

THE LOVELORN GRUNDY!



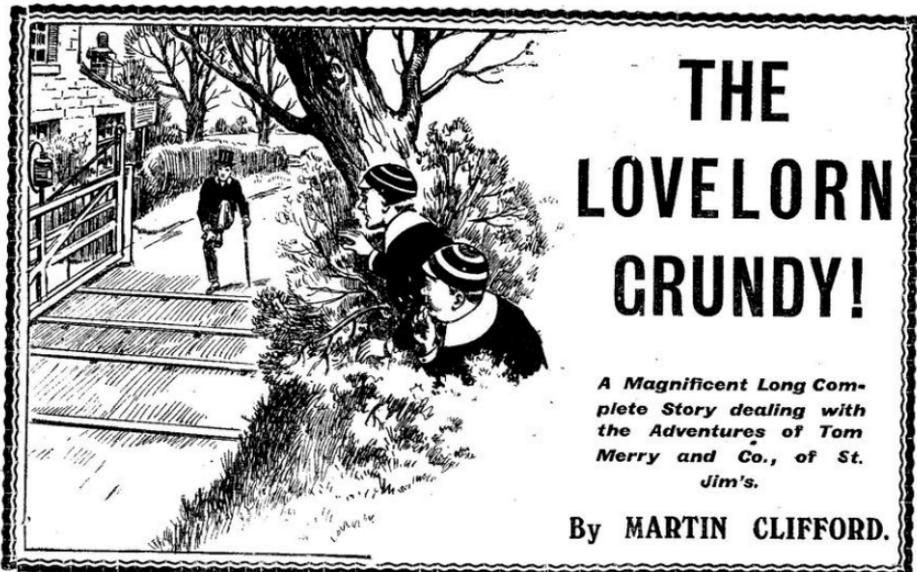
AWKWARD FOR GRUNDY!

An Amusing Incident in the Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale in this Number.

THE LOVELORN GRUNDY!

A Magnificent Long Complete Story dealing with the Adventures of Tom Merry and Co., of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



CHAPTER 1.

The Beginning of It!

HELP!" Grundy—the great George Alfred Grundy of the St. Jim's Shell—turned his head at that cry.

It was a girl who had uttered it—a pretty girl.

Grundy, Gunn, and Wilkins had been to Wayland, to the cinema-show, and were just fairly started on their ride back. They had left the last houses of the little market-town behind, and had reached the edge of the moor.

"Look out, you silly chump! You nearly had me over!" snapped Wilkins.

For Grundy, in turning his head, had also turned his front wheel a little, and Wilkins had very narrowly escaped a tumble.

Wilkins was luckier than Gunn. Grundy bumped off next moment, without giving warning, and Gunn, into whom he barged heavily, went over, to land upon the rough grass of the moor, with his machine on top of him.

"Idiot!" roared Gunn. He was not much hurt, but he was a good deal alarmed, and he might have been hurt.

Grundy paid no heed to him. He was rushing towards the girl and the young man who had seized her.

"Oh, help!" cried the girl again.

"I'm coming!" bellowed Grundy.

And he came with a rush.

"Just you stop it!" he howled.

"The conceit gaz is, 'Unhand the lady, villain!'" said Wilkins, with a grin.

"No, not 'villain'—'catiff' or 'varlet,'" replied Gunn, picking himself up.

"Oh, you're always for back numbers!" Wilkins said.

"Look at old Grundy!"

"The young man was not a large size young man. Though he might have been ten years older than Grundy, he was at least a stone or two below that hero's weight. But it is only fair for Grundy to say that there would have

been no hesitation had he been twice as big.

His smallness gave the great George Alfred the chance of doing things on the spectacular scale, however.

He seized the young man by the collar, and almost lifted him off his feet.

"Serves you right, Bert!" cried the girl.

"Here, I say, what are you doing?" snorted Bert.

It was rather a silly question, for Bert could not really have been in any doubt what Grundy was doing. It was the heroic rescue act, and was painful to Bert.

"Just like old Grundy!" said Wilkins.

"It was only a lovers' quarrel, I'm certain. I saw those two when they were a hundred yards off, and they were walking along side by side then, friendly enough for anything."

"No; I fancy they were squabbling then," answered Gunn. "I saw them, too, and Bert hadn't got his arm round her waist. Wayland johnnies always put their arms round when they're taking their girls for a walk, so those two must have had a tiff!"

"Bert's squaring up to him!" said Wilkins.

"Well, Grundy won't want our help, and if he did want mine he jolly well wouldn't get it," Gunn said. "He's the clumsiest ass that ever rode a bike! Did you see how he barged me off?"

"I saw. Thought about calling 'Encore,'" replied Wilkins. "You shot off so neatly. Nothing clumsy about you, Gunny! Hallo! Bert's got him in the eye!"

"And Grundy's got Bert on the snuffer! My hat, they aren't half going it!" Bert's down!"

"And the girl's clapping her hands!" said Wilkins. "They must have had a pretty bad quarrel!"

Bert did not stay down. He bounced up again, and danced round Grundy, looking for an opening.

Now, Grundy was in many ways the duffer St. Jim's held him to be. But there

were one or two things he could do well, and no one ever disputed the fact that he was hefty enough with his fists. There were plenty of cleverer boxers in the Shell and Fourth; but weight and strength will tell, and Tom Merry, Reginald Talbot, and Harry Noble were the only St. Jim's juniors who carried too many guns for Grundy.

Bert was certainly no match for the burly Shell fellow. But Bert did not seem to be aware of that fact.

"The chap that knocks women about is generally a funk," said Gunn. "But that fellow isn't."

"He wasn't knocking her about, ass! He caught hold of her—that was all. I tell you it was only a lovers' quarrel."

The quarrel seemed to have been serious, however, for the girl left no doubt in the minds of the two who watched that she regarded Grundy as her champion.

Bert came in, seeking to get under Grundy's guard. Grundy let out hard with his right, and Bert took the punch on his chin, and went to grass again.

"Have you had enough?" roared Grundy, standing over him.

"Oh, let the chap get up, Grundy!" shouted Wilkins.

Wilkins and Gunn had not had enough, if Bert had. And it seemed that the girl had not had enough, either, for she stood, with flushed face and parted lips, gazing at Grundy as if she admired him no end.

The great George Alfred stood back. He had no wish to take unskilful advantage of his prostrate enemy.

Bert arose again; but this time there was no bounce in his uprising.

He looked at Grundy, and his hands clenched and unclenched. He looked at the girl, and his eyes flashed angrily.

"You ain't worth fighting for, Lulu!" he said. "A flirt you always were, and a flirt you always will be. I'm done with you!"

"And a very good thing, too!" replied the girl, tossing her pretty head. "Please

don't speak to me again, Albert Horridge!"

"I ain't likely to!" returned Mr. Horridge dismally. "This will be a lesson to me. I promise you."
"So it ought to be!" snorted Grundy. "Mr. good fellow, don't you know that only a cad would think of laying hands on a woman?"

"Who laid hands on her, then? I never! She aggravated me past all bearing, an' I caught hold of her—"

"Well, wasn't that laying hands on her?" demanded Grundy.

"In a manner of speaking it was, and then again in a manner of speaking it wasn't!" replied Bert. "You're young yet, my lad, and you don't know the ways of the sex!"

"He's old enough and strong enough to thrash you, anyway, Mr. Horridge!" flashed the girl.

And her blue eyes fastened themselves admiringly upon Grundy.

The great George Alfred threw out his chest, and did his level best to look as much like William Farnum, whom he had been watching upon the screen, as Nature would let him.

"He ain't thrashed me!" growled Bert. "I'm chucking it now, because I don't consider as you're worth fighting for. Lulu Briggs, an' that's all about it. I don't wish Mr. Grundy—if that's his name—no more harm than this—as you'll take him on for a bit in my place, an' lend him as fine a dance as what you've led me."

And with those ominous words Mr. Albert Horridge strode away.

"Now let's see what will happen!" chuckled Wilkins.

Grundy was not in the least a ladies' man. In general he rather despised girls. The only exception to the rule of which St. Jim's was aware was cousin Ethel. But, then, everyone liked and admired Ethel, Cleveland; and Grundy had not shown any marked signs of spooniness even in her case.

"If it were Gussy!" murmured Gunn. "Bert would have given him a hiding, that's all!" said Wilkins.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had a very susceptible heart. He was ready to fall in love on the slightest provocation.

"Gussy would see her home," Gunn said.

"Hanged if Grundy isn't thinking about it!" answered Wilkins.

And Wilkins had read aright the rather puzzled expression upon the rugged face of Grundy.

Perhaps the Wild West cinema-play he had just been watching had done its part in inflaming Grundy's imagination. When a man who "packed guns" wher-ever he went, and shot on sight, could show himself a victim to the tender passion, it could not be so wholly beneath contempt to figure in the role of knight errant.

The girl decided it for him, though.

"I'm afraid to go home alone. He might be lurking in wait for me," she murmured, with down-dropped eyes, a small foot tapping nervously on the rough turf.

Grundy noticed how long and thick her eyelashes were. Never before in his life had he noticed a girl's eyelashes, not even Cousin Ethel's.

And what beautiful golden hair she had, and what a lot of it! Her complexion, too, so clear and soft!

In his heart Grundy did not believe that Mr. Horridge was not at all likely to lurk. Mr. Horridge did not strike him as quite that kind of person.

The old Grundy would have said so bluntly. But a new Grundy had been born, and the new Grundy was quite in-

capable of resisting the wiles of the enchantress.

"I shall be very pleased to go with you," he mumbled.

"What did he say, Wilky?" inquired Gunn.

"Blessed if I know! But he's going. My hat! What a lark!"

Grundy did not look upon it as in the very least a lark. It was the most serious thing that had ever happened to him in all his life. He was sure of that.

Indeed, what ever had happened to him that could be compared for a moment with this in importance? He felt that all the years had been but a mere prelude to this meeting with Miss Lulu Briggs.

"You can wait here with that bike, Wilkins," he called. "I don't suppose I shall be very long."

Grundy might mumble in addressing Miss Briggs, but he could speak out in lordly enough fashion to Wilkins.

"Can I?" returned Wilkins. "Thank you for nothing!"

"Am I to wait, too, Grundy, or can I go home?" asked Gunn, with deceitful humility.

Grundy did not deign to answer either of them. He had given his instructions, and he expected them to be obeyed. Without another word to his henchmen he walked off by the side of the beautiful Lulu.

"What are you going to do?" inquired Gunn of Wilkins.

"I can tell you what I'm not going to do, and that is miss such a giddy treat as this!" Wilkins answered. "Come along!"

He picked up Grundy's bike, which had been allowed to fall in the middle of the road, and, wheeling both that and his own, followed Grundy at a discreetly slow pace. And Gunn went with him.

CHAPTER 2.

Over Head and Heels.

"My hat! If she isn't taking hold of his arm!" gasped Wilkins.

"Poor old Grundy!" said Gunn.

"What are you pitying him for, clump? The silly ass likes it. You might see that with half an eye."

"I do believe he does! Look at him leaning towards her! I'll bet he is making sheep's eyes at her like one o'clock!"

"She is a jolly good-looking girl, you know," said Wilkins.

"Now, don't you go getting spoony, too, old to!"

"Me?" Oh, don't be such an idiot! Likely, isn't it?"

"Well, it sounded like it."

"I can tell you this, Gunn: you're a heap more likely to get that way than I am. You're a romantic sort of bounder, always reading novels and things with fair maidens in them. I've heard you go on like anything about Diana Vernon, in one of Shakespeare's—"

"Scott's, fatherhead!" She comes in 'Rob Roy.' Ripping book!"

"Well, it's all the same—Scott or Shakespeare—as much alike as Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee, for all I ever could tell. Then there's the Jewess in 'Hamlet,' or something—"

"Ivanhoe," you mean, you potty ass!"

"Well, I knew it was some name like that. Just one name, I mean. Rebecca, wasn't it?"

"Yes. But Rebecca and Di Vernon were both dark. I never did think much of fair girls myself."

"Anyway, there it is. You might get that way, and I never could. Oh, look!

There're going right on like that, though they've come to the giddy street now. Fancy if old Linton or Railton was to spot them!"

Grundy and the girl had passed between the gates at the level crossing. Beyond that the streets of Wayland began. They were not exactly crowded streets at any time, except on market-days; but Grundy did feel just a little bit uneasy that the girl's hand should still be clutching his muscular arm. He also had thought of the possibility of an encounter with a master.

But he felt that he could not ask her to let go. She was telling him all about herself, with reservations, and Grundy was interested.

"Of course, I don't mean to stay in a shop," she said. "I'm a bit above that sort of thing, I should hope. I'm going to be an actress—a famous actress. I think on the films. Somehow that appeals to me more than the stage. I love the pictures, don't you?"

"I think you're all right," said Grundy.

"You shall take me some day if you're very good," said Miss Briggs coquetishly, and Grundy wondered what Linton or any of the other masters would think of that if he came upon them. But he said nothing about his doubts.

"What should you guess my age to be?" asked the fair Lulu next.

"Oh, about seventeen!" replied Grundy.

"Well, you're some guesser, as the Americans say. I wonder whether I could guess how old you are?"

"Have a shot!" said Grundy.

He felt that he was getting on like a house on fire.

"Eighteen!" the girl guessed.

Seldom in his life had George Alfred felt better pleased, though he was usually well enough pleased with himself. But it was not often he met anyone who rated him at the value he put upon himself.

One of Grundy's articles of faith was that he looked very much more than his actual age. The other fellows laughed at this idea, even Gunn and Wilkins laughed. But Miss Briggs was different. If anything had been needed to complete the captivation of Grundy that guess at his age would have done the trick.

And it is likely that the fair Lulu knew that.

"You're some guesser, too!" Grundy said tenderly.

"Am I right? I should have guessed more, you know, only I can see by your cap that you are still at school, so that I thought you could hardly be nineteen."

"No, I'm not nineteen," answered Grundy, quite truthfully, seeing that he was only sixteen. "Oh, yes; I'm at school still! But mine's rather a special case. I—well, you see, I don't really learn anything worth mentioning."

Mr. Linton, the master of Grundy's Form would not have contradicted that statement. He had often said that it seemed utterly impossible to teach Grundy anything whatever, and that the Third Form was the proper place for him. But it is hardly likely that Mr. Linton would have agreed that Grundy's was a special case, except in the sense that he was far more stupid than most fellows of his age.

"Red is my favourite colour!" said the girl. "I have always admired the St. Jim's caps."

Grundy tried to say that henceforth red would also be his favourite colour, but he could not quite get out the intended compliment.

