

"GLORY FOR GRUNDY!"

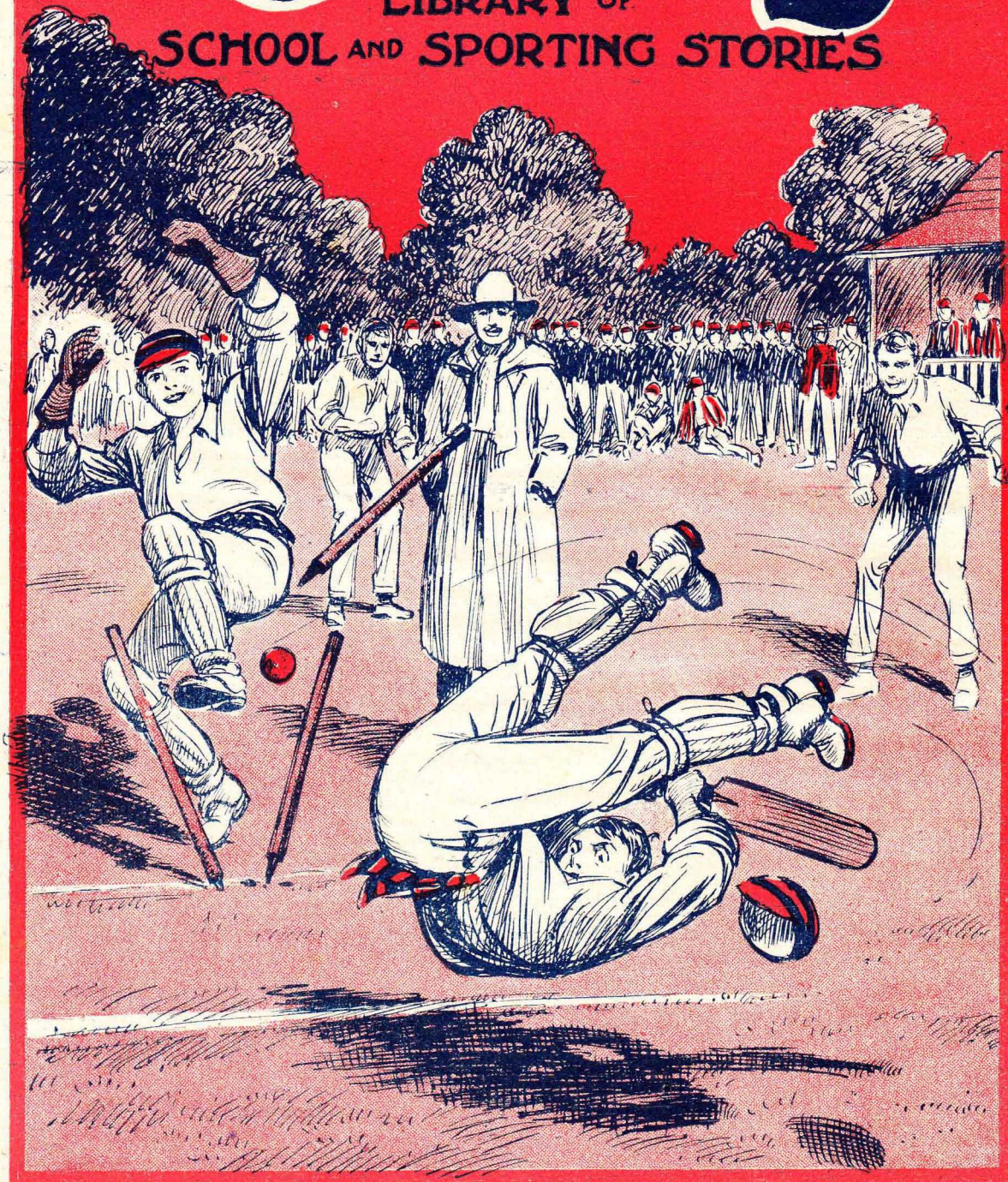
Read this Amusing and Exciting Story of the
Chums of St. Jim's, inside.

The GEM 2^d

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

No. 901.
Vol. XXVII.
May 16th,
1925.

LIBRARY OF
SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES



BOWLED BY THE FAGS!

The bowling of the Greyfriars fags' team proves too much for George Alfred Grundy!
(An exciting incident from the grand School Story of St. Jim's, inside.)



Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

MY DEAR CHUMS.—Great news for next week! A really bright and lively, rollicking yarn of the Third Form! That's what you will find in next Wednesday's GEM.

"THE THIRD FORM ADVENTURERS!"

By Martin Clifford.

This tale is all about the jape that Monty Lowther hit on. The jester of the Shell thought the Third wanted rousing up. He hatched a scheme for tickling the curiosity of the merry band which owns allegiance to Mr. Selby. The joker of the Terrible Three is a genius for turning out smart ideas. He felt he had got hold of the wheeze of the season. It was a perfectly brilliant notion, and Monty Lowther found tons of enjoyment in planning it all out. There was a mysterious letter with a secret attached concerning a considerable sum of money. But after he had got matters snugly arranged second thoughts entered the thinking-box of the humorist. As a result of this change of mind a remarkable situation is created. Circumstances over which Monty Lowther has no control cause the masterly wheeze to get going. The Third is properly mystified. Wally D'Arcy, Curly Gibson, and their chums are led a fair dance. It is a top-hole story. There are moments when you feel you have found your way into some jolly old maze of misunderstandings. There are ups and downs, and plenty of cross-currents. The fun is fast and furious, with a copious supply of hot water for Monty. He is reckoned too funny by half. Then comes a surprise for all parties and a cheery wind-up to a yarn which will be remembered as one of the merriest Mr. Martin Clifford ever wrote. See next week's issue, and tell your pals of the high time coming.

"BIG BEN DERBY!"

By Louis Alfriston.

Little Cocky Withers steps on to the stage next week. Mind you give this newcomer a good reception! But you will be sure to do that. There is something about young Cocky which commands

"MY READERS' OWN CORNER!"

OUR TUCK HAMPER'S ARE PRIME!

Remember, boys and girls, we award a delicious Tuck Hamper for the best storyette sent us each week—also half-a-crown is paid for each other contribution accepted. Cut out the coupon on this page, and send it, together with your joke, to me.

HULL READER WINS OUR TUCK HAMPER. A BITING RETORT!

During a village cricket match the crack batsman had the misfortune to get several of his teeth broken. In the return fixture he faced the same trundler. "Hi, there!" he shouted, before a ball had been played. "I hope you're not after my teeth again." "No, my lad," was the quick response. "I am after the stumps this time."—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to R. Green, 58, Alliance Avenue, Hull.

S'EASY!

"What a wonderful painter Rubens was!" remarked Mr. Jones at the Art Gallery. "Yes," assented Mrs. Jones. "It is said of him that he could change a laughing face into a sad one by a single stroke!" "Why," spoke up little Johnny in disgust, "that's nothing!"—THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 901.

My schoolmaster can do that quite easily!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. W. Green, 58, Burgoyne Road, Stockwell, S.W.9.

A "HORSEY" DEAL!

Irish Dealer: "What's yer price?" Scotch Dealer: "Fifty pounds." Irish Dealer: "What! For a nag like that?" Scotch Dealer: "Ay, an' cheap at the price! The horse can gallop and jump." Irish Dealer: "Bedad! To be sure it can't! If it could it would jump at the mention of fifty pounds!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Bowran Macdonald, 16, Derwent Street, Sunderland, Durham.

IRISH!

Pat had just fallen from the scaffolding to the ground, forty feet below. Mike, his pal, peered anxiously down at him. "Pattrick!" he yelled. "Yis, here Oi am!" groaned Pat. "Sure, man, are yez not dead?" asked Mike. "Indade Oi am!" was the reply. There was a short pause, after which Mike spoke. "Sure, Pat," he said, "ye're sich a loier Oi don't know whether to belave ye or not!" "Begorra, ye villain!" howled Pat. "Thin Oi must be dead, 'cos ye wouldn't dare call me a loier if Oi was aloive!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Bobby Macnee, 8, Highfield Drive, Hillhead, Glasgow, W.2.

SMART FOR TRIMBLE!

Mr. Railton: "Trimble, how can you prove that the earth is round?" Baggy (peevishly): "Er—I never said it was, sir!" No wonder Mr. Railton collapsed on the spot.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss M. Howlings, 9, St. Margarets, Norwich, Norfolk.

DOUBLE DUTCH!

A customer entered the grocer's shop and asked for a pound of cheese. "Are

instant respect and admiration. He and Big Ben Derby are the two stars in our first-rate series of tales of the boxing world. There can be no doubt that both will win lasting popularity. Ben takes Cocky under his wing, for the world has been somewhat rough on the youngster, and Big Ben is a comrade worth having. He is massive and a straight hitter, and he likes to see fair play. The opening adventures of the pair are thrilling. These new yarns of the Ring will get themselves talked about everywhere. Just spread the news, for everybody wants to hear more about the noble art.

NOT DEAD YET!

No; the "St. Jim's News" has not faded out! Although it does not figure in next week's programme, the scintillating Supplement is only biding its time. Grand numbers are in preparation.

THE TUCK HAMPER!

Laugh and grow fat, and, what's more, the world will laugh with you. Our Tuck Hamper feature will assist you to carry out this advice. It is better than ever. There is a chance of a Tuck Hamper for everybody. Why not you? Send in your brightest joke.

BACK NUMBERS!

Two correspondents in North London ask me whether far-back copies of the GEM can be had. I am afraid the answer has to be in the negative. Of course, old numbers may be obtained through other readers, or, occasionally, from the second-hand booksellers. With regard to the second question—yes, Wildrake will appear again shortly.

"DAVE THE PIT BOY!"

By Max Hamilton.

Markham is the evil genius in young Dave's life. In next week's magnificent instalment we get a drama of the black deeps which is ringing in its intensity. Dave has his big chance to show the stuff of which he is made. You will see what that chance is. It deals with one of the really big things which may happen along in the lives of us all. How does Dave take it?

"THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY."

Those new numbers of our splendid "Library," which gives long complete tales of St. Jim's, Greyfriars, Rookwood, etc., must not be missed. You can get these famous stories everywhere, and they will be just the yarns to keep on your bookshelf to take down and read again and again.

Your Editor.

you sure it's Dutch cheese?" asked the customer. "Oh, yes, madam," said the shopkeeper. "Well, how can you tell it's Dutch?" asked the customer. "By its language, of course!" replied the shopkeeper.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Currie, 45, Osborne Grove, Sherwood, Nottingham.

MAKING SURE!

The electrician was puzzled. "Hi!" he called to his assistant. "Put your hand on one of those wires." The assistant did as he was told. "Feel anything?" "No." "Good!" said the electrician. "I wasn't sure which was which. Don't touch the other or you'll drop dead!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to James Smith, 38, Brooksby's W., Homerton, E. 9.

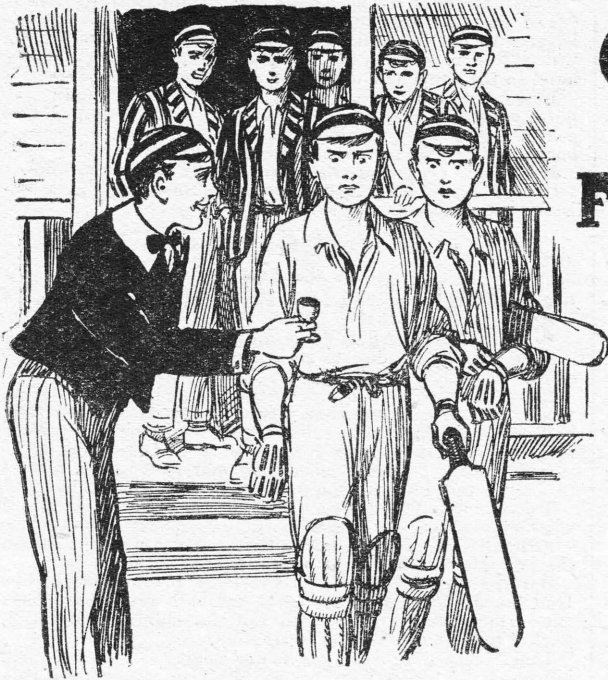
A LONG SHOT!

"There's old Dorchester," said Simpson to his friend Craggs, as a stout gentleman wandered into the club smoking-room, looked about him and strolled out. "Melancholy-looking cove, isn't he? And he used to be such a great lad years ago. I saw him throw half-a-crown clean across the Thames at Westminster one night." "Oh, come!" remonstrated Craggs. "That's a tall one!" "Tall! Nonsense!" retorted Simpson: "I tell you he did—but, of course, money went farther in those days!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Robert Randall, 398, Wigan Road, Bryn, nr. Wigan, Lancs.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON. THE GEM LIBRARY.

No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

King Cricket is all the rage at St. Jim's. And with the great George Alfred Grundy in command, results of rather a sensational nature may well be expected!



GLORY FOR GRUNDY!

An Amusing Cricket Story, Featuring the Famous Chums of St Jim's, Tom Merry & Co., and George Alfred Grundy.

By
Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1

Grundy Astonishes the Natives!

“WHEREFORE that worried brow?” Wilkins of the Shell addressed that question to his chum and study-mate, George Alfred Grundy.

That burly youth was standing at the study window, frowning into space.

It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and worried brows were not in fashion on half-holidays. But George Alfred Grundy certainly looked worried just then. His expression was gloomy, in marked contrast to the expressions of his faithful henchmen Wilkins and Gunn, who were looking merry and bright.

There was a letter in Grundy's hand. Wilkins had discovered it in the post-rack and had brought it along. And that letter was evidently responsible for Grundy's puckered brow and worried look. But Wilkins wanted to make sure.

“No bad news, I hope?” he ventured.

Grundy gave a grunt.

“I was hoping that my Uncle Grundy would turn up trumps with a remittance,” he said; “but there's nothing doing. I asked for bread, and he's given me a stone. In other words, I asked for a remittance, and the old buffer's given me a lecture.”

“What about?” asked Gunn.

“Oh, things in general. He says he isn't satisfied with the reports he's been getting from my Housemaster and my Form master. Old Linton's been telling him that I'm the biggest dunce in the Form. And if that's not a libel I'd jolly well like to know what is.”

“Pity you can't sue Form masters for libel,” said Wilkins.

“Still, Linton has to tell the truth in his reports, you know.”

Grundy swung round from the window.

“The truth?” he said. “Is it the truth to say that I'm the biggest dunce in the Form?”

“Ahem!”

“Answer me, George Wilkins!” roared Grundy, glaring at his study-mate. “Do you regard me as a dunce?”

“Nunno!” said Wilkins hastily. He was startled by that hostile glare. “You're quite a brainy fellow, Grundy—isn't he, Gunn?”

“Absolutely!” said Gunn. “There's no shortage of grey matter in Grundy's top storey. I can't think why old Linton should say he was a dunce. He must have mixed Grundy up with some other fellow when he made out the report.”

Grundy looked sharply at Gunn. He could never quite be sure whether his study-mates were serious or whether they were leg-pulling.

“I'm sorry your Uncle Grundy has cut up rusty,” said Wilkins. “He's sent you a jolly long lecture, by the look of it.”

“Five pages,” said Grundy lugubriously. “Sort of serial story in five instalments. He kicks off by saying that he is

far from satisfied with the progress I'm making at St. Jim's. ‘Your Form master's report is hardly an inspiring document’—sarcastic old buffer! ‘I am informed that you are the biggest dunce in your Form, despite the fact that you are bigger and older than many of your Form-fellows. This state of affairs is intolerable, and cannot be allowed to continue. Unless you pull yourself together and make amends for previous lapses there will be trouble.’”

“My hat! Uncle Grundy believes in hitting straight from the shoulder!” said Gunn. “What else has he got to say?”

Grundy continued to quote from his uncle's letter.

“It often happens, in the case of a boy who is backward with his lessons, that he is a leading light in the sphere of sport; but you, apparently, have no such saving grace. I am told—not by your Form master, but by an equally reliable informant—that you are backward in athletics as well as in Form-work. I am horrified to learn that you have not been able to get a place in your Form eleven, either in football or cricket. You appear to have sunk into a state of mental and physical sloth; and this will not do at all. If you cannot gain distinction as a scholar, you might at least attempt to distinguish yourself on the playing-fields.”

“Phew!” whistled Wilkins. “What a dressing down!”

“Uncle Grundy must have got out of bed the wrong side before he wrote that letter,” said Gunn.

“Or else he's been missing his Kruschen,” said Wilkins.

Grundy gave a snort.

“I expected a remittance, and I get five pages of sermonising,” he growled. “I wouldn't mind if I deserved it, but I don't. It's a libel to say I'm a dunce, and it's a bigger libel than ever to say that I'm backward in sport. I'd like to know who told Uncle Grundy that! If it happened to be one of the fellows, I—I'd burst him!”

Grundy's voice was deep with indignation.

“Backward in sport, indeed! What sport am I backward in, I should like to know? I'm pretty warm at footer, and hot-stuff at cricket, and mustard at all the other games. It isn't my fault that I don't play in the Form eleven; it's Tom Merry's. He's never given me a fair show.”

