

NELSON LEE! JACK HARTLEY! TEDDY LESTER!

The Boys' Realm 1d.
of Sport and Adventure

EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY.

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THE NEW BOWLER

A TALE OF COUNTY CRICKET & NELSON LEE, DETECTIVE.
By Maxwell Scott



TEDDY LESTER'S SCHOOLDAYS

By John Finnemore.

THE 1st CHAPTER.

Dabney the Romancer.

"K NOW him?" said Dabney. "Oh, of course!" Dabney made the remark with an air of easy assurance, but some of the fellows in the room did not seem to be quite impressed. Paget, the skipper of the Mountford Cricket Club, grunted; he was a fellow of few words, but his grunt expressed a great deal. Norris winked solemnly into his lemon-squash. Jones smiled out of the window. But another fellow, who perhaps did not know Dabney quite so well, made the eager inquiry at once:

"Do you really, Dab? What's he like?" The fellows present all belonged to the Mountford Cricket Club, and they had been talking cricket, and discussing the team's prospects in a match that was to come off the following week. It was likely to be a tough match for Mountford, and some of them were anxious as to the result, for they didn't like the prospect of Dalrymple's coming and licking them on their own ground, under the eyes of their fellow-townsmen. As far as batting was concerned, Mountford were pretty reliable; but their bowling was weak, and their fielding—as Paget declared in his blunt way—was wicked. And from the rotten fielding of the Mountford men, the talk had naturally turned upon a certain famous cricketer, famous especially for his powers in that branch of the great summer game.

The cricketer in question was a young Indian, a dusky Jam from our Empire in the East, who had won golden opinions from all sorts of people by his wonderful cricket. He had played for his university, and had been successful as a county cricketer; and Paget made the remark that next week's match would be all right if Mountford had a single chap like Jam in their ranks. All present had heard of him—but no one had happened to see him in the flesh—with the exception of Dabney—if Dabney's account was to be believed.

Dabney was one of those fellows who knew everything, have been everywhere, and have met everybody. Fellows took Dabney's statements about his experiences with a large amount of salt. He was not exactly untruthful—he would have scorned a lie with genuine scorn—but he had a vivid imagination that would have made his fortune as a novel-writer. He would say things in the heat of the moment that did not exactly square with the facts, and if he found credence, he would go on insensibly, hardly noticing how distant he was getting from the sober truth. And so, when he remarked that he knew the Jam of Jagpore, his words were not received with the keen interest they would otherwise have evoked. There was only one fellow—and he was a late recruit to the club—who asked for further information.

"What's he like, Dab?" Dabney coughed slightly. But he caught a grin upon the face of Norris, and he went on in self-defence, as it were.

"Oh, a fine fellow, and a fine cricketer—medium size, and very well put together—much about my own build—jolly dark complexion, of course—they're all dark in Jagpore. You should see him field! Gets over the ground like greased lightning. He said to me after the Oxford and Cambridge match—"

There was a sound of bubbling as Jones sniggered over his lemonade. Dabney looked at him.

"Gone down the wrong way," said Jones, in a tone of explanation.

Dabney sniffed. Whenever he found one of his fairy tales doubted, his custom was to back it up with a bigger fairy tale, and that he now proceeded to do.

"I'm only sorry Jaggy—we always called him Jaggy, you know—I'm only sorry Jaggy is too busy a man to be able to come to a small place like Mountford, or I'd ask him to play for us next week. He'd do it like a shot if I asked him. I had the opportunity once of doing him a small service—a little matter that was effected through my influence with the Surrey committee—and he told me at the time that he'd do anything for me."

"Fancy that!" said the seeker after information innocently. "What a pity he can't come down here!"

"Yes, isn't it? I've half a mind to write and ask him, anyway; we could keep a place open for him till the last moment, couldn't we, Paget?"

Paget grunted.

"Still, I don't like the idea of presuming on a little favour I've done a chap," said Dabney magnanimously. "I shouldn't like to interfere with his playing in a county match, either. I should feel rotten if I learned that he had put off something at Lord's or the Oval on my account."