"I suppose you aren't so tied down as the other boys?" said Miss Briggs. "I

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mean, that you can do more as you like? I noticed that you gave orders to those youngsters who were with you. Are they — What is the word? I know it you— What is the word? I know it reminds me of cigarettes. But what is "No; they're not exactly my fags," replied Grundy. "But they share my study, and—and—well, I'm kind to them, and protect them, and all that, you know."

"How nice for them! And how very generous of you!" said Miss Briggs feelingly.

Grundy felt that he was not going outside the truth. He really was kind to Gunn and Wilkins. He had treated them to the picture show that afternoon. Uncle Grundy's liberal tips did Wilkins and Gunn almost as much good as they did Grundy. And he was always ready to stand up for them, though it is not to be denied that Wilkins and Gunn were very well capable of standing up for themselves.

"I have never met anyone quite like you before," sighed the girl, after a minute or two of silence.

There were lots of things Grundy wanted to say, but he could not find words for them.

He threw out his chest again at that. It seemed to the great George Alfred that at last he had found someone to rate him at his proper value.

"Oh, my hat!"

It was Jack Blake, of the Fourth Form, who exclaimed thus.

Blake, Herries, Digby, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had also been at the cinema; but they had gone in and come out later than the three Shell fellows.

Herries gasped. Digby whistled. Gussy elevated his monocle, and gazed upon Grundy and the charmer in almost a dazed fashion.

Grundy looked straight before him, and refused to recognise their existence, although all their caps were doffed as they passed him, and between holding up his eye-glass and taking off his cap, Gussy came very near doing an altogether unpremeditated acrobatic descent from his bike.

"Who are they?" asked Miss Briggs.

"Oh, mere kids from a junior Form!" replied Grundy loftily.

The four heard that. Their ears were sharp, and Grundy's voice was not exactly of the sweet and low variety.

"Mere kids!" snorted Blake.

"The silly ass!" growled Herries.

"Weally, Gwunday ought to know bettah than to talk like that!" said Arthur Augustus hotly.

But Dig only grinned.

Miss Briggs and her escort turned the corner of the street, and almost ran into Cardew, Levison, and Clive, also riding back after a visit to the cinema. A Wild West film was always an attraction for the St. Jim's juniors.

Grundy fairly groaned as the three lifted caps and grinned—at least, they seemed to him to be grinning, though probably they would not have admitted that they were.

"Don't you feel well?" asked Miss Briggs sweetly.

"Yes. It's only those silly asses. They—you see, they don't understand, and I—"

"Oh, I shouldn't take any notice of them. They're so much beneath you that it really isn't necessary you should."

Grundy would have been very willing indeed to take no notice of Levison & Co., if they would only have left him alone. But he dreaded the sarcasm of both Ernest Levison and Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"I don't mind about that, of course!" he said. "But it's a bit of a nuisance meeting so many of our youngsters. Oh, hang it, here come some more of them!"

It was four of the Shell this time—Tom Merry, Manners, Lowther, and Talbot; and if there was anyone whose tongue Grundy dreaded more than Cardew's, it was Lowther.

"Put on your most solemn faces, you fellows," said Lowther to his companions. "Whoso grinneth shall die the death, and whoso winketh shall expire under lingering tortures!"

And, after this warning, the humorist of the Shell hung back for a moment behind the other three in order to ensure passing close to Grundy and bestowing upon him a huge wink without letting the girl see it.

More doffed caps—another scowl from Grundy—and a beaming smile from Miss Briggs, who was not in the least averse from attracting attention.

If Grundy had not already fallen head over heels in love, he would have backed out then, for he remembered that several other Shell and Fourth Form fellows had spoken of going to the show that afternoon, and there was no certainty that he might not run into more of them. Even as that thought crossed his mind, he sighted Julian, Reilly, Hammond, and Kernish.

He passed them with his head held high, and his face scarlet, but gave no sign of recognition in response to their bows and smiles.

"I turn down here," said Miss Briggs.

Grundy was not sorry. Along the way they had been going, more St. Jim's juniors might have been met; but it was hardly likely that any would be encountered along this side street.

The girl stopped.

"We have to go in the back way, you know," she said. "There is no private door in front. It's Willie & Wagstaff's the drapers. But you mustn't come into the shop if you want to see me; I should have to pretend that you were a stranger. I don't suppose you want to see me again, though—why should you?"

"But I do!" said Grundy warmly.

The thought of never seeing Miss Briggs again made his heart stop beating. He felt that the world would be a desert if any such catastrophe happened to him.

"Well, when?" asked the fair Lulu.

"Saturday afternoon!" suggested Grundy.

"Wish I could! But that's our busy day. Sunday or Wednesday are my only chances of getting out in the afternoon!"

"Sunday, then!" said Grundy eagerly.

"Can't you wait till Wednesday?"

"No, I can't!" replied Grundy. He had wanted to say just that; and it was easier to say it in response to the query. He felt quite grateful to Miss Briggs for making it easy.

"You are ardent, and no mistake! Well, I'll meet you on Sunday at three o'clock, at the railway crossing. Pity the cinema doesn't open on Sundays, isn't it?"

"Yes—no, I mean. I'd much rather go for a walk!" Grundy said.

"Would you? Then so would I! Do you like chocolates?"

"Do you?" countered Grundy.

"No, I don't like them—I love them!" "Right, ho!" Grundy replied.

"I say, I don't know your name!" "It's Grundy—George Alfred Grundy."

"How strange!" "Why is it strange?" "Because George has always been my favourite man's name. I think it's so manly and robust, and you do look it! My name's Lulu Briggs—Louisa by rights, but Lulu to my friends."

"Er—good-bye, Miss Briggs!" "Good-bye, Mr. Grundy! I mustn't call you George, if—"

CHAPTER 3. Getting Roasted!

"H A. ha, ha!" Blake and his three chums jumped from their bikes as they met Wilkins and Gunn, and Blake and Herries and Digby chuckled.

Only Arthur Augustus looked serious. Gussy had been there himself, and he had some sympathy for Grundy.

"It's the funniest thing I've seen or heard of in a dog's age!" said Blake.

"Old Grundy in love—oh, crums!" "And arming the girl through Wayland—my hat!" gasped Herries.

"Jolly good-looker, too, if you ask me," said Digby. "But it is funny!"

"Funny? Why, you fellows don't know half of it—not a quarter!" said Wilkins.

"You ought to have seen what we've seen!" added Gunn.

"Well, what have you seen, fatheads?" demanded Blake. "You needn't think you're going to be allowed to keep it to yourselves!"

"Hallo, here are Levison and Cardew and Clive coming!" Wilkins said.

"We'll tell you the yarn when they come up."

"They've seen Grundy. You can tell that by their diaks," said Blake.

"How have the mighty fallen!" exclaimed Cardew, as the three dismounted.

"I always knew old Grundy was a silly chump, but I didn't think he was quite such a chump as this!" said Clive.

"He's chump enough for anything!" Levison said. "But this certainly is breaking out in a new place for him."

"Now for the yarn, Wilky!" urged Dig.

"Half a jiffy! Here come Tommy and his crew. The more the merrier!" Elkeke said.

Gunn looked rather doubtful. At the bottom of his heart there was just a little more sympathy for Grundy than Wilkins had, and he was not sure that to tell these fellows everything was quite fair.

But he knew that there was no stopping Wilkins.

"Seen him?" asked Manners, as the four came up.

"Rather!" chuckled Blake.

"Wouldn't have missed it for anything!" said Dig.

"The sight of a lifetime!" remarked Cardew solemnly.

"He'll run into some more of them," Lowther said, grinning. "Julian & Co. were just behind us. And Kerr and Figgy and Fatty were at the show."

"Saw we Kangaroo and Dane and Glyn," said Clive.

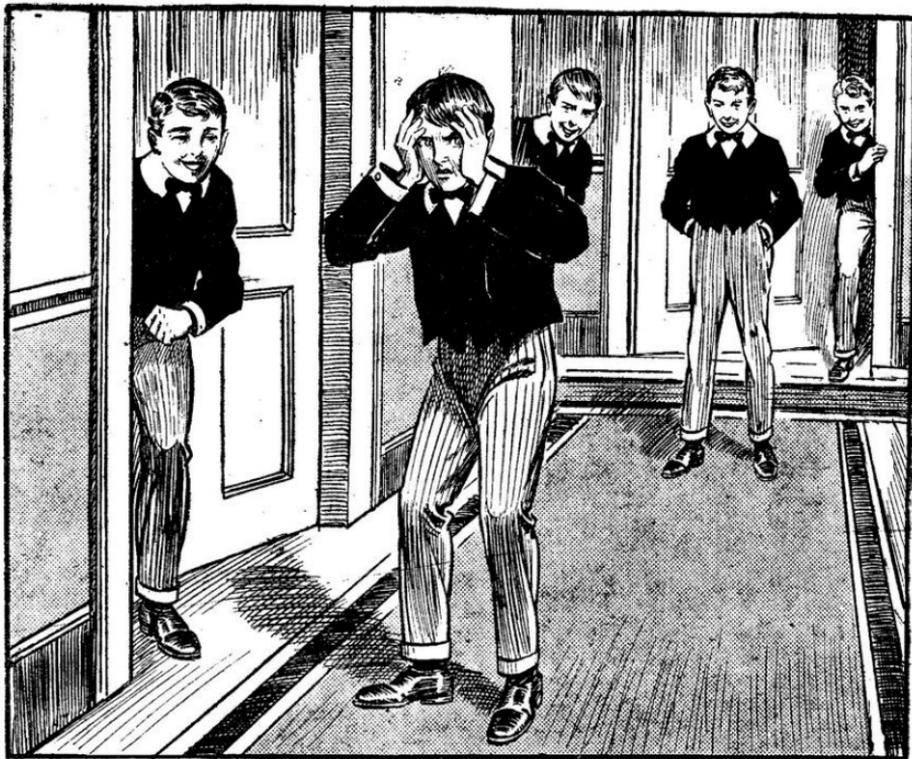
"And a dozen more," Talbot said. "Poor old Grundy!"

"What are you pitying the image for?" snorted Blake.

"I don't know that it was exactly pity," answered Talbot. "But Grundy simply can't stand being roasted about anything, and he'll get more of that now than ever he has had in his life before."

"Weally, you know, deah boys, I ccsid— I mean, don't you think it would be wata more decent to say nothin' to Grundy about it? It is scawvelly faiah to a fellow—"

But Gussy was howled down. Even Gunn could not see it his way; and Gussy appealed to Talbot in vain.



"You traitor! You sweep! Better not come near me for the next week or two!" roared Grundy, as doors opened all along the passage, and heads were popped out to see what was going on. (See Chapter 4.)

Then Julian and the three with him rode up.

"Shall we tell them now, or wait till the rest come along?" asked Wilkins of Gunn.

"Oh, tell them, I say! I didn't know there were so many of our chaps there."

"You plutocrats occupied positions in the most select part of the house, and naturally did not deign to notice the rabble elsewhere," said Cardew.

"Rats! It was only because old Grundy had had a big tip from his uncle," explained Wilkins.

"Well for you that you've touched him for some of it," answered Cardew. "You get no more, my bonny boys!"

"Why not?" demanded Wilkins, opening his eyes widely.

"He will be spending it on the fair damsel, of course."

"We'll jolly well see that he doesn't, won't we Gunny?"

"Yes," said Gunn.

But he did not seem quite so sure as Wilkins that that disaster could be averted. Perhaps he realised better than his chum the rooted obstinacy of the great George Alfred.

"Get on with the yarn, Wilky," said Tom Merry.

Wilkins proceeded to tell the story of Grundy's encounter with Mr. Albert Horridge.

Everyone but Arthur Augustus grinned broadly.

Cardew thrust a thumb into Gussy's ribs.

"Weally, Cardew, I beg that you will not—"

"What's the odds? You're not wearin' your corset to-day, dear boy. Whose funeral is it?"

"Funeral, Cardew? I weally fail to undahstand you."

"Are you lookin' like an undertaker's mite without any cause, then?"

"I am not lookin' like an undahatakah's mite, Cardew!"

"That expression of settled gloom—that—"

"Bai Jove! I am uttaly disgusted with you fellows, that is all!"

"And enough, too!" snapped Blake.

"What are you disgusted about, you tailor's dummy?"

"At your piebald gwins an' your uttaly lack of appreciation of the duty of a gentleman! I considah that Gwunday did quite the wright thing in the circs, an' I shall tell him that I think so!"

"He'll punch your head," said Wilkins.

"Weally, Wilkins, that is a most extraordinary notion! Why should Gwunday punch my head for—"

"He'll think you're pulling his giddy leg—that's why."

"Here he comes!" said Manners.

Grundy had not perceived the crowd as yet, though he was within a couple of hundred yards of it. He had no

eyes for anything around him. In mental vision he still saw the fair face and golden hair of Miss Briggs—of Lulu!

"Hallo, Grundy! Had a spill?"

The cheery voice of George Figgins brought him to himself with a start.

Kerr and Fatty Wynn were with Figgins, and just behind them came Noble and Dane and Glyn. But none of the six knew anything about what had happened; they had just missed the treat.

"No, I haven't had a spill," replied Grundy.

"You rode in, I know. What are you walking back for?"

"I should be very much obliged if you would kindly mind your own business, Figgins," said Grundy, with hauteur that would have done credit to Arthur Augustus himself.

"What's the row down the road?" came the voice of Clifton Dane from the rear, and Kangaroo & Co. ranged up.

Then Grundy saw the crowd, and perceived Wilkins and Gunn in its midst.

He flushed as red as a tomato. A deep groan came from his lips.

"I'm sure he's ill, or something!" said Fatty. "Have you been eating something that didn't agree with you, Grundy?"

Figgins, Kerr, Noble, Dane, and Glyn

clapped on speed, curious to know what was the cause of the gathering ahead. But Fatty stayed by Grundy. It was easy for Fatty to sympathize with anyone who had fed not wisely but too well. Fatty had often suffered in that way himself.

"No, it isn't that! I say, Wynn, you're a decent chap; lend me your bike, will you?"

"What for? Where's yours?"

"It's there—Wilkins has got it. You can have it, you know!"

Grundy had a wild idea of riding back through Wayland and making for St. Jim's by some other road—any other road.

But Fatty could not see it at all. He looked puzzled.

"What's the idea, old top?" he asked.

"Oh, you're an ass—a fat ass!" snorted Grundy.

He saw that it was no go. Fatty naturally would not give up his bike without an explanation, and he certainly would not give it up after an explanation.