“It's time we had a new skipper, I'm thinking,” said Wilkins.

“Hear, hear!” said Gunn. “Cricket election comes off on Wednesday. I suppose Merry will be re-elected captain. Figgins of the New House is putting up against him, but it's a forlorn hope for Figgy. Tom Merry's got practically the whole school at his back.”

A gleam came into the eyes of George Alfred Grundy.

“There's another candidate putting up,” he said.

“Meaning Blake?” said Gunn. “I know he thought of putting up, but he decided afterwards not to oppose Tom Merry. He stood down, so as to make it a straight fight between a School House chap and a New House chap.”

Grundy sniffed.

“I'm not talking about Blake,” he said.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 901.

"Then who the merry dickens—"

Grundy then exploded his bombshell.

"I'm putting up for the cricket captaincy myself!" he said.

"You! Oh, my hat!"

Wilkins and Gunn stared at their leader in blank astonishment. They had a certain amount of respect for Grundy. He was a hefty fighting-man, and it was better to have him for a friend than for an enemy. But when it came to cricket it was quite another matter. Nobody could respect Grundy as a cricketer. Grundy's knowledge of the great national game was limited—extremely so. He knew which end of a bat to hold, but beyond that he knew very little.

But Grundy, in his colossal conceit, imagined that he was a Jack Hobbs in embryo. He considered it quite on the cards that when he came to a man's estate he would be even more famous than "the Pride of Surrey." In his mind's eye he saw himself piling up century after century, until the newspaper placards, "ANOTHER CENTURY BY GRUNDY," grew monotonous to the public gaze. In his mind's eye Grundy saw himself lionised by the great sport-loving public.

Grundy was not likely to see these happenings with any other eye than his mind's eye. But with his mind's eye he visualised them very clearly and definitely, and he could not understand why the St. Jim's fellows thought so meanly of him as a cricketer, when he was a better bat than Tom Merry and a better bowler than Fatty Wynn—in his own opinion!

Wilkins and Gunn had a great respect for Grundy as a fighting-man, but as a cricketer they placed him among the "also rans." They considered that Grundy's cricket was a sight for gods and men and little fishes, as, indeed, it was!

The news that Grundy, of all people, proposed to stand as a candidate in the forthcoming election knocked Wilkins and Gunn all of a heap.

"You—you're not serious, old man?" muttered Wilkins.

"Eh? Of course I'm serious!"

"You—you're actually going to put up for the cricket captaincy?" gasped Gunn.

Grundy nodded.

"I shall make a better skipper than Tom Merry or Figgins, by long chalks," he said. "The idea of putting up for the captaincy has been in my head for a long time, and this letter from my uncle has clinched matters. Uncle Grundy thinks I'm backward in sport. And I'm jolly well going to prove otherwise! If I'm elected—"

"If!" murmured Wilkins.

"I shall scrap the existing eleven, and build up a team of my own—a team that will go right through the cricket season without a defeat!" said Grundy impressively. "You fellows shall have places in my team, of course."

"Thank you for nothing!" said Gunn. "My dear old duffer, you haven't an earthly chance of getting elected! Where are you going to get your votes from? You can count on my vote, and you can count on Wilky's; but that's about all you're likely to poll."

"Rats!" was Grundy's rejoinder.

"I'm going to practise at the nets this afternoon, as soon as I've handed in my name as a candidate, and when the fellows see my sparkling form, they'll say, 'Grundy's the man for us! Why ever has he been allowed to hide his light under a bushel all this time? He ought to have been made cricket captain ages ago!'"

"Ahem!" muttered Wilkins.

"Ahem!" coughed Gunn.

Grundy glared at his study-mates.

"What are you ahemming about?" he demanded, clenching his hands. "Look here! Am I the right man for the cricket captaincy, or am I not?"

"The very man!" said Wilkins promptly.

"Absolutely!" chimed in Gunn. "But I'm afraid the other fellows won't think so."

"Wait till they see me at the nets!" said Grundy grimly. The great George Alfred then screwed up his uncle's letter into a ball, and tossed it into the fireplace. After which, he strode away to Mr. Railton's study, in order to hand in his name as a candidate for the cricket captaincy.

When the news was noised abroad that Grundy was putting up for election, the St. Jim's fellows gaped and gasped. And when Grundy's name appeared on the notice-board, below the names of Tom Merry and Figgins, they rubbed their eyes, and wondered if they were dreaming.

George Alfred Grundy had certainly succeeded in astonishing the natives!

CHAPTER 2.

At the Nets!

"FOOTER or cricket? Pay your money, and take your choice!"

The Terrible Three of the Shell were standing at the window of their study, gazing out into the quad.

It was a bright, sunny afternoon. The breath of spring was in the air. It was that period of the year when football was expiring, and cricket was commencing. As a matter of fact, both games were being played at St. Jim's that afternoon; and it seemed very odd to see some fellows in shorts and jerseys, and others in white flannels.

The Terrible Three were trying to make up their minds whether to chase the big ball, or to smite the little one.

Football was dying hard. Even after a long season, the juniors were not tired of it.

But the counter-attraction of cricket proved irresistible. Had the day been dull or damp, football would have been more appropriate. But with the sun shining gloriously, cricket proved the greater attraction.

Tom Merry picked up his footer boots, and tossed them into the bottom of the cupboard. He then produced a pair of buckskin cricket-shoes. Obviously, his mind was made up.

"Cricket's the proper caper," he said. "Most of the schools have started practice already, and St. Jim's is not going to lag behind."

"No jolly fear!" said Manners.

The Terrible Three lost no time in changing into their flannels. After which, bats and pads and stumps were dragged forth from their winter recesses.

On their way to Little Side, Tom Merry & Co. were joined by Jack Blake & Co., of the Fourth.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, immaculate in a set of spotless flannels, beamed upon the Terrible Three.

"Awfully glad you've decided to play cwicket, deah boys," he said. "It's weally too warm for footah. What do you think of my new blazah?"

"Is that a blazer, Gussy?" asked Monty Lowther, in surprise. "I thought it was Joseph's coat of many colours, come down to you through the generations as an heirloom!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah! I will admit that my blazah is a twife on the bright side; but the colour scheme is perfect?"

Lowther chuckled.

"Mind you wear that blazer when we play Greyfriars, Gussy," he said.

"Why, deah boy?"

"Because it will dazzle the eyes of the Greyfriars fellows, and make them colour-blind, so that they'll never be able to see the ball when they're batting!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus frowned.

"Don't be a funnay ass, Lowthah—"

"Certainly not, old chap. I shouldn't dream of entering into competition with you!"

And there was a fresh peal of laughter.

"What do you fellows think of Grundy's latest?" inquired Jack Blake. "Fancy a guy like Grundy putting up for the cricket captaincy!"

"Oh, he's potty!" said Tom Merry.

"Stark, staring mad!" agreed Lowther. "I thought so once, and now I know it, as the poet says. The silly chump will poll about one vote, and that will be his own! Hallo! Talk of angels, and you're bound to hear the flapping of their giddy wings!"

The cricketers had reached the entrance to Little Side, when George Alfred Grundy bore down upon them.

Grundy was looking very pompous and important. He was in flannels, and he carried a cricket-bat under his arm.

There was a legend in connection with that bat. It was said to have been welded on one occasion by the great "W.G.," who had made a century with it. The bat had since been cut down to boy's size, and Grundy had bought it at an auction. The bidders had been chiefly composed of old ladies, who had no use for cricket-bats; and Grundy

You must read—

THE LION'S REVENGE!

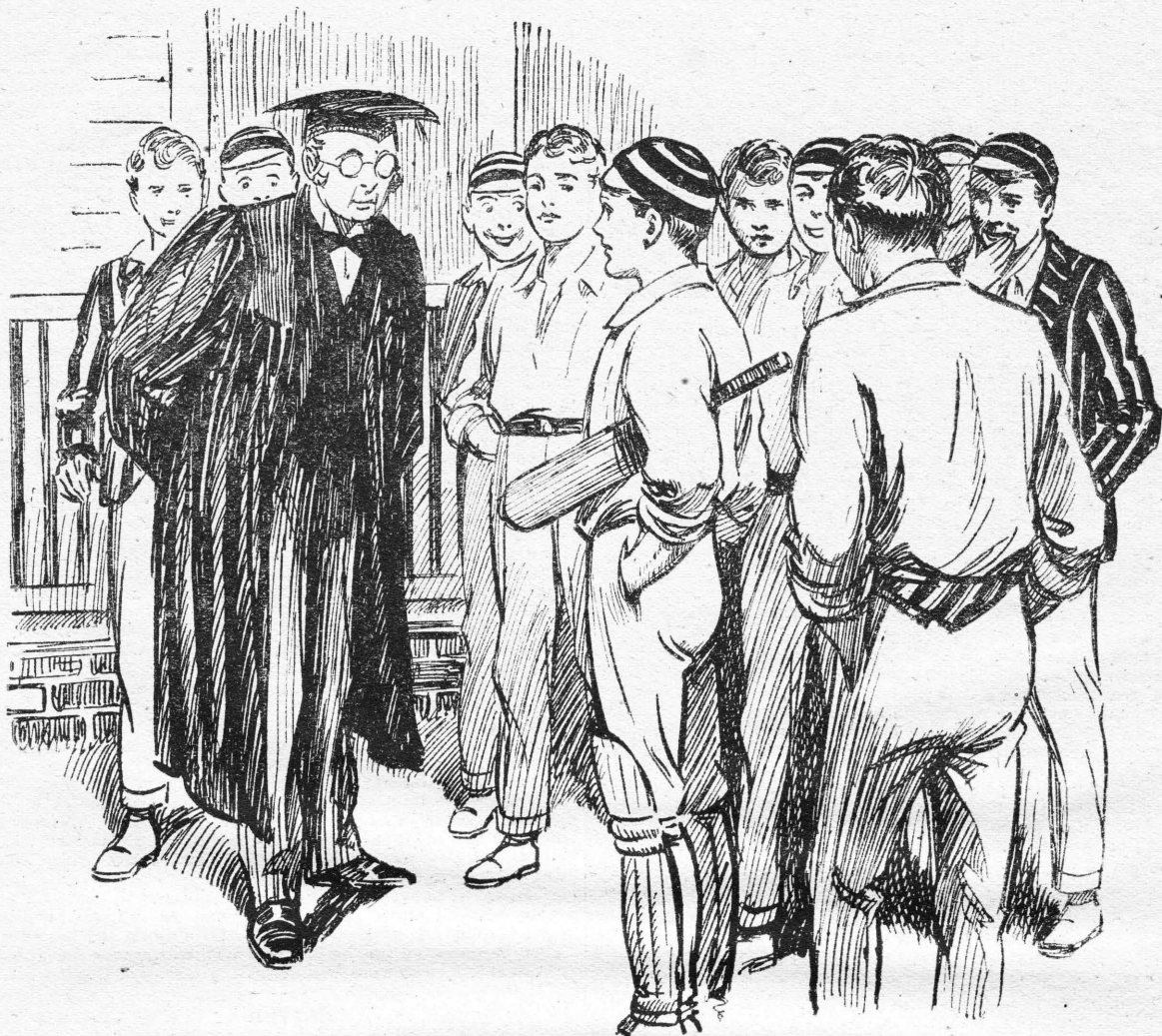


Be on a good thing, boys! Don't miss this thrilling and powerful war story of 1975. Begin it NOW in this week's issue of

BOYS' FRIEND

Buy a Copy TO-DAY!

2D



"I fail to understand, Grundy," said Mr. Linton. "Why do you not play for the junior eleven. Have you ever been asked to play?" "Never, sir," said Grundy, quite truthfully. The master of the Shell looked puzzled. "Perhaps you are too good for the eleven?" he suggested. "What I mean is, your form may be so much above the average?" The juniors stared at Mr. Linton in speechless surprise. (See page 6.)

had, therefore, got it cheap. It was the auctioneer who had assured Grundy that the bat had once been used by W. G. Grace. But probably the man with the hammer had been "telling the tale."

At all events, Grundy hoped to make a century with that bat himself—and not one century, but many.

"Here comes our prospective skipper!" said Manners. "He's going to give a comic turn at the nets."

Grundy heard that remark, and frowned. "None of your cheek, Manners!" he said. "I'm a jolly sight better cricketer than you, anyway."

"Bow-wow!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy surveyed Grundy through his monocle.

"Without wishin' to be wude, Gwunday," he said, "I considah that you are an absolute lunatic, to put up for the wicket captaincy!"

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther. "Without wishing to be the slightest bit rude, Grundy, I consider that you're the biggest dolt, dunce, and duffer that ever was!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Grundy scowled at the humorist of the Shell. "You think you're mighty funny, don't you?" he growled.

"Not half so funny as you, old chap. You're a born comedian, Grundy. And in your latest stunt, as a candidate for the cricket captaincy, you fairly surpass yourself!"

"Let's get on with the cricket," said Tom Merry, laughing. "What are you going to do, Grundy—bat, bowl, or field?"

"One thing at a time," said Grundy. "I think I'll take a turn with the ball, first."

"Oh, help!" Grundy was a terror with the ball. He was not a terror

to the batsman, but to anyone who happened to be standing behind him—for that was where the ball usually sped on leaving Grundy's palm. The majority of the fellows wisely stationed themselves out of the danger-zone.

"You going to bat, Merry?" asked Grundy.

"Yes."

"Good! I mean to take your wicket!" And Grundy, having shed his blazer, rolled up his sleeves with a businesslike air.

Tom Merry put on a pair of pads, and strolled casually to the wicket. He did not trouble to take guard, for he did not anticipate that the ball would come anywhere near him. There was no telling where it would go; but it was fairly safe to assume that the batsman would see nothing of it.

"This is the first ball of the season," said Grundy, preparing to take his run. "Here goes!"

Grundy pounded along the turf like a charging elephant. His right arm described a circular movement, sweeping round like the sail of a windmill, and the ball fairly flew from his hand.

Whiz!
"Yawoooooh!"

There was a fiendish yell from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Gussy had stationed himself about a dozen yards away, at right angles to the bowler, and he had fondly imagined he was safe. But he had imagined a vain thing. Nobody was safe when George Alfred Grundy was on the war-path. It was Gussy's chin that stopped the ball's lightning career. And the swell of St. Jim's fairly danced with anguish.

"Ow-ow-ow! Gwunday, you fearful wuffian! You have nearly fractured my jaw!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sorry, Gussy!" gasped Grundy. "Pure accident, you know. The ball slipped."

"I wish you'd make it slip in this direction, Grundy," said Tom Merry. "I'm getting tired of waiting."

Grundy clapped his hands sharply together, as a signal for Arthur Augustus to return the ball. But Gussy was too busily engaged in nursing his chin to bother about the ball. Grundy had to retrieve it himself.

"Mind your eye!" muttered Lowther, as Grundy prepared to deliver the second ball of the season.

There was a general stampede for safety on the part of the cricketers. But one person was blissfully ignorant of the danger. Knox of the Sixth came strolling across the turf, with his hands in his pockets. Knox saw that cricket practice was in progress, but he did not notice who was bowling. Had he seen that it was Grundy, he would have ordered that bright youth to suspend operations with the ball until he—Knox—was well out of the danger zone.

Whiz!

Again the ball flew from Grundy's hand, and Tom Merry waited for it. But he waited in vain.

For a brief second the juniors lost sight of the ball. They vaguely wondered where it had gone. A wild yell from Knox satisfied their curiosity on the subject.

"Yoooooop!"

Knox had fielded the ball with his chest, and he was doubled up with anguish. Grundy blinked at him in surprise and dismay.

"I say, Knox, you shouldn't have got in the way!" he protested. "That ball would have had Merry's middle stump!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox did not join in the general laughter. He felt anything but humorous just then. A few quick strides brought him within striking distance of George Alfred Grundy, and he gave that youth a cuff which made him rock on his feet.

"You dangerous young imbecile!" roared Knox. "You ought not to be let loose on a cricket-ground!"

"Ow!" gasped Grundy, caressing his ear.

"Take a hundred lines for criminal carelessness!" snapped Knox. "Don't let him have the ball any more, Merry. We don't want a fatality!"

And Knox strode away, scowling.

"Poor old Grundy!" said Monty Lowther. And then he started to sing:

"He ain't a-goin' to bowl no mo', no mo',
He ain't a-gin' to bowl no mo'.
You needn't insure your lives or limbs,
For he ain't a-goin' to bowl no mo'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy glared at the laughing throng.

"Well, if I can't bowl, I'm going to bat!" he said.

"In due course," said Tom Merry. "I'm going to have my knock first. Bowl up, Blake!"

The practice proceeded, and real cricket took the place of freak cricket.

Tom Merry was slow in settling down, but once he got the measure of the bowling he cut and drove with great power. Tom was every inch a cricketer, and the fellows who stood behind the nets looking on, decided that they could not do better than re-elect him to the captaincy. A batsman of the fearless, aggressive type, Tom Merry was both an example and an inspiration to the other members of the eleven. He thoroughly deserved to skipper the side. Figgins was a good man, but Tom Merry was better. As for Grundy, the bare thought of that amazing youth captaining the junior eleven was enough to induce hysterics.

