

ANOTHER £10 WON BY GEM READERS!

Result of "Scarlet
Streak" Contest
(No. 3) inside.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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No. 955.
Vol. XXX.
Weeks Ending
May 29th & June 5th,
1926.

MR. RATCLIFF INDULGES IN "TEST" CRICKET!

The bat was there, the ball was there, but somehow the twain didn't meet!

(A laughable incident from "The Mystery Cricketer"—this week's long complete school story of Tom Merry & Co.)

OUR "SCARLET STREAK" COMPETITION

First Prize £5, AND FIVE PRIZES OF £1 EACH.

YOU MUST NOT MISS THIS, BOYS!

(RESULT OF CONTEST No. 3 is given on PAGE 7.)

HERE is the eighth of our topping one-week competitions, you fellows. You will enjoy it because it is a novel idea, with some jolly good prizes which simply *must be won*.

You are, of course, all reading our new serial, "The Scarlet Streak," which appears on page 23 of this issue. Well, we have written a paragraph about Pug Logan, the Monk's right-hand man, which the artist has put into picture-puzzle form.

In attempting to solve the puzzle it will help if you read the story and see the film; also, the sense of the sentences will assist you. But you should remember each picture or sign may represent part of a word, one, two, or three words, but not more than three words.

Try your hand at solving the paragraph—you can see that the opening words are "Pug Logan, an _____" and then write your solution IN INK on a sheet of paper. Cut out the puzzle and the coupon together; attach your solution to the tablet, and, having signed and addressed the coupon IN INK, post your effort to:

GEM, "Scarlet Streak," No. 8,
Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4 (Comp.),
so as to reach there not later than FRIDAY, JUNE 11th. Any efforts arriving after that date will be disqualified.

Next week we shall give you another new puzzle and there will be more splendid prizes to be won.

RULES WHICH MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.

The First Prize of £5 will be awarded for the correct, or most nearly correct, solution. The other prizes will follow in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to divide any of the prizes should it be necessary in the case of ties.

You may send as many efforts as you like, but each must be complete in itself, and must consist of a solution, a puzzle, and a signed coupon. Solutions containing alternatives will be disqualified. The decision of the Editor will be absolutely final.

No one connected with the staff or proprietors of this journal may compete.

Our Grand Story, "The Scarlet Streak," has been filmed by the Universal Co. Read the story and see the film.

"SCARLET STREAK" No 8

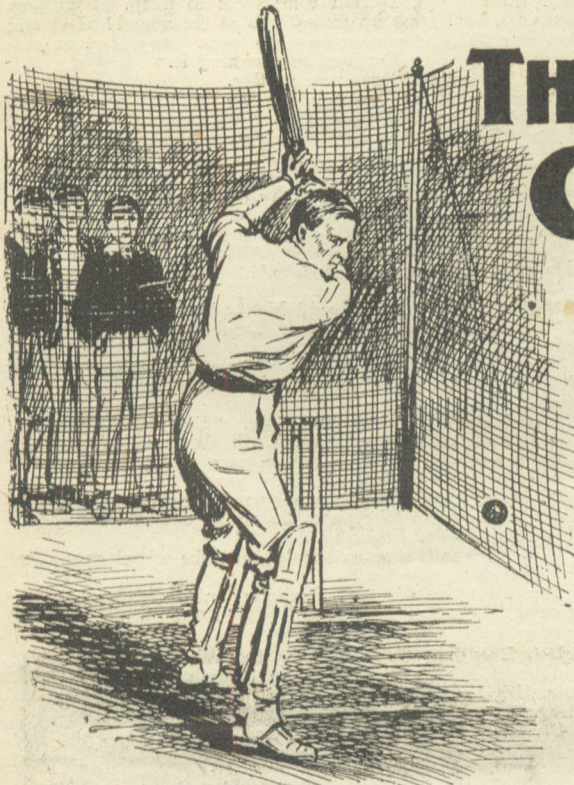
I enter "Scarlet Streak" Contest No. 8, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....

8

THE LIMIT! St. Jim's, as a whole, expects to pick up some very useful tips from the new cricket coach, but when he gets into "harness" and insists upon everyone batting left-handed, enthusiasm begins to evaporate!



CHAPTER 1. The Fugitive!

TO walk, or not to walk—that is the question!" said Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry looked up at the lowering sky.

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

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

"Come on, then!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Weally, Lowthah—"

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE MYSTERY CRICKETER!

A Magnificent Long Complete
School Story, featuring Tom Merry
& Co., the Cheery Chums of St.

Jim's.

By

Martin Clifford.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Who was hunting him down, and why? If the man was a fugitive from the police, the juniors would be defeating the ends of justice in helping him. If, on the other hand, his pursuers were footpads, or private enemies, it was

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plain duty of the juniors to give the man what assistance they could.

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

"My enemies! Quick, quick! Don't let them get me!" So insistent, so urgent was the man's plea, that when he scrambled into the taxi the juniors made no movement to prevent him.

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

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

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

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

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

"Good enough!" said Tom.

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

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

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

"Thank Heaven for that!" panted the fugitive.

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

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

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

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

The man nodded and smiled.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I have wead a lot about Bob Bwadshaw, in 'Wisden.' He used to be the leadin' playah of the Loamshire eleven, an' he once played for England in the Tests."

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

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

"I am."

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

"The same!"

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

Bob Bradshaw smiled rather cynically.

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

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

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

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

"That would be better than being unemployed," said

Bob Bradshaw. "I'll tackle your headmaster in the morning. Meanwhile, I want somewhere to sleep. I suppose you couldn't fix me up somewhere at the school? I should feel safe there, from—er—my pursuers. Any shed or out-building will do. I'm used to roughing it."

Tom Merry pondered the matter.

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

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

"Plenty!"

"Plenty of rats, too!" said Monty Lowther, with a grin. "I'll chance that. I think I shall be able to make myself fairly comfortable!"

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

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

"You are quite welcome to the gwub!"

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

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

Tom Merry settled with the driver, while Monty Lowther tugged at the bell to arouse Taggles, the porter, who was dozing in his parlour.

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

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

But the juniors were within the law, and they chuckled as they trooped into the dark quadrangle. They were accustomed to Taggles' irascible moods. The worthy porter's beauty sleep had been disturbed, so it was hardly surprising that he was not in an amiable temper.

"Good-night, Taggy!" called Monty Lowther cheerily.

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

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

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

"Same heah, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "He is not an impostah, I'm suah of that. Bein' a vewy cute an' discernin' fellow, I can always see through a deception."

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

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

CHAPTER 2.

Mr. Ratcliff is Annoyed!

"MY heye!" Taggles, the porter, uttered that ejaculation in great astonishment. Like the prophet of old, Taggles was amazed with a great amazement.

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

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

"My heye!" repeated Taggles.

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

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

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

And Taggles raised his voice to a roar.

"Hi, you!"

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

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

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

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

Bob Bradshaw found his bearings—and his voice—at last. "My good man," he murmured, "you needn't be so beastly offensive! I'm not doing any harm. I wish to interview the headmaster."

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

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

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

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

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

"I'll pervide you with my boot if you don't clear hout!"



Away over the dark fields, two bright lights could be seen. Tom Merry went to the speaking-tube and addressed the driver. "Go slow for a bit," he instructed. "There's something queer happening." The taxi slowed to a mere crawl. Suddenly there was a crackling sound, accompanied by the snapping of twigs; and a breathless man, drenched with rain, darted into the roadway in front of the crawling taxi. (See Chapter 1.)

snorted Taggles. "Ah, there's Mr. Ratcliff! 'E'll 'ave you hout of it quick enough!"

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

"Mr. Ratcliff, sir!" bellowed Taggles.

The Housemaster frowned and strode towards the woodshed.

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

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

"Bless my soul!"

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

"Indeed!" said Mr. Ratcliff grimly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bob Bradshaw laughed sardonically.

"It would take a better man than Taggles to eject me," he said. "Why, I could eat him! I could tackle the pair of you, if it came to that, and you would wonder what had hit you. But don't alarm yourself, Mr. Schoolmaster. I will go, and I will return later to see the Head."

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

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

"I hardly think that impudent rascal will dare to come here again," said the Housemaster. "Should he attempt to re-enter the premises, Taggles, you will eject him forthwith."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Taggles, not very confidently, however.

And when Bob Bradshaw returned after breakfast, having obtained a wash and brush-up during the interval, Taggles saw him arrive from his parlour window, but did not go out to challenge him. There was a mysterious "something" about Bob Bradshaw that frightened Taggles considerably, and gave him pause. That "glittering eye" with which the Ancient Mariner had startled the Wedding-guest was possessed by Bob Bradshaw. Superstitious people would have called it the evil eye. Taggles was not superstitious, but he deemed it prudent to give Bob Bradshaw a wide berth.

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

The juniors were equally cordial.

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

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

"My hat!"

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

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

The Terrible Three piloted the visitor to the Head's study. Bob Bradshaw tapped on the door, and was bidden to enter. Then the juniors withdrew.

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

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

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

Bob Bradshaw nodded.

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

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

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

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

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

"Yes, rather!"

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

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

"Merry! Manners! Lowther!" Mr. Ratcliff barked out the names like a series of pistol-shots. "How dare you hold converse with this—this person? I have already ordered him off the premises, and he has had the temerity to return."

He has no right here at all, and you boys have no right to hold familiar intercourse with him."

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

As for the juniors, they eyed the Housemaster calmly.

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

"What!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Mr. Bradshaw is a member of the school staff, sir," said Tom Merry. "Of course, if it's wrong to speak to him—"

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

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

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

"I—I apologise!" he gasped.

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

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

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

"Well, Mr. Ratcliff?"

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

"Your information is correct, Mr. Ratcliff."

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

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

Mr. Ratcliff bit his lip.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 3.

The New Cricket Coach!

"COMPULSORY!" said Kildare.
 "Whether we like it or not," said Darrell.
 "Exactly!"
 The captain of St. Jim's and his chum Darrell looked slightly annoyed.
 Afternoon school was over, and their attention had been drawn to an announcement which was posted up on the notice-board—an announcement which had a special significance for the Sixth.

"NOTICE!"

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

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

"This is a new departure, I must say!" growled Kildare, his handsome face clouding a little. "That word 'compulsory' smacks too strongly of Prussianism, for my liking."