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed Fatty. "You might be civil to a chap when you're asking him to do something for you, anyway!"

"Are you going to do it?" snapped Grundy.

"No, I'm jolly well not!"

"Then where's the use of being civil to you?"

"Oh, rats to you!"

And with that Fatty rode on.

"Grundy wanted to borrow my jigger," he said, as he came up to the crowd. "Is there anything the matter with his?"

"Oh, the sweep!" cried Levison. "Wanted to get out of his roasting, I suppose!"

"What roasting?" inquired Fatty.

A dozen voices began to tell him the story all at once. In the midst of it Grundy strode up.

"I'll thank you for my bike, George Wilkins!" he growled.

"Might as well thank me for taking care of it for you while you're feeling thankful," answered Wilkins.

He handed it over, and Grundy started at once to mount.

"Here, hold on, old top!" said Cardew pleadingly. "You're not in such a hurry as all that, are you?"

"Of course he is. He's going to put up the banners!" gibed Lowther.

Grundy gave him a glare under which he ought to have wilted, but did not.

"What's Grundy been doing?" asked Fatty. "I can't make head or tail of it while you all talk at once."

"Grundy didn't do anything," said Manners. "The girl did it all, as far as I can make out. Took him by the arm and—"

"If you don't dry up, Manners, you'll get hurt!" roared Grundy.

"You wouldn't hurt me, would you, Grundy?" asked Lowther.

"Oh, wouldn't I? You'll see!"

"You ought to have seen him paste Bert!" said Wilkins.

"Who's Bert? And why did Grundy paste him?" inquired Fatty. "I can't make out this bizzny a bit!"

"Grundy's been accurin' a distressed darsel from an ogre named Bert," said Cardew.

"It don't sound much like an ogre's name," Fatty said. "Besides, that's all rot. There ain't any ogres these days, and I don't believe there ever were."

The girl called "Help," and Grundy waded in. "Wilkins said solemnly. "He wiped the floor with Bert, who was as big as a row of houses, and—"

"That's all rot, Wilkins, and you know it!" roared Grundy. "The chap wasn't a big chap at all. I didn't want to quarrel with him, but the young lady did call for help, and what was a fellow to do?"

"Let me assuage you, Grundy, that that is at least one fellow heah who considers that you did absolutely the wight thing, an—"

"You, do you mean?" growled Grundy. "But you're only a silly ass!"

"Bai Jove! Weally, Gwunday—"

"Come to that, we all think you did the right thing, if the girl was attacked, Grundy," said Tom Merry. "But you know, old top, if you'd been seen by any of the masters walking arm-in-arm with her—"

"I care no more for the masters than I do for you silly idiots!" yelled Grundy. "Why can't you mind your own business, and leave me alone? I suppose such a thing as a fellow escorting a young lady home after he's—er—well, I suppose I may say rescued her—has happened before?"

"Yes. But when he's a junior—"

"Junior be hanged, Merry! I'm not like you kids. She took me for eighteen—she said so herself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The burst of laughter at that made Grundy absolutely furious. Even Gussy laughed. Grundy realised that he had let out too much.

"Did he call you Georgy?" cackled Lowther.

"No, no, Lowther. One doesn't call a chap of eighteen 'Georgy'—it would be 'Mr. Grundy,' of course," said Levison.

"An' meanwhile, where was Mrs. Grundy?" inquired Cardew blandly.

"Oh, he isn't spliced yet—not quite!" said Blake.

"You fail to get me, Blake. I am referring to the lady who is supposed to be down like a cartload of bricks upon anything in the least improper."

"I do not see that Gwunday has been guilty of anything impwopnan, though he did chawctawctawise me as a silly ass," said Gussy warmly.

"That wasn't improper, anyway; we all agree with that," Dig said.

"I'm going!" snorted Grundy, and he mounted.

"We're all going now. We'll ride with you," returned Kerr.

"I don't want you!" howled Grundy. "But they knew that. They went with him, nevertheless."

CHAPTER 4.

A Bad Attack!

"SHALL I go across to the tuckshop and get in something for tea?" asked Wilkins.

"Jolly good notion!" said Gunn heartily.

"I wasn't speaking to you, champ! I was speaking to Grundy."

"Well, better speak to him again. He didn't hear. He's doing lines or something."

Snort!

Grundy appeared to have heard that, and to have snorted in contempt of the idea that anyone of his importance should be doing lines.

"Grundy, old top!" said Wilkins ingratiatingly.

"Don't bother me!" snapped Grundy. "But it's nearly tea-time!"

"What do I care about that?"

"I should think you ought to care something about it!" fumed Wilkins. "What should a chap care about if he—"

"You're a pig, George Wilkins!"

"What?"

"A pig?"

"Eh? Why?"

"It may be because you can't help it. That's being charitable, anyway. But you ought to try, at least."

Snort!

It was Wilkins who snorted this time. Wilkins had quite a healthy appetite, and he made no pretence of despising the fleshpots. But Grundy had also quite a healthy appetite normally, and Wilkins could not see why he should pretend to regard tea with indifference.

"What rhymes with 'Lu,' Gunny?"

"Eh?"

"Can't you hear? I thought I spoke loudly enough," said Grundy crossly.

"You did. You always do. Your whisper is louder than some chaps' shouts. And I heard all right. But you took me by surprise. Not writing verses, are you?"

"I'm writing poetry," answered Grundy, with dignity.

Snort!

That was Wilkins again. There was no possible room for mistaking the sentiments of Wilkins as to the relative importance of poetry and provender.

"If you're going to make noises like

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Mellish tossed over two clods in quick succession. One landed right in the box of chocolates, and the other smacked full upon Grundy's nose. With a howl of fury Grundy leaped up and rushed at the bank. (See chapter 6.)

that, Wilkins, you had better go and make them somewhere else," said Grundy. "I don't like them."

Wilkins suppressed a very plain answer to that by a considerable effort.

"Look here, are we going to have any tea?" he asked desperately.

"Eh? Tea? You want tea? Well, I've no objection, I'm sure."

At that the face of Wilkins brightened, and Gunn also looked relieved.

"Shall out, then?" said Wilkins, extending his hand.

"Eh? Shall out? What for?"

"Grub, of course! Didn't you hear me say I was going to the tuckshop?"

"Well, go! I'm not hindering you, am I?"

Wilkins stared at him.

"I haven't a blessed sou," he said.

"Not much good, then, unless Gunn has some. Dame Taggles won't give you any tick. And I don't agree with your asking for it. I consider getting into debt wrong."

"But you've got plenty!" said Wilkins desperately.

"Eh? Oh, yes, I've some tin! But I don't want any tea, and I don't see why I should encourage you fellows to be greedy. In fact, I won't do it. You make beasts of yourselves—that's what you do!"

"I say, old chap, that's a bit thick, you know," protested Gunn.

Wilkins seemed to choke down something before he could find voice to say:

"Look here, Grundy, you had a whacking big remittance from your uncle yesterday!"

"Well, what about it?"

"You took us to the cinema, and stood tea afterwards. That was all right. We're grateful."

"I'm glad to hear that, George Wilkins. It's the first sign of it I've ever seen in you, I must say."

"Oh, rats! You don't expect us to write you letters-of thanks every time you stand us a feed, do you? Now we know you've got heaps of tin left. Are you getting stingy in your old age? That's what I want to know!"

"Oh, that's what you want to know, is

it? Better clear out before I let you down in a way you won't like!"

"What?"

"Can't you hear me?"

"Oh, you—you— Hanged if I can find words to tell you what I think of you! I'm going! I'm fed up with you! Don't you come, Gunn! He'll need you to tell him how to spell the long words in his rotten verses!"

And with that Parthian shot, Wilkins departed, just in time! For Grundy had snatched up an inkstand, and it would have been hurled at the head of Wilkins had he waited a moment longer.

Now it was lowered, and Grundy turned to Gunn with a smile upon his rugged face.

"That silly ass has gone, Gunn, so I can ask you to give me a leg-up with these verses. I can't talk much before him. Wilkins hasn't any soul."

Gunn reflected that Wilkins had made it quite clear that, if he had no soul, he had another organ which the average schoolboy is apt to think of oftener.

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And Gunn was by no means sure that he did not agree with Wilkins in thinking that the demands of the inner man were really of more importance than what Grundy called "sua."

But he dissembled. If he could only talk Grundy round, they might all three be sitting down to a capital spread within half an hour. Their joint study was usually a land flowing with milk and honey—metaphorically speaking—for a few days after one of Uncle Grundy's remittances.

"What do you want, old man?" Gunn asked. "Blue" rhymes with "Lu," of course."

"I've got that," said Grundy. "Eyes so blue, you know. I want another rhyme."

"Flu," suggested Gunn.

"Silly idiot! You can't tell a girl that she's going to have the flu, can you?"

"I don't see why not, if she looked like it," replied Gunn.

"But it wouldn't be poetry, you maniac!"

"Nunno, I suppose it wouldn't. I say, Grundy, you're not really gone on that girl, are you?"

"I don't approve of your choice of expressions, William Gunn! I am not gone on anybody, let me tell you!"

"Jolly glad to hear it!" said Gunn. "I was rather afraid—"

"But I—er—I— Look here, you know, Gunn, a fellow's bound to find the girl he can really care for sooner or later, isn't he?"

"Yes, that's right, I suppose," admitted Gunn. "No, I don't know that it is right, either. Plenty of bachelors about. Look at your Uncle Grundy, frinstance."

"My Uncle Grundy and I are very different persons," Grundy said gravely. "Besides, you don't know what feelings he may have had in his younger days. Sooner or later, I say—"

"But you needn't make it so much sooner as this!" blurted out Gunn.

"What do you mean, you fatheaded chump? I'm not a mere kid. Why, she took me for eighteen—nineteen, nearly."

"She said so, I dare say. Girls will say things like that when they want to get a chap on a string."

"Want to get a chap on a string? Really, I don't see what use all your mugging at books is to you, Gunn, if you're going to talk like that after it! And what do you know about girls, anyway?"

"Precious little, thanks be!" replied Gunn. "But I know my sisters, and Wilky's, and a few others."

"Oh, yes, I dare say you do! But this is a very different matter from your sisters, or Wilky's. Mind, I'm not saying anything against them. They are nice enough girls. But—but—"

"Lulu's a goddess and a nymph and a dream of beauty, and all that—eh?" put in Gunn, with what should have been obvious sarcasm.

It was not obvious to the great George Alfred. He dipped his pen into the inkpot in a great hurry, and Gunn could see his lips forming the words "goddess" and "nymph" as he wrote.

"I knew you could give me a wrinkle or two, Gunn," he said cheerily, after making his notes. "Now, what rhymes with 'nymph'?"

"Lymph," replied Gunn, grinning.

"Eh? What is lymph?"

There were lots of things the great George Alfred did not know.

"Stuff they use for vaccination and inoculation, and so on," answered Gunn.

"What? Really, William Gunn, you are a disgusting beast!"

"I don't see that," said Gunn. "Then you're dull—positively dunder-headed! Vaccination, indeed! Why—"

"I suppose the girl was vaccinated? She ought to have been, anyway."

"But it isn't poetry, you silly ass!" howled Grundy.

"What's that about poetry?" inquired Kangaroo, sticking his head in at the door. "Scuse me, Grundy, old top! You were whispering rather loudly, you know."

"Grundy's writing—"
"Shut up, Gunn!"
Gunn edged towards the door. He had given up all hope of a spread now, and

No 13.—The Rev. RICHARD HOLMES, D.D., M.A.



Headmaster of St. Jim's. In every respect an ideal Head. Kind and considerate to his boys, as a rule, though at the same time a stickler for justice. Always knows what is going on throughout the school, though his boys often fondly imagine that he is in entire ignorance of their japes and schemes. A fine man, and a fine leader.

he knew that he would not be safe within Grundy's reach after making the revelation he was about to make.

"A poem to—"
"If you don't dry up, William Gunn, I'll—"

"Shall I hold him, Grundy?" asked Kangaroo, winking at Gunn.

"Yes! I'll slay the sweep for—"

Grundy made a dash at Gunn. Kangaroo pretended to grab Gunn, and Gunn pretended to struggle. But at the moment when Grundy reached them the Australian's grip, somehow, gave way, and he stepped aside, while Gunn fled down the passage, and Grundy, rushing

like a bull, brought up hard and painfully against the wall opposite.

"He's writing a poem to Lulu!" chanted Gunn. "My hat! He hasn't half got an attack! Gussy was nothing to him!"

"You traitor! You sweep! Better not come near me for the next week or two!" roared Grundy, as doors opened all along the passage, and heads were popped out to see what was going on.

The head of George Wilkins was popped out of Study No. 10, tenanted by the Terrible Three.

"Come along in here, Gunn!" said Wilkins. "Tom Merry's asked us to tea, and I was just going to fetch you."

"Well, I don't mind if I do," replied Gunn. "It won't be safe to go back there for a bit, anyway."

Grundy retreated into his own study, and slammed the door hard.

"Ha, ha, ha!" resounded down the passage.

"My hat! Grundy writing a poem—a poem!" gasped Gore. "Wonder what the spelling's like!"

"How's it go, Gunn?" asked Lowther. "Something like this, eh?"

"Sweet Lulu, with eyes so blue,
Upon my knees I humbly sue—"

"Never thought of 'sue,'" confessed Gunn. "I gave him 'flu,' but he didn't seem to think the girl could have it—I don't see why not. But it doesn't go at all—I don't believe he's got two lines done yet."

"Let's help him out," said Manners, going to the door of Grundy's study. "Here's a good line for you, Grundy!"

"I should think you, an angel if you ever flew!"

"Bad—very bad!" said Lowther, shaking his head. "He thinks her an angel, anyway. Flying's got nothing to do with it—why, the R.A.F. can fly, and you wouldn't call them angels, I suppose? You're out of date, my boy."

"Come along in, and don't be an ass, Manners," said Tom Merry. "Oh, here's Talbot. 'Now we can have tea.'"

"Anything funny up?" asked Talbot, who had come from out of doors. "Everybody seems to be grinning."

"Funny? Rather! Grundy in love, and writing verses to the girl!" chortled Manners.

"I don't call that funny," Talbot said. "It's rather sad."

But he could not help grinning.

"Sad? Why?"

"Grundy is such an ass, Tom! There's no telling what silly things this will make him do. And there will be a row, as sure as eggs are eggs. A fellow can't go walking arm-in-arm through the streets of Weyland with a girl and not have it talked about; and if it comes to the ears of the masters—"

"Oh, it's being talked about all right!" said Wilkins. "Everyone's chortling about it. But that's not to say the beaks are going to hear. He's going to meet her again on Sunday, you know."