But Grundy was not finished with yet. He had turned out to practice, with the object of impressing the spectators and securing their votes at the election. He had certainly impressed them with his bowling—but far from favourably! It now remained for him to show them that, although he was no Maurice Tate with the ball, he was a mighty man with the bat.

There was a chuckle when Grundy took Tom Merry's place at the wicket.

Fellows came running up from all directions to swell the ranks of onlookers.

Grundy's batting, as Lowther observed, was better than a music-hall turn at the Wayland Empire—and cheaper. It was, in fact, a free entertainment.

Grundy took guard, and waited for the ball to come. When it did come, it carried Grundy's middle stump away with it.

There was a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Didn't you see that one, Grundy?" yelled Digby.

"No," said Grundy, restoring the middle stump to its former position. "Matter of fact, I wasn't ready."

"Oh, my hat!"

The ball was returned to Jack Blake, and he sent it down once more, with precisely the same result.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 901.

Grundy swiped at the ball as if he would despatch it to the limits of the horizon. But something went wrong with his calculations. Once again the middle stump performed revolutions.

"How's that?" chuckled Blake.

"I have a faint suspicion that it was out, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There were two pink spots on Grundy's cheeks as he replaced the middle stump. He could hear the caustic comments of the crowd behind the net, and he felt rather foolish. Of course, Blake had only bowled him out by a fluke. Grundy felt sure of that. Still, he must pull up his socks, and show these cackling dummies what a really fine cricketer he was.

For the third time Blake sent the ball down. Grundy lunged out to it, and his bat swept through the air.

Crack!

It was not the sound of a wicket being wrecked. It was the sound of bat meeting ball. And the latter went soaring away into space.

The crowd gasped.

It was a mighty hit—a prodigious hit—the hit of a lifetime! Even Grundy was amazed, as he followed the flight of the ball. For he had hit it clean out of the ground. It alighted, with what a novelist would call a sickening thud, at the feet of Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell.

"My only aunt!" gasped Monty Lowther. "What fat-head said the age of miracles was past?"

"A hit, a hit, a vewy palpable hit!" said Arthur Augustus, quoting Shakespeare. "It must have been a feahful fluke, bai Jove!"

"The biggest fluke that ever happened!" grunted Blake.

There was no doubt about that—in the minds of the majority, at least. Only two persons failed to regard that mighty hit as a fluke. One was the hitter himself; the other was Mr. Linton.

The Form master had not seen Grundy clean bowled twice in succession. He had only seen that terrific hit, and he took it to be a sample of Grundy's usual form.

Mr. Linton did not follow junior cricket very closely, and he knew little or nothing about the individual merits of his pupils. But he did happen to know that Grundy was not a member of the junior eleven, and he began to wonder why. Surely a fellow who could hit a ball clean out of the ground was entitled to a place in the team?

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Linton.

He blinked down at the ball and he blinked at the flannelled figure of George Alfred Grundy in the distance. Then he gathered up the ball and walked towards the group of cricketers, who were still discussing Grundy's mighty hit.

CHAPTER 3.

Fair Play for Grundy!

"GRUNDY!"

George Alfred looked round as Mr. Linton called his name. Grundy's face was flushed with triumph. At last he had shown the onlookers what sort of stuff he was made of. Jack Blake was no mean bowler; he was one of the best in the Lower School. And Grundy had hit one of Blake's deliveries clean out of the ground.

Grundy seemed to have grown appreciably taller since making that Jessopian hit. No person, by taking thought, can add a cubit to his stature, yet Grundy seemed to have put on a couple of inches. He was swelling visibly, too, with pride and importance.

Mr. Linton looked at him quite benignly.

"I must congratulate you, Grundy!" he said. "That was a truly wonderful performance, to hit a ball out of the ground."

"Oh, it's nothing to make a song about, sir," said Grundy, as if such feats were an everyday occurrence with him.

"It was a very fine achievement," said Mr. Linton. "Do you not think so, Merry?"

Tom Merry smiled, but said nothing. His honest opinion was that Grundy's hit had been a gigantic fluke. At the same time, he did not wish to belittle Grundy in the eyes of his Form master.

"Come, Merry!" said Mr. Linton rather sharply. "Was not that hit a fine achievement on Grundy's part?"

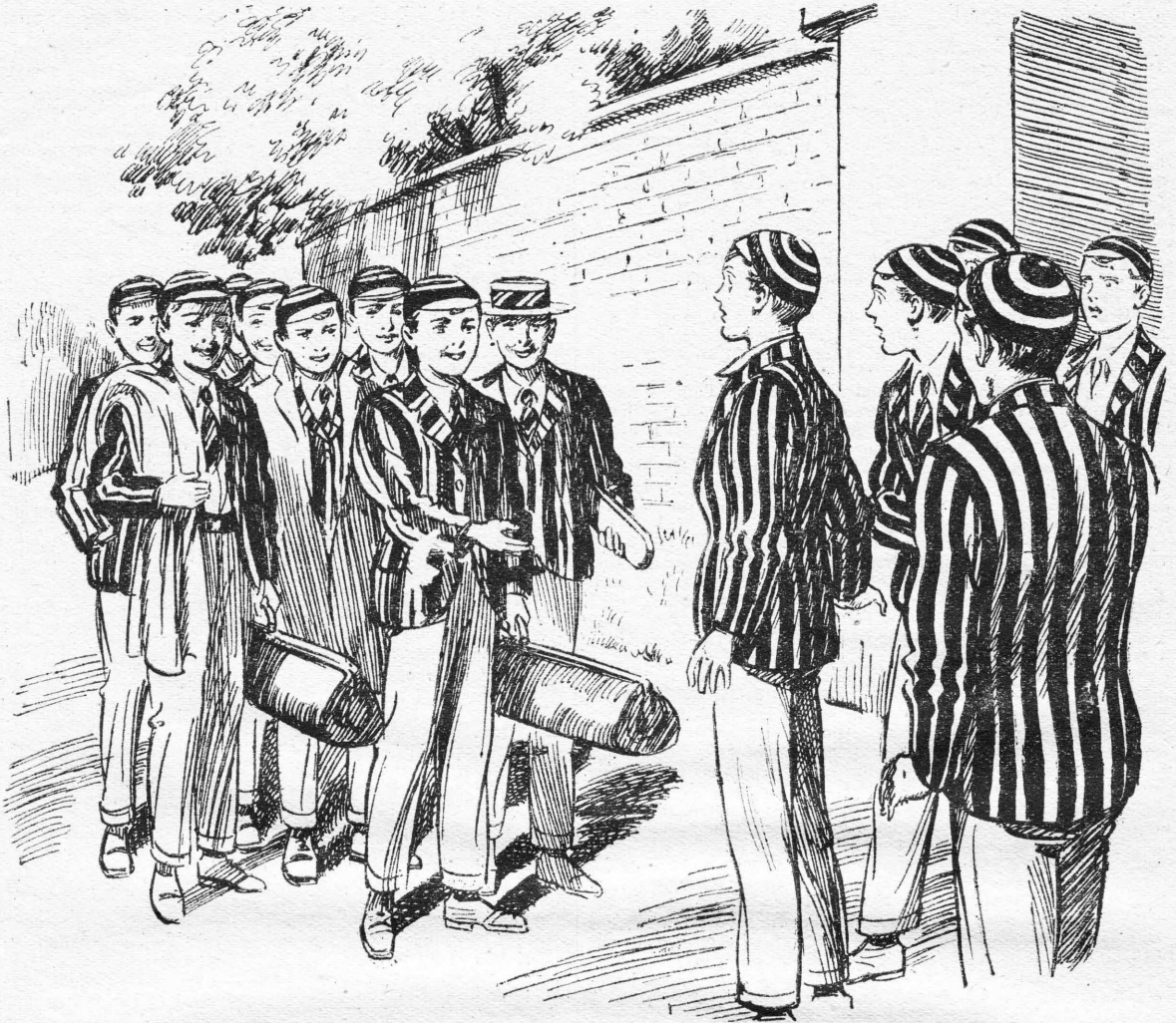
"Ahem! I—I suppose it was, sir."

Mr. Linton frowned.

"There should be no supposition about it," he said. "I am not a cricketer myself, but I know a good player when I see one. In my opinion Grundy is a very fine batsman."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. And the rest of the cricketers gasped. It was quite obvious that Mr. Linton had not seen Grundy clean bowled with two successive balls prior to making that big hit.

"I fail to understand, Grundy," said the master of the Shell, "why you do not play for the junior eleven. Have you ever been asked to play?"



Dicky Nugent bestowed a cheery grin upon George Alfred Grundy, who was looking utterly bewildered. "Here we are," said the leader of the Greyfriars fags. "How d'you do, Grundy?" "What the merry dickens—" began Grundy. "Have you kids come over to see the match?" "No jolly fear!" "No jolly fear!" said Dicky Nugent. "We've come to play in it! You see, we're taking the Remove Eleven's place!" (See page 14.)

"Never, sir!" said Grundy, quite truthfully.

Mr. Linton looked puzzled.

"Perhaps you are too good for the eleven?" he suggested.

"What I mean is, your form may be so much above the average that if you played in the junior eleven it would be a one-man team."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jack Blake. "Grundy too good for the eleven! Did you ever?"

"Silence, Blake!" said Mr. Linton. "Is my surmise correct, Grundy? Are you too good a player to take part in the junior matches? If so, I suggest you approach Lefevre of the Fifth Form, with a view to playing in his team."

"Great Scott!" murmured Tom Merry.

The mere thought of George Alfred Grundy figuring in the Fifth Form eleven made him almost dizzy.

"If Lefevre has no vacancy," went on Mr. Linton, "possibly Kildare of the Sixth could find a place for you in the first eleven? I know it is not usual for a boy to play for any other Form but his own; but if he shows exceptional ability, as you have done, I see no reason why he should not play for a higher Form."

The juniors stared at Mr. Linton in speechless surprise.

It was quite apparent that the master of the Shell was in blissful ignorance of Grundy's true form. He was judging Grundy's capabilities as a cricketer solely on the strength of that big hit he had recently witnessed.

The juniors could imagine what would happen if Grundy approached Kildare of the Sixth for a place in the first eleven. He would have gone out of Kildare's study quicker than he went in—with a boot behind him to facilitate his exit.

There was a smirk of satisfaction on Grundy's face. Mr. Linton's flattering words were like music in his ears.

At long last one person at St. Jim's, at least, had woken up to the fact that Grundy was a born cricketer!

"You have not yet informed me, Grundy, why you do not play in the junior eleven," said Mr. Linton.

"Must I tell you, sir?" said Grundy. "I'd rather not, if you don't mind. But if you insist—"

"I do insist."

"Well, then, sir, the fact is, I've been kept out of the eleven by personal jealousy."

"Bless my soul!"

"I don't want to tell tales or get anybody into trouble, sir," Grundy went on, "but that's the position. I'm such a good player that if I played in the eleven I should put Tom Merry and the others in the shade."

"Why, you—you—" stammered Tom Merry.

"I've never been given a chance, sir," said Grundy. "I'm not complaining; I'm simply stating facts. Whenever I've asked for a place in the eleven I've been told to go and eat coke!"

Mr. Linton pursed up his lips.

"It seems to me, Grundy," he said, "that you have been very unfairly treated. Tom Merry is the present captain, is he not?"

"That's so, sir," interposed Tom.

"Why have you barred Grundy from the team, Merry?"

Tom flushed.

"I always select players strictly on their merits, sir," he said. "If I thought Grundy was good enough for the eleven I'd put him in. But I don't think so."

Mr. Linton frowned.

"It seems to me, Merry," he said, "that the canker of jealousy has been at work. You appear to be jealous of Grundy's prowess—"

"Jealous of Grundy?" gasped Tom Merry. "Oh, my hat!"

"Do not utter ridiculous ejaculations, Merry!" said Mr. Linton severely. "I do not consider you have acted fairly towards Grundy. A boy who can hit a ball out of the ground is surely entitled to play in the eleven."

"But—but—" stammered Tom Merry. He was about to say that Grundy's hit had been the biggest fluke that ever happened, but he restrained himself.

"I understand that the election of a cricket captain takes place on Wednesday," said Mr. Linton. "Are you one of the candidates, Grundy?"

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"Then your candidature has my hearty support!" said the Form master. "I sincerely hope that your schoolfellows will have the good sense to elect you."

"Good gracious!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We should be a set of wavin' lunatics if we elected Gwunday!"

Fortunately for D'Arcy, Mr. Linton failed to hear that remark.

The master of the Shell turned once more to Tom Merry.

"I am aware that I have no right to interfere in these matters, Merry," he said. "At the same time, I must insist upon Grundy being given fair play."

"You needn't worry about that, sir," said Tom Merry rather heatedly. "Grundy will have the same chance as the other candidates. We sha'n't interfere with him in any way."

"Very well, Merry. I am glad to have your assurance on that point," said Mr. Linton. "I do not like the thought of such a good player being excluded from the eleven, and I hope Grundy's candidature may prove successful."

"Thanks awfully, sir!" said Grundy.

And Mr. Linton walked away, leaving the cricketers in a state of utter consternation.

The only person who looked pleased was George Alfred Grundy. But that youth did not remain at the wicket and continue his batting. He had performed a wonderful feat by smiting the ball out of the ground, and he didn't want to spoil that performance by being clean bowled while Mr. Linton was still in sight. Grundy wisely decided to rest on his laurels. He removed his pads and donned his blazer; then he tucked his bat almost affectionately under his arm and stalked away from the scene of his triumph.

At that moment Grundy was on excellent terms with himself. He felt that everything was for the best in the best of all possible worlds. And there was no doubt in Gussy's mind that when Wednesday came he would be elected captain of cricket, on the strength of that wonderful hit he had made that afternoon. And then, when his ambition was attained and he was captain of the junior eleven, he would be able to despatch the good news to his Uncle Grundy and prove to that gentleman that he was no duffer at sport after all!

CHAPTER 4. The Conspirators!

"I WEGARD Mr. Linton, deah boys, as an old fogay!" Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The swell of St. Jim's had been invited to tea in Tom Merry's study; and the juniors, having discussed tea, were now discussing the amazing events of the afternoon.

"Linton knows nothing about junior cricket," said Tom Merry, with a frown. "He oughtn't to have barged in."

"Pity he didn't turn up a bit earlier, when Grundy was performing like a circus clown," said Manners.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Linton's labouring under the delusion that Grundy's a first-class cricketer," he said. "I was on the point of telling him that Grundy's big hit was a thundering fluke. But I doubt if he would have believed me. He would have thought I was running Grundy down because I was jealous of him. Jealous of Grundy! Oh, ye gods!"

"The question, is, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, stirring his tea, "how can we make Linton see that Gwunday is the biggest duffah that evah handled a cwicket-bat?"

Monty Lowther, who had been pondering deeply for some moments, looked up.

"I think I know how we can wangle it," he said.

"How?" inquired three voices in chorus.

"By voting for Grundy at the election!" was the startling answer.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Don't talk rot, Monty!" said Tom Merry sharply. "What on earth would be the good of voting for Grundy?" Monty Lowther chuckled.

"There's method in my madness," he said. "This is my idea. We'll pass the word round to all our pals, and get them to vote for Grundy—without Grundy knowing anything about it, of course. Grundy will win the election, and be duly appointed captain of cricket. And he'll make

such a fearful hash of it that he will be forced to resign almost as soon as he's elected."

"Bai Jove!"

"The first match of the season," Lowther went on, "is against Greyfriars. Grundy will select a team of hopeless duffers—fellows like Mellish, and Skimpole, and Baggy Trimble. Greyfriars will come, and see, and conquer, and Grundy will be made to look a champion ass in the eyes of everybody—including Linton. Do you get me?"

"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "That is a weally wippin' weehee, deah boy! Just the sort of weehee that might have occurred to me—"

"Only it didn't!" chuckled Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's certainly a topping stunt," said Tom Merry. "When we've finished tea, we'll trot round the studies, and do some secret canvassing on behalf of Grundy. We'll interview all the fellows we can trust, and make them promise to vote for Grundy. He's sure to make a ghastly mess of the captaincy. When the Greyfriars fellows come over here and lick Grundy's eleven by an innings and umpteen runs, it will be the finish of Grundy as a cricket captain. The fellows will howl for him to resign."

"Just so," said Monty Lowther. "Why, even a fags' team could lick any eleven that Grundy put in the field."

Tom Merry clapped his chum on the back.

"You've given me an idea!" he said. "Why not arrange with Wharton, of Greyfriars, to send a fags' team over to play Grundy's eleven? The Greyfriars fags are smart little players, I believe. Anyway, they'll be too good for Grundy and his merry men."

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "Gwunday's eleven will be licked to a fwuzzle by the Gweyfwiahs fags, an' Gwunday will be the laughin'-stock of the school. He'll be forced to wesign fwom the captaincy wight away. An' Linton will realise that Gwunday's big hit this aftahnoon was nothin' but a fluke."