"It's a pity," said Paget grimly. "I'm sure the Jam would play if you asked him, Dab. I haven't the slightest doubt of it. Not a bit!" Dabney reddened.

"Look here, Paget—"

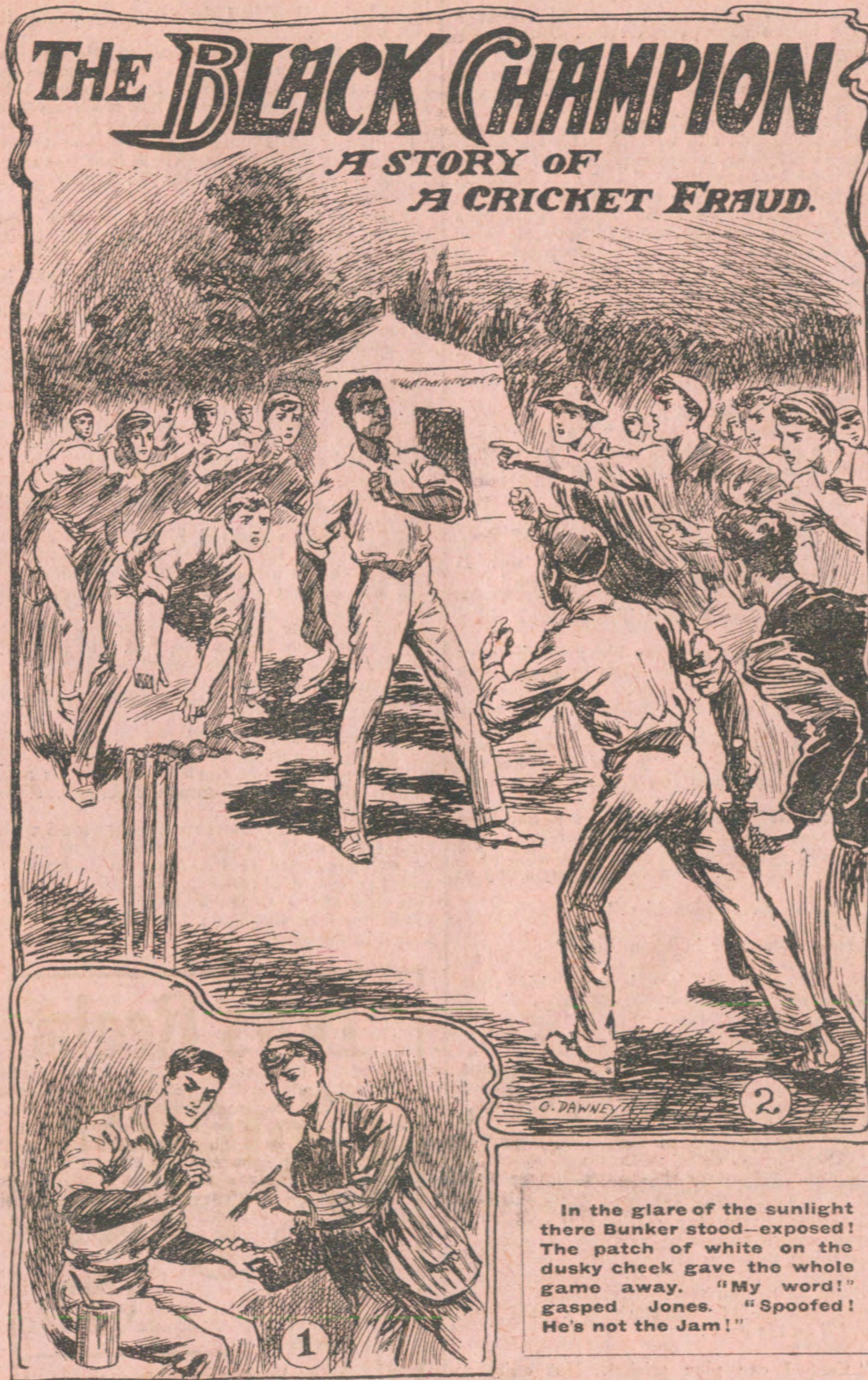
He was interrupted. The door was opened and a big fellow came in, looking somewhat excited.