"I didn't know," replied Talbot. "He ought to be stopped, I think."

Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders.

"What can you do when old ass Grundy's set on anything?" he said. "It's not a bit of use talking to him," agreed Gunn.

"I wasn't exactly thinking of arguing with him," Talbot answered. "I only think it ought to be stopped; but I own I don't see how, or who's to do it."

"Oh, let's have tea, and leave Grundy alone!" said Manners.

CHAPTER 5.

On the Trail of Grundy.

"THERE he goes!" sniggered Mellish.

If Mellish of the Fourth, was not the worst sneak and spy at St Jim's, that unenviable distinction belonged to his study-mate, Baggy Trimble, to whom he was speaking now.

George Alfred Grundy had just wheeled his machine out of the bike-shed. It was Sunday afternoon; and on Sundays many of the juniors were wont to present a smarter appearance than on weekdays. But Grundy, who was less—not to say slovenly—in his dress, had never before been seen looking so dandified as he now did.

He wore a silk hat, which is not absolutely the most convenient headgear for a cyclist. He had on a thin, fancy waistcoat, which hardly looked suitable for even a mild winter's day. His tie might have been taken from Gussy's stock—except for the fact that Grundy would never have lowered himself to borrow from the swell of the Fourth. His boots were of patent leather, and his socks were gorgeous. Altogether he looked rather more like a modern Solomon in all his glory than Grundy of the Shell.

He gave a hurried glance round, but failed to perceive Mellish and Trimble—not altogether an accident, that, for they were carefully keeping out of his sight. No one else was in the quad at the moment. Dinner was only just over, and none of the fellows had as yet started out for the usual Sunday afternoon walk.

Grundy stopped now to fix something to the handlebars of his bike. He handed that something—a brown-paper covered parcel—with care.

"Chocolates!" said Baggy, his mouth watering.

"How do you know?" asked Mellish.

"Isn't he going to meet a girl, chump? They always want chocs, don't they? Besides, I saw the box in his study—a two-pounder. Jolly good chocs, too!"

"Did you bag any of them?"

"Well, I may just have sampled them—not from the top layer, though. I took them from underneath. He'll think the girls who packed the box had them. I say, Mellish, it would be good business if we could get hold of that box, wouldn't it?"

And Baggy licked his lips at the thought.

Mellish had his share of greed, but it was a smaller share than Baggy's.

"I'd rather see him spooning the girl," he said. "That's what I'm after."

"Oh, well, that would be all right, because then we could make him shell out to us to keep it dark, couldn't we? Ha, he!"

"Shut up!" snapped Mellish.

Baggy's cack had been Grundy's cue, and he looked round sharply. But he saw nobody, for the precious pair were sitting behind a parcel fastened on now, and he made tracks for the gates at once.

Baggy and Mellish did not emerge from cover until he had mounted and ridden off.

Just at that moment Gunn and Wilkins came out of the School House.

"Seen old Grundy, Mellish?" asked Wilkins.

"Saw him yesterday," replied Mellish. "I mean just now, fathead!"

"No, fathead!"

It was a point-blank lie, of course; but Mellish did not mind that, and he knew that Baggy did not mind, either.

But Mellish's lies were so frequent that they failed to carry conviction to anyone at all suspicious.

"Let's look into the bike-shed," said

Gunn. "I saw Baggy grin when Mellish said that. If Grundy's gone his bike won't be there."

Grundy's bike was not there, of course. When his chums came out of the shed Baggy and Mellish were also invisible.

But Gunn and Wilkins were not troubling about those two dingy sheep. It was of Grundy, they were thinking.

"Let's tell Tom Merry," said Gunn. "Those chaps said something about stopping him, and it's my opinion he ought to be stopped. This thing has gone far enough. He's been quite potty ever since Wednesday, and he brought home a whole bundle of new clobber from Wayland yesterday."

"Dunno about stopping him," replied Wilkins, grinning. "That isn't going to be so blessed easy. And I think it's too

No. 14.—GEORGE FRANCIS KERR.



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funny to be stopped. But we might tell Thomas. Those fellows won't like it if we leave them out of it."

So Wilkins and Gunn went off to find the Terrible Three, and directly they had gone Mellish and Baggy emerged from cover, and made a bolt for the bike-shed.

"My back wheel's punctured," said Baggy. "I shall have to borrow somebody else's machine."

"There always is something the matter with that old creak of yours!" snorted Mellish. "Hurry up and make up your mind whose you'll take. Of course, anybody would be pleased and proud to lend you a figger."

"I'm not so sure of that," said

Baggy, failing to scent sarcasm. "Some of the chaps are awful pigs about that kind of thing. I'll take Racker's, I think—he won't want it to-day. Sure to be playing banker in his study, you know!"

"I don't care whose you take—only hurry up!" returned Mellish.

So Baggy took Racker's machine, and the two were clear of the gates before anyone else came along.

They had heard all about the affair of the Wednesday before, naturally. Everyone in the Lower School had heard about it. So the fact that Grundy was not in sight did not trouble them. They knew which road to take.

It was a mild, sunny afternoon, more like spring than winter; and Baggy was soon perspiring profusely.

"Don't go so fast, Mellish!" he pleaded. "We don't want to catch him up, you know!"

"Precious little chance of that," replied Mellish. "I might do it, but you never would—not at your best pace. Remember that we don't know where he's going to meet the girl."

But Mellish slackened speed somewhat. It was owing to that fact that Tom Merry, Talbot, Manners, Lowther, Gunn, and Wilkins, caught sight of the two as they toiled over the moor.

"What are they after?" asked Tom, with a nod towards the figures ahead.

"Grundy. I should say," answered Talbot, with a smile.

"But why?"

"Oh, just out of curiosity and love of prying—that's all!"

"I say, you fellows!" said Tom. "Doesn't that make us look a little—er—well, you know, Mellish's game isn't exactly our game, is it?"

"Of course it isn't," replied Lowther. "We are actuated by the highest motives—to save Grundy from the consequences of his own fatheaded folly, and all that—while Baggy and Mellish—"

"I don't like anything that looks like their game," said Tom. "And I don't really see what we can do, either. Suppose we meet Grundy with this Miss Briggs? We can't insist upon his leaving her and coming along with us, can we?"

"Oh, don't chuck it, Tommy!" said Wilkins plaintively.

"Hold on, if it's only to see what Baggy and Mellish are up to," added Gunn. "I believe they've something up their sleeves, you know. They knew old Grundy had gone, and they're on his track."

"I'm not game for trailing Grundy," Talbot said. "But if those two really are up to any tricks, they ought to be stopped, I consider. Grundy may be making an ass of himself—"

"May be," snorted Manners.

"Well, then, Grundy is making an ass of himself. But, after all, there's nothing in what he's doing that's worse than foolish—Gussy has done the same sort of thing, and he wouldn't do anything that was right off the rails, as he saw it. If those two outsiders are stalking the old ass to annoy him and the girl, we shall be justified in putting the kibosh on their little scheme."

"That's all right, Talbot," said Wilkins. "I don't mind whether you call it tracking a wild ass or tracking two snakes in the grass, as long as you don't chuck it!"

Gunn and Wilkins hardly looked at the affair in the same light as Tom and Talbot, it was plain. The feelings of Manners and Lowther were possibly nearer to those of Grundy's chums than to those of their own. They did not quite see why Grundy should be allowed to play the fool unwatched.

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"We shall lose him altogether, with you creeping along like that!" grumbled Mellish to Baggy.

"Well, you don't want to catch him up, do you? Even if we miss him, we haven't really lost anything. But I don't believe we shall miss him. And he isn't my fault if I'm slow. It's the fault of this blessed bike. I never was on a thing that took so much pushing."

They were nearing Wayland now, and, of course, Grundy, who had ridden hard, was well ahead of them.

As his appointment with the fair Lulu was for three o'clock, Grundy might have taken matters more easily. But he was very ardent indeed, and, moreover, it had seemed to him expedient to be away from St. Jim's before the other fellows started out—which seemed to indicate that Grundy was not quite so stupid as some of these other fellows thought him.

He wanted to get rid of his bike before he met the girl, too. As he was in Wayland soon after half-past two, there was plenty of time for this, and when Mellish and Baggy saw him again he was on foot.

Grundy was approaching the level crossing from the town side, and just before he reached it the gates were closed for the passage of a goods-train. Mellish and Baggy had a glimpse of him before the train began to rumble past; but he did not see them. His eyes were turned in the other direction, whence would come the charmer.

"Get behind those trees!" said Mellish.

By the side of the road was a clump of trees, with a screen of bushes. In summer they would have afforded good cover; now, leafless and bare, they were hardly likely to conceal anyone from keen eyes. But Mellish judged rightly that Grundy's eyes would be busy with other matters than possible watchers as he passed.

"Stop blowing, fathead!" snarled Mellish. "You could be heard a mile away!"

"What, with that train going past?" puffed Baggy, who was blowing rather hard.

"Yes, you fat fool—with a dozen trains going past!"

"Look here, Mellish! I'm not going to stand—"

"Shut up! You can sit if you want to. It's too muddy for me; but I dare say you won't mind. Pigs are mud."

The train had passed now. Grundy, standing on the other side of the railway-track, was in full view. They saw him take out a spare pocket-handkerchief and rub his boots. He looked down at them after the operation was at an end as if he were not quite satisfied with the result.

"Hi, there!"

Grundy jumped out of the way only just in time to avoid a motor-car. His silk hat, which had become rather insecurely perched upon his head, fell off and rolled in the mud.

"Why, you—you— What do you mean by it?" he belated.

"What do you stand right in the middle of the road for, like a gaping idiot?" roared back the driver of the car.

Then he swept on, past the lurking-pigs of the mud, while Grundy spoke wild words that were wasted upon the air, except in so far as they afforded amusement to the listeners.

The burly Shell fellow picked up his hat and contemplated it with rueful eyes. It was certainly none the better for its fall.

While he was still trying to rid it of The Gem Library.—No. 619.

some of the mud it had gathered Mellish whispered to Baggy:

"Here she comes!"
It was guesswork, for Mellish did not know Miss Briggs by sight. But the guess was correct.

The fair Lulu approached, a vision of beauty in a well-fitting dark-blue costume, with a fur cape and a dainty muff, and a captivating hat.

"She ain't half bad-looking!" said Baggy critically.

"Prettiest girl I've seen for a long time," replied Mellish. "You wouldn't think she'd look at old Grundy, would you? But, of course, she's only making a fool of him."

"No need to do that, I should think— he, he!" chuckled Baggy.

"Shurrup, you fat frog! You'll have him hear you!"

But Grundy did not hear. He had just caught sight of the girl, and he had ears and eyes for no one but her. He clapped the muddy hat upon his head and advanced to meet her.

Grundy had rehearsed this meeting mentally a score of times at least. He had thought of lots of things to say—quite eloquent things.

But the only words he could find when it came to the point were:

"It—it's a jolly fine day, isn't it?"

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The girl was reader of speech than he. "Isn't it?" she answered brightly. "I'm so glad! I was afraid it might rain, and then you wouldn't have come."

"Oh, wouldn't I?" growled Grundy.

There was a certain eloquence of brevity in that speech, though the eloquence Grundy had designed had not been of the brief order.

The girl looked at him languishingly.

"Would you?" she asked softly.

"Rather!" replied Grundy.

"That's very nice of you. My word, aren't you a swell? Like a nobleman, I declare!"

"Oh, well, a fellow must dress a bit on Sundays, you know!" said Grundy, no longer quite so tongue-tied. "But I biked in, and my boots aren't any the better for it."

He did not say anything about his hat. He hoped she would not notice the condition of that.

"Where shall we go?" she asked.

"Oh, you know best!" Grundy answered.

"Let's go across the moor. It's never muddy there, even when the roads are. And there's a fallen tree in a hollow that we can sit on!"

"Right-ho!" replied Grundy.

He was not conscious of offering his arm, but it is to be presumed that he did, for Miss Briggs took it as if it belonged to her.

"My hat!" gasped Mellish. "He's not half going it, is he, fat?"

CHAPTER 6.

The Ungrateful Grundy.

MELLISH and Baggy did not emerge from their cover till Grundy and Miss Briggs were a couple of hundred yards or so away, and only their heads were visible, for the moor undulated a good deal here. They could no longer see the two when they were once out in the road; but they saw someone else.

A short, slim young man, with sandy hair, hurried up to them. He wore a frock-coat—and other things, of course—and he carried an umbrella. His face was working, and his eyes gleamed.

"I say, seen a young lady?" he asked.

"Several—lots, I might say," returned Mellish, grinning.

"Don't you get japing with me, my lad, or you'll get the umbrella about your back!" snapped the young man.

The grin faded from the face of Mellish. Baggy quivered like a jelly. The young man was small, no taller than Mellish, but he looked to them very ferocious.

"Well, if you'd tell us what she was like," began Mellish weakly.

"Blue hair, golden eyes— What are you sniggering at, you fat fool?"

"He, he, he! You said she had blue hair!" giggled Baggy.

"I said blue eyes and golden hair, Dark blue costume, fur round her neck."

"We've seen her," said Mellish. "Very handsome young lady. Walks well, and smiles—"

"If she smiled at you it was only because of your funny faces!" the young man snapped. "But there," he added gloomily. "I dare say she did; she'd smile at anybody. Which way did she go?"

Perhaps Baggy ought to have been surprised when Mellish pointed down the road; but perhaps not. Baggy knew his Mellish.

"Anyone along with her?" asked the young man fiercely.

"Yes. One of our fellows," replied Mellish.

Not another word said the sandy-haired young man. Down the road he hurried, swinging his umbrella violently.

"What did you tell him that for?" asked Baggy.

"We don't want him spoiling our game."

"But it would have been funny to see him go for old Grundy."

"Rats! Grundy could eat him up! He's thrashed him already. That must be the chap Wilkins and Gunn saw on Wednesday."