The juniors chuckled from time to time as they finished their tea.

The deep, dark plot which had just been hatched promised to prove most effective.

George Alfred Grundy was to be given a chance of showing his prowess as a captain and a cricketer. If he bungled that chance—as was only too probable—it would be his own funeral. Mr. Linton would not be able to say that Grundy had not had fair play.

Grundy was very much in the limelight that day. His amazing feat on the cricket-field was the one topic of conversation in the junior studies. Even in some of the senior studies reference was made to that mighty swipe which had caused such a sensation.

But nobody talked louder and at greater length than Grundy himself.

Over the tea-table in his study he prattled to Wilkins and Gunn of his achievement, and reproached them for not having been on the spot when the hit was made.

"It was a hefty hit, and no mistake," said Grundy. "Two hundred and twenty yards, from hit to pitch. I've measured the distance."

"You said just now it was a hundred and eighty yards," said Wilkins. "And when we first heard about it, it was only a hundred and fifty."

"The distance increases every time Grundy mentions it," said Gunn. "It will be a mile soon."

"You'd better curb your imagination, old man," said Wilkins, smiling at Grundy. "If you go on at this rate you'll soon be declaring that the ball landed in Wayland High Street."

Grundy scowled.

"It was a jolly fine performance, anyway," he said. "Nothing like it has been seen at St. Jim's for a long time. I put all my beef into that stroke."

"Did you shut your eyes?" asked Gunn.

"Eh? Of course not."

Wilkins sniggered.

"Wonderful coincidence, the ball happening to hit the bat like that, wasn't it?" he said.

Grundy jumped to his feet.

"Look here, George Wilkins! If you're trying to be funny, you'll go out of this study on your neck!"

"Pax!" pleaded Wilkins. "No offence, old chap."

Grundy sat down again.

"That hit of mine was no fluke—" he began.

"Wasn't it?" asked Gunn in surprise.

"No!" roared Grundy. "It wasn't! I know exactly what I was doing. I saw old Linton walking in the distance, and I calculated to place the ball right at his feet."

"Marvellous!" said Wilkins, stifling a yawn.

"Wonderful!" murmured Gunn; but he didn't seem to wax very enthusiastic about it.

The fact was, Wilkins and Gunn were heartily sick of hearing about Grundy's great feat. Grundy could talk of nothing else. Like the brook in the poem, he seemed

destined to go on for ever. He did not tire of descanting about his wonderful performance—though he made his listeners very tired indeed.

"That hit of mine," said Grundy, still harping on the same chord, "will do me a power of good. Lots of fellows hadn't quite made up their minds whom to vote for at the election; and that hit has decided them. It will bring me no end of votes."

"You're an optimist," said Wilkins. "If you poll more than half a dozen votes at the election, I shall be mightily surprised. I wish you the best of luck, of course," added Wilkins hastily; for the storm-signals were gathering on Grundy's brow.

Grundy's tongue continued to wag—still on the same topic. Finally, Wilkins and Gunn were obliged to flee from the study. They were sick of the sound of Grundy's voice. Unlike the exile in the poem, they did not pine to hear the sweet music of speech. They had heard enough!

There was quite a lot of excitement in the School House after tea.

Grundy had placed an announcement on the notice-board, in support of his own candidature. It was a weird and wonderful hand, and leavened by Grundy's weird and wonderful spelling:

"NOTISS TO ALL AND SUNDERY!

"Do you want a reel, live skipper?

Do you want a suxcessful cricket seazon?

Do you want St. Jim's to be top-dogs and cox-of-the-walk?

Do you want to see our opponents skittled out for dux-eggs?

Do you want to witness some mity hits for six?

IF SO, VOTE FOR GRUNDY!"

Quite a crowd of fellows congregated round the notice-board to read that announcement. It was perused, in fact, by "all and sundery."

"Grundy's latest!" drawled Cardew of the Fourth. "He's set us a sort of giddy catechism."

"We certainly want a real, live skipper," said Clive.

"But we shall have to look farther than Grundy for him!"

"And we certainly want a successful cricket season," said Levison major. "But if Grundy skippered the side, we shouldn't win a single match!"

"Grundy's an amusin' cove, an' no error," said Ralph Reckness Cardew. "Did you ever see such writin', an' such spellin'? The dear man has surpassed himself this time!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Going to give Grundy your vote, Cardew?" inquired Tom Merry, who had strolled on the scene with his chums. Cardew stared.

"My dear old top," he said, "I'm not qualifyin' for admission to a lunatic asylum!"

"No; but, seriously, I think you ought to vote for Grundy."

Cardew smiled.

"You're rottin', of course," he said. "Vote for Grundy, indeed! I'd rather vote for my aged and decrepit grand-mother!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry drew Cardew aside, and whispered something in his ear. Cardew chuckled, and nodded.

"All serene!" he said. "That's quite a stunnin' wheeze. I'll see that Grundy gets my vote."



Miss. ETHEL CLEVELAND.

The cousin of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form, and greatly admired by all the juniors at St. Jim's. A more charming, practical, and sympathetic girl it would be hard to find. Ethel always receives a hearty welcome from the Head's wife when she visits the school, and is a welcome visitor to tea in any of the junior studies. Figgins, of the New House, usually contrives to get his fair share of Ethel's company on such occasions. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy is sometimes inclined to think him a little too greedy in this respect, but Ethel does not seem to mind. Every junior at St. Jim's regards Ethel as a loyal and true pal.

"What!" shouted Levison. "You're going to vote for that chopheaded chump?"

"Yes," said Cardew. "An' so are you, an' so is Sidney. Henceforth, we will consider ourselves the loyal supporters of the great George Alfred."

"What's the little game?" demanded Clive.

Cardew passed on the news, and Levison and Clive laughed heartily. They agreed to vote for Grundy at the election, and to keep it dark meanwhile.

The Terrible Three continued their canvassing on Grundy's behalf; and they secured the promises of at least twenty fellows in the School House to vote for Grundy.

Everybody agreed that it would be a splendid idea to give Grundy his chance, and see what he made of it. That he would make a ghastly mess of it, no one doubted for a moment. He would raise a freak eleven, which would be soundly thrashed by the Greyfriars fags. Only for a brief season would he reign as captain of cricket—dressed in a little brief authority, so to speak. He would then be compelled to resign from office, and to hide his diminished head. And Tom Merry would be re-elected to the captaincy.

That was how the juniors figured it out. And it remained to be seen whether their predictions would be fulfilled.

CHAPTER 5. The Election!

"T O-NIGHT'S the night!" George Alfred Grundy spoke quite cheerfully.

For several days past, Grundy had been busy

soliciting votes, and advancing his claims to the cricket captaincy. And now that the day of the election had arrived, Grundy was bursting with confidence. His optimism was unbounded. Even the celebrated Mark Tapley was a whining pessimist by comparison with Grundy!

Wilkins and Gunn had backed up their leader to the best of their ability, but they were very dubious about the result of the election. They knew nothing of the plot which had been hatched in the Terrible Three's study; and they imagined that Tom Merry would be returned at the top of the poll, with Figgins, of the New House, a good second, and Grundy a bad third.

But Grundy would not hear of defeat. He was all smiles that day; and his smile was broader than ever when eight o'clock came—the hour fixed for the election.

The members of the Shell and Fourth Forms flocked into the Junior Common-room, eager to record their votes.

It was a very excited crowd that swarmed into the room. And Kildare, of the Sixth, who had charge of the proceedings, found it very difficult to quell the uproar.

The captain of St. Jim's shouted for silence till he was nearly husky. Finally, he had to enforce silence with his ashplant.

The voting papers were handed round. Each paper bore the names of the three candidates, in alphabetical order:

- FIGGINS, G.
- GRUNDY, G. A.
- MERRY, T.

A cross had to be placed against the name of the favoured candidate. And a good many crosses went down against the middle name.

In the ordinary way, no fellow in his right senses would have dreamed of voting for Grundy. But this was a

unique occasion. Those who had been secretly canvassed by Tom Merry & Co. were eager to vote for Grundy. And they were even more eager to see what would happen after the election, with Grundy as captain of cricket.

There were a good many grinning faces in the Junior Common-room while the balloting was in progress.

The three candidates, who were not permitted to vote, sat looking on. Grundy nudged Tom Merry with his elbow.

"I'm going to pull it off!" he whispered. "I feel it in my bones. This is where you take a back seat, Merry, and I come into my own."

"Rats!" retorted Tom.

"You've had a long innings," Grundy went on. "You've been captain of cricket ever since I came to St. Jim's from Redelyffe. And a change will do everyone good."

"Where do I come in?" asked Figgins.

"You don't," said Grundy. "You stay out! I shall be top of the poll, and you and Tom Merry will be nowhere. It's always been a pet ambition of mine to be captain of cricket. And my ambition's going to be realised at last!"

"If you poll more than two votes," said Tom Merry, "it will be an eye-opener!"

Kildare rapped on the desk for silence.

"Have you all voted?" he asked.

There was a general nodding of heads.

"Then I'll collect the papers. Cut along and ask Darrell to step in here for a moment, Merry. We ought to have two scrutineers."

After a brief interval, Darrell of the Sixth stepped into the Common-room. And he and Kildare went through the voting-papers, while the voters looked on breathlessly.

A puzzled expression came over Kildare's handsome face as the checking of the votes continued. And when the checking was complete, Kildare looked not only puzzled, but dumbfounded. Like the prophet of old, he was amazed with a great amazement.

The result had now been arrived at, and Kildare blinked in a stupefied way at the figures in front of him. Darrell was looking equally astonished.

"There—there must be some mistake," muttered the captain of St. Jim's. "We'd better go through the voting-papers again. Sorry to keep you waiting, you kids."

The fellows fidgeted in their seats whilst the recount took place. Some of them were smiling serenely, well knowing what the result was going to be. Others were on tenter-hooks.

When the papers had been rechecked, the result confirmed the previous checking.

"Great Scott!" gasped Kildare. "I've seen some funny election results in my time, but this fairly takes the bun! I'm beginning to think that some of you kids must have taken leave of your senses!"

"What's the result, Kildare?"

George Alfred Grundy was on his feet. His tone was eager and hopeful.

Kildare looked at Grundy.

"I have to congratulate you, Grundy," he said. "You have been elected captain of cricket by a majority of twelve votes."

"Hurrah!"

His face flushed with triumph, Grundy proceeded to execute a Highland fling on the floor of the Common-room.

Wilkins and Gunn, who had voted for Grundy, as per promise, were too dazed to cheer, or even to congratulate him. That amazing election result knocked them all of a heap. They sat glued to their seats as if stunned.

There were others, also, to whom the result of the election came as a bombshell.

"Grundy—captain of cricket!" gasped Gore of the Shell. "Has the world suddenly gone mad?"

"I'm jolly glad Grundy's elected!" said Baggy Trimble. "I shall be able to get a place in the eleven now. All the good players were crowded out when Tom Merry was skipper. But you'll see that the really brilliant players, like me, get a fair show, won't you, Grundy?"

"Rely on me," said Grundy, his eyes sparkling with triumph. "I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking all the fellows who had the good sense to vote for me. Thanks very much indeed! You'll never have cause to regret this."

Tom Merry and Figgins, the defeated candidates, rose to their feet. Outwardly, they were looking very crestfallen. Inwardly they were feeling vastly amused.

"Well," said Tom Merry, "I suppose we must take our defeat like sportsmen. Give me your fist, Grundy!"

Grundy shook hands cordially enough—first with Tom Merry, and then with Figgins.

"I'm rather sorry for you fellows," he said. "Still, it's a case of the best man winning, and the duds having to take a back seat."

"If you call me a dud—" began Figgins sulphurously.

"Well, you must admit that you're not up to my form,"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 901.

said Grundy. "I've never seen you hit a ball clean out of the ground, Figgins. A fellow with bony biceps, like yourself—"

Figgins fairly exploded. He clenched his hands, and no doubt he would have exercised his bony biceps upon George Alfred Grundy, had not Tom Merry dragged him back.

"No quarrelling, there!" rapped Kildare.

"It's all right, Kildare," said Grundy. "Figgins is only feeling a bit sore. We all feel like that in the hour of defeat. It's human nature, you know."

"Well, I wish you luck with the cricket captaincy, Grundy," said Kildare. "But I must say I'm jolly surprised to find you elected. You polled twelve more votes than Merry, and fifteen more than Figgins. I'd no idea you were a cricketer. To be candid, I'd always regarded you as a hopeless duffer at the game."

Grundy smiled.

"Funny how these impressions get about, isn't it?" he said. "The fact is, Kildare, I'm a born cricketer. It's only jealousy that has kept me out of the eleven. But it can't keep me out any longer. I'm captain of cricket now, and my word is going to be law. I mean to make some sweeping alterations in the junior team. And if we don't win every single match we play under my captaincy, I'm a Dutchman!"

"I shall be surprised to see you on the winning side even once," said Kildare. "However, you've got your chance now, and it rests with you whether you make a thumping success of it, or a ghastly failure."

So saying, the captain of St. Jim's strolled out of the junior Common-room with Darrell.

They left the room in a buzz. Everybody seemed to be talking at once, and the voice of George Alfred Grundy drowned those of his schoolfellows.

Grundy was holding forth on the subject of his great triumph, and what he was going to do, and what he was not going to do. Mounted on the table in the Common-room, the great George Alfred was monarch of all he surveyed. And his utterances were received with cheers and counter-cheers by the noisy throng.

Grundy was now enthroned in majesty as captain of cricket. And Monty Lowther voiced the general opinion when he declared that there was going to be some fun!

CHAPTER 6.

Grundy's Eleven!

AFTER lessons next day Mr. Linton saw fit to address a few remarks to George Alfred Grundy.

"I am very pleased to hear, my boy, that you have been elected captain of cricket," said the good-natured Form master. "I trust the team will thrive under your captaincy, and that you will amply justify the confidence which has been placed in you."

"Thank you, sir," said Grundy. "We're playing Greyfriars on Saturday—the first match of the season. I hope you'll turn out to see the match, sir."

"Most certainly I shall be present," said Mr. Linton. "I do not often attend cricket matches, but I am anxious to see you make a good start in your new role. Have you selected your eleven yet?"

"Not yet, sir. There's going to be a practice this afternoon, and I shall see how the fellows shape before I make up the team."

"A very sensible plan," said Mr. Linton approvingly. And he dismissed Grundy with a pleasant nod.

The new captain of cricket wore rather a grim look as he came out of the Shell Form room.

As skipper of the St. Jim's junior eleven, Grundy intended to take his duties very seriously. Under his rule there was to be compulsory practice. Grundy proposed, if possible, to muster the whole of the Shell and the Fourth at the nets. There was to be no shirking. Iron discipline was to be the order of the day. Under Grundy's captaincy the slackers would cease from slacking, and the weary would find no rest.

Fellows like Racke and Mellish, who usually spent their leisure hours frowning in stuffy studies, would be ordered to get into flannels and take their turn at the nets.

Grundy caused quite a flutter in the dovecotes, so to speak, on this particular afternoon. He descended upon the slackers like a wolf on the fold.

First of all, he visited the luxurious study of Aubrey Racke. That elegant youth was reclining in the armchair, chatting with Mellish of the Fourth.

Racke glared at Grundy as the latter barged in.

"What d'you mean by comin' into a fellow's study without knockin'?" he demanded.

Grundy gave a snort. Not at any time did Grundy have much respect for the proprietaries.

"Turn out!" he said imperiously.

"Eh?"

"Turn out! I want you at the nets!"

"Then you can go on wantin'!" said Racke warmly. "I'm



Skimpole stood gazing dreamingly into space through his big spectacles, and the ball landed plump on the top of his cranium. "Yaroooh!" he yelled. "Ha, ha, ha!" "Well caught, Skimmy!" Grundy bestowed a glare upon the genius of the Shell. "Why don't you pay attention, you frabjous dummy?" he roared. "You ought to have caught that one!" "Ow!" roared Skimpole. "I did!" (See page 15.)

not goin' to fool around chasin' a cricket-ball, if that's what you mean!"

"No jolly fear!" said Mellish. "You can count us out, Grundy. Run away and pick flowers!"

Grundy looked grim.

"I'm captain of cricket," he said, "and what I say goes. Are you coming at once, or do you want me to frogs-march the pair of you down to the ground?"

Racke and Mellish looked quite startled. Grundy's manner was not at all compromising. He was in no humour to be trifled with. Moreover, he was a hefty fighting-man, and was quite capable of carrying out his threat of frogs-marching the slackers down to Little Side.

"I—I don't feel up to cricket at the moment!" muttered Racke. "Fact is, I've got a splittin' headache."

"An hour at the nets will soon cure that," said Grundy. "Come on!"

Racke and Mellish groaned in chorus. They had been looking forward to a quiet and peaceful time now that Grundy was captain of cricket. Tom Merry had often compelled them to turn out to practice; but they had hoped that Grundy would be less exacting. Neither Racke nor Mellish had any love for cricket. They preferred to take their ease in their inn, as it were. It came as rather a shock to find Grundy introducing iron discipline. Both Racke and Mellish had voted for Grundy at the election. Now they wished they hadn't.