"Have you heard, you chaps?" he inquired.

"No; any news?"

"Yes; I've just heard it in the town. The Jam of Jagpore is staying with Sir Alfred Potts over at Deepdene, a couple of miles from here—you remember, the chap who did the double hat-trick last season?"

"My word! At Deepdene?"



"Yes. Shouldn't wonder if we see something of him," said the new-comer. "I've never seen him, but I should like to. Anybody here who has seen the chap?"

"Yes," said Paget, with a grin; "there's Dab."

"Oh, Dab!" said Chichester, without asking for further information. He knew Dab!

"Yes; knows him well," said the innocent youth, who had been sucking in Dabney's wild statements. "Knew him at Oxford, and helped him to get on to a county team. I never knew that Dabney had such friends in first-class cricket before. And I say!" exclaimed the young man eagerly. "If he's staying down here, there's no reason why Dab shouldn't ask him to play for us next week. He'd do anything for Dabney!"

Dabney turned almost green.

"My hat," exclaimed Paget, "what a splendid idea! It's only half an hour's walk over to Deepdene, Dab. Why not walk over to-morrow and speak to the Jam about it?"

"Good!" said Norris and Jones together.

Dabney murmured something unintelligible. "What a splendid wheeze!" went on young Smith. "We'll knock Dalrymple into a cocked hat if the Jam consents to play. And he'd do anything for Dabney."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Paget, unable to contain himself any longer.

"Why, what's the joke?" demanded young Smith. "Ain't it a jolly good idea to ask the Jam to play for us, as he's in the neighbour-hood?"

"Oh, ripping! But Dabney won't!"

"Why not? Won't you, Dab?"

Dabney glared at Paget. Never in all the years of his boasting and "gassing" had he come to such a pass. Always he had left himself some tiny loophole of retreat, but now it was an absolute show-up. And there was that brute Paget laughing away like a lunatic, not even pretending to believe his yarns. It was piggish of Paget, but certainly the Mountford Munchausen had been very careless this time. Worst of all to the unfortunate boaster was the amazement of young Smith. Dabney felt a curious desire to keep the faith of that innocent young man intact.

"Oh, no, Dab won't!" grinned Jones. "Dab wouldn't like to trouble him!"

"Oh, that's all rot!" exclaimed Smith indignantly. "I suppose we want to lick Dalrymple, and as the Jam would do anything for Dab—I say, Dab, you haven't been pulling our leg, have you?"

"Certainly not!" said Dabney desperately. "The Jam would do anything I asked him, but—"

"But what?" Dabney hesitated, but the smiles on all faces determined him to about the most reckless humbug of his career.

"Well, I will ask him!" he exclaimed. "I'll walk over to Deepdene to-morrow, and I have no doubt that he'll play!"

"Good!" exclaimed young Smith gleefully. "Won't it be a surprise for Dalrymple?"

"Ye-o-es," said Paget; "if he plays!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said the innocent youth. "He'd do anything for Dabney!"

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

Bunker Offers Advice.

DABNEY thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and his brows were wrinkled into a thoughtful frown as he walked homeward.

He could hardly believe that he had been idiot enough to get himself into such a fix; but there it was. He was in the scrape, and how to get out of it he hadn't the faintest idea.

Of course, he could say that he had asked the Jam, and that the latter had declined to play; but how would that square with his previous statements that the Prince of Jagpore would do anything for him? Besides, it would be such an obvious humbug that it was certain to be disbelieved; already Dabney fancied he could see the mocking smiles of the Mountford fellows.

But to get the Jam to play, that was impossible.