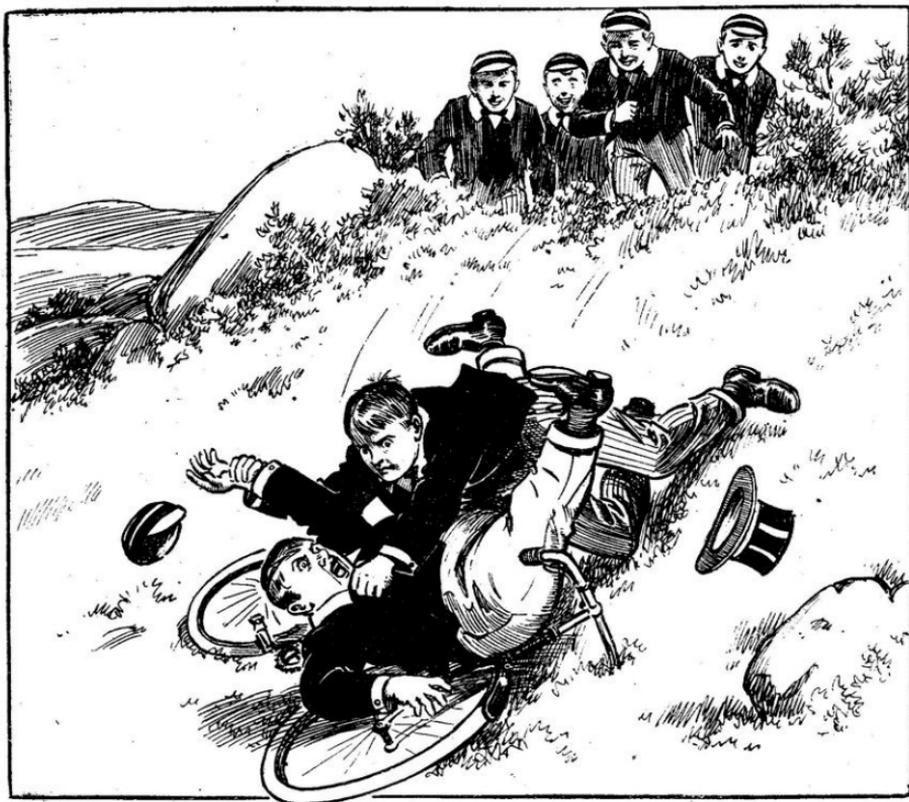
"Oh!" said Baggy, whose mind was apt to move slowly. "I see now. It's Horrid, or whatever his name is. Well, I shouldn't have minded seeing Grundy go for him. He was beastly rude to us."

"He'll find them, sooner or later, you bet!" Mellish answered. "But we'll find them first."

And Mellish started off across the moor, wheeling his bike. Baggy trailed after him.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry and the rest had dismounted some little distance down the road. They had topped a rise just in time to see Grundy and Miss Briggs leave the road for the moor, and had drawn away to the side of the highway, so that Mellish and Baggy should not see them.

They saw the sandy-haired young man come up to the two Fourth-Formers.



Baggy, with Grundy on top of him, had landed right upon a bicycle, and Baggy, Grundy, and the bike were all somewhat the worse for the mix-up. "Hope to goodness that isn't my bike!" exclaimed Mellish. "It's Racke's and it's pretty well smashed to pieces!" howled Baggy. (See Chapter 6).

"I do believe that's Bert!" said Wilkins.

"Oh, he's Bert all serene!" agreed Gunn. "He's got his go-to-meeting clobber on, but it's Bert."

"Then those two have thrown him off the scent," said Tom.

"Rather a pity," remarked Lowther. "From the way he walks and swings his gump, I should surmise that Bert is breathing fire and fury, and an encounter between him and Grundy would be quite humorous—better than Charlie Chaplin!"

"I don't know about that," replied Talbot. "The girl's pretty enough to send lots of fellows off their heads about her, and this chap is really jealous, I suppose. Grundy can lick him, you say. I don't know that I'm keen on seeing him licked."

"Do we want to talk to him?" asked Manners.

"Does he want to talk to us?" returned Tom.

"Well, he may ask us questions, and we aren't Mellishes or Baggies."

"Let's ride past him," suggested Gunn. Mellish and Baggy had now started across the moor, and the chances were that they would not look down the road.

The six mounted, and rode swiftly past Mr. Horridge.

He did not speak to them, but he glared at them—especially at Tom and Talbot, who had rather more than an average share of good looks. It appeared that Mr. Horridge considered all St. Jim's as enemies.

"Let's leave our bikes at the gatehouse," said Tom, as they drew near the level-crossing.

The man in charge readily agreed to look after the bikes, and the half-dozen Shell fellows went off across the moor in the wake of the Fourth Form black sheep.

"No use hurrying," said Manners. "We don't want them to spot us."

"And it's understood that we're not dogging Grundy, but only following those two to see that they don't get playing some sneaking trick on him and the girl," said Talbot.

"My dear man, what you propose to do amounts to aiding and abetting Grundy in his love-making!" gibed Lowther.

"No, it doesn't. It may not be for the credit of St. Jim's that Grundy should go spooning, but it's still less so that

those two young cads should stalk him like this!" Talbot snapped.

"Talbot's right, Monty," said Tom seriously.

"Oh, have it your own way! After all, it's Sunday, isn't it?" replied Lowther. "There's bound to be some fun, anyway," he whispered to Manners.

"Hope so. All the same, I don't think Talbot and Tommy are far wrong," Manners answered.

And at heart, not only Lowther, but Gunn and Wilkins also, were of one mind with him. None of them lacked chivalry, and Miss Briggs was really a very pretty girl, and if she was making a fool of Grundy she could hardly do much harm that way, since Grundy seemed to have been designed by Nature for precisely that role.

Grundy had no suspicion that he was being fooled. He could not quite persuade himself that the fair Lulu's feelings for him were as ardent as his for her; but, then, that was hardly to be expected, perhaps hardly to be desired. He was sure that she liked and admired him; and he was pleased to be liked, and still more pleased to be admired. Georgie

Alfred had an appetite for admiration that went very far from being satisfied at St Jim's.

They found the hollow and the fallen log, and Grundy gallantly spread a gorgeous silk handkerchief for Miss Briggs to sit upon. He forgot that he might be wanting that handkerchief. He had used the other to wipe his boots with, which constituted some slight disqualification of its use for the ordinary purpose.

It was quite mild in the hollow; and Miss Briggs, with her fur cape and her sensible, warm costume, did not feel in the least cold. Neither did Grundy at first, and he failed to realise as yet that he was not clad in absolutely the most fitting garb for sitting out of doors on a winter day.

He produced his box of chocolates, and the fair Lulu uttered a little scream of rapture.

"Oh, what a positively gorgeous box!" she exclaimed.

Grundy beamed as she sampled the chocolates liberally.

"Aren't you going to have any, George?" she inquired, after dealing with a dozen or so in a manner that might have appealed to Baggie himself.

It cannot be said, however, that it did actually appeal to that youth.

"She's wolfing those chocs like one o'clock, Mellish!" he muttered to his confederate.

That hollow really was not a very good place for people who did not want to be watched, though as far as that went, Miss Briggs and George Alfred Grundy were doing nothing that all the world—except the St. Jim's authorities—might not have seen. Mellish and Trimble had found cover in a smaller depression to the rear of it, with a gorse-bush as screen.

"Let her!" answered Mellish.

"I wouldn't if I could help it, but I don't see how I can stop her!" mumbled Baggie dolefully.

Mellish said nothing in reply to that. He had taken out his pocket-knife, and was cutting at the rough turf.

"What are you doing?" asked Baggie.

"You'll see in a minute, porpoise!"

Quite a number of small clods of earth and grass were in the heap by the side of Mellish when he shut up his knife and put it away.

He glanced round. There were more gorse-bushes a few yards behind, and the broken character of the ground was all in favour of his scheme.

"You squint round there, and tell me if Grundy gets up," he whispered to Baggie.

"Directly he does, you just scoot for that thick clump at the back near our bikes, and lie low there. If you're sharp he won't see you. The bank of the hollow is pretty steep this side."

"What are you going to do?" inquired Baggie.

"Same as you, of course, ass! I'm counting on his not being willing to leave the girl for more than a minute or two."

"I mean with those things?"

"This!"

And Mellish tossed one of the small clods over the bank, while Baggie popped his head round at the side to watch its effect.

He popped it back again at once.

"I see now," he said. "Jolly good idea! But it didn't fall within three yards of them, you know."

"I shall get the range presently. Was it behind or in front?"

"To the side."

"Which side, you fat ass?"

"To the left."

Mellish tried again.

"Farther away than ever," said Baggie.

"You said to the left, idiot!"

"Yes; their left, fathead!"

"Well, that's our left, too. They've their backs to us."

"So they have. I'd forgotten that. Of course, I meant the right!"

"Clump!"

Mellish tossed over another small clod.

Grundy, after ascertaining that he had long outgrown any hankering after chocolates, had been prevailed upon to try one, and was now trying his fifth or

No. 15.—GEORGE FIGGINS



The acknowledged chief of the New House Juniors, in spite of the fact that they include fellows of a Form senior to his. Long-legged and wiry, an athlete of skill and pluck, and a fellow beyond reproach. A real good leader. Cherishes a devout admiration for D'Arcy's cousin Ethel. (Study No. 4.)

thereabouts. The clod fell right upon his hand, and sprinkled the chocolates with dirt.

"What was that?" he asked, in surprise.

"I don't know; but it's made a mess of those chocs!" said the girl angrily.

Grundy looked at the box. Its contents had been rather deteriorated in value for anyone at all fastidious. He shook out the remainder of the second layer, and stripped the paper from above the third.

"These are all right, Lulu," he said.

Something like a snigger came faintly to his ears, and then something like a gurgle.

Mellish had clapped his hand over Baggie's mouth.

"You'll spoil the whole show!" he hissed furiously.

Grundy listened intently, but no further sound came to him. He fancied that he must have been mistaken.

"You didn't see anyone about as we came over the moor, did you?" he asked, with a slight sniff, for he was beginning to feel chilly.

"Not a soul," replied Miss Briggs, proceeding with her sampling.

Grundy sniffed again. Half turning, he took out the handkerchief he had used upon his boots, selected the cleanest portion of it, and blew a desperate blast.

Even as he did so, another clod smote his hat, and broke, scattering earth over the handkerchief, already none too clean.

"Confound it!" snorted Grundy.

"What's the matter now?" asked the girl.

"More of that stuff! It must fall from the bank, and yet I can't see how it could get over here."

Unless the bank of the hollow had volcanic properties, and was in eruption, it was certainly difficult to see how that could have happened.

But the fair Lulu, who had not yet been hit, was not inclined to worry.

"When are you going to take me to the pictures, George?" she asked coquettishly.

"I don't know—or I mean, when do you want to go?" sniffed Grundy.

"Shall we say Wednesday—the six o'clock house?"

"Wouldn't the afternoon be better?" inquired Grundy, who foresaw difficulties in the way of even the early-evening show.

"No; I don't care much about going in the daytime. Besides, we could go for a walk then, and you could take me to tea after that, and then we could do the cinema."

In spite of the chill that was creeping over him, Grundy warmed at that. It meant hours and hours with the charmer. He must miss call-over; it was true; but that seemed a small price to pay for such bliss.

Indeed, call-over seemed an absurd thing even to remember at such a time.

"Right—ho!" he said. "Will half-past two suit you?"

"Better make it a quarter to three, I think, George."

Baggie and Mellish listened with all their ears to that, and no more clods were thrown until the engagement had been ratified.

Then Mellish tossed over two in quick succession.

One landed right in the box of chocolates, and the other smacked full upon Grundy's nose.

With a howl of fury, Grundy leaped up and rushed at the bank.

He scrambled half-way up, then lost his footing, and rolled down.

Miss Briggs was unfeeling enough to laugh.

Grundy picked himself up, kicked his hat away, seized the box of chocolates, hurled it out of the hollow, gave the girl one look of reproach, and rushed at the bank again.

"Yow! Lemme be, Tom Merry!" sounded the squeak of Baggie Trimble.

This time Grundy reached the top. He saw Baggie and Mellish struggling in the grip of half a dozen Shell fellows.

"You confounded spies!" he bellowed.

And it was quite plain that he meant the epithet to be applied all round; it was not only for Mellish and Baggie.

"Rot," snapped Tom. "We weren't spring on you. We were only looking after these young swoops."

"Which of you chucked clods of earth over there?" demanded Grundy, evi-

dently ready to believe that any of them might have done it.

"Mellich and Trimble, of course!" said Talbot warmly.

"I didn't! I never chucked a single one! I'll take my oath of that!" wailed Baggy.

"They were dogging you. We came after them," Tom said.

"Oh, well, I can't say that I'm grateful!" snorted Grundy.

"No one ever expected you to be!" retorted Manners.

"Better clear off, all of you, if you have any decent feeling at all!" said Grundy severely.

"Behaving like street urchins, I call it! I say, though, before you go, has any of you a clean hanky?"

Talbot produced one. Grundy took it without thanks.

"Going to take her to the cinema on Wednesday—eh, Grundy?" squeaked Baggy, who was behind Tom and Talbot, and felt more or less safe thus fortified.

Grundy rushed, Talbot and Tom gave way at once. Baggy ran for all he was worth; but Grundy seized him, and they fell together into a clump of gorse.

A wild howl from Baggy and a roar of rage and pain from Grundy arose as they rolled out of sight. The rest darted to the spot, and looked over the bushes.

Baggy, with Grundy on top of him, had landed upon a bicycle, and Baggy, Grundy, and the bike were all somewhat the worse for the mix-up.

"Hope to goodness that isn't my bike!" exclaimed Mellich.

"It's Racke's, and it's pretty much smashed to pieces!" howled Baggy.

"You've done it now, Grundy! It wasn't my fault, and I shall jolly well tell Racke so!"

"I don't care what you tell Racke!" shouted Grundy, getting up with a score of gorse prickles sticking in his face. "I hope he'll slay you!"

The bike was not quite so bad a case as Baggy fancied; but a dozen spokes were broken, and one of the rims was buckled.

Grundy struggled up again, without a word, passed his Form-fellows with a disdainful look, and made his way back to Miss Briggs.

"Hanged if I don't half admire the fellow!" said Manners. "He does stick to it, anyway!"

"Grateful, wasn't he?" Lowther said.

"Well, I'm not sure that he had to be grateful for, the way he would look at it," answered Talbot.

"Except your hanky, old fellow," Tom said, grinning.

"He's welcome to that. Clear out of this, you two cads! We can leave you to Grundy, I know; but if it wasn't for being certain of that I'd give you a jolly good hiding each myself!"

Mellich and Baggy collared their bikes, and slunk away. The afternoon had not been so big a success as they had anticipated.

CHAPTER 7.

A Scheme of Salvation.

"HE means to go!" said Wilkins.

"Says he doesn't care a scrap about anybody at St. Jim's—masters, prefects, or silly asses in the Shell," added Gunn. "I think he's mad!"

"And he's simply awful to live with," Wilkins said plaintively. "We haven't had a peaceful moment in the study since Sunday."

