

# Northern Messenger

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THE PENALTY OF PLAYING THE FOOL.

## Don't be a Fool Man.

(British Workman.)

I. M— was a smart young sergeant in my corps. We were camped in a lovely spot in India: A cricket match was to be played, and friends from the station were to witness the game; among these were certain of I. M—'s friends. Before play they and he imbibed rather freely. I. M— was a good cricketer, and much depended upon his play, as he was one of the bowlers for his side. He came off very well in the first innings, and when it was over he and his friends repaired to the mess tent, where the conviviality of the morning was continued. At length I. M— was called to the wicket. With pads buckled and gloves buttoned, off he went across the field. But those who awaited him fancied that he was somewhat

unsteady on his legs, and an officer of the other eleven, rather partial to I. M—, on account of his play, met him, and said he had better come in later on. Like a wise man, I. M— returned to the tent. 'Hallo!' said one of his friends, 'are you to be sent back like that?'

'Yes,' said he, 'Lieutenant sees that I have had a little too much "Bass"; I shall be all right soon.'

And he would have been quite content to lie down and try to get ready to go in later. His would-be friend, however, was of another mind, and said, 'Well, you are a duffer if you submit to such treatment as that. Don't be a fool, man—go in and show them how to make a score.' Others agreed that he had better wait, but his friend again called out, 'Don't be a fool, man, take your turn.' I. M—'s blood being up, he again started

across the field. By this time there was a little commotion; some shouting, 'Send your man in,' others whispering of what had happened, and others wondering what would happen. Of course, this did not allay his excitement nor increase the steadiness of his walk. Then the officer came towards him and insisted upon his retiring from the field, but he insisted on going forward. An officer could not suffer his authority to be defied, even on the cricket field, and therefore he ordered I. M— to his tent under arrest. Had he not been befooled he might have saved himself even now, but no; flinging his bat, gloves and pads on the ground, he bolted across the field in another direction.

An escort was sent in pursuit, and having captured their prisoner, were bringing him back, when he made an attempt to escape. The sergeant in charge then ordered the