

CRICKET CHUMS.

A Grand, Complete Story.

By Charles Hamilton.

The Rajah Comes to Clivedale.

"I 'M not going to stand it!" growled Ganthony. He brought his fist down upon the study table by way of emphasising his remark.

"Hallo! Hallo!" exclaimed Jim Herries, looking up from Cicero. "What's the row now, Ganthony? You're always grousing about something. Blessed if I wouldn't as lief have a howling dervish for a study-mate!"

"You're going to have something of the sort," snapped Ganthony. "Old Mugs wants to shove that blooming nigger in here with us!"

"What nigger are you referring to? I wasn't aware there was one at Clivedale."

"You know who I mean. It's Kloumi Lal."

"Now, look here—"

A timid tap at the door interrupted Jim Herries.

"Come in!" he sang out.

The door opened. A tall, slim, lithe fellow stood there, his big black eyes looking inquiringly into the study. He was dressed in Etons, but his face, of a deep, dusky brown, and his dark, flashing eyes, betrayed the Oriental. It was Kloumi Lal, Rajah of Rampore, the new boy at Clivedale.

"Hallo!" said Jim cheerfully. "Come in! You're Kloumi Lal, I suppose? You're to share this study with us?"

"Mr. Mugford told me so," said the Hindu, speaking in perfect English. He looked out of the corner of his eye at Ganthony's scowling face. "I hope that you do not object."

"Oh, rats!" said Ganthony. "Why couldn't Mugs shove you into some other study? There may be chaps at Clivedale who like nig—"

He got no further, for Cicero, hurled by the deft hand of Jim Herries, caught him full on the mouth with a sounding smack, and he sprang up with a yell.

"I'll break your neck for that, Jim Herries!"

"Will you?" said Jim cheerily. "Break away, then. You've wanted a hiding for a long time, my son, and you may as well have it now!"

Ganthony rushed at him, and at it they went hammer and tongs, much to the amazement of the new boy, who stood regarding them with wide eyes of astonishment.

The fight was a brief one. Ganthony was no match for Jim Herries, nor had he half so much pluck. He had one closed eye and a visibly swelling nose when he cried off.

"Sure you've had enough?" inquired Jim politely.

"Yes, hang you!" snarled Ganthony, mopping his nose, from which the "claret" was freely flowing, with his handkerchief.

"If you haven't, I've got plenty more on tap," said Jim. "The question is, have you learned how to be civil to a new chap, or must I go on teaching you?"

"If you're going to take that blooming nigger under your wing—"

Biff!

Jim's left came out like a flash of lightning, and Ganthony sat down suddenly.

"Have some more?"

"You—you—" There was no word strong enough to express Ganthony's feelings. "I'll make you sit up for this some time, Jim Herries!"

"Oh, you couldn't frighten a mouse!" said Jim contemptuously. "If you don't know how to keep a civil tongue in your head, I shall have to educate you, that's all."

And that was how the Rajah of Rampore was installed in No. 5 Study, and how his acquaintance began with Jim Herries—an acquaintance that was to ripen into a deep and life-long friendship.

The New Recruit.

THE rajah soon settled down into the ways of Clivedale. Jim Herries did all that he could to make things easier for the new boy from a distant part of the Empire. He did it first from good nature, but he soon came to like the rajah very much. And from the first day Kloumi Lal had shown his attachment to Jim.

U. J.—303.

A MAGAZINE FOR READERS OF ALL AGES. "The Penny Pictorial." 1d. every Friday. Each issue contains a Splendid Tale of Sexton Blake, Detective.

Ganthony did not depart from the attitude he had taken up at first, but with the rest of the Form the rajah became popular. There was no nonsense about him, and he was so kind and obliging that a fellow couldn't help liking him. He had only one enemy, and that was George Ganthony. But that one contrived to make his enmity felt. As he was the rajah's study mate he had plenty of opportunities, and Jim could not always interfere.

The rajah entered into the sports with a keenness that won Jim's hearty approval. He was the keenest of all upon cricket. He rather surprised Jim when the latter first took him out to practice at the nets.

Jim was one of the finest cricketers at Clivedale, and one of the pillars of the first eleven. He recognised in Kloumi Lal a cricketer after his own heart, and their friendship was cemented by their love of the grand old game. The rajah had not been long at Clivedale before his form attracted the notice of Maurice, the school captain, who was much exercised in his mind at that very time about the formation of the team he was to play against Northwold College.

