J. J." for convenience. You would have to pay you probably 2s. 6d. for the afternoon. When this experiment has been repeated several times, you become proficient to a fair degree, you should ask the manager, if he likes your playing, whether he can send you to any theatre (not going on the circuit).

If you secure a post, the usual wage is about a guinea per week to begin with, and if you do not suit you will tell us, and why. A good pianist may rise from a guinea to as much as two pounds per week, and added to this the greater freedom than is found in most theatres. If you theatre has only two audiences per week, as is the case in most local shows, your hours on matinee days will be 2 to 10.30 p.m., and on other days from 5 to 10.30.

Although the hours are not long, yet the work is hard, and unless you are in sound physical condition, the strain will tell upon you.

Your position in the theatre is one entitling you to rest, and upon you falls an equal part of the responsibility of seeing the performance go. You get to know where there is a good pianist, and back there to know her. The result of this is the receipts go up, and the manager will see that you have your fair share of the credit.

A picture pianist who had been at the piano for the year told me the other day: "With each new picture that comes in I can hear something fresh." And so it must be with you. Most theatres run the thing through for a trial when they come in, and you will probably be expected to be there to select your music. Wherein you are expected to rest for your own sake it is advisable to go.

The most successful pianists to pictures are those who are extroverted, and this playing without the aid of music undoubtedly gives them an advantage over the pianist who has to divide her attention between looking with the music and watching the pictures.

If you have a big exclusive picture coming to your theatre, such as "Que Vadis," you should make careful preparation for suitable accompaniment. It is tedious, with film records, but to supply special music for those big shows, and you should watch for these.

The Editor