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

"Have you seen this fellow Bradshaw?" inquired Kildare.
 "Yes."
 "What's he like?"

"He struck me as being a very decent sort," said Darrell. "He's got a fine cricketing record behind him. I've been swotting up his performances in 'Wisden.' It was Bob Bradshaw who hit up that hurricane century against the Australians, some years ago, and saved England from being walloped in the Test."

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

"Rather!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"No, it hasn't!" replied Knox grimly.

Sefton started a little.

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

"Yes!"

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

"No!"

"Pardon me," interposed a quiet voice, "but you will obey the Head's order and turn out with the others."

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

ANOTHER £10 WON BY READERS!

Result of "Scarlet Streak" Competition No. 3.

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution. The FIRST PRIZE of £5 has therefore been divided between the following two competitors whose efforts, each containing three errors, came nearest to correct:

J. R. DIXON, 100, Addison Road, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
 A. JONES, Vine Cottage, Dudley Road, Ventnor.

The FIVE PRIZES of £1 each have been divided among the following seven competitors whose solutions each contained four errors:

L. Bell, 9, East High Street, Kirkintilloch, N.B.
 S. A. Crouch, 56, Dalmarnock Road, Bridgeton, Glasgow.
 J. J. Humble, 20, Railway Side, Hightown, Castleford.
 E. Keith, McKinnon's Land, Dalntober, Campbelltown.
 Miss L. Sutcliffe, 19, Kettering Road, Levenshulme, Manchester.
 T. Williams, 43, Glanmor Road, Llanelly.
 B. Wilson, 48, Bunyan Street, Rochdale, Lancs.

The correct solution was as follows:

Bob Evans is a youthful reporter on a daily newspaper. He is very daring, and is known to his pals as a young fellow who can always write a good yarn. Bob is instrumental in saving the inventor of the Scarlet Streak from the crooks, who soon discover that he is a power to be reckoned with.

(Another £10 waiting to be won, boys. See page 2.)

A set of flannels had been found for the new cricket coach. They were not a good fit, by any means. The trousers resembled a pair of tights on Bob Bradshaw's well-developed legs; and the blazer was so close-fitting that the brass buttons seemed likely to burst at any moment. But, despite these sartorial defects, Bob Bradshaw looked every inch a cricketer.

Knox glared at him.

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

"I am."

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

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

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

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

"What will you do, then?"

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

Knox flushed crimson.

"You—you cheeky rotter!" he spluttered.

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

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

Knox glared after him.

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

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

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

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

he realised that it would not have been a safe policy to defy Bob Bradshaw.

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

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

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

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

Then Knox bowled; and Knox was savagely eager to take Bob Bradshaw's wicket, and make him look small. Knox seemed to twist himself round like a Catherine-wheel as he delivered the ball, and he sent it down with all the vim and "pep" he could command. Knox expected it to make a nasty mess of Bob Bradshaw's wicket; instead of which, the ball came whizzing back to the bowler, along the carpet; and it had such pace on it that Knox, trying to field it, felt as if he was arresting the progress of a cannon-ball. He gave a yelp of anguish, and shook his hand painfully.

"Yaroooop!"

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

"Hold that one, Knoxey!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Lost ball!" said Jack Blake, with a chuckle. "Ye gods, what a hit!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bob Bradshaw handed the bat to Kildare.

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

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

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

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

"Why, you're adopting a right-handed posture. That won't do at all. You must bat left-handed like I do."

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

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

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

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

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Kildare. And he stared at Bob Bradshaw in blank amazement. The rest of the seniors were amazed, also.

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

"No, never!" said Langton solemnly.

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

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

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

"Great pip!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"How's that?" chuckled Jack Blake.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 4.

Ratty the Cricketer!

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

Mr. Ratcliff was looking—and feeling—in a thoroughly bad temper. The appointment of Bob Bradshaw as cricket coach, and the Head's refusal to hear a word against him, rankled considerably with Mr. Ratcliff.

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

Mr. Ratcliff more than suspected that Bob Bradshaw was

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

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

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

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

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

"Is he a satisfactory tutor?"

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

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

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

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



St Jim's Jingles!



No. 38.—KIT WILDRAKE, of the Fourth.

KIT, from the Wild and Woolly West,
I'll introduce right now, boys!

He rides a horse with skill and zest,
He's hobnobbed with the cowboys.
This sturdy youth from Boot Leg Ranch

To peril is no stranger;
He's never yet been known to blanch
At any risk of danger!

He sits a horse with wondrous ease,
He's active, gay, and nimble;
He does not wobble at the knees
Like craven Baggy Trimble.
No bucking broncho ever yet
Has proved this youngster's master;

He's great! and one may safely bet
No fellow can ride faster.

He shares a study—Number Two—
With Trimble and with Mellish;
A precious pair of rascals who
He cannot really relish.

He'd much prefer to "dig" with Blake,

Or Cardew and his cronies;
For they are jolly sports, who take
An interest in ponies!



Wild West "Kit."

In all the varied fields of sport,
Kit Wildrake's spry and sprightly;
He always wins a good report.

His lamp of fame burns brightly.
He's straight and sound in all his ways,

And we admire him greatly;
He's often in the limelight's rays,
Though rather quiet lately.

When Wildrake comes to man's estate,

He'll ride to hounds at leisure;
To jump a hedge, or clear a gate,
Will be his pride and pleasure.

He's just the type of chap to take
The keenest joy in racing;
And he will very likely make
A name at steeplechasing!

A word in Martin-Clifford's ear

I now make bold to murmur;
To every GEM-ite, Kit is dear,
No favourite could be firmer.
Then take your pen up, Martin C.,
Master of schoolboy stories;
That we may read anew, with glee,
Of Wildrake and his glories!

NEXT WEEK:—FRANK LEVISON, of the Third.

an impostor—that he was not the real Bob Bradshaw who had played for Loamshire and England some years previously. If the man was a poor player, Mr. Ratcliff's suspicions would ripen into certainty that Bradshaw was sailing under false colours. The Head would be informed, and the new cricket coach would be given marching orders from St. Jim's. That was a consummation devoutly to be wished, from Mr. Ratcliff's point of view. He hated Bob Bradshaw. It had been a case of hate at first sight. From the moment Bob Bradshaw had been discovered in the woodshed, Mr. Ratcliff had disliked him intensely; and his dislike had increased as the day wore on. There had been several stormy passages between the Housemaster and the new cricket coach; and it looked as if there would be several more.

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

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

"What!"

"I shall be pleased to bowl to you for a few moments," Mr. Ratcliff frowned.

"I do not play cricket," he snapped.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The words themselves were genial enough, but there was a quiet deadliness in the speaker's tone which made Mr.

Ratcliff quail, as he had quailed on a previous occasion. Under that hypnotic gaze of Bob Bradshaw the Housemaster felt strangely helpless—felt conscious that he was being dominated by a much stronger will than his own. He wanted to turn and walk away. He began to wish he had stayed indoors in his study. This man seemed to be casting a sort of spell over him.

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

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

"It—it is quite impossible!" stuttered Mr. Ratcliff. "I do not play cricket—I cannot play!"

"It's never too late to learn, sir," said Bob Bradshaw. "I won't detain you long—just half a dozen deliveries."

Mr. Ratcliff saw quite plainly that Bob Bradshaw was determined to have his own way in the matter. He disliked the man more intensely than ever, but he feared him as well. He had an uneasy feeling that there would be a "scene" unless he did as Bradshaw wished. Like most tyrants, Mr. Ratcliff was a physical coward. True, there were plenty of seniors standing around, and they would have interfered quickly enough if there was any violence. But their interference might be too late to save Mr. Ratcliff from getting a blow.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

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

"Yes!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff.

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

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

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

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

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

Monteith, therefore, decided to send down a very simple ball, such as the veriest novice could have dealt with. He pitched up a lob, which, had Mr. Ratcliff been a cricketer, he would have chastised severely.

But Mr. Ratcliff was not a cricketer. He shut his eyes and smote blindly. The bat struck the turf with a sickening

concussion, making a big indentation, and causing Mr. Ratcliff to lose his equilibrium and sit down on his wicket.

Crash!

"Yooooop!"

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

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

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

"I'm afraid Bob Bradshaw will get into hot water over this," said Tom Merry, rather gravely.

"Rats!" said Jack Blake. "It wasn't Bradshaw's fault. He didn't force Ratty to make a fool of himself."

"True; but—"

"I can't undahstand Watty's consentin' to play," said Arthur Augustus. "Bob Bradshaw must have been feathfully persuasive."

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

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

CHAPTER 5.

Tea with Bob Bradshaw!

"OUR guest is late," remarked Monty Lowther. Tom Merry glanced at the clock, and nodded.

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

"Oh, give him another five minutes," said Manners.

"Pr'aps he's been detained somewhere."

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

Study No. 10 in the Shell passage resembled a land flowing with milk and honey. Tom Merry & Co. were in funds, and they had gone out of their way to prepare something extra-special in the way of feeds. Bob Bradshaw's appetite was an unknown quantity, but his burly appearance implied that he was neither a dyspeptic nor a faddist, but rather partial to the fleshpots of Egypt, as it were. Certainly he would have no cause to grumble at the feed which his schoolboy hosts had prepared. There was a large and tempting variety of edibles on the snowy-white tablecloth. If Bob Bradshaw didn't fancy cold rabbit-pie, there was a lobster salad; and if he fancied neither, there was a plate piled high with ham sandwiches, and a large, good-looking plum-cake, with which an epicure would have fallen in love at first sight.

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

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

It was Tom Merry's opinion that the man was possessed of a violent temper, which he generally managed to suppress, but which was liable at any time to break forth, if given



Baggy Trimble's eyes were fixed upon Bob Bradshaw, and he gave vent to his well-known and irritating cackle. "He-he-he!" "What's the joke, Baggy?" inquired Lowther. The fat junior levelled an accusing forefinger at the new cricket coach. "Spoofer!" he exclaimed dramatically. "Impostor! Your game's up!" (See Chapter 6.)

sufficient provocation. Manners and Lowther were inclined to share this view.

There was a rumour going the rounds—it was probably started by Knox of the Sixth—that Bob Bradshaw was an impostor, who had obtained his appointment as cricket coach by trading on the Head's credibility.