"Ah, that looks something like!" exclaimed Maurice, stopping to watch the rajah batting against Jim. "There's form, if you like!"

Jim was one of the deadliest bowlers of the first eleven, and the rajah was keeping his wicket up in fine style. Maurice watched him enthusiastically.

"Let's see what you can do with the leather, Kloumi Lal," he called out.

And the rajah obediently slung the bat to Jim Herries and took the ball.

Now, Jim was as fine a batsman as Clivedale could boast, and Maurice knew it. But it was plain that Jim had all his work cut out to stop the balls the rajah sent down, and at last one broke in a tricky way just where the batsman did not expect it, and whipped the middle stump out of the ground in a twinkling.

"Hallo—hallo!" exclaimed Maurice. "Where did you learn to bowl like that, chappy?"

"In Rampore," said the rajah, with a grin.

"Oh, ho! Are there any more at home like you?"

The rajah took the question seriously.

"You should see my cousin, Jamset Singh," he said; "he beats me hollow."

"Then he must be a coughdrop!" declared Maurice. "I wish we had him here. As for you, I know what I'm going to do with you."

"What's that?"

"Shove you in the first eleven. Scott, you will be a rod in pickle for the Northwold fellows, if I'm not very much mistaken, and I don't think I am!"

The rajah's eyes glistened.

"Oh, rats!" broke in Ganthony, who had come down to the cricket-field with the captain, and had listened with an angry brow to the talk. "What are you thinking of, Maurice?"

"Beating the Northwold fellows."

"You as good as promised the vacant place in the team to me."

"Yes, because there wasn't a better man available then."

"Do you mean to say there's a better man now?" demanded Ganthony angrily.

"You can see it for yourself. The rajah's head and shoulders above half the members of the present team. You are not in the same street!"

Ganthony scowled blackly.

"I think it's a beastly shame to play a blooming nigger, anyway!" he snapped.

Maurice looked him up and down.

"Do you want your head punched, Ganthony? No? Then you had better keep it shut! And look here, the rajah's going into the first team, and you're not. That's flat!"

And the captain walked away, well satisfied with his discovery of new talent.

Ganthony, pale with rage, turned to the rajah.

"So you think you'll keep me out of the eleven, you rotten hound? I—"

Smack! A dusky hand, open, but very forcible, caught him on the cheek, and he staggered, and his sentence remained unfinished. Kloumi Lal looked at him with blazing eyes.

"You coward!" he said. "You have been my enemy since the first day I came here, and I never gave you cause. But if you hate me you shall have reason. I will meet you where you like."

"Come down behind the boathouse," said Ganthony, in a voice thick with rage. "I'll tan your nigger's hide for that blow!"

Down to the secluded spot where most of the school biffles were fought out they went, followed by a dozen fellows who had seen the altercation in the cricket-field.

Ganthony stripped off his jacket and rolled up his sleeves. He looked very bulky as he faced the slim, graceful Hindu, and the general opinion was that Kloumi Lal would be unmercifully licked. But Jim Herries wore a confident grin. He had put the rajah through his paces with the gloves, and he knew that the prince from far-off Rampore was hot stuff.

And so Ganthony soon found him. His first heavy rush was stopped by a right-hander full on the nose, which passed his guard he did not know how. As he staggered back, the rajah put in one with his left, and Ganthony went heavily to grass.

"Bravo, rajah!"

Ganthony was more astonished than hurt. He came up gamely for the second round, and this time the rajah received as much punishment as his adversary. Both looked pretty badly used when they separated at Jim's call of time.

"Keep him at arm's length, Lal," said Jim anxiously. "I think you'll settle the brute, but you must be careful."

The rajah nodded, and toed the mark again.

The third round was decisive. The rajah received two drives in the face, but he did not allow them to disconcert him. He got in a beautiful upper-cut with his left, which seemed to lift Ganthony off his feet, and then, rushing in, he drove his right against his opponent's jaw with terrible force.

Ganthony went down with a grunt, thumping on the ground like a sack of coal.

He did not respond to the call of "Time!"

"Done, Ganthony?"

"Yes, hang you!"

Ganthony rose slowly to his feet. He scowled blackly at the rajah and Jim, and began to walk slowly away.

The Northwold Match.

GOLDEN sunlight, bright blue sky, and a field of emerald. It was perfect cricketer's weather, and the hearts of the Clivedalers rejoiced. For it was the day fixed for the match with Northwold, the biggest event in the cricket season at Clivedale.