But it was no use arguing with Grundy. That youth was on the war-path, and he had to be obeyed.

"We're comin'," said Racke sullenly.

"Buck up, then!" said Grundy. "Go and get into your flannels, and if you're not at the nets in ten minutes look out for squalls!"

Grundy continued to round up the slackers.

Gore and Scrope and Clamp and Chowle were run to earth in the wood-shed, whither they had repaired in order to enjoy a quiet smoke.

Grundy rapped on the locked door of the shed and demanded admittance. And he created such a commotion that Gore and his companions feared that Grundy's bellowing voice would bring a prefect on the scene. They hurriedly doused their cigarettes and opened the door to Grundy.

"Don't make such a row, for goodness' sake!" growled Gore. "We don't want one of the beaks to swoop down on us. What the merry dickens do you want, Grundy?"

"You!" said Grundy promptly. "All four of you! Get into your flannels, and sharp about it! It's cricket practice."

"Not for me!" said Gore. "I'll see you to Jericho, Grundy, before I take my orders from you!"

Grundy gave a snort of exasperation and rushed at Gore. The next moment they were fighting like tigers in the doorway of the woodshed.

Scrope and Clampe and Chowle did not attempt to interfere. They had no desire to get in the way of one of Grundy's hefty punches.

Gore, however, was no funk. On the contrary, he rather revelled in a scrap.

It was a fast and furious encounter, but Grundy was in better trim than his opponent. One of his formidable punches, straight from the shoulder, took Gore full in the chest, and he toppled over in the doorway with a crash. As falls the giant oak, so fell George Gore.

"Ow-ow-ow!" groaned Gore.

"Going on with the scrap?" inquired Grundy.

"No, hang you!"

"We'll get on with the cricket, then. I'm not going to have any slacking while I'm skipper. I'll give you ten minutes to change your togs and get down to the ground. If you're not there by then I'll come and fetch you!"

And Grundy strode away in search of other slackers. One and all were rounded up and ordered to proceed to Little Side to await Grundy's pleasure. Some came quietly, as a

constable would say; others had to be hauled out of their comfortable armchairs by the scruffs of their necks.

Baggy Trimble of the Fourth came willingly enough. Trimble rejoiced in the fact that Grundy was captain of cricket, and he was anxious to show Grundy what a really fine cricketer he was. The previous cricket captain had not been in the least impressed by Baggy's form; but Grundy was bound to appreciate and applaud it. Trimble's style of play was so like his own!

When Grundy arrived at the nets practically the whole of the Shell and the Fourth were there.

As Grundy approached Monty Lowther made a sweeping salaam.

"All hail, your Majesty!" he murmured.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get up!" growled Grundy.

"To hear is to obey," said Lowther meekly.

Grundy then addressed the grinning crowd.

"Now, understand me," he said. "I mean business! You won't find me a soft, easy-going skipper like Merry was. Each fellow will take five minutes with the bat, and I'll look on and sum up his capabilities. Get your pads on, Merry!"

Tom Merry frowned. He was not accustomed to taking orders from Grundy. But the frown soon vanished, and the ex-captain put on his pads and took his place at the wicket.

"Bowl up, Noble!" commanded Grundy.

Harry Noble started to bowl, and Tom Merry laid on the willow good and hard.

Grundy, assuming the pose of the late Napoleon Bonaparte—with folded arms and frowning face—stood looking on. He made no comment until Tom Merry's five minutes were up. Then he slowly shook his head, more in sorrow than in anger.

"Hopeless!" he said.

"W-w-what?" stuttered Tom Merry.

"No idea of the game at all," said Grundy. "A fag in the First would have put up a better show."

"Mum-mum-my hat!" mumbled Tom Merry.

"I shouldn't dream of having you in my eleven," Grundy went on. "Perhaps, after you've had a few lessons from me, you'll improve. But at present—hopeless, quite hopeless!"

Tom Merry made a noise like a soda-water siphon in action. He fairly bubbled over with indignation.

"You—your cheeky ass!" he spluttered. "I've a jolly good mind to wipe up the ground with you!"

"That's enough!" said Grundy sharply. "I know the truth is sometimes painful, and the truth is, Merry, that you can't play cricket for toffee. I'm quite willing to give you a bit of coaching, when I have time, and if you improve I might be able to squeeze you into my eleven later on."

Tom Merry breathed hard. He came within an ace of hurling himself upon George Alfred Grundy and smiting that cheerful youth hip and thigh.

"Your turn next, Gussy!" said Grundy, signalling to the swell of St. Jim's. "I hope you'll put up a better show than Merry."

Arthur Augustus lounged to the wicket. Gussy was a good bat, with a variety of graceful strokes. His leg-glides were a treat to watch, and his late cuts were very stylish.

No competent critic could accuse Arthur Augustus of being a duffer at cricket.

But Grundy was not a competent critic. He shook his head sadly at the end of Gussy's five minutes.

"Awfully feeble!" was his comment.

Arthur Augustus spun round from the wicket with a wrathful glare.

"Bai Jove, I twust you are not wefewwin' to my battin', Gwunday?"

"Battin'?" said Grundy. "Don't call it flattering names. You're as big a duffer as Tom Merry, Gussy. In fact, it's a toss-up which is the bigger duffer of the two."

Arthur Augustus fairly exploded. His dignity was outraged. That deadly insult from Grundy made him temporarily forget the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

"Gwunday, you wude wottah!" he exclaimed. "I will not be insulted in this mannah! You have no wight to make dispaawagin' wemarks about my battin'. Put up your hands, an' I will administrah a feashful thwashin'!"

Grundy merely grinned.

"Don't get your wool off!" he said. "You fellows don't seem to like being told the plain truth about your cricket. On present form, Gussy, you're not fit to play for a kindergarten! But I've no doubt you'll improve under my tuition."

Arthur Augustus danced with rage.

"I wufese to take tuition fwom a burblin' duffah like yourself!" he exclaimed. "I weward you with scorn and despision!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Unless you apologise for your wude wemarks, Gwunday, I shall thwash you heah an' now!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 901.

Arthur Augustus laid his bat on the turf and threw himself into a fighting attitude. But Tom Merry & Co. hastened to pour oil on the troubled waters. The indignant Gussy was pacified at length, and Jack Blake took his place at the wicket.

"One minute," said Grundy, advancing towards Blake. "You don't seem to know how to hold your bat. Let me show you."

"Keep off," hissed Blake, "unless you want me to brain you!"

"Impossible!" chimed in Monty Lowther. "How can you brain a fellow when he's brainless?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy shrugged his shoulders.

"If Blake doesn't choose to take a few friendly tips from me, it's his own funeral," he said. "He's an awful dud at the game, but I'm willing to tackle even the most hopeless cases!"

Jack Blake looked daggers at Grundy, but he said nothing. Words failed him!

The practice proceeded, with George Alfred Grundy looking on and taking notes from time to time.

All the good cricketers were denounced as hopeless duffers by Grundy. On the other hand, all the genuine duffers were acclaimed by Grundy to be first-class players.

Aubrey Racke and Baggy Trimble and even Skimpole were given a word of praise by the new cricket captain. Moreover, they were promised places in the junior eleven.

After tea Grundy busied himself in his study drawing up the list of players for the forthcoming match with Greyfriars.

It was a list which made Grundy's schoolfellows gasp when they saw it.

The names of the chosen eleven were duly displayed on the notice-board, as follows:

"G. A. Grundy (capt.), G. Wilkins, W. Gunn, G. Gore, P. Mellish, A. Racke, L. Scrope, G. Clampe, C. Chowie, B. Trimble, and H. Skimpole."

"What a team!" gasped Monty Lowther. "Oh, what a team! Grundy might as well have included Taggles, the porter, and Toby, the page!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't see that eleven winning many cups and championships!" said Manners, with a grin. "Wilkins and Gunn are not bad, and Gore's a bit of a slogger; but the others—"

"I don't think the Greyfriars fags will find it difficult to beat that little lot," said Tom Merry. "That reminds me. I must telephone to Wharton and put him wise about our little plot."

"Kildare will let you use the phone in the prefects' room if you ask him nicely," said Lowther.

Tom Merry nodded, and, with a smiling face, he set off in quest of Kildare of the Sixth.

CHAPTER 7.

Wharton is Willing!

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY came swaggering down the Shell passage.

Grundy was a very pompous and important personage these days. Judging by his lofty and superior attitude, one would have imagined that he owned the round earth and all that was therein. Like Julius Caesar, he seemed to bethrill the narrow world like a Colossus.

Grundy nodded patronisingly to Tom Merry, who was about to pass him.

"What do you think of my eleven, Merry?" he asked.

"I hardly know what to think of it," replied Tom. "Is it really a cricket eleven, or a hopscotch team?"

Grundy frowned.

"It's a far better eleven than any that you've ever drawn up," he said. "We shall simply make rings round the Greyfriars Remove. They won't be up to our weight. The only thing I'm afraid of is the match will be too one-sided."

"I quite agree," said Tom Merry. "But he didn't mean what Grundy meant."

"Rather a pity we've got to play their Remove team," Grundy went on. "I wish they'd send their Fifth Form eleven over."

"My hat!"

"Or their First Eleven. You needn't snigger, Merry! We'd give the Greyfriars First a run for their money!"

Tom Merry laughed outright. He simply couldn't help it. Grundy's colossal conceit, coupled with his unbounded optimism, was certainly a matter for merriment.

"I've just written to my Uncle Grundy," continued George Alfred. "I've told him that the fellows have come to their senses at last and elected me captain of cricket. And I've invited him to come down for the Greyfriars match. The dear old chap will be awfully bucked to see me lead my eleven to victory."

"He's not likely to see anything like that happen," said

Tom Merry. "He'll probably see you bowled first ball, and stalk away in disgust."

Grundy glared.

"You're only talking like that because you're rattled at being left out of the eleven!" he growled. "There isn't a fellow at Greyfriars who could take my wicket first ball. I shall pile up the merry runs and make a brilliant century, and Uncle Grundy will beam all over his dial and give me a handsome tip before he goes back. My cricket will be an eye-opener to him."

Tom Merry chuckled. Certainly Grundy's style of play would be likely to prove an "eye-opener" to his worthy uncle, but not quite in the sense that Grundy meant.

"I'm sorry to have to leave you out of the team, Merry," said Grundy. "You're not a bad sort of fellow in your way—in fact, I rather like you, except when you say horrid things like you did just now. But, of course, personal likes and dislikes don't count when a skipper's selecting his eleven. He's got to choose his men strictly on their merits. He can't afford to play duds, even though they may be quite decent chaps."

Tom Merry breathed hard.

"That's the second time to-day you've called me a dud," he said.

"Are you asking for a thick ear, Grundy?"

"I'll take all the thick ears you can give me!" said Grundy scornfully.

Tom Merry clenched his hands, and was about to rush at Grundy, when a tall figure came striding into view. It was Kildare of the Sixth. Tom Merry promptly dropped his hands to his sides and contented himself by giving Grundy a glare which ought to have withered that youth on the spot.

Grundy returned the glare. Then, with a snort, he went on his way to post the letter to his Uncle Grundy.

"What's the trouble, Merry?" inquired Kildare. "You were about to scrap with Grundy, I believe?"

Tom Merry admitted the soft impeachment.

"Well, it's lucky for you that I came along when I did," said the captain of St. Jim's. "If I had caught you scrapping in the passage there would have been some impots flying around. I suppose you're feeling rather sick at having Grundy for cricket captain?"

"Not half so sick as Grundy will feel by and bye!" answered Tom Merry, with a laugh.

"After the match with Greyfriars, do you mean?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"I've no doubt Grundy will make a champion ass of himself," said Kildare. "I'm still in the dark as to why he was elected captain. Strikes me the majority of the electors must have temporarily lost their reason."

"I don't think Grundy will have a very long innings as skipper," said Tom Merry. "By the way, Kildare, may I use the phone in the prefects' room? I want to get through to Wharton of Greyfriars."

Kildare gave permission readily enough. And Tom Merry strolled cheerfully away to the prefects' room. He rang up Greyfriars, and found himself in touch with Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

"Sorry to trouble you, sir," said Tom Merry, "but could I speak to Wharton a moment, please?"

"Certainly!" said Mr. Quelch cordially.

There was a brief delay. Then the cheery voice of Harry Wharton sounded over the wires.

"Hallo! That you, Merry?"

"Yes," said Tom. "I want to speak to you about Saturday's match."

"Nothing wrong, I hope? All your fellows fit and well?"

Tom Merry proceeded to explain the situation.

"We've hatched a little plot against that ass Grundy," he said, "and we want your co-operation. It will interest you to know that I'm no longer captain of cricket. Grundy has stepped into my shoes."

"Great Scott!" gasped Wharton.

"The fact is we wangled it that he should be elected," Tom Merry went on. "He was always grouching that he never got a fair show in the cricket, so we're going to give him a chance to make good. He's made a start by getting together a team of the biggest duffers you could possibly meet in a day's march! Baggy Trimble and Skimpole are in it, to mention only two of the comedians."

Harry Wharton laughed, but his laughter was short lived. He realised that if he brought his strongest eleven over to St. Jim's to play Grundy's comic team the match would be a farce. And Wharton had no liking for farcical games. He was a lover of keen, exciting cricket, and he told Tom Merry so.

"You needn't worry," said Tom. "We're not asking you to come over and wipe up the ground with Grundy & Co. A fags' eleven is quite capable of doing that. And that brings me to the point. Could you arrange to send over a team of babes? The Second Form eleven would do nicely. They'd be too good for Grundy."

"All serene," said Wharton, after a pause. "I'll see to

that. I've no doubt our fags will be able to put it across Grundy's rag-time team. But what about the proper match? I don't like the idea of that being postponed."

"It needn't be postponed for more than an hour," said Tom Merry. "The Grundy fiasco will be over in an hour, and then we can get down to serious cricket. Bring your eleven over, by all means; but don't arrive for an hour after the fags. Is that clear?"

"Quite!"

"Then we shall expect your fags' eleven at two o'clock on Saturday, and your illustrious selves at three. Good-bye—and thanks very much!"

"Good-bye!"

Tom Merry rang off and strolled out of the prefects' room, smiling.

Manners and Lowther were waiting for him outside.

"Have you worked the oracle, Tommy?" inquired Lowther.

"Yes, rather! Wharton was quite willing to fall in with our scheme."

"Oh, good!" chortled Manners. "The stage is now set, and on Saturday afternoon the curtain will be rung up on one of the biggest farces of modern times!"

"We might think it a farce, but I reckon Grundy will think it a tragedy!" grinned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was in a merry mood that the Terrible Three went along to their study to tackle evening prep.

The plans for the humiliation and downfall of George Alfred Grundy were now complete.

Would Grundy defeat those plans, by rising to the occasion and scoring a century in the presence of his uncle?

Possibly; but not probably. For the age of miracles was past!

CHAPTER 8.

A Shock for Grundy!

A SMART two-seater car swung into the gateway of St. Jim's.

It was Saturday afternoon. Dinner was over, and the quadrangle was alive with happy schoolboys.

The sudden appearance of the car attracted everybody's attention. And there was a shout from George Alfred Grundy.

"My uncle!"

"Oh, my prophetic soul, my uncle!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Taggles, the porter, saluted Uncle Grundy respectfully as he drove in. Uncle Grundy gave an impression of plumpness and prosperity, and his ample form converted the two-seater into a single-seater. Certainly, there was no room for a passenger.

The car slowed up, and Grundy hurried towards it.

"Hallo, uncle! Awfully glad you've turned up!"

Uncle Grundy heaved himself out of the car with some difficulty, and shook hands cordially with his burly nephew, who was in flannels.

"Pleased to see you, my boy," he remarked. "I was more than delighted to get your letter informing me that you had been elected captain of cricket. It appears that the little lecture I gave you on backwardness in sport has taken root. So you're a full-blown cricket captain now—eh?"

"Yes, rather!" said Grundy. "I'm in the seat of the mighty now, you know. Some of the fellows don't like having to knuckle under to my authority; but they've no choice in the matter. Have you had lunch, uncle?"

Uncle Grundy nodded.

"I had an excellent lunch at the Cafe Royal, in Wayland," he said. "A capital place! They do you very well."

"Yes, I've noticed that," said Grundy. "They did me out of a bob the last time I was there."

Uncle Grundy smiled.

"I did not mean to imply that they were profiteers," he said. "They certainly gave me a very fine lunch. I must go there again. Supposing I take the winning team along, and treat them to tea?"

Grundy's eyes sparkled.

"That would be topping, uncle!" he said. "We should be awfully bucked."

Grundy seemed to take it for granted that the winning team would be his own. And he was looking very merry and bright as he piloted his uncle through the throng of fellows in the quad.

Uncle Grundy nodded cheerily to Tom Merry & Co. as he passed them, and they lifted their caps in salutation.

Mr. Linton came down the School House steps just as uncle and nephew reached the foot thereof.