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

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

"Here he comes!" said Manners suddenly.

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

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

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

"Yes."

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

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

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

"I think you rather put the wind up Ratty, by fixing him with that queer sort of glare," said Manners. "Honestly, you looked as if you were going to knock him down if he refused to play."

Bob Bradshaw looked grim.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tom Merry poured out tea.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Phew!"

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

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

But Tom Merry quickly brightened up.

"It won't be so bad, you fellows, having to bat left-handed," he said. "We're playing a girls' team on Saturday—Cousin Ethel's eleven, you know—and the arrangement is that we are to bat left-handed. So it will be good practice for us."

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

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

"Oh crumbs!"

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

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

"I do!"

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

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

CHAPTER 6.

A Queer Affair!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

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

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

"I say, you fellows—"

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

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

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

"He, he, he!"

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

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

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

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

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

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry.

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

"You fat rotter!" he roared. "I'll teach you to come here

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and insult our guest! You say he's an impostor—that he's filched another man's name. Prove it, or you'll go out of this study on your neck!"

Baggy Trimble gave a snort.

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

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

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Monty Lowther.

And Tom Merry and Manners stared first at Baggy Trimble, and then at the man he accused. Had the fat junior dropped a bombshell in the study the effect could not have been more startling.

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

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

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

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

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

"Come back!"

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

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

Tom Merry looked at him curiously.

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

"Yes—and no. He is right in saying that a man calling himself Bob Bradshaw keeps the Cricketers' Arms at Burehester. But he is quite wrong, of course, in suggesting that I am an impostor. It is the other man who is the impostor—the publican. Poor fellow! One can't help feeling sorry for him. He is not a lunatic exactly, but he suffers from delusions. And one of his delusions is that he is me—Bob Bradshaw."

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry in astonishment.

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

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

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

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

"We—we don't know what to think!" stammered Tom Merry. "It's about the queerest affair we've ever struck. Obviously either you or the publican is an impostor. You can't both be Bob Bradshaw, the famous cricketer. Personally, I'm inclined to believe your version of the story, because of the way you played cricket this afternoon."

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

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

Bob Bradshaw shook his head.

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



Gordon Gay sent a ball down and D'Arcy jumped out to drive. At that precise moment, Mr. Ratcliff was thoughtless enough to walk in front of the bowling screen, and doubtless his action was responsible for the fall of D'Arcy's wicket. Bob Bradshaw, whose ire was roused by this incident, made a megaphone of his hands and fairly bawled to Mr. Ratcliff: "Hi! You!" (See chapter 7.)

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

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

Bob Bradshaw looked thoughtful.

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

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

CHAPTER 7.

Curious Cricket!

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

"You may not, Master D'Arcy."

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

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

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

"Weally, Mr. Bradshaw—"

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

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

The members of the St. Jim's junior eleven were in their flannels, waiting outside the pavilion for their opponents from the Grammar School to turn up. None of them had taken kindly to Bob Bradshaw's order that they were to bat left-handed; indeed, some of the players had waxed

very indignant on the subject. They protested strongly; but the new cricket coach firmly adhered to his decision.

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

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

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

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

Tom explained the situation.

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

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

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

Gordon Gay reflected for a moment.

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

Tom Merry brightened up at this suggestion.

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

"Not at all! We shouldn't get much satisfaction out of licking you if we batted right-handed and you batted left. But if both teams bat the same way it ought to be a good game. I imagine there will be plenty of ducks' eggs, though!"

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

(Continued on page 16.)



THE St. Jim's News

EDITORIAL!

By TOM MERRY.

EMPIRE DAY is celebrated at St. Jim's in fitting style. Lessons are cut out of the programme (cheers!) and the members of the St. Jim's Cadet Corps parade in uniform in the quadrangle for the purpose of saluting the flag.

It is a very impressive spectacle. The Union Jack is hoisted to the top of the flagstaff, which surmounts the ivy-clad tower, and it is saluted by one and all. Nearly all the British Dominions are represented on this occasion. England claims the majority, of course. Scotland is represented by Kerr of the New House; and Ireland by Eric Kildare, the brothers Mulvaney, and Pat Reilly. Fatty Wynn is the Welsh representative. Then we have Harry Noble from Australia; Sidney Clive from South Africa; Clifton Dane from Canada; and Kit Wildrake from British Columbia. All these fellows are patriotic to the core—eager and whole-hearted supporters of the Empire to which they belong.

The famous Recessional, "God of our Fathers, known of old," is usually sung, also "Land of Hope and Glory." The Head then delivers a short address to the fellows on patriotism, and the need of continued loyalty to the British Empire. The address is not really necessary, for there's no waning of patriotism at St. Jim's, I assure you! Finally, the National Anthem is sung, hundreds of schoolboy voices uniting in the age-old refrain. Then comes the word of dismissal, and we are free to spend the rest of the day as we choose. Cricket, boating, and picnics in the woods, are the most popular pursuits.

This is the first Empire Day Number of the "St. Jim's News" to be published. The subject is rather a vast one for schoolboy journalists to handle; but we have done our best.

I should just like to say a word, though, about the Empire's future. There are some who declare that it is in danger of going to the "bow-wows." There are long-faced "Dismal Jimmies" who wring their hands and say that the British Empire is rapidly going the way of the great Assyrian, Grecian, and Roman Empires of old.

Don't you believe it! I agree that the British Empire has just passed through a stormy time; but, having survived the greatest war in the world's history, I see no earthly reason why it should suddenly crumple up. "The British Empire is played out," you sometimes hear people say. "It has had its day." The only suitable retort to this is that ancient and classic monosyllable, "Rats!" The British Empire is very much alive and kicking, in the

full vigour of its prime; and if I'm anything of a prophet, it will proceed from strength to strength. At all events, I prefer to take the bright and hopeful view to the dull and gloomy one; and I feel sure that every patriotic fellow in the land will be on my side about it.

Played out, indeed? Not on your life. The British Empire is not a here-to-day-and-gone-to-morrow concern. It is solid and substantial and durable; and the coming Empire Day celebrations should satisfy any doubters that the fires of patriotism are burning as brightly as ever!

TOM MERRY.



SONS of the EMPIRE!

By Dick Brooke.

STURDY sons of Empire we,
Talbot, Blake, the Terrible Three;
D'Arcy, Digby, Bernard Glyn,
Comrades all, through thick and thin,

Celebrating Empire Day
In the good old British way.

Finn and Wildrake, from the West,
Join our pageantry with zest;
Clive, from Africa's sunny shore,
Koumi Rao from Blundelpore—
Stand erect, in salutation
To the banner of the Nation!

Kildare, from the Emerald Isle,
With his frank and pleasant smile;
Reilly and Mulvaney, too:
From Australia, Kangaroo—
Tribute to the flag will pay
On this stirring Empire Day!

Dane, from the Canadian Lakes,
Kerr, who loves the Land o' Cakes;
Wynn from gallant little Wales—
All who figure in our tales,
Stand upon the massed parade,
In their uniforms arrayed.

All united in the cause
Of our Empire and her laws;
All acquainted with her glories,
Told in many thrilling stories,
Proudly we parade this day,
Proudly we our homage pay.

In our universal tongue
Be the Song of Empire sung.
Brother grips the hand of brother,
Nurslings of one mighty Mother—
Of our Empire, great and vast,
Mightier than the Empire's past.

Where the British Flag is flown,
Truth and Honour shall be sown.
Justice, with an even scale,
There shall flourish and prevail.
Britannia still shall hold her sway
For many a future Empire Day!

EMPIRE DAY JOTTINGS!

By Jack Blake.

ST. JIM'S has celebrated Empire Day, May 24th (which was also the birthday of the late Queen Victoria) for many years. The Day's programme has never varied. Wet or fine, the members of the School Cadet Corps, together with the rest of the fellows, have paraded in the old quadrangle, saluted the Union Jack, and sung the National Anthem.

The flag is flown at the top of the school flagstaff; and it is the custom for the captain of the school to perform the ceremony of hoisting it. For this purpose, he has to ascend to the top of the tower. His position seems rather precarious to the crowd below, but in reality it is quite safe. At all events, there has never been a captain of St. Jim's who has shirked this function.

Empire Day at St. Jim's has never been the occasion of any "scenes"—except patriotic ones. We have never harboured any rebels who have refused to pay allegiance to the British flag. At the moment of hoisting the Union Jack, every hand has leapt proudly and smartly to the salute.

I have often been asked if I am a descendant of Admiral Blake, who rendered such yeoman service to the Empire. I am not, so far as I know, a descendant of this great sailor. He was a Somerset man, whereas my own people have lived in Yorkshire for generations.

Herries of the Fourth is feeling rather aggrieved just now. He suggested to the Head that it would be a good idea if he—Herries—were permitted to play "Land of Hope and Glory" on his cornet at the Empire Day celebrations. Apparently the Head thought it anything but a good idea! He promptly pooh-poohed it, with the result that poor old Herries is in the doldrums.

There are fellows at St. Jim's now who will one day accomplish great things for the Empire; that is certain. In years to come, schoolboys will possibly be reading of the exploits of General Kildare; or of Sir Thomas Merry, the intrepid explorer; or of the great statesman and diplomat, Lord Eastwood (formerly Arthur Augustus D'Arcy). If we were permitted to peep into the future, I'm sure it would be jolly interesting!

The St. Jim's Cadet Corps has already held a rehearsal of the Empire Day celebrations.

MEN WHO MADE the EMPIRE!



A Special Contribution in
Honour of the occasion.

By
Mr Victor Railton, M.A.
Master of the School House at St. Jim's



WHAT an illustrious scroll of honoured names history has handed down to us!

Pioneers, explorers, statesmen, sailors, soldiers—a noble army of patriotic spirits who fought and wrought, who toiled and suffered, in order to build up our vast Empire, and to make it the great power it is to-day.

Wellington and Nelson; Raleigh and Drake; Gladstone and Beaconsfield; these names will leap instinctively to the mind, when we assemble on the morning of Empire Day, to salute the British flag.

Livingstone, Captain Cook, Captain Scott and his gallant band of Antarctic heroes; all the explorers, small and great, who gave their lives' work, and in many cases their lives, in the cause of the Empire. An honoured scroll, indeed!