"Here's a chance for you fellows to come to Grundy's rescue again, and I only hope that you'll get more change out of it this time than you did last," remarked Kerr, with a grin.

There was quite a crowd in No. 10 of the Shell studies, the apartment of the

Terrible Three. Footer was the real business of the meeting; but that had been given the go-by as soon as Wilkins and Gunn had come in to report Grundy obdurate.

"Well, I know one thing—I'm going to be in it this time," said Blake. "I haven't forgiven you fellows yet for leaving me out of Sunday's bizney. Mean, I call it!"

"There's a fine chance for Kerr," said Lowther thoughtfully.

"For me?" asked Kerr, in surprise.

"For you, dear boy! Make up of Horridge, and frighten Grundy out of his senses!"

"Horridge? Who's he? Oh, I know

"Pack a gun, dear boy, and threaten him with that," suggested Lowther coolly. "Needn't be loaded, of course!"

"It's quite a nice part," replied Kerr. "In fact, it's so nice a part that I can't understand why you should be willing to hand it over to me."

"Horridge is—not to put too fine a point upon it—sturdy," Lowther returned.

"And I am—not to put too fine a point upon it—aburn—eh?"

"Well, we'll say aburn—not much odds," Lowther answered.

"Thank you for nothing—no Horridge in mine!"

"You can't do it that way," Gunn said anxiously. "And it's really serious. I saw that sneak Mellich talking to Knox just now, and Knox was grinning like a blessed gorse! It would just suit his book to catch Grundy out; they've had above one or two rows, Grundy did whale Mellich—Baggy, too; but it wasn't a scrap more than they deserved."

"I'm glad he did," Talbot said. "But it's a rotten bizney to have Knox mixed up in it. He can make his catch as easily as possible, and pretend that it happened by accident. If he reports that Grundy was taking a girl to the cinema at Wayland when he might have been here at prep—well, it ought not mean the sack, but it would go very near it."

"Yaas, wathah! What are we to do, Tom Mewwy?"

"Don't shove it on to me, Gussy! I don't know what to do!"

"I've half a notion," Kerr said, "and it's growing into a whole one fast. Grundy's got to be saved, in spite of himself, if poss; but I'm not going to play any horrid Horridge to save him, you may take that from me. Tommy, have you kids been behaving pretty decently lately?"

"I think so, Kerr. We haven't been in any particular row, anyway. Why?"

"Railton's a decent sort always, and if there was something really special on at the cinema he might give you leave to go over to the evening show for once, don't you think?"

"There isn't anything special on," Tom said.

"There's 'Grundy and the Girl'—great drama in five reels—or fifty, unless it's stopped!"

"Can't tell Railton that."

"My dear man, it is needful to tell Railton everything?"

"It's a ripping good idea!" said Fatty. "Kerr's always are, aren't they?" queried Lowther.

"Of course they are!"

"So, of course, this is. But what exactly is the idea?"

Fatty looked at Kerr. He was quite at a loss. But Kerr knew, he was certain.

"Going to the cinema," Fatty said.

"And how's that to rescue Grundy from the siren?"

"Excuse me, Lowthah, but I weadly do not consider it in vewy good taste to refer to the young lady as a siren," Gussy said reprovingly. "She is a vewy pretty girl, an' we have no weason to suspect her of—"

"Who's suspecting her of anything, chump? You can't suspect her of being gone on Grundy, any way. No girl could be."

"I don't see the use of rescuing Grundy," remarked Dig, with a grin. "Grundy isn't ours, Gussy is. And the only result of getting Grundy out of the mess will be to land Gustavus in it. He's half-way there now!"

Arthur Augustus smiled in a deprecating manner. But it was plain that the idea of supplanting Grundy was not one that he strongly resented.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 619.

No. 16.—FATTY WYNN.



A popular character, known as "Fatty," built from Wales. A big eater; but not by any means to be classed with Trimble and Bunter. Can practise self-denial, and is full of generous instincts. A tip-top goal-keeper and a splendid bowler. A fellow of simple and confiding nature, with great faith in Figgins and Kerr, but no fool. (Study No. 4.)

—the rival! Chap you fellows met as you came back on Sunday, raving with jealousy and wrath!

"Fity Mellich and Baggy didn't meet him," said Manners. "The fur would have flown if they had. They sent him on the wrong track, you know."

"And you think that I might make up as Horridge and frighten Grundy, Lowther?" said Kerr slowly.

"You could make up as anybody, you know, old chap," Fatty Wynn said.

"You dry up! When did you know anybody to frighten old Grundy, Lowther? And, seeing that he's already thrashed Horridge once, how do you propose that I, as Horridge, should awe him? I'm not exactly in the habit of wandering about asking for it, you know, and I admit that Grundy can lick me."

"You haven't answered Lowther's question, Fatty," said Manners.

"Oh, well, I don't know all about that part of it," confessed Fatty. "But Kerr knows."

"You fellows can't be in it, anyway," said Herries.

"Why not?" snapped Figgins.

"Ratty won't—Latham's in charge for a day or two. He won't mind if Railton doesn't."

"And what are we to do if we can get Railton's leave?" Tom asked.

"You get it for as many as poss, and you include the erring Grundy, of course. At the picture-show we take care to get seats near Grundy and the girl—all round them, in fact."

"My hat!" said Wilkins breathlessly. "Old Grundy won't be half wild! But there's all the better. Go on, Kerr!"

"Knox butts in to make trouble. Tommy produces the leave-chit. Knox is done like a dinner! What if Grundy is sitting next the charmer? Tommy will be next her on the other side, and—"

"Oh, shall I?" demanded Tom.

"Well if not you, Talbot. You're both beauties, you know. Figgys or I can't say as much for ourselves."

"You wouldn't catch me on that hop if I was an Adonis!" growled Figgys.

"I'm not sure that it quite suits me," said Talbot, smiling.

"Oh, I do not mind takin' it on!" volunteered Gussy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are all you silly asses cacklin' about?"

"It shall be Gussy, then," said Kerr. "That is, if the seat's vacant. We can't turn anyone out for him, I suppose?"

"Has Algernon Marmaduke meditated upon the wibb of Grundy?" inquired Latherer solemnly.

"Sounds like the beginning of the 'Hud,'" said Tom.

"That's it! Great Grundy's wrath, to Gussy direful spring. Of thick ears, ruby nose, any old thing!" declaimed Lowther.

"Oh, dry up!" snorted Manners. "Gussy's no Achilles, and your metre's all lame. It's a good notion, Kerr, though I'm not sure old ass Grundy is worth the trouble. Bound to be funny, though!"

"Won't Grundy glower?" giggled Gunn.

"Tommy, play your part!" said Kerr.

"You mean, trot off to Railton at once, I suppose? Well, I don't mind. He can only say 'No.'"

"Wrong, Thomas, the pessimist! He can say 'Yes,'" corrected Lowther.

"I mean, he can only refuse at worst, oump! He won't bite my head off. How many of us?"

"There are thirteen present—unlucky number," replied Kerr. "But Grundy will make fourteen. I take it that Levison and Cardew and Clive would be on?"

"And Kangaroo and those fellows," Talbot put in.

"An' Julian an' the others in No. 5?" suggested Gussy.

"Julian's a very good-looking fellow, old top," said Lowther warningly.

"What has that to do with it, you silly fathead?"

"Oh, if it's nothing to you it's less than that to me, dear boy. And, of course, no one could accuse Grundy of beauty!"

"Don't suggest anyone else. That's quite enough!" said Tom.

"Gore won't like being left out," Talbot said.

"Can you go without Skimpy?" asked Lowther.

"I think so," answered Talbot, smiling. "But Gore's different."

"I'll ask for Gore, then," Tom said. "Here goes!"

And he made his way to Mr. Railton's study.

"Well, Merry?" said the House-mason gravely.

"I've a favour to ask, sir."

"If it's in reason, my boy—"

"Not sure what you will think about that, sir. But a party of us want to go to the Wayland picture show this evening—not the last house—the one before it. We'd do our prep this afternoon, and—"

"That must be a condition, Merry. certainly. Work must not be neglected. Something very special, I take it?"

"Yes, sir," answered Tom, with some slight hesitation.

It would be awkward if Mr. Railton asked him what it was, for he had not the least notion what was being shown.

"Ah! Who are the members of the Party?"

Talbot, Gore, Blake, D'Arcy, Herries, Digby, Grundy, Wilkins, Gunn, Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, Noble, Dane, Glen, Cardew, Levison, Clive, Kerruisi, Julian, Hammond, Reilly, Redfern, Owen, Lawrence, Manners, Lowther, and myself," rattled off Tom.

He had remembered Redfern & Co. just in time to include them.

Mr. Railton lifted his eyebrows.

"Quite a party!" he said. "You are sure you have forgotten no one?"

"Oh, yes, I have, sir! Roynance, Durrance, and Lumley-Lumley. Oh, and Koumi Rao!"

It seemed a pity to Tom to leave out anyone likely to be keen, for he saw that Mr. Railton meant to consent.

"Very well. But the going of the New House boys must be sanctioned by Mr. Latham. You can tell him I have no objection, however. Back by nine o'clock, mind, Merry!"

"Oh, yes, sir. And thank you no end! Will you let me have a pass?"

"Repeat your list," said the master, taking up his fountain-pen.

Tom went off with the pass in high feather. It was certainly a great scheme of Kerr's! Even if it did not matter as far as Grundy was concerned—but in one way or another it was bound to marter to the great George Alfred, if only in the way of annoyance—everyone else was something to the good.

CHAPTER 8.

At The Cinema.

"HERE we are! But where are Grundy and the girl?" asked Lowther, in front of the picture-palace at Wayland.

"That's all right," said Wilkins. "They haven't gone in yet. We've been on the watch."

Wilkins, Gunn, Roynance, and Gore had gone on in advance of the rest.

No one had refused to join the party. Everyone was as keen as mustard, some few mainly because of the show, but most on account of the side-show.

"Has he come over at all?" asked Talbot.

"Bless your innocent heart, yes!" replied Gore. "The silly bouncer started directly after dinner, while we were mugging away at prep. He's been with the girl all the giddy afternoon, no doubt."

"She must be jolly tired of him by this time," said Manners.

"Here they come!" exclaimed Gunn. The front of the picture-palace was all aglow, and that tended to render the area on each side of it dark by com-

parison. If Grundy had looked, he might have seen quite a crowd of St. Jim's fellows to the right, or he might not have seen it—it was difficult to be sure how far the illumination threw into darkness the spaces immediately beyond its sphere.

But Grundy did not look. He passed straight in, with Miss Briggs by his side. She was not hanging on his arm, and some of those nearest fancied that she did not look as though she had any inclination so to hang.

Her pretty face wore an expression somewhat less agreeable than usual. One might almost have imagined that three or four hours of the great George Alfred had bored her.

Kerr was close behind Grundy. The Scots junior had been allotted the role of treasurer. He had notes and silver ready.

"Two grand circle, please," said Grundy.

He got the tickets, and passed on with the girl.

"Thirty-one grand circle, please," said Kerr. "And may our fellows be going up while you give me the tickets?"

"Oh, certainly, though I think you can be sure of good seats at this hour in any case. I suppose you want to be all together, though? Ward!"

The uniformed assistant hurried up. Business was slack just then.

"Yes, Miss Baines?"

"Pass thirty-one for grand circle. You shall have the tickets in a minute."

"Right-ho, miss!"

"Come on, you fellows!" said Kerr. They filed in quickly. The first of them were at the foot of the staircase before Grundy and the girl had reached the top.

By the time they had chosen their seats, the St. Jim's rush had begun.

Gussy had got in front, and he made haste to secure a seat on the left of Miss Briggs. Grundy was sitting on her right.

Wilkins was manoeuvred by the humorous Lowther into the seat to the right of Grundy. It was not that which he would have chosen.

Lowther was next to Wilkins, and Tom next to Lowther.

The rest spread themselves out on each side and behind, so that when they had settled down Miss Briggs was near the front centre of a solid block of St. Jim's juniors, "all with their hair nicely brushed and their faces washed," as Lowther remarked to Talbot just behind him. Figgins sat on Talbot's left, and between Figgys and Fatty he had been reserved for Kerr, which brought him just behind Grundy.

"Wilkins, what are you doing here, you silly chump?" growled Grundy, suddenly becoming aware of the proximity of his chum.

"Same as the rest," replied Wilkins. "Well, you go and sit somewhere else!"

"Sha'n't! I've paid for my seat. Besides, if I did the rest wouldn't shift."

Grundy glanced round and behind, and groaned. Kerr was taking his seat, and the great George Alfred saw the bright and smiling faces of Lowther, Tom Merry, Cardew, Talbot, Figgins, Roynance, and many more.

The orchestra had started a marching tune, making up in volume of noise for any deficiency in music. But half the crowd from St. Jim's plainly heard Grundy's fierce exclamation.

"It's a blessed conspiracy, and I'm not going to put up with it!"

"Quite a family party, eh, Grundy,

old top?" said Cardew, who had heard perfectly, but pretended not to. "Don't be an ass, Grundy!" pleaded Wilkins. "You'll say we were right later on, I fancy!"

"What? Likely, isn't it? Is Gunn here?"

"He's here, somewhere."

But Gunn, momentarily more astute than Wilkins, had fought shy of Grundy's neighbourhood.

"You're traitors!" rapped out Grundy.

"Better turn your dial the other way, or Gussy will be cutting you out!" retorted Wilkins.

Grundy turned at once. He scowled at what he saw.

Miss Briggs had noted the fact that the boy sitting next to her was very stylish and well-groomed, and Miss Briggs liked that sort of boy. So she promptly dropped a glove, which Arthur Augustus had promptly—and politely—retrieved.

She was saying "Thank you," very nicely indeed, when Grundy faced round, glaring.

"Introduce your friend to me, will you, George?" she asked sweetly.

Grundy's stare intensified. Gussy should have wilted under it, but did not. Instead, he smiled his very best smile. "He's no friend of mine!" snapped Grundy.

"But he is from St. Jim's—I saw his cap!"

"They would not let me wear a toppah," murmured Gussy.

"—oh, look here, Lulu, really—can't you be satisfied with me?"

Grundy had subdued his voice as far as possible, but, even so, it carried too far, as the snigger from the sides and from behind testified.

"I don't see why I should be, and I can't bear jealous persons," said the fair Lulu, tossing her head.

"I suppose I must introduce myself, as Gwundy wefuses," began Gussy. "I am—"

"Did I say I refused?" snorted Grundy. "This is D'Arcy, a kid in the Fourth, Miss Briggs. D'Arcy—Miss Briggs! Now you've got what you want!"