Dabney not only had no claim upon him, but he did not even know him, and as a matter of fact, had never seen him. Now, in the cool moments of dismay it seemed to him incredible that he had allowed his imagination, and his absurd desire to make himself of consequence, to lead him on to such wild exaggerations. If only he were well out of this scrape, he

mentally vowed he would follow the straight and unromantic path of facts as a needle follows the magnet. What an utter ass he had been to involve himself in such a maze of exaggeration and falsehood. But it was too late to think of that. How was he to extricate himself from the tangle, without showing himself up to everybody as a—well, he knew what they would consider him—a very ugly word he did not like to pronounce.

Dabney went into his rooms, looking as if he were going to a funeral. A man was seated in Dabney's easy-chair, with his feet on Dabney's table, and one of Dabney's best smokes between his teeth. He looked up as Dabney came in, and nodded and grinned at him affably.

"Hallo, Dab!"

"Hallo, Bunker!" said Dabney. "I didn't know you were down here."

Mr. Bunker rose and shook hands. He was an old acquaintance of Dabney's, and he adorned the stage in London when he was not "resting," and his rests were long. Dabney often referred to him in Mountford as "my friend, the famous London actor, Bunker." As a matter of fact, Mr. Bunker generally appeared on the stage as the front legs of a camel, or as a halberdier in a procession, and when he had a speaking part his speeches were generally confined to such lines as "My lord, the carriage waits." But he might have been a Garrick, a Kemble, and an Irving all rolled into one by the way Dabney talked of him—in his absence.

"You're looking down in the mouth," said Mr. Bunker, regarding his friend with a critical eye. "I'm resting, you know, and I thought I'd look in for a day or two. If I'm in the way—"

"Not at all."

"What's the trouble?"

Dabney came to the sudden resolution of confiding everything to Mr. Bunker, and asking his counsel. At all events, he could rely upon Mr. Bunker for sympathy and secrecy.

"I'm in a deuce of a hole," he said. "Advise me."

"Go ahead, dear boy!" said Mr. Bunker, helping himself to a fresh cigar from Dabney's box, and seating himself on the corner of the table. "Unbosom yourself. I can give you the best advice gratis; you can rely upon your old chum for assistance in everything except financial matters."

And Dabney unbosomed himself.

To his surprise and annoyance, Mr. Bunker received his stammering, blushing confession with a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Mr. Bunker. "Ho, ho, ho!"

Dabney stared and glared.

"Look here, Bunker—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If that's all you've got to say—"

"Ho, ho, ho!" gasped Mr. Bunker. "Same old Dabney! Do you remember telling me when I first met you that you knew Irving, and would speak for me and get me a leading part in 'Merchant of Venice?' Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"Excuse my smiles," said Mr. Bunker, sobering down. His "smiles" had rung through the whole house. "It's all right."

"Is it?" grunted Dabney, very much huffed.

"I think—"

"It's all right. I can advise you, old chap. Don't get ratty. It seemed funny at first, you know. If it's only a cricketer you want I suppose a white man will do as well as a brown or black one. Play me. I know the game pretty well, and I should do you credit." "It isn't that," said Dabney impatiently. "We could get dozens of fellows to play. We want the Indian especially, because it's a hard match, and I've undertaken to get him to play. If he doesn't play—"

"And you don't know him?"

"N-n-n-n-no!"

Mr. Bunker shook his head sadly.

"You're growing too reckless, Dab. You should keep your whoppers within reasonable bounds. Now I—"

"Look here—"

"It's all right. The best thing you can do is to go to the Indian and make a clean breast of it," said Mr. Bunker seriously. "I've heard of the chap, and I know he's a decent fellow and very good-natured. He might take pity on you, and play out of sheer good-nature."

Dabney looked very dubious.

"It's your only chance," urged Mr. Bunker. "If you say you've asked him, and he's refused, you'll be laughed at. It's a sporting chance, and I advise you to take it."

And poor Dabney, upon reflection, decided to follow his friend's advice.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

A Puzzling Situation.