The master of the Shell smiled pleasantly at Uncle Grundy, and shook hands with him quite effusively.

"You have come down for the match, sir?" he inquired.
 "Yes. I'm very keen to see how my nephew shapes. Strictly speaking, I have no business to be here. There are matters in the City which require my attention. But they must wait. I have never seen George play cricket, and it would be churlish of me to miss this opportunity."

"Quite so," said Mr. Linton. "I have had the pleasure of seeing your nephew play, and his form was a revelation to me. I saw him hit a ball clean out of the ground—a feat which must require great skill. I propose to watch the match this afternoon—in fact, we will watch it together, sir, if you have no objection."

Uncle Grundy willingly assented to that arrangement. And Grundy hoped to entertain the two worthy gentlemen with a bright and dashing display of batting.

After he had escorted his uncle round the building, Grundy asked to be excused.

"I must go and get my men together," he said. "The Greyfriars fellows will be arriving at any minute."

Grundy found the members of his eleven changed, and ready for the fray. And they all strolled down together to the school gates, to await the arrival of the Greyfriars team.

Tom Merry & Co. were also waiting there with smiling faces. Their smiles rather nettled Grundy, but he said nothing. He regarded his schoolfellows with a look of haughty contempt.

The school clock was chiming the hour of two, when the visiting team came into view along the road.

Grundy, shading his eyes from the sun with his hand, gazed at the approaching eleven in astonishment.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated. "Is my eyesight playing me tricks, or have the Greyfriars fellows shrunk in size? They seem a set of dwarfs, to me!"

"Rot!" said Wilkins.

"You come and look, then."

Wilkins stepped out into the roadway beside his leader, and surveyed the advancing throng.

"Great pip!" he gasped. "That can't be the Remove eleven! Looks like a team of fags, from here."

"P'raps they'll get bigger as they get nearer," said Gunn.

But when the visitors drew near to the school gates, it was quite obvious that they were mere fags.

Dicky Nugent, of the Greyfriars Second, was in the vanguard. Dicky bestowed a cheery grin upon George Alfred Grundy, who was looking utterly bewildered.

"Here we are!" said the leader of the Greyfriars fags. "How d'you do, Grundy?"

Grundy was too astonished to take the hand which Dicky Nugent held out to him.

"What the merry dickens—" he began. "Have you kids come over to see the match?"

"No jolly fear! We've come to play it," said Dicky Nugent.

"But—but we were expecting the Greyfriars Remove! What's happened to Wharton and the others?"

"We're taking their places," explained Dicky cheerfully. Grundy's face clouded over.

"Looks to me as if a practical joker has been at work," he said. "We're not going to play a parcel of fags. It's the Remove eleven we want."

"Remove eleven's not available," said Dicky Nugent. "It's little us that you've got to play. We haven't fagged all the way over to St. Jim's for nothing, Grundy. We've come to show you how to play cricket."

"You—you cheeky young cub—"

"Lead the way to the ground!" said Dicky, unperturbed. Grundy's face was a study. He turned helplessly to his followers.

"What are we going to do about this, you fellows?" he asked. "The Remove eleven hasn't turned up, and this team of babes has been sent over in its place."

"Might as well play them, an' give them a thunderin' good lickin' for their cheek!" said Aubrey Racke.

"Anyway, there will have to be a match, now that Uncle Grundy has come here specially to see it," said Wilkins.

"That's so," said Gunn. "You can't disappoint your uncle, Grundy."

Grundy pondered the situation for a moment.

Certainly a match of some sort would have to be played, now that Uncle Grundy had sacrificed his business affairs in order to come to St. Jim's and see his nephew perform. Moreover, Grundy couldn't very well send Dicky Nugent's team empty away, after they had made the long journey from Greyfriars.

"You'll have to play them, old man," murmured Wilkins, in Grundy's ear. "After all, it's just as well that Greyfriars have sent a fags' team over. We should never have licked the Remove."

Grundy gave a snort.

"I should have licked the Remove off my own bat," he said. "I've never felt in better trim. It seems absurd to

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 901.

play against these infants; but there's nothing else for it, I suppose. Come along!"

And Grundy led the way to Little Side. The fags' eleven from Greyfriars trotted cheerfully in the rear of the procession. They seemed to be quite eager to get to grips with Grundy's eleven, and they had no doubt as to the outcome of the encounter. In spite of their diminutive stature, Dicky Nugent & Co. were smart little players, and Dicky had been careful to choose the best possible eleven.

Uncle Grundy and Mr. Linton, who had found a shady seat in front of the pavilion, looked very astonished when the rival teams came into view.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Linton. "That surely cannot be the Greyfriars Remove?"

"Why, they're mere midgets!" said Uncle Grundy. Grundy explained the situation when he came up.

"For some reason or other, the Remove Eleven hasn't turned up," he said. "Greyfriars have sent over a fags' team. It's a thousand pities. The game will be too one-sided for words! Still, we ought to play, I suppose."

"Most certainly!" said Uncle Grundy. "I did not come here on a fool's errand. I have come to see some cricket, and I am determined not to be disappointed."

"All right, uncle," said Grundy. "We'll play. But I won't take advantage of these fags. They haven't long left their mothers' apron-strings. When I've made a century against their puny bowling I shall retire."

"A very sportsmanlike decision, Grundy," said Mr. Linton, with an approving nod.

But Dicky Nugent & Co. were resolved that Grundy should not make a century, or anything like it, against their bowling. They had hopes of dismissing the great George Alfred for a "big round nought," and humbling his pride in the dust. At all events, they were brimming over with enthusiasm. And, if enthusiasm conquers the world, it was more than likely to conquer Grundy and his merry men.

CHAPTER 9.

Not According to Programme!

"HEADS!" called Dicky Nugent.

"Heads it is!" said Grundy, stooping to pick up the coin he had tossed.

"We'll bat!" said Dick promptly. "Get your pads on, Gatty. You and me will open the innings."

Dicky and his chum buckled on their pads, with a business-like air.

Kildare and Darrell, who had good-naturedly consented to act as umpires, strolled on to the field in their white coats. They were followed by Grundy's eleven; and a laugh went round the ground as Grundy led his men forth to the fray.

Seldom had such an ill-assorted team of cricketers represented St. Jim's.

Only Wilkins and Gunn, of the whole eleven, looked capable athletes. Grundy himself looked as awkward and ungainly as it was possible for a fellow to look. Aubrey Racke and his cronies lounged on to the field, with their hands in their pockets. And Skimpole of the Shell looked a weird figure in his flannels. Skimmy's mind was not concerned with cricket just then. He was deep in the throes of a Cross Word puzzle, and was trying to think of an African quadruped in twelve letters. Skimpole had wanted to bring his dictionary on to the field of play, in order to make search for the elusive quadruped; but Grundy had insisted upon the dictionary being left behind in the pavilion.

Perhaps the most comic personality in Grundy's eleven, however, was Baggy Trimble. That youth had somehow mislaid his cricket flannels; and, failing to find them, he had "borrowed" Levison major's. Levison was a slim youth, and his flannels fitted him to perfection. But they didn't fit Baggy Trimble. Baggy seemed likely to burst clean through them at any moment. The trousers resembled a pair of tights; and the cricket-shirt had already shed a couple of buttons. As for the belt, Baggy had been unable to coax it round his ample circumference, and he had been obliged to discard it. Not that a belt was at all necessary, in the circumstances.

There was a cheer as Dicky Nugent and Gatty trotted down the pavilion steps, padded and gloved, and swinging their bats.

"Hurrah!"

"Play up, the Lilliputians!" roared Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

As the two fags approached the wicket, Grundy instructed Trimble and Mellish to take over the bowling.

Wilkins and Gunn protested at once.

"You can't put those silly chumps on to bowl, Grundy!" said Wilkins, aghast. "What about Gunn and myself?"

"No need to put our best bowlers on," said Grundy. "Dash it all, we don't want the match to be a giddy farce. We must give these fags a chance to collect a few runs. They'd all be skittled out for ducks-eggs against our best bowlers. I'll give you and Gunn a turn with the ball if it becomes necessary; but there's no fear of that."



Dicky Nugent tightened his grip on the ball and took a run. His arm swung over, and the ball came speeding towards the wicket like a live thing. Grundy shut his eyes, and made a tremendous swipe. His bat swept backwards through the air, and there was a fiendish yell from Gatty who was keeping wicket. "Yaroooh!" (See page 16.)

Grundy then positioned his men in the field. And Dicky Nugent took his guard, and prepared to receive the first ball of the match.

Mellish was the bowler. He sent down the best ball he knew, but Mellish's best was not very brilliant. It was, indeed, a very feeble delivery, and Dicky Nugent jumped out to meet it, with a confident grin.

Crack!

The ball went speeding away to the leg-boundary.

"Four!" gasped Wilkins.

"That's all right," said Grundy. "We'll give 'em a few boundaries to start with. The poor little beggars need a bit of encouragement."

The first over yielded thirteen runs to the enterprising Dicky Nugent. It was sorry stuff that Mellish sent down, and Dicky fairly revelled in it.

The bowling of Mellish, however, was positively brilliant by comparison with the bowling of Baggy Trimble.

The first ball that Baggy delivered stopped dead half way up the pitch. And there was a roar from the onlookers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you think you're playing marbles, Baggy?"

Dicky Nugent walked down the pitch, and batted the ball back to Trimble.

"Try again, old top!" he said encouragingly.

Trimble's second venture was even more comical than the first. But Kildare of the Sixth didn't think it comical. The ball shot off at a tangent, and came into hard and painful contact with Kildare's ear.

The captain of St. Jim's fairly danced with anguish.

"You—you dangerous imbecile!" he roared. "If it wasn't for the fact that Mr. Linton and Grundy's uncle are looking on, I'd cuff your fat head! I order you to take Trimble off after this over, Grundy!"

Grundy frowned.

"I'm skipper of this team, Kildare, and I'm taking orders from nobody!" he said.

Kildare looked grim.

"You'd better obey me," he said, "or I shall come down heavily after the match."

"Oh, very well!" said Grundy. "You can take over from Trimble, Racke, after this over."

For the remainder of that over Kildare was careful to stand back, well out of the danger-zone. It seemed to be Baggy Trimble's policy, when bowling, to hit everything but the wicket.

Meanwhile, the score mounted merrily.

Dicky Nugent and Gatty went great guns, flogging the feeble bowling to all parts of the field.

Even Grundy grew alarmed at length, when the score reached thirty for no wicket. He signalled to Wilkins and Gunn.

"We've given these fags quite enough liberties," he said. "Skittle them out, and sharp about it."

But Dicky Nugent and his fellow-fag refused to be skittled out. Wilkins and Gunn were moderately good bowlers, and they bowled their very hardest. But the Greyfriars fags were well set now. They fairly collared the bowling, and the score rose by leaps and bounds.

Uncle Grundy, looking on, seemed quite perplexed.

"I cannot congratulate my nephew on his choice of players," he said. "Why does he not go on to bowl himself, I wonder?"

"I cannot say," replied Mr. Linton.

As a matter of fact, Grundy wanted badly to bowl. He felt sure that he could have broken that stubborn partnership between Dicky Nugent and Gatty. He felt equally confident that he could have skittled out the remainder of the Greyfriars fags like rabbits. But Kildare flatly refused to allow Grundy to bowl.

Grundy fumed and protested.

"I consider you're acting very high-handedly, Kildare!" he said. "Why can't I bowl, I should like to know? I'm a deadly bowler!"

"You are," agreed Kildare. "Knox tells me that you are the most deadly and dangerous bowler at St. Jim's. But you're not too dangerous to the batsmen. It's the fellows standing around you who are in danger. There will be some broken heads if you start to bowl; and I flatly forbid it!"

So the attack had to be left in the hands of Wilkins and Gunn. They did their best, but the Greyfriars fags refused to be beaten.

With the score at sixty, Gatty mistimed the ball, and spooned up a simple catch to Skimpole. But that bright youth was not looking out for catches. He was still trying to think of an African quadruped in twelve letters.

Skimmy stood gazing dreamily into space through his big spectacles. And the ball landed plump on the top of his cranium.

"Yaroooh!" yelled Skimpole.

"Well caught, Skimmy!"

Grundy bestowed the glare of a basilisk upon the genius of the Shell.

"Why don't you pay attention, you frabjous dummy?" he roared. "You ought to have caught that one!"

"Ow! I did catch it!" groaned Skimpole. "It has given a severe shock to my cerebrum! I wish you would ask Gatty not to strike the ball in this direction."

"W-w-what?" gasped Grundy.

"You see, I happen to be working out a problem, and the sudden and unexpected arrival of a cricket-ball is apt to disturb one's train of thought. I am endeavouring to think of an African quadruped in twelve letters—"

"You—you—" spluttered Grundy wrathfully. "If you don't give Cross Word puzzles a miss, and pay attention to the cricket, I'll jolly well slay you!"

The game was resumed, and the score rapidly approached the hundred. The ground was encircled by grinning spectators. The only persons who were not grinning were Mr. Linton and Uncle Grundy. They were amazed and angry. They had fully expected the Greyfriars fags to be skittled out for a small score; yet the opening pair were still together, and they seemed quite capable of staying together till the crack o' doom.

When the hundred was hoisted, however, Dicky Nugent and Gatty started to take risks. They ran out recklessly to meet the bowling, they sneaked runs with daring adroitness, and they deliberately gave chances to the fieldsmen—chances which, needless to state, went begging.

On one occasion Grundy made a desperate effort to run Dicky Nugent out. He snatched up the ball while the batsmen were running between wickets, and hurled it in with all his force. But Grundy's aim was slightly erratic. The ball missed the wicket by yards, and travelled at full speed to the boundary. Grundy had made his opponents a present of four runs.

The next moment Skimpole came rushing up to Grundy with flushed face and gleaming eyes.

"Hippopotamus!" he exclaimed.

"Eh?" gasped Grundy.

"Hippopotamus!" repeated Skimpole.

Grundy fairly exploded. This was the last straw. Pelion piled upon Ossa, so to speak. Grundy had certainly acted clumsily in hurling the ball to the boundary; but to be called a hippopotamus by Skimpole, of all people. It was past all endurance.

Grundy shot out a brawny arm and seized the unfortunate Skimmy by the collar, and shook him till his teeth rattled.

"Ow, ow, ow!" panted Skimpole. "Leggo, you dreadful hooligan! Help! Rescue!"

"I'll teach you to call me a hippopotamus!" hooted Grundy.

"I wasn't! I didn't! I was trying to tell you that I'd found the African quadruped in twelve letters."

Grundy let go of Skimpole as if he had been red-hot.

"Sorry!" he gasped. "No, I'm not, though. You deserved that shaking for working out silly Cross Word puzzles during a cricket match. Hallo! What's happening?"

Dicky Nugent and Gatty had left the wickets, and were strolling towards the pavilion.

"We've declared!" called Dicky over his shoulder. "A hundred and twenty for no wicket is good enough to be going on with, I think."

Grundy flushed crimson. Even he realised the humiliation of the position. Not a single wicket had been taken, and the Greyfriars fags had declared their innings closed.

Grundy's eleven were covered with shame and confusion. With burning cheeks and downcast eyes, they followed the Greyfriars batsmen to the pavilion.

A mighty cheer rang out over the playing-fields. And there was quite a storm of hand-clapping. But the applause was not intended for the home side.

Dicky Nugent and Gatty had covered themselves with glory, and the cheering rang like music in their ears. But as for Alfred Grundy and his followers they fervently wished that the earth would open and swallow them up.

CHAPTER 10.

The Fall of the Mighty!

"**R**EALLY, George, I am ashamed of you!"

Thus Uncle Grundy.

"I came here this afternoon to witness an exhibition of exhilarating cricket," Uncle Grundy went on. "I have certainly witnessed such an exhibition—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 901.

not on your part, however, but on the part of your diminutive opponents. They have made a laughing-stock of your eleven. They have covered you with ridicule. It is disgraceful! Have you nothing to say for yourself?"

"It's all right, uncle—" began Grundy.

"It's not all right!" roared Uncle Grundy. "It is far from all right. It is all wrong!"

Uncle Grundy was annoyed. Not mildly annoyed, but very considerably annoyed. And with good reason. The worthy gentleman had hoped to see Grundy distinguish himself, and to reap some reflected glory himself in consequence. As it was, Grundy had made such a ghastly mess of things that it was impossible for his uncle to point the finger of pride at him, and say, "Behold, my nephew! Is not he a wonderful cricketer?"

Grundy fidgeted uncomfortably under his uncle's wrathful gaze.

"Of course, uncle, we had to let those fags make a decent score," he murmured. "If we hadn't the match would have been a farce."

"It is sufficiently a farce already!" snapped Uncle Grundy. "I am deeply disappointed in you, George, and so is your Form master."

"I am, indeed!" said Mr. Linton.

George Alfred Grundy looked very crestfallen as he turned away. But he quickly brightened up.

There was still a chance to make amends for past lapses. Grundy's eleven had not yet batted.