The girl pouted, and Gussy's noble brow was clouded for a moment. Grundy's manner had not been gracious, to say the least of it. But perhaps there was some excuse for Grundy.

It appeared that Arthur Augustus and Miss Briggs had got what they wanted, however, for Grundy was quite out of the picture for some time thereafter.

Gussy seemed to forget that more than thirty pairs of eyes were upon him; and if Miss Briggs realised that she did not mind it.

"Do you eash about chocolates, Miss Briggs?" asked Gussy, producing a large box.

"I simply adore them!" replied the fair Lulu.

"I should think you do! You've been eating them all the afternoon!" growled Grundy.

He got what he deserved for that. Miss Briggs pointedly turned her back upon him.

Topical pictures were appearing upon the screen. But Grundy did not see them. Gussy and Miss Briggs did not see them as far as the gloom permitted, those two were looking into one another's eyes, while Grundy stared into a grey and gloomy future, relieved only by mental visions of putting Arthur Augustus through it with vigour for this.

"Ten years older than he is, if a day!" said someone behind Gussy.

He heard, but he did not tumble to it that the remark had anything to do with him until Miss Briggs looked round angrily.

The light went up again. The topical pictures were finished.

"Hallo! Here's someone who seems to imagine he is entitled to a seat among us!" said Cardew.

"It's Horridge!" said Talbot.

It was Mr. Horridge, evidently in wrath. He was trying to push his way in among the St. Jim's fellows. But there was no vacant seat, as those on the outskirts of the block made clear to him.

"Says he isn't going to stand it!" the word was passed along.

"Well, he certainly can't sit it, not here!" Lowther said, with a grin.

An attendant came up and remonstrated with Mr. Horridge, who at last subsided into the seat next to Gunn, who had got as far as possible from Grundy.

"You're one of them!" said Mr. Horridge darkly.

"One of whom? I haven't done anything to you," Gunn replied uneasily.

"You know! But you will see something before long! Don't be surprised if there's shooting!"

And Mr. Horridge drew back the skirt of his frock-coat to show the butt of a revolver—or so it seemed to Gunn, though he could not feel quite sure, for the lights went down just at that moment.

Gunn was about to whisper to Durance, on his left. But Horridge hissed into his ear.

"One word, and your doom is sealed!"

William Gunn was not a funk. But he had not the courage or the readiness of such fellows as Tom Merry, Talbot, Blake, or Figgins. And he did not want his doom sealed. It sounded an extremely nasty thing to have happening to a fellow.

He tried to persuade himself that it was all bluff, but the attempt was not a great success. Then he made up his mind that directly Horridge produced the revolver he would hang on to Hor-

ridge's arm and yell for all he was worth. But he hoped it would never be produced. Gunn was not so fond of the limelight as Grundy.

Horridge was plainly half-mad with jealousy. The furious looks he cast at both Grundy and D'Arcy told that.

He paid no attention whatever to the screen. Nor did Gunn. He was watching Horridge all the time. And Gussy could not have told afterwards what the play was about, and it is doubtful whether Grundy could, while only a small minority of the rest could have given anything like a coherent account of its action.

But Miss Briggs, apparently quite oblivious of the jealous Bert, saw most of it, and ate chocolates with industry meanwhile. Fatty Wynn whispered to Kier that she must be greedy, however good-looking she was. Fatty thought Gussy would have done much better to pass that box of chocolates round.

"Have one, Gwundy?" asked Gussy politely.

"I will not!" snapped Grundy.

"I will, though, old chap!" Fatty said. "Pass 'em along!"

But they were not passed along. Arthur Augustus kept his grip on the box, while those within reach helped themselves. And after that he glanced at the box as if he considered that they had helped themselves too liberally.

"Shows how a chap will go all to pieces when he gets gone on a girl," said Fatty sadly. "I must say old Gussy's liberal enough as a rule."

CHAPTER 9. The End of It.

"KNOX!"

The word was passed along, and the St. Jim's crowd thrilled.

There was from the outset no doubt whatever about the prefect's errand. The way he looked around him, and the instant movement he made towards Grundy as soon as he saw the Shell fellow, made that clear.

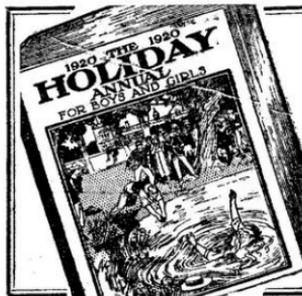
The suspicions of Gunn and Wilkins were justified. In fact, no one had ever had much doubt that they would be since the story of Knox's confab with Mellish had been told.

Knox was, by long odds, the most unpleasant fellow in the Sixth. He was a vengeful brute, too, and he had more than once been up against Grundy.

"It's all right!" said Tom Merry. "We're absolutely on velvet. There isn't a dashed thing Knox can do, though he may try a lot!"

The attendant showed Knox a vacant seat; but he only shook his head, and began to try to force his way past these at the end of the row which included Grundy, Gussy, and the girl.

They made room for him to pass, sup-



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posing that he must have spotted a vacant place. But he came to a dead halt when he reached Gore, the outermost of the St. Jim's fellows on that side. Tom Merry was next to Gore, with Lowther and Wilkins between him and Gussy.

"Move your knees, Gore!" commanded Knox.

"No fear! There isn't a seat!" answered Gore.

"I don't want a seat. I want to get at Grundy!" hissed the prefect.

"What do you want to get at Grundy for, Knox?" asked Tom.

"He's here without leave, and he's with a girl!" returned Knox, almost spluttering with wrath.

"I don't believe he's here without leave, do you know, Knox?" said Lowther sweetly.

"And it's not a crime to occupy a seat near a girl," remarked Tom. "If it is, Gussy's a criminal, too. Don't be silly, Knox!"

"Sit down!"

"You're getting in the way of the screen!"

"Chuck him out!"

The cries from behind only served to make Knox more furious.

"I believe you're all here without leave, and I shall take your names!" he fumed. "But it's Grundy I want now!"

"Hit him out!"

"Hit him on the head and make him lie down, somebody!"

"You can't, you know, sir, really," remonstrated the attendant. "There are vacant seats this side, but there's no room at all there."

"I'm not here to see your rotten show! I'm here to do my duty!" snapped Knox.

"Chuck him out!"

"You must come out of that, sir!"

"Make room for me, Gore!"

"Jolly well won't!"

"Come here, Grundy!"

"Oh, rats," snorted Grundy.

Another attendant came up, and two or three young men among the crowd rose, ready to help. The St. Jim's fellows sat tightly. This sort of thing was not very creditable to the school; but they could not restrain Knox, and they did not greatly mind his making a fool of himself.

"I really think, Knox, that you will have to sit down," said Lowther blandly.

"If it hurts—well, you know, a big chap like you shouldn't put himself in the way of corporal punishment. If you can't sit, you must stand at the back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The funniest antics of Charley Chaplin had never aroused a more hearty burst of laughter at the Wayland Cinema than that speech of Lowther's, audible to everyone in the grand circle, did.

Knox had to give it up for the time being. Breathing fire and fury, he went to a seat at the side, whence he glowered at Grundy and the rest and bided his time.

"Who's that feller?" demanded Mr. Horridge of Gunn.

"One of our prefects—a silly ass!" answered Gunn.

"I've a good mind to let daylight into him!" said Mr. Horridge wrathfully.

"He's making my girl conspicuous. She'll never hear the last of this!"

Gunn began to feel some sympathy with Mr. Horridge. The little man seemed to think more of the girl than of himself, anyway.

"Do you—is she—I mean, are you very fond of her?" Gunn asked timidly.

"I care more about her than about my life!" replied the little man bitterly.

"She'd promised to marry me, too. But she's a flirt—that's what's the matter

with her! Carrying on with boys of sixteen when she's very nearly old enough to be their mother—twenty-three, to my certain knowledge!"

Gunn did not remark that the margin of age hardly seemed so big as Mr. Horridge inferred. He said:

"What's the use of shooting up the place, you know? It won't do any good. You'd rather be in jail—a sight rather."

The little man was in deadly earnest, it seemed, and Part Five had begun. Crisis drew near.

"What!" exclaimed Durrance, in great surprise.

Gunn had tried to whisper to him, that he might pass on news of the danger.

"You say another word, and I'll—"

hissed Mr. Horridge.

"Oh, nothing much," Gunn said to Durrance. "It will keep!"

And he nerved himself to go through on his own with a task that he felt to be above his weight, hoping desperately all the time that action on his part would not be needed.

"God Save the King!" struck up, and there was a general rising. Gunn's trembling hands were ready to seize Horridge.

"Now, then, Grundy!" roared Knox. "Come out of that! You brought a girl here, and—"

Gunn had no chance, for Horridge acted in a manner he had not expected. With one bound he cleared two rows of seats, leaving Gunn behind; another bound, and he stood above Knox, with his revolver pointed at the prefect's head.

"Oh, Bert, don't!" shrieked Miss Briggs.

"Here, help! Don't shoot, you fool! What have you done to you?" howled Knox, cowering.

Horridge had no chance to shoot. Tom Merry, Gussy, Lowther, Talbot, Figgins, Kerr, all piled in on him at once. He was forced down upon the seats, and the revolver was wrenched from his hand.

The confusion was great. The bolder spectators tried to press nearer; the more timid ones strove to get away. The attendants, in vain, endeavoured to restore order.

Then, through the crowd pushed a stalwart constable, whom many of the St. Jim's fellows recognised, and knew for a good man at need.

He took the revolver from Tom's hand, and broke it.

"Not loaded!" he said. "What little game are you playing, Mr. Horridge? And where's the fellow I was sent for to attend to? It wasn't you."

"I think you will find the gentleman in question under the seats, Everson!" said Lowther blandly.

Knox was not actually there, but he was as nearly there as he could get. He alone of all the St. Jim's fellows had shown palpable funk.

He came out now, looking angry, and the circle began to clear.

Gussy escorted Miss Briggs downstairs. But she had lost interest in Gussy.

"Poor Bert!" she said. "I didn't know he thought so much of me!"

"Can I take you anywhere, Miss Bwiggs?" inquired the swell of the Fourth.

"No, thank you. I must wait for Bert," answered the fair Lulu.

Gussy gave one sigh. His dream was over. So was Grundy's. Already the great George Alfred had made up his mind that he would never speak to Miss Briggs again.

In the vestibule Knox bucked up.

"I want to see your passes!" he snapped.

"Oh, you shall see them all right!" replied Tom.

"I don't believe Grundy had leave, if the rest of you had!" snapped the prefect.

"Don't worry! I hadn't!" said George Alked, with magnificent disregard of consequences.

"Wrong, old top! You have!" said Tom.

Grundy stared. Knox examined the long list with great care. Then he tore it across, flung it down, said something lurid, and stalked out.

"How did you wangle that?" growled Grundy.

"Got leave for the crowd and included your name," Tom replied.

"My hat! What for?"

Grundy hardly knew whether to be angry or pleased.

"Well, you're the biggest ass in Sussex; but, after all, you're one of us!" answered Tom.

"I—I— Oh, see here, Merry, that was no end decent of you!" said Grundy.

Mr. Horridge came down, escorted by the stalwart Everson.

The girl sprang forward.

"Oh, Mr. Everson, you're not going to lock him up, are you?" she pleaded, with tears in her fine blue eyes.

"No, miss, it isn't as bad as that. But he may have to appear before the magistrates."

"Bert, how could you be so silly?" asked Miss Briggs.

"I dunno, Lulu! But you fair drove me mad!"

She seized his arm. She glanced neither at Grundy nor Gussy. She walked her Bert off.

"He's a decent little chap really, and she's a nice girl; but he's jealous, and she's flighty!" said Everson, smiling.

"I shall never look at another girl as long as I live, Gunny!" growled George Alfred.

"Don't talk to me, Blake! I really cannot bear being japed just now!" said Arthur Augustus sadly.

"All's well that ends well!" remarked Monty Lowther.

THE END.

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SYNOPSIS.

Dick Danby, a stalwart lad of sixteen, obtains the promise of partnership from Captain Morgan Kidd, skipper of the auxiliary schooner Foam, and his daughter Stella, in a treasure cruise to the wrecked Pathan. Dick is the sole survivor of the Pathan, which was torpedoed, and is lying, half-submerged, off an island in the South Seas. In the strong-room of the ill-fated ship is two million sterling in bar-gold and money, and the Dragon's Eye—a wonderful diamond.

Otto Schwab, posing as a Dutchman—though in reality the commander of the T-hoat which sank the Pathan—and Sulan Mendozza, a villainous Malay, are their unscrupulous rivals for the treasure.

Harry Fielding and Joe Maddox join the expedition, also Wang Su, a Chinese boy.

They reach the island on which the Pathan is sunk, and a fierce encounter with the Red Rover takes place, in which our friends are victorious. Later, Dick and Stella go for a swim round the island. During their absence from the ship a cyclone approaches, and the Foam has to leave them and make for safety.

The Red Rover is sighted, and later Stella and Dick bear the sounds of firing. They return to the Foam, and find that Captain Kidd has been slightly wounded.

Wang Su discovers that Otto Schwab is in league with the Islanders, and informs Captain Kidd, who gives the order for work on the wreck to commence at once.

(Now read on.)

Finishing the Giant Lobster.

DAY follows very close on dawn in the tropics, and by the time Dick had donned a diving-suit it was broad daylight.

Descending the rope ladder which had been put in place the previous night, he made his way through a perfect fairy land of coral and anemonies and gorgeous, trailing weeds to the wreck.

He had already practically made up his mind how to proceed, and was carrying some dynamite cartridges, and unwinding a reel of wire, one end of which Joe Maddox was to attach to an electric battery on receiving Dick's signal that all was ready.

Harry Fielding should have accompanied him, but at the last moment discovered that his diving-suit required some slight adjustment, so had stopped behind.

Thus it happened that Dick had to work beneath the waves alone, save for Wang Su, who journeyed from the rock to the Pathan's stern, sweeping up the gold which had fallen from the strong-room on to the sand, and carrying it to the surface.

Starting from the jagged rent in the vessel's hull, from which the gold had fallen, Dick affixed six charges of dynamite to the hull in such a position that they would tear a hole big enough for him to enter.

He had just put the last cartridge in

place, and had attached the wires, when he was nearly tripped up by Wang Su's charging into him.

Seizing him by the hand, the little Chinaman sought to draw him towards the ladder.