Poetry and Patriotism

Nor must we forget the great patriotic poets like Shakespeare, who taught us that it was a grand thing to belong to Britain.

"This England never did nor never shall,

Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror.
Come the three corners of the world
in arms,

And we shall shock them. Naught
shall make us rue,
If England to herself do rest but true."

Then we have John Milton, the secretary of Cromwell, who loved his country dearly, and wrote a splendid "Defence of the People of England." Milton became totally blind, but he stuck to his post, preferring (as he said) the loss of his sight to the desertion of his duty.

Later came that strange genius, William Blake, who loved England, but who lived in an age of darkness and fear, when the French Revolution cast its dark shadow over Europe. England was far from being a "land fit for heroes," in those days; but Blake sought to make it better.

"I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall the sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant
land."

These poets did much to inspire patriotism and love of country in the hearts of the people. In their way, they were just as much "makers of Empire" as the soldiers and sailors who fought our battles in distant lands.

Wolfe of Quebec.

When General Wolfe, on the eve of Quebec, recited Gray's "Elegy" in a

boat on the river, he said he would rather have been its author than have the glory of beating the French next day. Few chapters in our history are more heart-stirring than that which describes Wolfe's victory and death. He was in command of the expedition against Quebec, and the enterprise was great and hazardous; but General Wolfe, in spite of failing health and a very inadequate force, successfully surmounted all obstacles. He was a man who never knew when he was beaten. In the very moment of victory, he received a ball in the wrist and another in the body, and was carried to the rear of the battle. There, being roused by the shout of "They run!" he eagerly asked, "Who run?" and being told the French, he exclaimed: "I thank God, and die contented."

"A very Gallant Gentleman."

If I were asked to name my favourite hero of history, I should reply without hesitation, "Sir Philip Sidney."

This accomplished soldier and statesman lived in the reign of Good Queen Bess. After a very distinguished career, he was appointed a general of British cavalry, and was sent to assist the Dutch against the Spaniards. On 22nd September, 1586, he fell in with a convoy sent by the enemy to Zutphen; and, although the English troops were inferior in number to the enemy, they gained a gallant victory; but it was dearly purchased with the loss of their commander, who, after one horse was shot under him, mounted another and continued the fight, till he received a ball in the left thigh, which proved fatal.

As Sir Philip Sidney was being borne from the field, languid with loss of blood, he asked for water; but just as the bottle was put to his lips, he saw a dying soldier looking wistfully at it, and he resigned it, saying: "This man's need is greater than mine!"

This true hero of the Empire died shortly afterwards, and his body was brought to England and interred in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Wellington and Nelson.

This great soldier, and equally great seaman, accomplished many wonderful achievements for the Empire.

The Duke of Wellington was known as "the hero of a hundred fights"—a great tribute, when we realise that he had to contend with one of the most formidable warriors the world has ever known—Napoleon Buonaparte.

Nelson's exploits form a story in themselves, and I have no space to recount them in this article. It is impossible to speak of them too highly. Nelson's gallant victory and glorious death at Trafalgar are sure to be universally recalled on Empire Day.

Captain Cook.

And what of the explorers? One of the most celebrated was Captain Cook, who made many discoveries of lands which had hitherto been unknown, and who did much to widen the boundaries of the British Empire.

Captain Cook's third great voyage had a tragic ending. As commander of the Resolution, he discovered the Sandwich Islands, explored the Western coast of North America, and then made further discoveries in the Pacific.

Unfortunately, while touching at a place called Owhyhee, Captain Cook, in spite of the utmost prudence and tact, became involved in a dispute with the natives, and while endeavouring to reach his boat he was savagely murdered.

In Darkest Africa.

David Livingstone, the great African explorer, gave us a wonderful example of pluck and perseverance in the face of terrible hardships and handicaps. It is impossible to read his life-story unmoved. Livingstone made many wonderful discoveries of previously unknown regions in Central Africa, where he spent sixteen years. Later in life, he made another African expedition, which occupied seven years. This expedition was one of discoveries and disasters, ending with the death of its heroic leader. The disasters consisted of desertion by Livingstone's men, the loss of his medicine chest and stock of quinine, severe illness, failure to receive supplies intended for him, wars between hostile tribes, floods over large tracts of the country, etc. A report of his death was circulated by the men who deserted him; and in consequence of this a search-party was sent out by the British Government. The story of Livingstone's death was proved false. He continued his explorations, determined to discover the true source of the Nile. Several caravans with supplies were despatched for him; but hardly any of them reached him. He was eventually found in Ujiji, reduced by illness and hardship to the last extremity; but he refused to return to England. He struggled on, in spite of feebleness and formidable obstacles, and he continued to make notes in his diary until he could no longer stand. He was then carried on a litter by some of his faithful attendants, and placed in a native hut, where everything possible was done for him, but in vain.

The story of Livingstone's sufferings and death caused a profound sensation in England. Not only did this great explorer add much to our knowledge of Africa, but it was he who exposed and put an end to the horrors of the African slave trade.

A Noble Army.

Other great names will be called to mind on Empire Day—names of heroes whose fame will endure so long as our Empire lasts. Gladstone and Pitt and Disraeli, great statesmen all; Sir John Moore, who fell before the walls of Corunna, and whose death is immortalised in a poem which Byron declared to be the most perfect piece of verse in our language General Gordon, the hero of Khartoum; and, coming to recent times, Earl Roberts and Earl Kitchener, Benbow and Collingwood and Blake, gallant admirals all. So great is the scroll of the Empire's heroes that one can only quote a few names at random. These men all "did their bit" towards building up our magnificent Empire; and we must not forget them



THE MYSTERY CRICKETER!

(Continued
from
page 13.)

Grammar School was just as great as if the game was being played in the normal way.

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

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

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

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

The batting was very amusing to watch, most of the runs being scored by fluky hits. It was more by luck than judgment that the opening pair managed to take the score to 20 before they were separated, Fatty Wynn bowling Gordon Gay "all over the shop."

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

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

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

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

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

Arthur Augustus looked rather grim as he sauntered out to the wicket. Gordon Gay, who was bowling, had collected three scalps, so to speak; and the swell of St. Jim's was determined not to be added to his collection.

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

"Not that way, Master D'Arcy! Left-handed, please!" "Pway accept my apology, Mr Bwadshaw!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I was forgettin'."

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

"Hurrah!"
"Well hit, Gussy!"

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

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

Gordon Gay sent the ball down; and the swell of St.

Jim's, who was now beginning to feel quite at home as a left-handed batsman, jumped out to drive.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Ratcliff paused for a moment, uncertain how to act. To stride on to the playing-pitch, and engage in wordy warfare with Bob Bradshaw, could not be done without considerable loss of dignity. On the other hand, to move away from the bowling-screen, like a small boy doing as he was told, was not to be thought of. Eventually, Mr. Ratcliff decided to remain where he was. Bob Bradshaw looked very grim.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gordon Gay sought out Tom Merry in the pavilion.

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 8.

Mr. Ratcliff's Ordeal!

DIRECTLY the match was over, Bob Bradshaw strode across to where Mr. Ratcliff was standing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

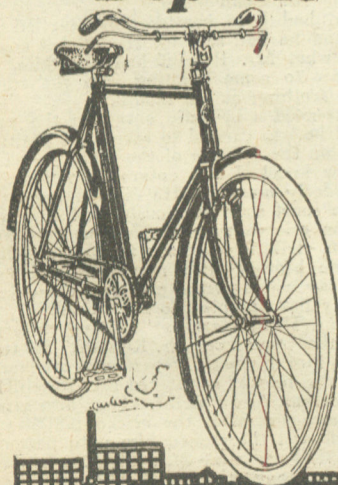
"Apologise?" hooted Bob Bradshaw. "It is from you that the apology should come! You walked in front of the bowling-screen while the match was in progress; and when I shouted to you to clear off, you deliberately stayed there! You deliberately did it to annoy me. You've had your knife into me from the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

"And I still believe you to be an impostor!" snapped

(Continued overleaf.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Help!" panted Mr. Ratcliff.

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

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

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

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

"Collar him!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Hold him down!"

"Sit on him!"

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

Mr. Ratcliff did not stop to thank his benefactors. Gasping and almost breathless, he hurried into the school building, and made tracks for the Head's study, in order to acquaint Dr. Holmes with details of the outrage.

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

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

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

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

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

Bob Bradshaw shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him report!" he said carelessly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Naturally, the Head had been considerably startled by Mr. Ratcliff's story, and he had sent for the cricket coach at once. In view of what Mr. Ratcliff had told him, he expected Bob Bradshaw to come bursting into the study like a maniac, almost frothing at the mouth.

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

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

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

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

"Pray be silent a moment, Mr. Ratcliff. I am also given to understand, Bradshaw, that after the cricket-match you approached Mr. Ratcliff and threatened him with personal violence, and declared that you were Dempsey, the boxer."

Bob Bradshaw looked astonished.

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

"You did!" booted Mr. Ratcliff.

Bob Bradshaw ignored the Housemaster.

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. Holmes frowned.

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

"Very well, sir!"

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

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

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

CHAPTER 9.

Desperate Measures!

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

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

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

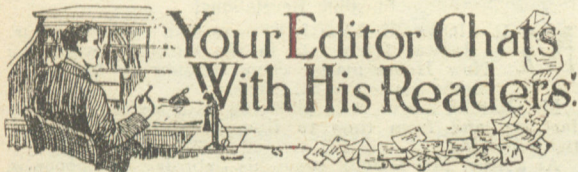
Remembering what had happened in their match with the Grammarians, Tom Merry & Co. were quite determined that the cricket coach should umpire no more of their matches.

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

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

The cricket coach had listened patiently to the leader of the deputation, but he had stubbornly refused to give way. He pointed out that it was his duty to take a keen interest

(Continued overleaf.)