MR. BUNKER had advised Dabney to strike the iron while it was hot, and Dabney was eager to put his fate to the touch, so to speak; so the following morning he walked over to Deepdene on a forlorn hope. As luck would have it, he met Paget and Jones in the street, and they seemed to guess at once where he was going.

"I'm going over to see the Jam," said Dabney, with something of his old manner. Even if he was to be exposed there was no reason why he shouldn't keep up the fiction till the last possible moment.

"Good!" said Paget. "We're out for a stroll. We'll walk over with you, if you like."

"Certainly," said Jones.

"I can't very well take you in," said Dabney hesitatingly.

"No, you can't," assented Paget, with a peculiar intonation in his voice. And Jones was taken with a fit of sniggering, and Dabney went on hastily:

"I—I mean, I can't take you into the place. I don't know Potts. You can walk with me there and wait in the lane."

"Right-ho!" said Paget, wondering whether Dabney would really have the nerve to go to Deepdene at all. He was soon convinced, for Dabney walked boldly in at the gates of Sir Alfred Potts' residence, and Paget and Jones sat on a stile near at hand to wait for him to come out. Jones looked puzzled.

"There can't be anything in it?" he said slowly. "He can't know the Jam?"

Paget grinned. "Of course not."

"Then what is he gone there for?"

"Bluff."

"The silly ass!"

Meanwhile, Dabney had asked to see the Jam on particular business connected with cricket, and as he gave the impression that he came with some urgent message from the Jam of Jagpore's club, he was directed to the garden, where the dusky cricketer was walking with Sir Alfred Potts. Dabney went into the garden, where he discovered a stout, elderly gentleman with a ruddy face engaged in conversation with a young man of stalwart frame and dusky complexion, evidently the famous Jam.

But Dabney noted with a sinking heart that the Jam wore his right arm in a sling, and all of a sudden it rushed upon his mind that the reason of the Jam's stay in that quiet corner of the country was some damage he had received which necessitated his resting for a time. And at that thought Dabney's last hope vanished.

Sir Alfred Potts looked at Dabney.

"Who are you? What do you want?"

"I—I have a message for his Highness the Jam," faltered Dabney.

"Oh, very good!"

And Sir Alfred strolled up the garden, leaving the Jam alone with the visitor. The Jam nodded to him agreeably, and asked what the message was.

"It's from the Mountford Cricket Club," explained Dabney. "An amateur club in these parts," he explained, as a blank look came over the handsome, dusky face of the Jam. "They heard that you were down here, and—"

"Yes," said the Jam kindly enough. "Go on."

"And—and that you were kind enough to take an interest in amateur cricket."

"Certainly," said the Jam.

"So I—we—they thought that—that perhaps you'd care to play for us in one of our matches," stammered Dabney. "Of course, we're nothing like the form you're accustomed to; it would be a little amusement for you if you cared for it."

The Jam smiled genially.

"Thank you very much," he said. "But as it happens I am here resting, as I have had the misfortune to hurt my wrist. Immediately I am fit for play again I am returning to my club. Thank you all the same."

There was evidently nothing more to be said. Dabney stammered something, and made his way out of the garden. The perspiration was thick on his brow as he emerged into Mountford Lane.

His last hope had vanished! What was he to say to the fellows? It would be easy enough to mention that the Jam's wrist was damaged, and that he could not play if he wanted to. Unfortunately, the truth would be no more believed than an untruth.

The Jam actually was unable to play. But Dabney could imagine the mockery with which that explanation would be received by the Mountford fellows. Poor Dabney was in the position of the boy in the fable, who cried "Wolf!" so often when the wolf was not there, that when the wolf came, and he cried again, he was not listened to. True or false, any explanation he made for the Jam's refusal would not be believed.

"Well?" said Paget and Jones together, slipping off the stile.

"You see—" began Dabney awkwardly.

Jones sniggered.

"Of course, he's declined?" said Paget sympathetically. "He has broken his leg, hasn't he? Or a near relation has just died? Or he's given up cricket?"

"No," grunted Dabney, stung into new humbug by Paget's tone; "nothing of the sort. He's consented to play."