At first Dick resisted, but a glance at Wang Su's face warned him of some unknown danger, and he made his way towards the Chair Rock as quickly as his cumbersome diving-suit would allow.

Thoroughly alarmed—the more so because the rough nature of his path forbade his looking behind him—Dick Danby blundered on until, at last, he reached the ladder, and scrambled to the surface.

Through the glass of his helmet he noticed that his chums' faces were deathly pale, and that the hands with which they unscrewed the butterfly-nuts that secured his helmet to the brass shoulder-plate were trembling.

"What is it? What has happened?" he asked directly he could make himself heard.

For answer Harry Fielding pointed down in the direction from whence he had just come.

A shudder shook his frame as he saw the giant lobster, or another equally as big and repulsive, standing against the wreck, in the very spot he had occupied a few minutes before.

Whether the huge crustacean had seen him at work, or could smell that he had been there, it was impossible to say; but it was certain he had not seen his flight, for he had stopped as though at fault, and the boys could see his huge eyes on their long, snake-like pillars moving round and round, while his long feelers searched every inch of the sand on which Dick had been standing, ere he commenced to creep up the hull.

"Quick, Joe, connect the wires to the battery! We may kill two birds with one stone!" cried Dick excitedly.

"Funny kind of bird!" grinned Joe, as he twisted the wires round the terminals.

"Fire quick, or the brute will foul the wires!" cried Dick.

Joe Maddox pressed a small button.

The next moment the wreck was hidden in a blinding flash, and the waters became so thick with stirred-up sand and floating debris that the boys on the rock could not see what was taking place beneath them.

Then from out of the turmoil arose the grisly form of their gigantic foe.

Instinctively the boys shrank back, but it needed no second glance to assure them that they had nothing more to fear from the enormous lobster.

For a few seconds it lay on its back,

its awful, spike-covered legs waving frantically in the air, a broken, bleeding mass where one huge claw had been, the other opening and shutting like a pair of enormous jaws.

Then it rolled over and sank to the bottom, where it lay a short time, its huge, rounded body rising and falling in an indescribably horrible way, until at last, to the astounded spectators' amazement, it crawled towards the chasm in the bed of the sea, and, toppling over, disappeared in its black, forbidding depths.

"I'll bet that is the first time that giant lobster has felt fear since it was a tiny mite of a soft-shelled baby—if it ever was a tiny mite," said Dick, with a somewhat shabby laugh.

Then he turned gratefully to Wang Su. "But for you that monster would have had me, Wang," he said, holding out his hand.

The little Chinaman grinned as he took his master's extended hand.

"He no likee fist chop dyn'mite. Wang no likee fist chop lobsters. We quits!" he declared somewhat ambiguously.

But Dick Danby scarcely heard him. He was gazing with delight at the wreck, for the tide had carried the disturbed waters away, and he could see that the explosion had achieved more than he had dared to hope.

Weakened by the battering it had received during the fierce typhoon, which had doubtless lifted it from the Pathan Rock and over the reef, the stout, iron-plated walls had given beneath the irresistible force of the dynamite.

A gaping wound, through which the divers could easily pass, was revealed.

"Hurrah! Now, in the language of the bard, 'We sha'n't be long!'" cried Dick, raising his helmet from the rock on which his chums had laid it.

"Waitee minute! Wang see allee safe!" interposed the Chinaman, and before Dick could object—if, indeed, he had wished to do so—Wang dived into the sea.

Twice he swam round the wreck with a strange, almost fish-like movement of his lithe body that made it seem as though he was indeed in his native element.

Then he rose to the surface, and, shouting that all was clear, dived down once more.

The three chums were too busy preparing for their next descent to watch him further.

Probably this was exactly what Wang Su had counted upon, for he dived straight to the wreck, and passed through the opening into the strong room with-

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Dick Danby, his hand on the hilt of his knife, moved forward, then stopped, to gaze in amazement at the strange sight that met his eyes. (See page 19).

out so much as touching either of the jagged sides.

Dropping on to his feet, Wang Su looked quickly around him.

In the dim light he could just make out thick bars of gold, stout canvas bags bulging with their valuable contents, whilst thousands of loose sovereigns from bags that had split open lay like autumn leaves about the floor.

But Wang Su paid no attention to the treasure at his feet.

Bar-gold or minted coins had no attraction for him just then.

His little eyes were peering through their traverse slits to right and left until at last they alighted on a nest of pigeon-holes of japanned tin in one corner of the room.

The majority of these partitions were empty, and their contents lay—a mass of morocco cases and glittering jewellery—on the sloping floor.

Dropping on his knees, Wang Su hastily searched amongst the jewels, throwing aside expensive brooches, priceless tiaras, gem-studded bracelets, necklaces of pearls, and loose stones as though they had been so much dross.

But in vain.

That which he sought could not be found.

Presently he rose to his feet with a gesture of despair, and, his bursting lungs crying for air, turned towards the

wound in the vessel's side by which he had entered.

Even as he did so he saw something that looked like a large drop of dew on the petal of a yellow flower.

Throwing himself through the water towards the shining treasure, he threw the heavy bars of gold amongst which it lay to right and left.

The veins stood out on his forehead as though they would burst, his chest seemed swelling, and his heart was beating so rapidly that the blood pulsing through his head sounded like muffled drums in his ears.

He knew that he must have air or die, yet he persevered, facing death itself rather than leave that alluring white spark of light behind.

Then his senses began to swim, and the knowledge that he had reached the limit of human endurance roused him to one last, despairing effort.

Hurling himself flat down on to the bars of gold, he thrust his hand between them, and a wild spasm of joy swept through his tortured frame as his hand closed over the smooth white stone.

The next moment he was staggering towards the open, and, a few seconds later, was striking out frantically for the surface.

Half unconscious, he had almost stumbled into Dick Danby's arms as he

emerged from the strong-room, but had seen nothing of him.

Neither did he know that, alarmed by the agony of the Chinaman's face, Dick had recoiled from the hull, and, drawing his knife, stood ready to defend himself against the unknown peril which had had power so to distort the Chinaman's usually impassive face.

But when a minute had passed, and nothing happened, Dick moved cautiously forward, and beckoning to Harry Fielding, who had stopped on receiving a signal from his leader, to follow, he peered into the cavernous depths of the strong-room.

The next moment all thoughts of danger fled as his eyes roved over the treasure he had come so far, and had faced so many perils, to secure.

There it lay, scattered about, as the tumbling of the sea had left it, waiting to be picked up and carried away, unless

The thought that Schwab and his cut-throat crew, reinforced by a band of ruthless savages, might already be on their way to snatch the treasure from him, sent Dick hastily to work gathering the treasure from the bottom of the sea.

Working with frantic haste, Dick and Harry carried the bars of gold to where lay a stout net attached to the end of the tackle, which, running through a block at the end of a spar, was to be hauled up by whoever's turn it was to be above the surface, and laid upon the rock until

such time as Stella should transfer it to the schooner.

At the end of an hour Dick ascended to the rock, and changed places with Joe, for it had been arranged that each should have an hour at the winch and two hours below, which would enable them to work much longer below, under the sea, than if they remained there until the air in their eyes was exhausted.

"Where's Wang?" asked Dick, as soon as Joe had removed his helmet.

Maddox looked quickly round him.

"I'd forgotten all about the little beggar!" he declared.

"Do you mean to say you haven't seen him?" demanded Dick anxiously.

Joe shook his head.

A thrill of alarm swept through Dick's frame as he recalled the Chinaman's fear-distorted face as he plunged past him.

Presently the creak of oars in rowlocks caused Dick Danby to glance towards the reef.

A few minutes later he saw Stella, in the canvas boat, emerge from the leavelling morning mist.

"Early to bed and early to rise is making you healthy, wealthy, and, possibly, though not very probably, wise," snarled the girl, with a gay laugh, as she sprang from the boat, and wound its painter round a jutting rock.

Dick did not immediately reply.

He was busy drawing ashore a bulging native basket, which he unhooked from the rope, and, having fastened a net in its place, let it run down to his companions toiling below.

"Something in your line here," he said, opening the basket and exposing its contents to view.

The lovely mate of the Foam uttered a cry of delight as she saw a mass of jewellery resting on the loose coin at the bottom of the basket.

But the next moment the laughter faded from her lips, and her beautiful eyes became dim with tears, as she turned from the basket, saying:

"Oh, Dick, isn't it terrible to think that all those pretty things belong to the poor creatures who were sent to their doom by the German?"

Dick Danby nodded.

"I haven't forgotten that, Stella, and if we can trace the owners of these jewels, or their heirs, we must restore them," he replied.

"By the by, how is it Wang has not come back with you? He was to have helped lead up the boat, you know?"

"Hasn't he returned? Dad sent him back last night with a message, after he had frightened the Kowaks half out of their wits with the Snake God's head!" cried Stella, in alarm.

"Oh, yes, he came back then, all right!" replied Dick, and went on to relate the alarming conditions under which he had last seen the Chinaman.

"And you didn't go to look for him?" cried Stella reproachfully.

"Perhaps he was injured. If so, it would be just like him to make straight for the cave, rather than delay you, when he knew that every moment was of consequence. I'll attend to the windlass whilst you go and see."

she added, taking the rope from Dick, who plunged at once into the sea, and swam towards the tunnel.

As he had expected, the gorge was deserted, and, with a heavy heart, he moved towards the grotto.

As he did so he was surprised to see the glistening stalactites reflecting back the flames of an unseen fire.

His hand on the hilt of his knife, Dick Danby moved forward, then stopped, to gaze in amazement at the strange sight that met his eyes.

(Another instalment of this splendid serial next week.)

The Editor's Chat.

The Companion Papers are:

THE MAGNET. Every Friday. THE BOYS' FRIEND. Every Monday. THE GEM. Every Wed. THE PENNY POPULAR. Every Friday. QUOKLES. Every Friday.

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS GLAD TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS.

QUITE HUMOROUS.

A quaint little artistic error is reported to me from Stafford. It concerns Stella of the long golden hair, who is figuring so charmingly in the GEM serial. Well, the author arranged that the charming young lady should have tresses the colour of the money we never see any more, but the artist seems to have entertained different opinions, and he has taken the extreme liberty of bobbing the lady's hair, and making her wear it in the American style. Or, shall we assume that the girl changed her mind at the last moment?

There is something more in this letter from Stafford to which I must positively refer. The writer says she is sure that the office-cat, Melchisidec, was responsible for the loss of the GEM Chat concerning which I wrote some weeks since. The meaning of this is, "Keep your eye on Melchisidec!"

But to proceed. The same correspondent assures me that the folks who omit their addresses do so in order to better give the correspondents' own words:—"Don't you know, dear Mr. Editor, that it is in the blissful hope of having their letters printed in the GEM? You know you always reply privately to those who do give their names, and think how exciting it is to find that one's letter has been given space in the favourite paper!" It is the same spirit as that which prompts an actress to lose her very best jewels which are standing under her nose.

There is really nothing to be said after that—only to felicitate the GEM on its Staffordshire supporter. Long life and happiness to her, and may her sense of wit never diminish!

BY THE WAY.

If you do not see your notice in the "Magnet" or the GEM, just take a look at the "Penny Popular." It may be there!

A SPLENDID RESOLVE.

A young friend of mine writes to say that as his mother is getting old he wants to help her, and he thinks that as he has no literary mind he could do so by writing books. I regard him as a splendid fellow to be determined to bring a lot of sunshine into the life of his best friend, but he must not run off with the idea that he will be able to earn money for the home by writing books—not yet, anyway.

He should learn all he can in his spare time, and, if he feels that way, he down his ideas of the world, but his job—the sort of job which brings a regular wage—must be his first consideration. And the money earned that way will bring all the happiness possible to his mother; for she will know that her son is putting his best into his work, and that his heart is set on easing her lot in the evening of her days.

NOTICES.

Miss G. Cooper, 12, Colmore Road, Baltham, S.W. 12, wants more members for her Correspondence Club.

B. Hill, 5, Upper Square, Isleworth, with readers anywhere.

Will Joseph Turner, late of 75, Rutland Road, Hove, Sussex, please communicate with A. E. Sherlock, 1, Olive Cottages, Caenwood Road, Ashstead, Surrey?

Norman P. Willis, Whelford, Langdon Road, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, with readers anywhere interested in stamps, age 13-15.

Cyril E. Barnes, 54, Eversleigh Road, Lavender Hill, Clapham Junction, London, S.W. 11, with readers anywhere. Edward Vandin, 5, Salerio, St. Peter's Port, Guernsey, Channel Islands, wants a good cinematograph for home use (second-hand preferred). Write first, stating price.

W. Mathie, 93, Bay View Road, St. Kilda, Dunedin, New Zealand, with readers anywhere.

R. Griffin, 424, Stretford Road, Old Trafford, Manchester, will give information concerning cinema stars. Stamped addressed envelope required.

Will F. Parnesky, of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, kindly write to F. H. Chapman, 22, Chatham Street, Ramsgate, Kent, who has written and received no reply?

John French, 860, Rochdale Road, Manchester, with readers anywhere, age 15-16.

Miss Ivy Lawrence, 57, Barrets Green Road, Harlesden, N.W. 10, with boy readers anywhere, age 16-18.

Miss Nellie Lowe, Barkley Street, Transvaal, Victoria, Australia, with readers anywhere, 16-20.

D. Domson, 49, Van De Lent Street, Cape Town, South Africa, with readers overseas.

I. Pinstone, 3, McKenzie Street, Cape Town, South Africa, with Jewish readers overseas.

B. Waigel, 79, Perkins Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, with girl readers.

J. J. Markham, 234, Wakefield Street, Adelaide, South Australia, with readers overseas.

S. Downey, c/o Mr. Price, 4, Bethnal Green Road, Shoreditch, with readers anywhere.

Miss Marjorie Walls, 114, Belvedere Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, with readers anywhere.

J. Death, 225, Barcom Avenue, Darlinghurst, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, with readers interested in detective work.

Miss Stella Harding, 21, College Road, Kent Town, Adelaide, Australia, will exchange photos with readers.

F. J. White, 46, Black Lion Lane, Hammersmith, W. 6, with regular readers of the Companion Papers.

J. Watson, 224, Balfour Road, Ilford, Essex, with readers anywhere, age 16-21.

A. E. Woodall, 85, Bayswater Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne, with readers overseas interested in stamps.

Cyril E. Barnes, Sergeant-Mechanic, W.T. Observer, R.A.F. Seaplane Station, Dumdee, Scotland, with readers anywhere, age 18-22.

S. G. Finch, 35, Landseer Avenue, Manor Park, E. 12, with readers overseas interested in ornithology.

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