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WHAT'S in a name? Well, it depends, of course, upon so many things. But when the name is "Sidney Drew," then all of us can find a ready answer to the query which sets this editorial chat rolling. All of us know that Sidney Drew yarns are the "goods"; all of us have subscribed in our own way to his world-wide reputation, just as much as we place Martin Clifford on the highest pinnacle sought after by writers of school stories. Very good—but to brass tacks. You fellows can look forward then to a really brilliant adventure story by Sidney Drew, which starts in three weeks' time, knowing well in advance that you are going to get something more than just your money's-worth. It's a brilliant story, as I have said before, but even "brilliant" hardly does it justice. All of you will appreciate that an Editor feels on tenterhooks, when he has commissioned an author to turn him in a yarn, as to whether the author will "come up to the scratch." Authors are human, just as human as the "worst" of us, and they sometimes have their "off" days. But if Sidney Drew suffers from "off" days we certainly have "dodged" them, for this coming serial story has taken all the anxiety out of my sails. In advance I can visualise the smiles of satisfaction of GEM readers when they come to the opening chapters. Satisfaction—that's the word! That's the word the tradesman keeps before him. And your Editor, broadly speaking, is a tradesman also. I'm trading you a bumper story-paper for twopence, but in addition to your twopence, I want your satisfaction—savvy? Well, "A Phantom Throne!"—that, by the way, is the title of Sidney Drew's latest—is certain to bring both you and me satisfaction. Here's to it!

RESULT OF SCARLET STREAK COMPETITION NO. 3.

In this issue—on page 7, to be exact—will be found the result of our popular picture-puzzle competition, which is

based upon the serial story now running in your favourite paper. Now there's real hard cash waiting to be picked up here, my lads, as a glance at the prize list will show you. Opportunities must never be missed. You'll often hear a fellow complaining that he "never gets a chance," or that he doesn't "stand a chance." But the real trouble is so many people won't realise what an opportunity is—until it's too late. But in the case of the cash awards for the correct solutions of the GEM picture-puzzle the opportunity is revived from week to week. It's YOUR chance, YOUR opportunity; make the most of it!

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"D'ARCY'S NIGHT OUT!" By Martin Clifford.

That's the title of the next grand long complete story of Tom Merry & Co. As the title suggests, Gussy, the swell of St. Jim's, plays more than a "walking-on" part. He does. You'll laugh till your sides ache over this story, boys.

"THE SCARLET STREAK!"

Look out, too, for another thrilling instalment of this amazing serial, and see how Bob Evans fares in his unequal struggle against the Monk and his myrmidons.

"BATHING!"

I expect a lot of you fellows have already "taken the plunge" this season, and, doubtless, found the water beastly cold. Well, sit back in a cosy armchair next week and read of the "bathing" adventures of Tom Merry & Co. in their special supplement.

A £10 OFFER!

As I mentioned above, the offer of Ten Pounds in prize-money, attached to the simple competition running in conjunction with "The Scarlet Streak!" is repeated from week to week. It will, of course, form one of the attractions for next week's issue, as also will the "Jingle" written around Frank Levison. This Jingle, by the way, concludes the series by our special Rhymester. Cheerio, chums.

YOUR EDITOR.

in all the junior matches, and to umpire in them whenever possible. And he had no intention of shirking that duty.

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

At a "confab" in Tom Merry's study, it was decided to resort to drastic measures, and to get Bob Bradshaw out of the way for the afternoon.

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

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

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

Bob Bradshaw gazed up at the azure sky, and nodded.

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

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

"Eh? Where?"

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

Bob Bradshaw became interested at once.

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

"In the library."

"Could you run and fetch it for me?"

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

"Good!"

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

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

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

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

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

Bob Bradshaw was a prisoner in the library!

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

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

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

Tom Merry waited outside the door, listening. Presently his chums joined him in the corridor.

"So you've managed it all serene, Tommy?" said Manners.

Tom Merry nodded and grinned.

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

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

A couple of minutes passed. Then footsteps were heard

crossing the library, and approaching the door. The juniors in the corridor exchanged smiling glances.

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

The door was locked.

"Tricked! Tricked and trapped!"

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

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

There was a soft chuckle from the corridor.

"Let me out!" roared the cricket coach.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 10.

Startling Revelations!

MR. HORACE RATCLIFF was in a happy humour.

It was fairly late in the afternoon when the New House master came striding up from Rycombe Station to St. Jim's.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Ratcliff was surprised, also, to hear sounds of furious tramping inside the library. There was quite a commotion

ANSWERS

Every Saturday.....PRICE 2d.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 955.



Mr. Ratcliff stood petrified—rooted to the floor with horror. The sight of the wreckage was appalling enough; but it was not that which alarmed Mr. Ratcliff so much as the wild-eyed, distraught figure who stood in the midst of the chaos. (See Chapter 10.)

going on, in what was usually the quietest and most sedate apartment at St. Jim's.

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

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

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

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

Crash! Crash!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Housemaster had more than suspected, all along, that the cricket coach had a streak of insanity in him. No sane person would have wrought this havoc! No sane

person would have had the strength, single-handed, to overturn those heavy bookcases.

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

"You!" he said hoarsely.

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

With a gasp of terror the Housemaster turned to flee.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tom Merry's eleven were just trooping off the field. In a keen and exciting tussle they had beaten the girls' team by a narrow margin and they were looking very pleased with themselves.

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

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

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

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

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

But their help was not needed after all.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tom Merry & Co. were thunderstruck. It took them a full moment to digest Mr. Railton's astounding information. Then they recalled the memorable night when they had first met "Bob Bradshaw" and rescued him from his pursuers. Those pursuers—though the juniors little dreamed it at the time—had been asylum warders. And Tom Merry & Co. had unwittingly aided an escaped lunatic!

"It is a very sad business," said Mr. Railton. "The man is not utterly insane, but he is subject to strange delusions. He believes himself at various times to be certain celebrities. His latest delusion is that he is Bob Bradshaw, the cricketer. The fact that he bears a superficial resemblance to Bradshaw, and plays cricket really well, gave a strong appearance of genuineness to his amazing claim. I readily admit that, for my part, I had no suspicion that he was not the real Bradshaw."

"Neither did we, sir," said Tom Merry. "It's a queer business altogether!"

"I feel wathah distwessed about it," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, glancing at the three retreating figures in the distance. "Will the unfortunate man evah wecovah his weason, Mr. Wailton?"

"It is hoped that he will," said the Housemaster. "At present he is subject to delusions and to occasional brainstorms, but with careful treatment his sanity should be restored at no distant time."

"I'm jolly glad to hear that!" said Tom Merry.

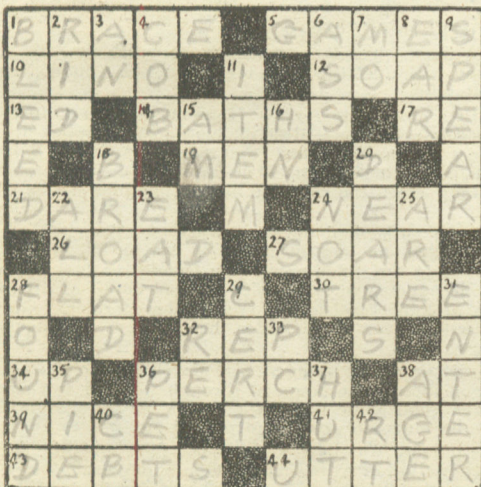
That evening St. Jim's was thrilled by the knowledge that for several days past the school had harboured a lunatic. And great indeed was the relief of Mr. Ratcliff at the departure of "The Mystery Cricketer."

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's grand long story of the Chums of St. Jim's, entitled: "D'ARCY'S NIGHT OUT!"—which shows the one and only Gussy in a new light.)

HERE'S AN EASY CROSS-WORD PUZZLE, CHUMS!

CAN YOU SOLVE IT?



Clues (Down).

1. To lose blood; extort money from.
2. Free.
3. Preposition.
4. Kind of nut.
5. Donkey.
6. Medical officer (abbrev.).
7. Organ of hearing.
8. A pointed weapon.
9. A separate article.
10. Preposition.
11. Cornstalk of St. Jim's (initials).
12. Wide.
13. Those beloved.
14. Everything.
15. Mastic food.
16. Denial.
17. Verb to be.
18. Brought to light.
19. A sure thing.
20. Go into.
21. With reference to.
22. Police-constable (abbrev.).
23. One of Wynn's weaknesses.
24. Fondle.
25. A small dwelling.
26. Grow old.
27. Army punishment (abbrev.).
28. Initials of the "Toff."

Clues (Across).

1. A pair.
2. Pastimes.
3. Floorcloth.
4. Used for washing.
5. Editor (contraction).
6. Donkey.
7. Where you can swim.
8. Same as 32 down.
9. Plural of man.
10. To venture.
11. Close.
12. Charge.
13. Fly alott.
14. Level.
15. A large woody plant.
16. A textile fabric.
17. On high.
18. Roost for birds.
19. Prep denoting nearness.
20. Dainty.
21. Drive onwards.
22. Sums of money due.
23. Speak.

(Correct solution will appear in next week's "Gem.")

ANY MEANS TO AN END! The Monk still seeks the precious papers which reveal the secret of the Scarlet Streak, and with Mary Crawford a prisoner in his hands, he looks like attaining his object. But there's always Bob Evans to be reckoned with!



A Powerful and Dramatic Story written around the Death Ray—the most amazing scientific discovery of modern times.

Derelict!

THROUGH the black smoke that surged from the engine Bob Evans saw red flames licking viciously, and he heard the count yell:

"The tank will explode—we're done! Jump for it!"

He caught Leontine as he shouted the words, and Bob saw him shaping to leap over the side of the burning boat. Bob slipped an arm about Mary's shoulders, and turned to the other side of the doomed vessel.

In that moment the motor-boat lurched wildly. Bob had a glimpse of seething water, and the fraction of a second later the vessel heaved on end, her prow tipped beneath the waves, and she sank.

Bob heard a sullen roar as something exploded. Next instant Mary was torn from his hold, and the water closed over his head.

He went down, twisting and turning madly in the turbulent water, as the vessel sank beneath him. He struck out with all his strength, fighting against the current that dragged him downwards.

Near at hand, the Monk and Pug Logan watched, and there was a sinister smile on the thin lips of the arch-crook. Pug slowed his own boat, then leaned from the wheel to drag one of the gang from the water; the Monk helped him, and they were pulling the second man aboard when Bob's head broke the surface.

As he came up, the young reporter narrowly missed hitting some of the floating wreckage of the sunken boat. He trod water as he looked about him, and he saw the count and Leontine striking out for the little dinghy which had trailed behind the count's vessel. By great good luck the painter had slipped, and the boat floated free.