Long had the two colleges been rivals for cricket fame, but the Northwold fellows were wont to put on airs of superiority, for of late years the balance had been very much against Clivedale.

The Northwolders arrived at Clivedale at an early hour. A good many of their friends came over with them to see the glorious victory—for that Northwold would beat Clivedale hollow not one of them doubted.

"They look less class than ever," grinned Elkington, the Northwold captain, to one of his companions. "And who's that they've got there? The Rajah of Rampore? Well, they must be hard up for talent, and no mistake! What can he know about cricket?"

"Oh, p'raps he's a regular Ranji!" laughed Thompson.

"Yes, p'raps," said Elkington, closing one eye.

Northwold won the toss and went in first. There was a cheer from the Clivedalers as Maurice came out of the pavilion at the head of his men, and another cheer for the rajah—for Clivedale hoped great things of the dusky son of the Orient.

Elkington opened the innings with Thompson. Elkington was a mighty man with the willow, and the spectators prepared for a treat. And indeed the Northwold captain made hay of the Clivedale bowling. The first over resulted in ten for Northwold, and Thompson took four in the second. Then Jim Herries went on to bowl against Elkington.

Smack!

Away went the ball, beyond the reach of point, and the batsmen started to run.

But not a single eye was upon them, for every glance was turned to cover-point, watching the rajah with intense keenness, for it was the rajah who was there.

The rajah! The ball was a good six yards to his right, and it seemed destined to drop hopelessly behind him. But the white-clad figure went like a flash over the green, and the rajah was backing, twisting, turning, his eyes on the floating ball, his hands stretched out as if to woo the batter to their embrace, and right into the dusky palms the ball dropped, and a yell went up.

And up went the ball, to fall again straight as a die into the rajah's hand.

"Caught!"

"Oh, well caught!"

"Good old rajah!"

Clivedale shouted itself hoarse.

Good old rajah, indeed! They had got rid of the most dangerous Northwold batsman in his second over—a stroke of luck they had not dreamed of. And Elkington, who five

minutes ago would have laughed aloud at the idea of being caught out in so early a stage of the game, carried out his bat with a crestfallen look.

The Northwold batsmen were very wary of Kloumi Lal after that. But presently Maurice put him on to bowl, and they discovered that however dangerous he was at fielding, it was as a bowler that he was most to be feared.

He took a couple of wickets for his first over, and the Northwolders looked at each other with faces growing more and more solemn.

And then Jim Herries had the ball, and he sent another batsman out for a duck's egg, and hope began to die in the Northwold hearts.

They had come to Clivedale in an extremely cocky humour, but their cockiness was gone now. The despised enemy had given them a reception they had never dreamed of. And when the wickets were all down for 70, they sighed. If Kloumi Lal and Jim Herries handled the willow like they did the leather, there wasn't much chance for Northwold.

Maurice opened his innings with himself and Jim. Elkington sent on Thompson, his best bowler, against the Clivedale captain. Maurice kept up his end well for a time, but the sixth ball of the over found him wanting, and his middle stump went out. Then the rajah went in to join Jim Herries.

We need not describe that innings in detail. Ever afterwards it seemed like a nightmare to the Northwolders when they thought about it. Thompson's idle remark turned out to be the solid truth. In the Rajah of Rampore Clivedale had a "regular Ranji."

In vain the Northwold bowlers plied that terrible pair with every conceivable kind of ball. Whatever they sent down the batsmen sent back, and the runs piled up. The rajah had knocked up 90 off his own bat when, in a gallant attempt at six, he was stumped. How the Clivedale lads cheered him when he carried out his bat! Even George Ganthony joined in, yelling as loudly as anybody.

At last, to the intense relief of Northwold, the Clivedale wickets were all down, but it was for a figure that took the visitors' breath away.

"All down for 180," groaned Elkington. "Who'd have thought it? They've woke up at Clivedale this season, and no mistake."

And it was with doubting hearts that Northwold opened their second innings.

Their gloomy forebodings were fully realised. They were all down for 30, and Clivedale had won by an innings and 80 runs, and the whole school was frantic with delight. They cheered the rajah, and carried him on their shoulders round the quadrangle, and Jim Herries also came in for an ovation. And the merry men from Northwold went home sadder than they came.

"We've had a good time here, Lal!"

"We have, Jim. A jolly good time."

"But the best of friends must part."

Jim Herries spoke rather sadly.

It was his last day at Clivedale, and the rajah's last day, too.