"When I start hitting sixes and knocking tiles off the roof of the pavilion it will put uncle in a better humour," murmured Grundy. "The old boy will simply love to see me flogging the bowling. True, it will only be fags' bowling, but that's all the better, in a way. I sha'n't have to worry about guarding my wicket. Fags never bowl straight."

"I say, Grundy!" Baggy Trimble hailed his skipper from the doorway of the pavilion. "You're putting me in first, I suppose?"

"Something wrong with your supposer, then!" growled Grundy. "Get your pads on, Wilkins, and we'll go in and knock spots off the fags' bowling!"

Keen as ever, Dicky Nugent led his men on to the field. And presently Grundy and Wilkins, the opening pair of batsmen, emerged from the pavilion.

Monty Lowther sprinted across to intercept Grundy, and solemnly offered him an egg-cup. Grundy stared at it.

"What's this for?" he demanded.

"To accommodate your duck's egg when you get it!" said Lowther sweetly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky rotter!" roared Grundy, his cheeks flaming. "Stand aside!"

And he made a furious lunge at Lowther with his bat.

The agile Monty skipped aside out of danger, and Grundy marched on to the wicket. He took long, majestic strides, and Wilkins was obliged to jog-trot in order to keep pace with him.

Dicky Nugent gripped the round, red ball in his right hand and placed his field. Dicky was looking very grim and determined. He had nothing to worry about, really. His side was in a strong position. But the leader of the Greyfriars fags meant to leave nothing to chance.

There was a delay of several moments while Grundy walked up and down the pitch, patting down the turf with his bat. Grundy had seen County players do this, and he considered it looked very impressive. He brought his bat down on the turf with a series of resounding whacks.

"Trying to get through to Australia, Grundy?" asked Gatty of Greyfriars.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do buck up, for goodness' sake!" said Dicky Nugent impatiently. "Can't you see I'm thirsting to take your wicket?"

It was not until he had examined every inch of the playing-pitch, and removed every lump of dirt from the surface, that Grundy was satisfied. Then he swaggered to the wicket and requested the umpire to give him centre.

Grundy was ready at last.

Dicky Nugent tightened his grip on the ball and took his run. His arm swung over, and the ball came sweeping towards the wicket like a live thing.

Grundy shut his eyes and made a tremendous swipe. His bat swept backwards through the air, and there was a fendish yell from Gatty, who was keeping wicket. He received a crack on the jaw which bowled him over like a ninepin.

"Yooooop!" yelled Gatty.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go easy, Grundy!" said Kildare. "Don't start maiming your opponents!"

That first ball had come within an ace of taking Grundy's wicket. He had missed it completely, and it had shaved the off stump.

"Go easy, Grundy, for goodness' sake!" implored Wilkins

at the other end. "Play yourself in before you start flogging!"

But Wilkins knew that such advice was wasted upon Grundy. The latter took advice from no one.

The responsibility for saving the game would rest upon the shoulders of Wilkins and Gunn. They were a couple of sound bats, and they were good for fifty apiece—barring accidents. None of the other members of Grundy's eleven were likely to make many runs.

But calamity, swift and sure, overtook the unhappy Wilkins.

Grundy made another terrific swipe at his second ball. But the ball escaped scot-free practically. It was the turf that suffered. Grundy ploughed up a whole heap of it, and a lump of earth flew up and struck point in the face. As for the ball it merely rolled a couple of yards.

"Run!" roared Grundy, pelting down the pitch.

"No, no!" yelled Wilkins. "Go back, you duffer!"

But Grundy, who was apparently under the impression that he had hit the ball a terrific distance, came on.

Wilkins ran in desperation, hoping against hope that the fag who threw the ball in would miss the wicket. But the Greyfriars fags were deadly shots. Before Wilkins could scramble home the wicket was down, and a confident appeal went up.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

Certainly it was out—very much out. Of that, as the gentleman in the "Gondoliers" observed, there was no shadow of doubt, no possible probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever!

Wilkins gave Grundy a savage look as he turned to go.

"You—you howling dummy!" he spluttered. "You burbling jabbercock! There was no run there!"

"Yes, there was—quite an easy run," said Grundy. "Why didn't you shift your lazy bones, instead of standing still like a graven image?"

"Oh, you—you—" panted Wilkins.

"Don't you call me names, George Wilkins!" said Grundy sternly. "Just you treat your skipper with respect, or I'll chuck you out of my eleven!"

"You needn't trouble!" snorted Wilkins. "I'll chuck myself out, with pleasure!"

And he strode wrathfully away to the pavilion.

Gunn took the place of Wilkins at the wicket. But he didn't stay long. Grundy promptly ran him out, and he shared the fate of the unfortunate Wilkins.

Gunn gave his skipper a withering look.

"You dithering dot!" he hissed. "If I were to brain you with my bat, it would be justifiable homicide."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gunn's expression was positively Hunnish as he went back to join Wilkins in the pavilion.

Two wickets were down—the only two wickets that really mattered—and not a single run had been scored!

The onlookers—with two notable exceptions—were almost weeping with merriment. Monty Lowther had thrown himself down in the grass, and was kicking up his heels in a wild paroxysm of glee.

Uncle Grundy and Mr. Linton, however, sat grim and silent. Neither could trust himself to speak.

Gore came in to join Grundy at the wicket. Grundy called to him.

"Just keep your end up," he said, "and leave the hitting to me. Wilkins and Gunn have gone—they were too slow for words—and now I've got to carry the team on my shoulders, I suppose. I guessed that was what it would be—a one-man show."

"Look here," said Gore. "If you run me out, I'll slaughter you on the spot!"

But Gore escaped the tragic fate of Wilkins and Gunn. He met his doom in a different manner. Bolsover minor, of Greyfriars, caught him on the boundary-line before he had scored. It was a spectacular effort on young Bolsover's part, and it was cheered to the echo.

Three wickets down—and still not a run scored!

Grundy still remained—the hope of his side, as it were. But a perverse Fate was already setting the stage for his downfall.

When Grundy faced the bowling again, it was with a do-or-die expression on his rugged face. He ran half-way down the pitch to meet the ball, but he missed it completely, lost his balance, and turned a somersault, landing in a sprawling and ungainly heap on the turf.

The ball sped on its mission of destruction; and the next instant the stumps were spread-eagled.

Gatty, behind the wicket, danced a Highland fling.

"How's that?" he chortled.

"Not out, surely?" gasped Grundy, struggling to his feet.

"Sorry to dash your hopes," said the umpire, "but it looks very much like 'out' to me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy's face was a study as he started on the long, long

trail back to the pavilion. The cup of his humiliation was full and overflowing. Four wickets had fallen; the scoreboard was still blank; and Grundy himself was among the slain. He almost tottered back to the pavilion; and Monty Lowther again waylaid him with the egg-cup.

"You'll need this, after all, Grundy!" he said.

"Leave him alone, Monty!" called Tom Merry. "Poor old Grundy will have quite enough to suffer, as it is. Don't pile on the agony!"

Grundy quickened his pace, and fairly bolted into the pavilion. He did not dare to meet the accusing, reproachful glance of his Uncle Grundy, or the equally accusing gaze of Mr. Linton.

The master of the Shell realised, at last, that he had been mistaken about Grundy.

That mighty hit at the nets, which had so impressed Mr. Linton, was now proved to be nothing but a fluke. Grundy was no cricketer. His recent sorry display had proved that up to the hilt. And the master of the Shell, remembering that he had supported Grundy's claims to the cricket captaincy, now felt extremely foolish.

The farcical match was quickly over. Grundy's Eleven compiled the anything but grand total of 6 runs—and 4 of those were byes. Of the other 2, Racke and Mellish claimed 1 apiece.

Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, had turned up in time to see the final rout. And they joined in the laughter and cheers which greeted the Greyfriars fags as they came off the field.

"Oh, what a game!" sobbed Monty Lowther. "Where's the school historian? He'll have to put this match on record, for the benefit of posterity!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If Grundy doesn't resign from the captaincy after this, I shall be mightily surprised," said Tom Merry.

"Of course he'll resign!" said Manners. "If he doesn't do it voluntarily, he'll be made to!"

Already a crowd of fellows had gathered in front of the pavilion, and they were yelling to the discomfited Grundy, who was hiding his diminished head inside.

"Resign!"

"Call yourself a skipper, Grundy?"

"Come and show yourself, and announce your resignation!"

Grundy realised that there was nothing for it but to obey. He would not be tolerated as cricket captain another five minutes. Tom Merry, who had finished second to Grundy at the election, would have to be restored to the captaincy.

It was gall and wormwood to George Alfred Grundy to have to announce his resignation in public. But he swallowed his pride, and appeared for a brief moment in the doorway of the pavilion.

"I resign!"

The words seemed to be dragged unwillingly from Grundy's lips. And his resignation was greeted with laughter and cheers.

"The King is dead—long live the King!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "Tom Merry's skipper again, and everything in the garden is lovely! Hurrah!"

And the cheer, taken up on every side, rang out over the St. Jim's playing-fields.

GET THESE NEW NUMBERS OF
"THE SCHOOLBOYS'
OWN LIBRARY"!

No. 3. "THE GREYFRIARS BUSINESS
MAN!"

A rollicking story of Harry Wharton & Co.,
featuring Fisher T. Fish, the "get-rich-quick"
American junior,

and

No. 4. "THE FIGHTING FORM OF
ST. FRANK'S!"

A powerful story of school life at St. Frank's,
introducing Willy Handforth, the boy who
wouldn't be bullied.

On Sale at all Newsagents. Price 4d.

CHAPTER 11. The Real Thing!

AFTER the pantomime came the drama. In other words, the comic cricket match between Grundy's Eleven and the Greyfriars fags was followed by a really thrilling struggle between Friars and Saints.

Tom Merry had very little time in which to select his team. But he raised a very capable eleven at short notice. And he found places in the side for Wilkins and Gunn, to compensate them for their misfortune in the previous match.

Uncle Grundy's afternoon was not wasted, after all. For he witnessed a splendid encounter between the rival schools. Greyfriars batted first, and they gave a sparkling exhibition, putting together a total of 144 runs, in spite of Fatty Wynn's fine bowling for St. Jim's.

It was realised that St. Jim's would have to fight hard for victory. Not only would they need to make a lot of runs, but they would need to make them quickly. It was a fight against the clock, as well as against the Greyfriars bowlers.

Tom Merry and Talbot laid an excellent foundation; and Jack Blake and Figgins and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy carried on the good work.

But it was left to Wilkins and Gunn to do the actual match-winning. They were the last pair in, and 24 runs were still wanted when they came together.

The Greyfriars bowlers moved heaven and earth to capture the last wicket, and the fieldsmen were on tiptoe. But Wilkins and Gunn offered a stout resistance, and on the stroke of seven o'clock, when stumps were due to be drawn, Wilkins made the winning hit, and he and Gunn were carried shoulder-high from the field.

George Alfred Grundy had watched the match from the seat in front of the pavilion, where he was sandwiched between his Uncle Grundy and Mr. Linton. Both gentlemen had been very annoyed with Grundy, at first; but in the excitement of the game, they had gradually forgotten their annoyance.

Grundy was one of the first to congratulate Tom Merry on the St. Jim's victory; and this action pleased Uncle Grundy a good deal. It showed that Grundy, with all his faults and conceits, was a sportsman at heart. He played the game in one sense, if he could not play it in the other! Some fellows had expected Grundy to sit sulking in the pavilion for the remainder of the afternoon, like Achilles in his tent. But that was not Grundy's way. He had certainly felt a bit sore, at first, in losing both the match and the captaincy; but his vexation did not last long.

And there was another thing about Grundy that his uncle secretly admired. He was not full of excuses for his defeat. He did not pretend that the wicket had favoured the fags, or that he himself had been the victim of bad luck. On

the contrary, he admitted that his team had been deservedly beaten.

True, Grundy still harboured the delusion that he was a good cricketer. But then, we all have our delusions, as Uncle Grundy remarked to Mr. Linton.

Grundy was agreeably surprised to find his uncle treating him quite amiably, when the cricket was over. He had hardly dared to hope that Uncle Grundy would pardon him for his appalling display of cricket. He had, in fact, expected the worthy gentleman to depart in a huff from St. Jim's.

But Uncle Grundy did no such thing.

"I think, George," he said, "that I will invite all the cricketers, of both schools, to a little celebration at the Cafe Royal, in Wayland."

"Good!" said Grundy. "Do you mean everybody, uncle, or just the two winning teams?"

"Everybody!" said Uncle Grundy, with a majestic sweep of his arm. "Winners and losers, too."

"My hat! Forty-four will be rather a crowd."

Certainly, such a large army of cricketers would severely tax the accommodation at the Cafe Royal. Moreover, the bill would be considerable. But Uncle Grundy didn't mind. The second of the two cricket matches had put him in such a genial frame of mind that he would have treated the world had his resources run to it.

A big charabanc was ordered by telephone from Wayland, and when it arrived at St. Jim's, it was promptly boarded by forty-four flannelled figures. Willing hands then assisted Uncle Grundy to clamber aboard; and it was a very merry party that went whirling out of gates.

Uncle Grundy soon showed that he did not do things by halves.

It was a feast of the gods that he provided at the Cafe Royal. And Friars and Saints sat together round the tables, and fought their battles over again.

There were bright faces in the lighted restaurant; and one of the brightest was that of George Alfred Grundy, who was fast forgetting the trials and tribulations of the afternoon. Grundy sat between his uncle and Tom Merry, and his manner towards Tom was quite friendly.

"I must say you're a better cricketer than I gave you credit for, Merry," said Grundy. "That was a top-notch innings you played against Greyfriars. Do you know, I don't believe you'll need any tuition from me, after all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I seem to have lost my form," Grundy went on. "I'll admit that I don't deserve to be captain of cricket, on to-day's showing. But when I get my form back, p'raps I shall have another shot at the captaincy. And I shall count on the fellows who voted for me last time to back me up again."

But Grundy was likely to count on those voters in vain. He did not know that they had merely voted for him in jest. Nobody, excepting Grundy's own studymates, would ever have voted for him in earnest.

"Well, dear boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "nobody can say that Gwunday hasn't taken his downfall in the twee sportin' spivit. Some fellows would have gone about like beahs with soah heads for days aftahwards; but Gwunday seems quite mewwy an' bwright. I believe he must be a philosophah!"

It was a right royal celebration that took place in Wayland. Speeches were made, and toasts were honoured; and after the feasting came the partings.

Harry Wharton & Co. and Dicky Nugent & Co. had to hurry off in order to catch their train back to Greyfriars. And their riyals and chums of St. Jim's saw them off at the station.

Uncle Grundy departed shortly afterwards in his two-seater. He shook hands quite affectionately with his nephew before he left, and he smuggled a crisp and rustling "fiver" into George Alfred's palm. It was a joyful surprise for Grundy, who had expected more kicks than pence, so to speak.

"Thanks awfully, uncle!" he said. "I hope you'll get a better report about me at the end of this term. I mean to take up cricket really seriously. And I shall slog hard in the Form-room, too."

Uncle Grundy smiled.

"I am glad to have that assurance from you, my boy," he said. "You are, at present, rather backward both in class-work and athletics. But you are a sportsman at heart and in spirit—which is the main thing. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, uncle!"

The car glided through the school gateway, and was swallowed up in the darkness beyond. And George Alfred Grundy turned and walked back to the House, feeling that life was well worth living, after all!

THE END.

(There will be another exciting story of Tom Merry & Co. next week, entitled: "THE THIRD FORM ADVENTURERS!" By Martin Clifford. Don't miss it, chums, whatever you do!")

BOOKS OF SPORT AND ADVENTURE.

Ask your newsagent to show you these books!

THE BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY.

- No. 761.—**THE ROTTER OF THE ROVERS.**
A Splendid Story of the Footer Field, introducing DICK DARE.
By RANDOLPH RYLE.
- No. 762.—**THAT TERRIBLE TERM!**
A Bubblicking Summer Story of Schoolboy Fun and Adventure.
By SIDNEY DREW.
- No. 763.—**DON DARELL ON THE TURF.**
A Magnificent Yarn of Racing and Adventure on the Turf.
By VICTOR NELSON.
- No. 764.—**THE GADDIES OF ST. GUTHBERT'S.**
A Novel and Exciting Sports Story of a Boy Golfer's Career.
By A. S. HARDY.

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY.

- No. 379.—**LIMITED LIABILITY.**
A Story of Detective Work, introducing Sexton Blake and Tinker.
- No. 380.—**BY ORDER OF THE KING.**
A Magnificent Tale of Mystery and Detective Adventure in England and ABYSSINIA.
- No. 381.—**THE MYSTERY OF THE POT-BANK.**
A Romance of the Poteries and the Peak District.
- No. 382.—**THE TRAINER'S SECRET.**
A Fascinating Story of the DERBY, featuring Sexton Blake and Tinker.

THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY.

- No. 3.—**THE GREYFRIARS BUSINESS MAN.**
A Mirth-provoking Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.
By FRANK RICHARDS.
- No. 4.—**THE FIGHTING FORM OF ST. FRANK'S.**
A Ripping Yarn of School Life at St. Frank's, featuring Willy Handforth, the Boy Who Wouldn't be Bullied. By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

Now on Sale.