Bob reached it at the same moment as the count and Leontine. He swam round to the stern and pulled himself aboard, then helped the others up.

"Where's Mary!" he gasped.

He stood up searching with anxious gaze the heaving, debris-strewn water about them. At a little distance a pile of wreckage was floating—two of the wooden grids from the floor of the sunken boat, with part of a seat and some spars; all piled together and held by a tangle of rope.

He got a glimpse of a form lying amidst the mass; it was Mary, and he saw her move one arm feebly.

"There she is!" he shouted. "Where are the oars, count? She might slip off if we—"

His voice faded away as

he caught the sound of the engine of the Monk's motor-boat. He, too, had seen the girl, and now the crook's boat came surging across the water, making straight for her.

In seconds only they were level with her. Waves were washing over the wreckage when the Monk stretched out his hands to grip her. He was grinning exultantly as he and the others hauled her aboard, and in the little dinghy Bob watched helplessly. He could do nothing!

"They've got Mary!" Leontine gasped the words as she dashed the water from her eyes and stared at the Monk's boat. At her side, the count stood, grim-faced and with his eyes glittering. His fingers were clenched as he realised, only too well, that they could do nothing to help her just then.

On a sudden the dinghy rocked as Bob jumped to the gunwale. He was on the point of diving overboard and swimming to the crooks' boat in a desperate effort to thwart them, but the count pulled him back.

"They'd crack you on the head with a boathook long before you got aboard!" he said quickly. "They're certain to go to Catalina. We'll get after them there!"

As he spoke, the motor-boat started up again, sweeping swiftly from the spot, its broad wash sending the little dinghy bobbing up and down on the water.

Bob saw that the two men were holding Mary, while the Monk talked to Pug Logan, and the young reporter watched with straining eyes as the boat swept away, vanishing in a little while and being lost in the distant bulk of the island.

As they swept from the spot, the Monk bent over to Pug Logan.

"We've got the girl!" he snarled. "What'll we do with her? I've got to get her to some place where I can make her talk! She knows what—"

The pugilist's battered features twisted to a crooked grin. "I've got a place on Catalina," he said. "We'll take her there!"

"They may follow!" and the Monk jerked his head back in the direction of Bob's boat.

"Follow!" Pug laughed shortly. "Let 'em! They won't find us unless we want 'em to. My place is right above one of those old mines, and nobody comes that way! Besides, it'll take 'em pretty near half the rest o' the day to row to the island. They ain't got a chance in a million of finding out which way we've gone!"

Pug was right when he said that. There was, Bob discovered, only one oar in the little dinghy. When the count passed it to him, Bob

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

BOB EVANS, a young reporter on the "Daily Times," has sacrificed his career in order to aid

RICHARD CRAWFORD and his daughter **MARY** in their fight against a gang of crooks. Mr. Crawford has invented a death-ray machine called the Scarlet Streak. A crook known as

THE MONK is trying to get possession of the invention in order that he may terrorise the world. He quarrels with two of his aides, **LEONTINE** and **COUNT K.**, who make friends with Bob and Mary. Mr. Crawford has disappeared, and Mary and Bob believe him to be dead; only the count is aware of the fact that the inventor is in hiding. Mary finds a cross-word puzzle left by her father, which contains the secret of the hiding-place of the blueprints of the Scarlet Streak. They are somewhere on Catalina Island. With Bob and Leontine, she goes in a motor-boat, driven by the count, towards the island. They are pursued by the Monk, his henchman, Pug Logan, and two other men. After the crooks' attempt to board the count's boat it catches fire.

(Now read on.)

found that the oar was more like a paddle than anything else—a poor enough implement for the long row which lay before them!

Bob settled himself in the stern of the boat and turned its bows in the direction of Catalina Island.

He dipped the paddle in the water and started the slow, laborious pursuit of the crooks. Though he worked with all the strength in his strong young body, though the count relieved him from time to time, it was many hours before the rocky shores of the island loomed across the heaving waters.

They landed without seeing anything of the Monk and the rest; then the count and Bob rested a while before they set off in the direction of Scott's house. Bob knew that Livingston Scott was a friend of the inventor; he could be counted upon to do anything in his power to aid in the fight against the gang of crooks—and in the rescue of Mary.

The Monk Schemes Anew!

PUG LOGAN'S house at the southern end of the island was a wooden building, with a veranda at the front, and the timbered walls all moss-grown, and, here and there, carelessly patched. The ground at the front was ill-tended, and there was about the whole of the low-roofed building an atmosphere of neglect.

Not far from it showed the broken derrick-frames and the rusted light railways of a derelict mine. Where a narrow arm of the sea stabbed into the land, close against the entrance to the mine, there showed the thin length of steel cable stretching across the water to the hill on the far side. The cable was tipped with red rust, and the carrier at the platform at one end sagged against its pulleys.

It was to this scene of desolation that Mary was carried. The girl drooped limply in the arms of Pug Logan—still unconscious from a blow on the head when the motor-boat sank.

As the hurrying group approached the house, Pug Logan's wife came out to meet them. She was a short, wrinkle-faced woman, with untidy, straggly hair, and cunning, close-set eyes.

"What's this, Pug?" she demanded, as they reached the house, but the ex-pugilist did not answer her; he pushed past, and carried Mary into the house. He made straight for a bed-room, and dropped the girl roughly on the bed.

"What's this, Pug?" the woman said again. "I ain't goin' to have none o'—"

"You're goin' to have what I say you'll have!" the pugilist barked at her. "Fetch that gal round, an' give her some dry clothes!"

His eyes glistened as he spoke; the woman started to answer—then she saw the Monk looking at her. His deep-sunk eyes were glittering, and there was an ugly half-smile on his thin lips. Without a word, she held open the door for them to pass out of the room, then she turned to Mary.

She patted her face and hands, loosening her clothing at the neck. It was not very long before Mary's blue eyes opened, and she lay staring up into the woman's seamed face. For a few moments Mary gazed at her in amazement, then she sat up.

"What—Who—Where am I?" she gasped. "You're all right, dearie," the woman told her, but her smile—meant to be reassuring—only startled Mary the more.

"Who are you?" she asked. "Who brought me here? Where—what—?" Quite suddenly realisation came to her. The Monk had pursued them—their boat had sunk—and there was nothing friendly about this woman; her face was too hard—too cunning. "Is the—Monk—" Mary's voice faltered and broke off.

"The Monk's in the next room," the woman sneered at her, her manner suddenly changing. "An' we got you right an' tight, my dear! Look out o' the window!"

Mary glanced over her shoulder. A man slouched past the window, his hatbrim turned down over his eyes; from the shadow his glance darted into the room, menacing and sinister. He reached the corner of the house, turned and strolled back—a sentry, placed there by the Monk!

"Right an' tight!" the woman repeated. "So take it sensible, an' don't you give no trouble. I'll look after ye, dearie! Your clothes is all wet; I'll get ye some dry ones an' you can change, but"—her voice changed its wheedling tone to a note that was full of threats—"but don't you try to git away, because you can't! An' th' Monk ain't in the mood to stand no nonsense from anybody!"

She left the room, and came back a minute or so later with an armful of dry clothing.

"These'll just fit ye," she assured Mary. Mary changed in the shelter of a screen, and gave her own clothes to the woman to dry. The frock which she had lent to Mary was of a style that might have been fashionable twenty years before; yet, for all the high collar and the puffed sleeves, Mary looked winsome as ever. She surveyed

herself in the glass as the woman left the room, looking at the set of the dress, straightening it out.

She returned to the bed as the woman took her own clothes out of the room, and for a long while the girl sat there, wondering what had happened to Bob. She wondered if he had escaped, or if he had gone down with the boat. The thought made her heart leap with anxiety, and then she heard voices from the next room. Creeping to the door, she laid her ear against the panels, striving to catch the words that came to her—words uttered in the Monk's evil voice, and answered by Pug Logan's growling tones.

The two crooks were sitting at a table, discussing their next move.

"We've got to act quickly!" the Monk told Logan, after he had made clear to him just what was afoot. "That fellow Bob Evans is as tough a proposition we could be up against, and he—"

"He wouldn't last long once I got my mitts on him!" Logan grated.

The Monk grinned a little.

"Maybe not," he said. "But you've got to get hold of him first! Now, they were going to see Livingston Scott. Bob will get the blueprints of the machine, and we'll have to lure him here with them!"

"Lure's right!" growled the Pug. "You're sure he's after those plans an' things?"

"Certain!" exclaimed the Monk. "I believe he'll find out from Scott exactly where they are, and they'll be the first things he'll go for. You see, he knows I'm after them, and he thinks I know just where to put my hands on them. That's what'll make him go straight for them! It's my opinion that he'll be in possession of them about five minutes after he sets foot on this island, and when he's got 'em he'll start looking for the girl in there!" And he jerked his head to the door behind which Mary was imprisoned.

Pug Logan's battered face creased in a crafty smile, and he nodded slowly.

"I get you! You'll drop him a note an' offer to swap the gal for the blueprints, eh?"

"You've got it!" the Monk told him. "He'll accept the offer, but it ain't certain that he'll get the girl!" And the two rogues laughed together.

Pug handed the Monk paper and pencil, and the arch-criminal began to write swiftly. His note was brief:

"Bob Evans,

"You've got the blueprints; we have Mary. Bring the prints to Pine Bluff, and we will release Mary. But come alone!—THE MONK."

"You think it'll fetch him?" queried Pug. "He won't baulk at the 'come alone' bit?"

The Monk shook his head as he folded the note.

"He's a mad-headed young fool!" he exclaimed. "He doesn't get scared easily—he'll come! And he won't bring anybody with him!" He handed the note to his companion. "You can get that delivered, can't you? Evans will have landed by this time, I should think; if he hasn't, it can wait for him. Send it by somebody who won't arouse suspicion."

"I've got a boy out the back," Pug told him as he rose. "He's from a farm t'other side o' the Bluff. He'll take it—he's bin choppin' wood all mornin', an' he'll be glad of a run!"

The ex-pugilist clumped from the building, and the Monk watched him go round the back to where a boy was busy with an axe on some small pine logs. The boy grinned when Pug spoke to him, and a little later the Monk watched the youngster as he trotted away on his errand, the note tucked in his breeches pocket.