"What!"

The words were scarcely out of Dabney's mouth before he repented them. But it was too late then.

"He's consented to play?" said Paget.

"Yes!" replied Dabney desperately.

"Oh, good!"

"He's sorry he won't be able to come down before the match and practice with the side," went on Dabney, surprising himself by the fluency of his invention. "But he'll be ready next Saturday, and you can rely on him."

Paget was very silent during the walk back to Mountford. It was borne in upon his mind that even liars tell the truth sometimes; and it was possible that there was something in Dabney's yarn this time. After all, Dabney might know the Jam—it was not impossible, though the fellows had taken for granted that it was all humbug, as usual.

"Blessed if I know what to make of it!" said Jones, when they had parted from Dabney.

And Paget shook his head.

"Same here!" he said. "We may have been too hard on Dab for once. Of course, it would be a splendid thing if the Jam really played for us."

"Will you keep a place open in case?"

"Yes, up to the match," said Paget, after a moment's thought. "If he's not on the field, we can play our usual eleven, you see. It won't do any harm to give Dab a chance."

And Jones assented.

Dabney walked home with his brain in a whirl.

Mr. Bunker was awaiting him; and he gave a prolonged whistle when Dabney desperately confessed what he had done.

"My hat!" said Mr. Bunker. "You're in it this time, and no mistake—deep!"

"I've a jolly good mind to bunk," said Dabney desperately. "I couldn't live in Mountford and face the fellows after they found out!"

"Hold on!" said Mr. Bunker, who had been doing some thinking that morning. "You say you've promised that the Jam shall play?"

"Yes—definitely. And they're beginning to believe it."

"They've never seen him?"

"Never!"

"He's a stranger in Mountford?"

"Absolutely!"

"Then—Mr. Bunker lowered his voice cautiously—"I can help you, old chap!"

Dabney stared at him.

"What are you driving at?"

"Spoof them!"

Mr. Bunker spoke in a low and mysterious tone.

Dabney, not comprehending, continued to stare at him blankly.

"You don't catch on?"

"No, I don't."

"Spoof them!" grinned Mr. Bunker. "It will be a lark! You see, I've played nabobs and rajahs on the stage—ahem! I mean I've played native guards of rajahs and nabobs—same thing, as far as the make-up is concerned. Of course, make-up isn't so successful in the daylight as behind the footlights—but I fancy I could manage it! You can play a spoof Jam. And I'll be the Jam!"

"You?"

"Yes! I can play cricket. Not quite so well as the Jam," Mr. Bunker grinned. "But it's not so important to win the match as to keep up the game. Anyway, I can play as well as anybody in Mountford, I don't doubt. So the side won't suffer. What do you say? I rather fancy myself as the Black Champion. Ha, ha, ha!"

Dabney silently grasped his friend's hand.

THE 4th CHAPTER.

The Mountford Match.

DABNEY had surprised his friends of the Mountford Cricket Club more than once; he surprised them more than ever now. It was impossible to doubt now that the Jam was really going to play for Mountford. It was hardly to be expected that a county cricketer of such standing would turn up to practise with a local team. So long as he turned up on the day of the match, all would be well. And Dabney was so assured, so circumstantial about that, that even the hardiest doubting Thomas of the club felt his misgivings melt away.

It seemed impossible, even to Paget, that Dabney could keep up the humbug so brazenly if the Jam were not to appear on Saturday for the match. He had left himself no loophole—no means of escape! If the Jam did not appear, Dabney was branded for ever in the eyes of his fellow townsmen. For it was not only the club, but all the people round about, who were interested in cricket, of course, took a deep interest in the matter. The whole village was excited about it.

And when, on the Thursday before the match, Dabney was seen walking in the High Street with a young man of dusky complexion, excitement reached its height, and even Paget believed. For whom could the dusky gentleman be, if not the Jam of Jagpore?