They had known each other for two years now, and had been staunch chums, in cricket and in everything else.

But now the time had come to part.

On the morrow the old school would know them no more.

The rajah was going back to far-off Rampore, there to bear rule over a dusky population, in the protecting shadow of the British flag—far from the old school, far from his British chum, and his handsome, dusky face was very sad as they strolled round the old quadrangle, under the ancient elms, for the last time.

Old Chums Well Met.

THE Rajah of Rampore, some years older than when we saw him last, and clad in a very different kind of costume, paced a large, airy apartment in the palace of his fathers, with a frown upon his dusky brow.

The rajah was worried, and he looked it.

He muttered to himself as he paced to and fro, but not in the Hindustanee, but in the good old Saxon of Clivedale.

"What the dickens shall I do? Oh, hang it; it's too rotten! It looks to me like foul play; but, anyway, I can't play Jamset Singh. What the dickens am I going to do?" He dropped the English and went on in his native tongue as a slave came salaaming to him. "What is it?"

"An English sahib desires an audience with the Huzoor."

"That cad Ganthony, I suppose," muttered the rajah. "I will see him."

But when the English sahib was ushered in, a shout of delight left the lips of the Rajah of Rampore, and, forgetting his dignity as a rajah and Huzoor, he fairly flew to greet his visitor.

U. J.—303.

"THE CASE OF THE NAVAL ESTIMATES" Is the title of next week's Long, Complete Novel. Please make sure of your copies by ordering in advance.

"Jim, you boulder! Why didn't you let me know you were coming? Why, I didn't even know you were in India! Give me your fist, old son!"

Jim Herries it was—older, browner, but the same old good-tempered, genial Jim.

He gave the rajah a hearty grip.

"Thought I'd take you by surprise," he grinned. "Behold the collector of Fuzzipore!"

He slapped himself on the chest.

"What?"

"Fact! I'm collector of Fuzzipore, just over your border, and my domicile will be within ten miles of your palace for the next five years or so. What do you think of that, old son?"

"Glorious!"

And when refreshments were brought in, they sat down to sip sherbet and to talk over old times, and presently Jim remarked:

"I say, you have another neighbour from the old school, Lal. Did you know that George Ganthonny was at Boggleywallah? And I hear that he's at the head of the cricket interest there, and that the Boggleywallah eleven has been staggering humanity in this part of India at the old game."

The rajah nodded. The worried look, which Jim's arrival had banished from his face, returned to it.

"Do I know it?" he echoed. "I should say so! The Boggleywallah eleven has come to play Rampore, and the match is to-morrow."

Jim rubbed his hands.

"What a little bit of luck! Then I shall see some cricket!"

But the rajah's expression was lugubrious.

Jim looked concerned.

"Anything wrong with your team?"

"Yes. I've lost my best man, and the rest of the team, as it unluckily happens, are hardly up to their usual form. We shall do our best, but I have no hope of winning without Jamset Singh."

"What's happened to him, then?"

"It looks to me like foul play," said the rajah, his brow growing dark. "As the Boggleywallahs are my guests, I made up a shooting-party for them, and Jamset Singh was in it. George Ganthonny's gun accidentally exploded, and Jamset got the charge in his leg. He isn't seriously hurt, but he will be lame for weeks, and there's no earthly chance of his playing in the match to-morrow."

Jim Herries wrinkled his brow thoughtfully.

"That's just exactly the trick I should have looked for from Ganthonny," he said. "He was always a cad, and he is, of course, set on beating you."

"Of course. He is keen on licking my team, for the sake of old times. You know how he had his knife in me at Clivedale. I know he feels just the same now, though, of course, he keeps it under. Rampore has been making a bit of a stir in the Indian cricket world, and he's dead set on lowering our colours. And he'll do it, too," said the rajah despondently. "Without Jamset Singh, I have very little hope of pulling it off."

Jim reflected.

"It was a cad's trick, and just like Ganthonny. It's a howling shame if he's allowed to pull off a victory by a bit of rotten treachery like that," said Jim warmly. "I wish you could play me."

"Of course, I should be at liberty to do so," said the rajah. "There's no objection to any substitute I choose to play. But it would be like a confession that Rampore couldn't win without a white man in the team, and a licking would be better than that."

Jim sipped his sherbet thoughtfully.

The rajah, looking at him, saw by the twinkle in his eye that some idea had come into his mind.

"Do you remember the theatricals we had once at Clivedale?" asked Jim, with apparent irrelevance.