It was as the boy started from Pine Bluff that the woman came across the room with Mary's clothes in her arms. She had laid them down after taking them from Mary, and now intended hanging them in the sun to dry. The Monk stopped her as she passed him, and he looked the clothes over.

"They're the girl's, eh?" he asked reflectively, then he looked at the woman. "You two are much of a size," he commented, and again he stared at the clothes thoughtfully. He picked up the coat and measured it against the woman. "Yes; that should just fit you—an' they won't take so long to dry! Listen carefully. I want you to do something for me!"

And he walked with the woman across the room to the front of the house, talking earnestly.

The Shadow!

THAT'S Livingston's house!" Count K. pointed ahead as he made the exclamation. With Bob and Leontine he was walking over the rough trail that led upwards from the shore. The white walls and roof of a fine house showed

against the green of verdure-clad hills behind. A bearded man on a horse was cantering down the trail towards them. He pulled up as they approached, and jumped to the ground.

"Why—it's the count!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?" He hurried forward, with outstretched hand. "Were you coming to see me?"

"We were!" the count answered him. "We—"

"Have you been—?" Scott looked at them in amazement. "Have you been in the water? Your clothes are fairly dry, but they—"

"Yes!" the count exclaimed grimly. "I'll tell you all about it in a moment." And then he introduced Leontine and Bob.

Livingston Scott was one of the richest men on Catalina Island. He owned more than one mine, as well as the ranch at one side of which his house stood. As the four walked slowly towards the house, the count told him something of what had happened that morning. Bob helped him to explain the situation, and just as they stopped in front of the building he handed Scott the Cross Word puzzle which held the clue to the hiding-place of the blueprints of the Scarlet Streak.

"That's the puzzle and there's the message Mr. Crawford left for Mary!" Bob told him. "I can't make head or tail of it, and we thought you might be able to give us some sort of clue. You were a close friend of Mr. Crawford, and I thought that perhaps you were in his confidence."

"I know that he had been working for a long while on a death-ray machine," the bearded man answered him. "But blueprints! No, I don't know anything about them, nor do I— Wait a moment! Perhaps this may mean something!"

From his pocket he drew an envelope, after he had handed the papers back to Bob. In the envelope was a cablegram:

"Livingston Scott,
Catalina Island.
45 75 76 19 12 33
SHADOW."

That was all.

"Shadow!" Bob exclaimed blankly. "Who the deuce is Shadow? What do these numbers mean?" And he looked inquiringly at the mine-owner.

Livingston Scott shook his head.

"I don't know," he said. "The whole thing means nothing to me. But numbers, and— Do you think that it might have some bearing on the Cross Word puzzle? Perhaps Crawford sent—"

"Mr. Crawford is dead," said Bob quietly; and then he told of the strange circumstances under which the inventor had been found. The news was something of a blow to Mr. Scott, and he stood silent, while Bob stared thoughtfully at the cryptic message from the "Shadow."

The count and Leontine stood looking on.

"It seems to me," said the count presently, "that that telegram must be from someone who knows what we're after, Bob. I feel certain that it has some bearing on the Cross Word puzzle and the—"

"You're right!" Bob swung round on him as he exclaimed suddenly: "Until now, I couldn't figure it out; but it must be the key to the hiding-place of the blueprints!"

"And the numbers refer to the squares!" Leontine put in. "If we are to find out what—"

She broke off at the sound of footsteps behind her, and they all turned to Pug Logan's messenger as he came running towards them.

"Which is Mr. Evans?" the boy panted.

And when Bob was pointed out to him he handed him the note from the Monk.

Bob's face hardened as he read the scrawled words, and he passed the note across to the count:

"Read that!"

"He wants you to go alone!" the count exclaimed.

"You wouldn't be fool enough to do that, would you?" Leontine asked excitedly, as she read the message over the count's shoulder. "Bob, if he got his hands on you—"



Bob Evans, clutching Mary Crawford in a desperate embrace, felt his fingers slipping on the rusted metal—felt the carrier lurching and swaying while it ran at dizzying speed down the cable! (See page 28.)

"Yes, I'll go alone!" Bob told them, and his eyes narrowed as he spoke. "I'd rather give up the blueprints, if I had them, than see Mary in danger!"

"And it's the blueprints he's after!" Mr. Scott said quickly. "That much is plain enough. No doubt he thinks you've got them already, Bob!"

"Then he thinks wrong!" Bob exclaimed. "I'm off right away! Which direction is Pine Bluff?"

"Turn to the left at the first break in the trail," the mine-owner told him. "You'll find a path that skirts the coast, then it cuts through a wood near the Bluff, and rounds the side of a cliff. You can't miss the way!"

"Thanks!" Bob turned to the boy, who was standing a little way off. "All right, sonny, you can tell the man who sent that message that I'm on my way!"

The boy ran off. The count and Leontine tried to stop Bob going alone, and to persuade him to wait until Mr. Scott had gathered a few men who would back him up; but Bob would wait for nothing. He started off down the trail at a run, and the three stood watching him out of sight before they turned to the house.

"I think we ought to follow him; he's certain to need help!" the count said. "The Monk will turn round on him as soon as he gets what he wants, and I know that he is more than a little afraid of Bob!"

Mr. Scott smiled a little.

"A fine fellow—and I won't let him down. If you will wait on the porch for a few minutes, I'll be ready to follow!"

He strode away, leaving the count and Leontine together on the veranda in front of the house. Leontine dropped to a chair, and she sat talking with the count for a little

while, then the mine-owner reappeared with four or five men behind him.

"Here are some men from my mine. They'll help us rescue Miss Crawford!" he said. "I don't think the gang will expect anything like this. We shall be right at Bob's heels, and ready to butt in if there is trouble!"

The miners were husky fellows, bronzed and big of shoulder. It seemed as though their boss had told them something of what lay ahead, for they all looked grim and purposeful.

Leontine rose and stepped towards the count.

"Are you sure that you're worried about Bob?" she asked, in a half-whisper, and her black eyes held a strange expression as she looked at him. "Never mind about following him," she said. "I know you are only concerned about Mary, and I hate her!"

There was venom in her voice, and anger in her eyes. The count did not answer her. He shrugged his shoulders, then stepped away and joined the mine-owner and his men.

Leontine stood on the veranda steps watching them as they followed the trail that Bob had taken. As she watched she felt all her old suspicions rise. The Monk had never trusted the count; she knew that he was not playing straight with the Crawfords or with Bob Evans. Was he planning to cheat her as well?

Leontine's lips tightened at the thought. It would be an evil day for the man who called himself Count K. if he tried to play fast and loose with her!

Trapped!

IN Pug Logan's house at Pine Bluff, Mary was pacing the floor, waiting anxiously. She knew that the Monk had some scheme on to get Bob into his clutches, and she felt that soon—very soon—Bob must come on the scene.

Outside her window the sentry paced up and down, glancing at her suspiciously each time that he passed. A dozen times she moved to the door and listened to what was going on in the other room, and it was shortly after one of these breaks in her restless pacing that she heard the key click in the lock. The door opened, and the Monk entered.

"I've sent for Bob Evans to bring the blueprints!" he said grimly. "If he loves you, he'll give them up—and don't you try to interfere!"

Mary made no answer. She gazed fearlessly back into the Monk's deep-sunk eyes as he glared at her. He spoke no other word, but turned abruptly for the door. Mary watched him go, her heart beating quickly; she could tell from the crook's manner that he was in a desperate humour.

He locked the door on the outside just as a man came towards him.

"Mrs. Logan's gone," he said. "We're all ready, if you are."

"All right, get on with it!" the Monk ripped at him; and he stepped to where the outline of a trapdoor showed in the floor. He lifted it and dropped swiftly through to a short ladder beneath. The ladder led him to the end of a tunnel—a long heading from the derelict mine above which Pug Logan's house stood.

The tunnel was hot and the air was musty; its floor was cluttered with rubble, amidst which showed the rails of a tramway. Along this tunnel the Monk made his way to a branch which had been made by Pug Logan himself. This branch led to a path that rounded a shoulder of a cliff, and the Monk reached the open air by a door which was very cunningly concealed. On the outside the secret door looked like part of the rocky face all about it.

Down the path the Monk met Pug Logan, and the two went on until they entered the wood of the valley below.

"We sha'n't have long to wait for him!" growled Pug. "It's a— There he is!" He exclaimed the words as he pulled the Monk behind a tree, the trunk of which was partly screened by bushes. Bob showed some little way ahead of them, running down a slope in the faintly-defined trail that he was following.

He had run almost all the way from Livingston Scott's house, and even as the Monk and Pug sighted him he pulled up with a jerk.

Through a break in the trees ahead of him he saw a figure seated on a boulder, plucking at the twigs of a bush growing close by the stone. He recognised the clothes as Mary's, and a smile broke on his face as he called: "Mary!"

The girl did not answer him. Bob called again, then

sprinted forward. He was up to her in a dozen swift strides, and he touched her on the shoulder.

"Mary, how did you get away from—"

His words died in his throat. It was not Mary! He found himself looking into the creased, laughing features of Mrs. Pug Logan.

"What are you doing in Miss Crawford's clothes?" Bob demanded angrily. "What's the game? Where is—"

"Thought I was her, eh?" And the woman laughed again. Yet through her laughter she glanced anxiously toward the path down which the Monk and Pug Logan should appear. She saw them approaching, and she held Bob's attention as she went on: "You didn't imagine the Monk would turn her loose till he got the blueprints, did you?"

Before Bob could answer her, the Monk and Pug were up to him, ranging one on either side of him. Bob glanced from one to the other, and he saw that this had all been planned. They had dressed the woman up to decoy him; no doubt he was now pretty well in the midst of the Monk's gang, they'd be hidden in the bushes and trees all around. The least sign of resistance, and they would close in on him; it was to get him well surrounded that the pseudo Mary had played her part.

"You've come, then!" the Monk grated. "Well, where are the blueprints?"

He held out his hand as he spoke. Bob met his gaze levelly. He had not got the blueprints, and he didn't want the Monk to get them. But he had to meet guile with guile. His first need was to find out just where Mary was; after that matters could take their course.

"I'll explain everything when you lead me to Mary Crawford," he said; and certainly did mean to explain everything—with his fists!