It was, as it were, a proof-shot on Dabney's part. If the "spoof" Jam successfully ran the gauntlet of the curious eyes in Mountford High Street, there was no reason why he should not face the ordeal of the cricket-field successfully.

And the pseudo Jam passed unquestioned in the street.

Jones came up and was introduced to the Jam, and went away delighted and quite satisfied. He told the other fellows, and they

agreed that they had done Dabney wrong in this instance.

Young Smith was enthusiastic. He had believed in Dabney all along, and he spoke scornfully of fellows who doubted him. He had told them so, etc. Young Smith had it all his own way at present. For the Jam story had been the biggest of Dabney's yarns—and it had been proved to be the truth! If that was true, might not his other yarns be equally well founded? Why not?

And so Dabney was treated with a new respect and consideration at the club. Even Paget was deferential to him.

It was all very delightful to Dabney; and in the sunshine of success he forgot the good resolutions he had made in adversity. Instead of carefully following the sober truths, he trod the primrose path of dalliance more recklessly than ever, and his tales grew amazing. His stories of the adventures he and the Jam had had together amazed even young Smith. Yet even Paget hesitated to doubt them, when there was the Jam walking the streets of Mountford arm-in-arm with Dabney!

On the morning of the match with Dalrymple, Paget felt a glimmering of chill doubt.

But Dabney reassured him. He sought in Dabney's face for a trace of uneasiness, in vain. Dab was all smiles and all confidence.

It was evidently all right; and Paget was relieved.

And when the stumps were pitched, and the Dalrymple side had arrived on the ground, expectation reached fever point.

Where was the Jam?

There was a sudden shout from the crowd:

"Here he is!"

"Hurrah for the Jam!"

Paget gave a grunt of satisfaction.

There was the dusky cricketer, with his arm slipped affectionately through Dabney's, strolling up to the pavilion.

He doffed his hat to the cheering crowd with Oriental grace. He salaamed to Paget when he was presented to the Mountford skipper; and the crowd cheered again. His manner was, perhaps, a little too Indian for a fellow brought up in England; but that really only added to the effect.



He was very gracious, for so great a man, to the local cricketers; very gracious, too, to the visiting team.

The Dalrymple fellows were dismayed at the prospect of such an opponent; but, at the same time, it was something to have played against the famous Jam of Jagpore. They might be licked—they very likely would be—but it would figure for ever in the annals of the Dalrymple Cricket Club.

Paget sent in the Jam first, after winning the toss. If the Jam knocked up anything like one of his Oval scores, Mountford would be able to declare shortly.

The Dalrymple bowler went on with doubtful looks. What on earth could he expect to do against the Jam of Jagpore?

To his amazement, and the amazement of the crowd, he did great things. It was not a difficult ball to play; but the Jam did not play it. His bat whistled through empty air, and the ball whipped his off stump out of the ground.

There was a simultaneous gasp from hundreds of throats.

The Jam of Jagpore was out, first ball of the first over!

Paget's face was a study.

The crowd gasped and wondered. Doubtless it was an accident—or the famous cricketer was off his form!

The umpire hesitated to give so great a man out; but he had no choice in the matter.

The Jam was out!

The Dalrymple men grinned. They took it as a fluke, but it was a lucky fluke for them. They had got rid of their only dangerous opponent, and they proceeded to make hay of the rest of the home innings. In three-quarters of an hour the home wickets were all down for 20 runs. Dabney going out with a duck's egg, and Paget being not out at the finish with a dozen to his credit.

Then the Mountford crowd told themselves that after all the Jam was more famous at bowling and fielding than at the wicket, and now they would see what they would see. That was certainly true, but what they saw was not what they had expected to see. For the Jam, when he was put on to bowl, bowled as if he hadn't handled a cricket-ball for years! He nearly brained Paget with the first ball, and his second caught the batsman on the leg—not before wicket, by any means. The crowd gasped and stared. If this was the famous county cricketer, what on earth was county cricket coming to in England! Paget's face was a study as he watched the dusky bowler at work. The Jam finished the over without taking any wickets, but also, fortunately, without causing any serious bodily damage to friend or foe.