The rajah stared.

"Yes."

"We wanted a Hindu, and you helped me make up as one."

"I remember."

"What sort of a chap is Jamset—as to build, I mean?"

"About your size."

"Excellent."

The rajah caught on. His eyes began to gleam, too.

"Great Scott! Jim, you're a genius!"

Jamset Singh's Cricket.

HY—what the—how the—

George Ganthonny broke off.

He had wondered whether the rajah would play ten men, or what kind of a substitute he would get in the place of Jamset Singh.

But that Jamset Singh would play he had never dreamed. But there was his name, as large as life, and Ganthonny

was flabbergasted. His feelings met with no sympathy from his followers. Not one of the Boggleywallahs dreamed that their chief had purposely disabled the finest cricketer in the Rampore team. Had they thought it possible, they would have wiped up the ground with their captain.

Ganthonny's great anticipations were considerably toned down by the discovery that the Rampore champion was to play after all. But he was determined to strain every nerve to win.

Ganthonny won the toss, and the Boggleywallahs elected to bat. The rajah led out his merry men and placed them to field. There was a murmur in the great crowd as the dusky fieldsmen took up their stations. It was a murmur of expectation. George Ganthonny opened with himself and Sampson. Ganthonny felt a slight tremor when the rajah jerked the ball to Jamset Singh, and that wonderfully-recovered invalid went on to bowl.

Down came the ball, and it broke in with a cunning twist on it that would have baffled a keener batsman than George Ganthonny.

He swiped at that ball where he was firmly convinced it was; but it wasn't there. But he knew where it was when he heard the clatter of falling balls.

It was clear that the visitors would have all their work cut out to keep their end up against the merry men of Rampore. The next batsman went on, and came out the last ball of Jamset Singh's over, looking blue, and with only a couple of runs to his credit; and so the innings continued.

"Last man in!" grinned the rajah presently, slinging the ball to Jamset Singh. "Go and put him out of his pain, chappy."

And Jamset Singh obeyed. For a miserable 2 that batsman was dismissed, and the Boggleywallahs were all down for just 100.

And then the Rampores opened their innings. Jamset Singh went in first with another dusky batsman, and Sutcliffe went on to bowl against the champion. He sent down a ball with a tricky break on it; but clack! and it was stopped dead on the crease.

The second ball shared its fate, and the third—well, Jamset Singh swiped at that ball, and no one could even guess where it was until one of the pavilion windows cracked, and then they knew.

In vain Sutcliffe tried every trick he knew. That redoubtable batsman was up to all of them.

He soon lost his partner, Ganthonny taking his wicket, and another Rampore came in to join him. Rampore men came and went, but Jamset Singh, like the little brook, went on for ever; and when, the last man in, the Rajah of Rampore himself came to join him, there was a hush of expectation.

It was a beautiful innings, only the Boggleywallahs couldn't quite see the beauty of it. Perhaps that wasn't to be expected. They had more leather-hunting about that time than they were accustomed to put in in a dozen ordinary matches; and when those hapless fieldsmen came in red and panting, they still saw the batsmen looking as fresh as paint, and Ganthonny began to wonder how it was going to end.

The rajah settled that point by declaring with 250 runs to his credit.

In the second innings the rajah did not send on his demon bowler at first, and so the visitors began to score runs; but when George Ganthonny came out of the pavilion, the rajah winked his eye at Jamset Singh, and tossed the leather to him.

Ganthonny knew his fate, but he faced it desperately, gripping his bat, and waiting for the ball.

It came down, and he stopped it, and he stopped the next; but he was only putting off the inevitable.

The third ball broke in true for his middle stump, and he missed it by inches. He glared at the wicket.

"Out!" said the umpire, picking up the balls.

And Ganthonny walked off dejectedly.

The Boggleywallahs came on in deep despondency, which was in every case justified if Jamset Singh had the ball. He took two more wickets in that same over, and a howl of delight from the Rampore crowd greeted the hat-trick.

What need to prolong the tale of disaster? The Boggleywallahs came and went with solemn faces till their second innings closed for a doleful 40.

Rampore had won, with an innings to spare, and more runs than they took the trouble to count. When the match was over, and the two teams fraternised, only one figure was absent from the festive scene.

It was Jamset Singh's. But later in the evening Jim Herries, the new collector at Fuzzipore, joined them, and Ganthonny had one consolation, that Jim had not arrived in time to see him so thoroughly licked. But what would he have said if he had known the exact facts?

THE END.