The Monk grunted. Suddenly he stepped closer and ran his hands over Bob's pockets. He felt the crackle of papers, and from the young reporter's breast-pocket he drew out the Cross Word puzzle and its accompanying papers. He examined it, scowled at it, and then handed it back.

"Thanks!" Bob ripped at him. "But I didn't come here to be searched, and I didn't—"

"Then come on; bring him, Pug!" And the pugilist laid a mighty hand on Bob's arm and urged him up the path. As they went, men appeared from out the bushes around and moved along with them—a sinister bodyguard. Bob's eyelids drooped when he saw them, and his grey eyes glittered a little. This was what he had expected. He had walked right into some kind of trap—but he would take a lot of keeping in it! Besides, Scott and the count would probably be hard on his trail. In a little while the Monk would be discovering that he had bitten off rather more than he could chew!

The group reached the narrow path along the cliff-face and, to Bob's amazement, the Monk halted in front of what was apparently solid rock. Pug stepped forward, tucked his hands in a crevice, and pulled open the secret door. The woman passed through the opening.

"Go on!" growled the Monk, nodding to Bob. The young reporter hesitated a moment, then followed the woman in Mary's clothes.

Bob found himself in a small cave, and he looked around him in the dim light.

"Miss Crawford isn't here!" he exclaimed.

"Course she isn't!" the Monk snarled. "Down that tunnel there. Follow the lady!"



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Through the tunnel Bob went, backed by the gang. He climbed the ladder at the end and found himself emerging into a big sitting-room. The Monk and the rest followed him up, and the moment that the leader of the gang was in the room Bob turned on him.

"Where is she?" he demanded.

"We'll soon show you!" the Monk answered him. As he spoke he gestured to Mrs. Logan. She unlocked the door of the room in which Mary was imprisoned and passed through. Bob started to follow her, but the Monk barred his path, gesturing threateningly. He waited until he heard a call from the inner room; then he opened the door and allowed Bob to look in.

He saw Mary struggling in the grasp of the woman who was holding her and preventing her from running to the now open door.

"Mary!" gasped Bob; and with a jump he made for the door. On the instant the Monk sent him reeling back across the room and locked the door. He laughed evilly as he faced Bob again, and he stuck his hands in his pockets as he exclaimed:

"Give me the blueprints, and you and Mary will go free!"

"You've seen all I know about them!" Bob exclaimed. He dived his hand in his pocket and pulled out the Cross Word puzzle and the other paper, handing them to the Monk. "I swear that is all we know about the blueprints. If I had them I'd gladly give them you!"

The Monk glanced at them, then flung them angrily back. They went scattering across the floor as he snarled:

"Then you'll stay here till you come across them, and she'll stay here, too!"

With the words he gestured savagely, then bent over the open trapdoor to yell:

"Pug!" The man came leaping up the ladder, closing the trap after him. "Watch him close!" the Monk grated. "I'll try and fix something that'll settle him—if he won't talk!" he flung round at Bob. "You've got those plans. If you haven't, you know where they are! You've given me trouble enough one way and another, and now I'll fix you for good and all!"

He stepped swiftly out of the room, and Bob watched him go. Pug Logan hauled a table across the floor until two of the legs were set above the trapdoor; then he dropped into a chair, rested his feet comfortably on the table, and said to Bob:

"An' lemme tell you that he means all he says! He don't like you a little bit, the Monk don't! An' now he's gone. If you want to have a chat wi' the gal in there, you can do it through the door! But don't you try to come no funny stuff, 'cause I won't stand for it! An' just keep yer voices low!"

At this unexpected concession Bob stepped eagerly to the door. He did not know that it was all part of a plan of the Monk's that Pug Logan would listen to their conversation, hoping to pick up some clue to what the Monk sought.

The Cable of Courage!

IT was just as Bob, the Monk, and the rest disappeared through the secret door in the rocky face of the cliff that a tall, grey-haired figure stepped swiftly down the path, hesitated a moment, then swung the door open, and followed the gang as they passed up the tunnel beyond the cave.

It was Mr. Crawford. The count had told him that he would be able to work in comfort and in secrecy if his enemies believed that he had been killed; but Mr. Crawford had not thought that the fight between Bob and the gang would continue.

The conflict was being waged as bitterly as ever, and the inventor dared not reveal to them that he was still alive; the Monk would learn it speedily, and that would bring the gang on his trail again. He had sent the cablegram to Livingston Scott, and he had signed it as "The Shadow"—that cognomen covered his identity—and it was like a shadow that he moved down the tunnel after the gang.

He stood for a long while at the foot of the ladder, listening to the voices that drifted down through the open trap. Then he heard Pug Logan's footsteps along the tunnel behind him, and he slipped into a black niche just in time to avoid the man. He heard Logan called, and watched him go up, then he pulled paper and pencil from his pocket, and, at the foot of the ladder, hurriedly scrawled a note.

With the paper in his hand, he returned to the path along the cliff-face, and he closed the door behind him, tucking the note into place at the top of the secret door, then he vanished up the path as rapidly and as silently as he had appeared.

"The Shadow" was barely out of sight when Count K., Livingston Scott, and his miners appeared on the path

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SEE THE FILM!

that ran through the woods below. They were following Bob's trail, and a minute or so later they started the climb up the cliff path.

It was Scott who saw the note first. He stared at it for a moment, then pulled it down and read:

The tunnel back of the Bluff leads to Pug Logan's cabin. They are there.

THE SHADOW.

He passed the note to the count, then bent to look at the place from which he had taken the note. He was not long in discovering that a door existed where there appeared to be solid rock.

"This must be the tunnel he means," said Scott. "Who the deuce the Shadow is, I don't know, but he's given us a good tip."

"You follow the tunnel," said the count. "I'll take a few men the other way. I know Logan's cabin—this path leads right past it."

With two men, the mine-owner entered the tunnel, and walked quickly down its length. They found the ladder at the end of the heading beyond the tunnel, saw the trapdoor above, and guessed its meaning.

Scott stood listening for a few seconds, climbing to the top of the ladder to do so. He caught Bob's voice as he talked through the closed door to Mary on the other side. The mine-owner did not hesitate.

"I'll shove open this trap, then we'll rush!" he whispered to his men, and he acted with his words.

The trap went up with a crash, heaving over the table standing on it, and sending Pug and his chair flying. Bob, from the door, caught a single glimpse of the bearded features of Livingston Scott and the men behind him. With a shout of warning to Mary, the young reporter piled all his weight on to the door.

At the third attempt Bob sent the door crashing open, splinters of wood flying as the lock was torn bodily from its fastenings. He saw Mary in the room, breaking away from the woman, and she ran to meet him.

"I'll get you out of it!" Bob exclaimed. "Down that

trap, quick!" He rushed her to the door, just as Pug Logan picked himself off the floor and leaped at the mine-owner. Scott met his bull-like charge with a smashing right that sent him sprawling half across the opening of the trap-door, just as Bob ran into the room with Mary at his side.

Bob bent, he tucked his arms round Logan's body, and, with a single heave, sent the man slithering across the room. He held out his hands to Mary, and lowered her to the ladder.

"We're clear, Mr. Scott!" he yelled, as he followed her. "Right!" roared the mine-owner, and he lashed out as Pug Logan came at him again. The room was full of fighting men now, and through them the Monk came plunging, knocking friend and foe out of the way as he saw his two prisoners escaping.

He bawled to Logan, who followed him, and the two went tumbling headlong down the ladder in wild pursuit of Bob and Mary.

But already Bob was in the heading. He heard the crooks come down the ladder, and the need for haste confused him. It was difficult to tell which way to go in the dim light, instead of taking the tunnel to the cliff-face, he hurried Mary along the heading.

In a couple of hundred yards or so they saw the bright light of day ahead of them, and a few seconds later they found themselves standing on a shelf of rock. From an iron frame above, a steel cable ran sheer across the gulf below them; at their end, caught by chocks, a rusted carrier hung supported on its pulleys.

Below them, the cliff dropped smooth and straight, with no path on either side. Evidently the heading had been used to tap ore from the mine, which was carried across the gulf to workings on the far side.

"We can't get away!" Mary gasped. "There's no path, and—"

She broke off. From the tunnel behind them they heard a hoarse, muffled shout—the Monk's voice as he sighted them.

"There's a chance!" Bob exclaimed. "Quick, let me help you up!" and he pointed to the carrier.

Mary was as plucky as he himself, and, without hesitation, she allowed him to assist her over the iron side of the car-

rier. Bob kicked away the chocks, tumbled over the side, and regained his feet just as the thing began to move.

At that moment the Monk and Pug Logan appeared in the mouth of the tunnel behind. Both stopped dead.

"Come back!" bawled the Monk. "The cables are unsafe!"

Bob grinned to Mary as the carrier gathered way. "Couldn't go back now if we wanted to," he said cheerfully. "And we— Gosh! I hope that the Monk's not right! Look down there!" And he pointed over the side.

Far below them angry waves foamed and surged about jagged, black spikes of rock.

Bob saw the baffled figures of the Monk and Pug Logan now receding, as the carrier gathered way on the cable.

He looked again to the hideous rocks below them, and—

There was a sudden jerk and a snap above his head. He glanced up. The rusted cables that held the carrier to its wheels were parting—they snapped as he watched!

The carrier tilted, one end dropping sheer. Mary gasped as she felt herself falling; Bob caught her, while he claved with his free hand.

Both slithered as the carrier tipped. Her weight proved too much for the single hold that he had on the side of the carrier. His grip slipped. They dropped while he grappled wildly, and found a fresh hold on the broken strands of wire rope.

A second he clung there.

The carrier was hanging from one end now. They were swinging in mid air—Bob's weight, and Mary's, pendant on the grip of his left hand alone.

He felt his fingers slipping on the rusted metal—felt the carrier lurching and swaying while it still ran at dizzying speed down the cable.

With all his strength Bob tried to renew his grip, then the cable itself broke and came away in his hand!

They dropped, whirling over and over, falling through thin air!

And down below, the lashing waves, whipped to foam on broken, menacing spikes of jet-black rock, awaited them!

(Could Death possibly be cheated again? Next week's instalment will be even more thrilling than its predecessors—so don't miss it whatever you do, chums.)

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