"My hat!" grunted Paget, as the field crossed over. "So that's the Jam! And he plays for a county! I wish you had let him alone, Dab."

Dabney was looking very uncomfortable. He hadn't had the faintest idea that his friend was such an infamous cricketer. He had only thought about success in the imposture, and cricket had had secondary consideration.

"I'm sorry!" he muttered.

"Oh, you couldn't help it," said Paget. "The chap's got a wonderful reputation, though I'm blessed if I know how. You couldn't know how he would turn out. But it's rotten! I'm not going to let him bowl again."

The other home bowlers did fairly well against the Dalrymple wickets, but the ball was not entrusted to the Jam again. Paget didn't know what to make of it, but it was quite clear that the Jam couldn't bat or bowl to-day. He was shockingly off his form—that must be it, though it certainly looked like clumsiness.

Paget still hoped something from the new recruit's fielding. He remembered all he had heard of the Jam's wonderful pace, of his certain delivery in returning a ball, of the infallible line it would take to the wicket, even from the depths of the long field.

But just now the Jam's fielding seemed to be on a par with his bowling and his batting. He certainly did his best; but his pace, with all his exertions, was not up to that even of young Smith, and he blundered even the easiest catches. If he returned a ball to the wicket-keeper he missed him by yards, or else seemed to be trying to brain him. And the disappointment of the crowd found expression in murmurs or moody silence.

Paget was getting wild.

What on earth did it all mean? he savagely asked himself. And at the end of an over, when the Jam had muffed a simple catch, and given the Dalrymple skipper a new lease of life at the wicket, he almost glared at the dusky cricketer.

The Jam had been exerting himself. The perspiration was pouring down his dusky face. He drew out his handkerchief and wiped it away, and there was a wild yell from Paget.

"My hat! The—the fraud! Look!"

The Jam faced him in surprise. He was not aware for the moment that the wiping of the perspiration from his dusky face had also wiped off a big patch of his dusky complexion.

In the glare of the sunlight there he stood—exposed! The patch of white on the dusky cheek gave the whole game away.

"My word!" gasped Jones. "Spoofed! He's not the Jam!"

"He's not the Jam!"

"Spoofed!"

"It's a swindle!"

"Where's Dabney?"

"What does it mean?"

The cricketers crowded round the exposed fraud. For some moments Mr. Bunker did not understand; then the patch of stain on his handkerchief enlightened him.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated.

The looks of the cricketers were excited and angry. They were shouting for Dabney, but Dabney was not forthcoming. Dabney had been fielding at cover-point, and he was making a straight line off the field now. But there was no escape for the unfortunate humbug who had personated the Jam of Jagpore.

"What does it mean?" roared Paget.

"You're not the Jam! You're a white man, you rotten fraud!"

"Hands off!" gasped Mr. Bunker. "It—it was only a lark! I—"

"So that was Dabney's little game!" grunted Paget.

"It was all lies, as usual, about knowing the Jam. And he got this rascal to come here and spoof us, to save his face! Where's Dabney?"

Dabney was gone. Mr. Bunker, not quite liking the looks of the cricketers, made a dash to escape. They were after him in a moment. He was bundled off the cricket-field with a dozen boots behind him helping him forward, and then the crowd took him in hand. Mr. Bunker's complexion was piebald, and his clothes were in tatters, when he was finally ejected from the ground, and he crawled away, feeling as if life were not worth living.

But afterwards, when the aches were gone from his bones, Mr. Bunker could afford to laugh over the occurrence. Not so Dabney. The unfortunate Munchausen of the Mountford Club dared not face the cricketers again. The match ended in a crushing defeat for Mountford; and when it was over, Paget and some other fellows went to look for Dabney.

It was perhaps fortunate that they did not find him. Dabney was gone, and from that day Mountford, and the Mountford Cricket Club, knew him no more.

THE END.

(More splendid sports' yarns in next week's BOYS' REALM.)

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