Price Fourpence Each!

THE TWO AERO SLEUTHS ARE ON TOP AGAIN!

Lord Weirdale finds that the Two Aero Chums are
"all there," in spite of their youthful appearance!

The FLYING WRAITH

BY
LESTER BIDSTON.

Another Thrilling Adventure of "Live-Wire" Lindsay and his staunch chum, Jerry O'Gorman.



CHAPTER 1. Called North!

"SURE, bhoys, I'm hopin' ye haven't forgotten th' monkey-nuts?" Jerry demanded anxiously.

The half-dozen alert journalists from Fleet Street laughed, but shook their heads. One, a journealese lion who trailed the world for bits of copy, turned twinkling eyes on the Irish part of the Lindman pair.

"It's said that the O'Gormans dropped their monkey-tricks and became Irish kings," he chuckled, adding wickedly: "The family thoughts still hanker round the old diet, eh, lad?"

Jerry joined in the laugh against himself.

"Faith, an' there's worse things than a bag of monkey-nuts!" he said cheerfully. "But I was beggin' favours f'me lean-lookin' pal in the cage yonder."

The ink-merchants turned interested glances on Lyle Lindsay. They had persistently pestered the famous "Lindman" chums with demands for interviews, until, for the sake of a quiet life, Lyle and Jerry had invited them to a private show in which the selenium beam and the Linnet were billed to appear.

The aero two-seater had already been examined with absorbed interest. It seemed such a tiny machine to have performed the marvels credited to it that the visitors began to wonder if an obscure joke was being played—a suspicion that strengthened immensely when Jerry pointed out his chum.

Entirely enclosed in a "bee-hive" cage of sparkling wire-mesh, Lyle Lindsay was seated in a swivel chair, a four-valve transmitting set facing him on a small table. Strangely enough, a three-foot porcelain-coated telescope reared high over the table, its whole length holding a snout-like arrangement of golden strands that terminated in a microphone four inches below the scope's eye-piece. Round this quaint apparatus the journalists ringed, their faces so frowningly doubtful that Lyle laughed, and offered a word of explanation.

"You are wondering what connection a telescope has with wireless, gentlemen?" he began. "You will perhaps

understand when I explain that Jerry is about to drive the Linnet skyward, and that the mere fact of keeping this eye-piece focused on him is sufficient to turn the wireless beam in the exact direction I want it. It's quite a minor experiment, of course, but I ask you to remember that we are working on very low wave-lengths, with a comparatively weak set." He adjusted his headphones, and indicated other pairs that occupied six chairs outside his cage. "Now, if you'll put the phones on your heads and yourselves in the seats, we'll carry on. Get busy, Jay!"

Risks were all in their day's work, else the visitors might well have hesitated. The bus stood scarce ten yards away, its nose pointed straight at the corner of the back garden they occupied. They watched Lyle flood his valves with power; they saw Jerry vault into his seat and start the plane's wireless going. Then they forgot doubts and fears in the fascination of that which followed.

There was Jerry lounging lazily in the machine, the forefinger and thumb of his right hand resting lightly on the joystick. They heard Lyle whisper "Contact," and they heard Jerry's drawled reply. Then they became conscious of a thin, shrill hum in their phones. Then, to their amazement, the polished propeller began to whirl without visible cause, the bus wheeled smoothly over six yards of turf, and as Jerry negligently moved the stick towards his chest the Linnet whizzed over their heads with scarce a sound to mark its passing!

"Great heavens! An aero self-starter!"
"A noiseless engine!"
"A machine that jumps without a run!"

These, and like exclamations, broke from the astounded journalists as quite a number of Lindman inventions were revealed in a single instant. But Lyle was watching the Linnet's rise, and briefly warned his guests to do the same.

It was a flight worth following—an exhibition of dare-devil chivvying on Jerry's part, a revelation of speed-climbing that left the London onlookers speechless with admiration.

Truly, as the bus streaked into the blue, it looked less linnet than hawk. Straight as a bullet it sped, its slight rotary movement barely noticeable, its

speed so swift that it became a tiny black spot in the sunshine in the drawing of six successive breaths.

Until it appeared the size of a midge Jerry maintained its hurtling fifty degrees rise. Then, distinct as though he spoke at their side, the aviator's voice vibrated the visitors' phones.

"Ten thousand feet in less'n five minutes. Not so bad, old shellbacks—what, what!" he called. "Faith, it's exclusive noos you're huntin', so I'll be afther tellin' ye there's a fine view from here, an' it's not a bit crowded! Hallo, Lylesey!"

"Same to you, old dear!" Lyle murmured.

"I'm for Birmingham," Jerry continued. "Suppose ye tune down to ten, and let's be hearin' how long th' ould selenium finder will keep us in contact?"

"It's a stiff test," Lyle answered. "But carry on. Ten it is—"

"No, no, no! Keep on thirty, and listen to me, Lindmans!"

The imperative order, coming in a strange voice, startled the chums almost as much as it did their Fleet Street friends.

"Phwat's the game?" Jerry demanded. "Ye're interruptin' a private seance. Gerrou, ye omadhaun!"

But Lyle, ten thousand feet below, quickly altered his "directionals" and bent closer to the microphone.

"Hallo! That you, Dixon?" he called. "Anything the matter?"

"I'm afraid so," came the answer.

"Sir William has just completed a long-distance call, ordering me to get in touch with you. Fortunately, you had asked me to listen-in to test your low-power transmission from here, so I was lucky enough to pick you up the moment the chief rang off."

"And what's Sir William's trouble?" Lyle asked.

"He doesn't say," Dixon replied. "But he wants you fellows to hurry north to Weirdale Castle with as little delay as possible. And, by the way, if that hungry newspaper crowd is on the spot, kindly say this tit-bit is not for publication."

"All a-right," Lyle answered. "Understood. Message ends." He turned the beam almost vertical. "Got that, Jay?"

"Bedad, I did an' all!" Jerry yelled excitedly. "Ring off, Lylesey. I'm coming down!"

Lyle snatched the phones from his head, switched off, and stepped out of the wired cage.

"Sorry, gentlemen, but that kills our experimental afternoon," he said. "The voice came from Inspector Dixon, of the Yard—an enthusiastic assistant in our beam tests."

"I recognised the voice—the same Dixon who was shot an hour before you crashed Ultima," Thorpe of the "Gazette" said. "I also happen to know that Assistant-Commissioner Mann has gone forth on a mysterious, highly important mission."

The remaining scribes looked at Lyle appealingly.

"Chance of a lifetime, if only Mr. Lindsay will allow us to travel with him!" one suggested.

"I'm travelling with Jerry, and the Linnet only holds two," answered Lyle pointedly.

"Nonsense, Graham!" Thorpe said sharply. "We cannot betray a confidence—and Dixon has told us plainly enough to keep out of it for the present."

Then Jerry created a diversion by skimming about four feet overhead and touching down with barely a two-yard run.

"Roust your kit out, whilst I load up wid juice, pard," he called: "You lads of the village can help by slewin' her snout round and treatin' her like mammie's precious, priceless, toothless one."

So helpful did the gang of amateur mechanics prove that the Linnet soared noiselessly into the blue again in exactly six minutes. A wave of hands, then the good men from the street of ink turned to the storing of Lyle's wireless gadgets, and the Linnet turned its nose in the direction of a five-hundred-mile flight!

CHAPTER 2.

A Weird Mystery!

THREE hours later, the graceful Linnet was skimming the stretch of Sutherland coast that lies between Brora and Helmsdale.

The northern dusk, already deepening to dark, heightened the desolation of a sealine that is perhaps the loneliest in all Britain. Mile after mile of smooth sand, broken only by hideous scars of red rock, lay as deserted as though some dread visitation had swept life clean away.

"Faith, it's cowl'd an' stiff an' starvin' I am," complained Jerry. "Shure, it's the end av the world we've come to, an' I've a shivery feelin' it's where the bad banshees come from."

"It's hardly as lively as Piccadilly Circus on a Saturday night," Lyle conceded. He switched on the light that lay behind a transparent roller map. "But Roth's the next village on the journey—and the last, for Weirdale stands just a mile beyond it."

"Bedad, the villagers'll be aslape, an' we'll never see it, if it gets much darker," grouned Jerry.

"We're on it now," answered Lyle sharply. "Cut over the sea. We mustn't advertise our arrival."

But never a soul did they sight until they planed gently down beside the black walls of a huge stone building; then, from the heavy shadows, two forms abruptly materialised.

"Keep your hand from that starter, my lad!" a gruff voice ordered. "We've got you covered—jump down and explain your presence here!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 901.

"Welcome home!" Jerry said satirically. He kept his hands clear of the stick; but, with his foot, he touched a lever that brought the plane's search-light into being and revealed two burly individuals with automatics most ominously pointed in their direction.

"Put that light out!" the same fellow yelled furiously. "Switch it off and get down quickly!"

Lyle chuckled. "Easy, Murdock," he said. "You covered us with compliments, not guns, when we met you in Dixon's parlour last week. Why the change, old dear?"

"The Lindmans!" Inspector Murdock gasped. "But—why, lads, it's barely three hours since the Chief phoned the Yard about you!"

"Long enough for our Linnet to hop over a yard or two," Lyle laughed.

"But what's the game, inspector? Scotland Yard staging a new Jacobean plot? Or perhaps you've decided to move headquarters out of the back alley you're housed in?"

"You'll find it's a game minus a joke, Lindsay," Murdock answered seriously. "You'll appreciate the game it is when I tell you there's a score of us keeping Sir William company in this neighbourhood. But deaden those lights, boys, I'll send word along that you've arrived."

Five minutes later the chums were admitted to the grim old castle, their curiosity and surprise increasing at sight of an armed guard round the gates, and the glimpse they obtained of sentries patrolling the walls. But not a word of explanation was given to them, and it was a bewildered pair that trod cold stone corridors and finally entered a big oak-beamed room in which four men sat in earnest conclave.

Of the four, one proved to be Sir William Mann. With a word of thanks for their quick response to his call, he introduced them to the others.

"Gentlemen, the young men who have done amazing work in the past," he said. "Permit me, lads—Lord Weirdale, of Weirdale, the Hon. Rupert Pallister, and Commander Carruthers."

The chums glanced at the strangely-assorted trio with interest. Weirdale, a Scottish lord of the old school, as hard and grim as his own granite castle; Pallister, a famous figure in English politics, and, at the moment, a high official of the Admiralty; and Carruthers, an ex-Navy man whose inventive genius had made his name a household word. Big names, but not big enough to unduly impress our hard-bitten pair.

Nor did the chums impress old Weirdale apparently. His shaggy grey brows almost touched in a ferocious frown as he glared at the youthful newcomers.

"Um—tender chicks to bring into this sort of business, Mr. Commissioner," he grumbled.

Mann smiled.

"About as tender as hungry wild-cats when they really get going," he answered easily. "Pull chairs up, lads, and I'll explain why we've turned Weirdale Castle into a fortress." The whimsical smile lingered on his lips as he indicated Carruthers. "This person is responsible for the hullabaloo," he continued.

"He has invented a species of flying fish, a three-in-one kind of vessel that is submarine one minute, surface ship the next, and leaping frog a moment later. Naturally, the nations of the earth would pay any price and go to any lengths to get this wonderful thing; so we've come to lonely Weirdale to stage secret trials."

"And I'll stake my name you could not have chosen a better place," snapped Weirdale. "When you begged the use of my dockyard, Pallister, I didn't expect an army of policemen to accom-

pany you, nor a couple of whippersnappers like this to be entertained." He glared ferociously at the commissioner. "As for you, Mann, I suppose you'd fire half your fatheads if they didn't find some silly mare's nest to justify their holiday."

Fortunately, Sir William had known the choleric aristocrat too long to be upset over a bark that seldom had a bite back of it. He merely winked his off eye at the aero chums and flattened Weirdale out with a few caustic words.

"If all my men are fools you must place Carruthers and me in the same class," he said quietly. "Either the lot of us cannot trust our own senses, or we've already established the certainty that someone is after the Flying Fish or its plans."

"Pish—imagination!" Weirdale snapped sourly. "But go on, give these boys the village gossip, then we'll be able to have dinner in peace."

"Bedad, I'll be in pieces if ye don't have it soon," Jerry whispered.

"The village gossip is to the effect that the black bat is out again, after resting for half a century," Mann explained. "There's an old superstition in Roth that a huge black bat flies hereabouts when the life of a Weirdale is in danger, and the bat has been busy lately, according to the yarns of at least a dozen Roth worthies."

"It won't lengthen or lessen my life by a day," Weirdale chuckled.

"Nor could I have taken notice of the tale, but for Carruthers' queer experience," Mann answered quietly.

"I had the Fish out last night, doing a preliminary test before the official one to-night," Carruthers explained.

"During the surface run, I could have sworn that a dark shadow flitted round and round the ship, and that twice it skimmed noiselessly overhead."

"D'you ever hear such rot, Pallister?" Weirdale snorted contemptuously.

"It certainly sounds sensational," Pallister admitted mildly. "If I didn't know you for a hard-headed man of exceptional ability, Carruthers, I would think that the village ghost gossip had made your imagination over-active."

Carruthers drummed impatient fingers on the table.

"Imagination or fact, I've a feeling that I've been watched and followed for weeks past," he answered.

"Very interesting—but it hardly explains why you called us North," Lyle suggested.

"I'm coming to that," Mann answered quickly. "This afternoon I stepped into this room, to find one of Weirdale's servants speaking into the transmitting set on yonder table. I only heard three words: 'Get them to-night!' then the fellow spotted me and closed down very quickly. He refused an explanation, and I've locked him up out of harm's way."

"Get them to-night!" Lyle repeated the words thoughtfully. "That must mean the all-important plans, Sir William." He turned to the uneasy inventor. "You've brought them with you, of course?"

"They're in the safe behind you," Carruthers answered. "If to-night's trial proves satisfactory they then become the property of the British Government."

"No chance of their being stolen beforehand?" asked Lyle.

Lord Weirdale took the doubt as a personal insult.

"Most certainly not!" he snorted. "I'd have you know, young man, that the room itself is burglar proof. It would need a charge of dynamite to break down yon door, and, for your private information, the leads of these

lattice windows are really thin steel bars, every one."

"Right-ho, sir!" Lyle agreed cheerfully, then turned to his chum. "I'd like to hear a bit more about this mysterious black bat. Fit for a stroll to the village, Jay?"

"Yes, bedad—when I've tucked a feed in its little bed," Jerry answered, winking pointedly at their touchy host.

His appeal was so definite, the hint so direct, that even Weirdale had to relax and smile. An immediate adjournment was made, the door carefully locked, then Weirdale led the way to a tuck show that satisfied even the starving Jerry.

CHAPTER 3.

The Shadowy Mystery!

BUT the chums were fated not to visit the village of Roth that night. They started from the castle with the intention, certainly, but little gusts of wind heralded a storm and warned that the Linnet must be securely pegged down.

Then Lyle had a brain-wave. "Y'know, Jay," he grumbled, "his lordship's a jolly sight too confident for my liking. If any bright spy spark has got wind of Carruthers' wonder-ship, it's the plans he's going for. I'm interested in that black bat rumour, but I'm more interested in Weirdale's study." He stood thoughtfully silent for a moment. "We've seen the inside; I wonder if we can find the outside on our own."

"It's away back of the castle," answered Jerry. "An' shure, bhoy, if the length of passages is anything to go by, t'other side's about ten minutes' walk away."

"Bit of exercise'll do you good," Lyle snapped, stepping away into the darkness.

From the moment of leaving the imposing gateway the path lay uphill. The light of their torches showed that the castle was built to form a rough square, that cliffs on one side fell sheer away to the sea, that the rear wall was closely hugged by a wood or forest of unknown size. A wild place indeed, its grim suggestion of mystery heightened by the thin wind that sang eerily through the trees.

Insensibly the chums lowered their voices to whispers. Wedged, as it were, between mighty stronghold and lonely forest, they had a most unaccustomed feeling of being puny creatures, of no account. Strange, sinister things seemed about to happen, they had a helpless sense of butting into the impalpable, of grasping at nothing and expecting to be stung.

"Haven't met any Yard men this side," Lyle said softly. "Queer, isn't it, after Sir Willie telling us he had the place patrolled."

"Quayre it is, bedad!" Jerry whispered. "Seems to me there's oojeoorums about—an' they're bboys we don't like in Oireland."

"Wish we'd brought our guns," Lyle answered. "I wouldn't mind your ooje-what-d'you-call-ums then." He grasped his pal's arm with a suddenness that made Jerry jump. "Look, there's a lighted window! We'll see what's doing, old dear."

Creeching cautiously forward, but keeping well back from the radius of light, they realised, to their surprise, that they were staring into the dining-room. The four men were still seated round the end of a long table, talking earnestly, and quite unconscious that they were overlooked. The cosy comfort of the

place sensibly increased the air of loneliness to those without, and Jerry forgot his tremors and indulged in a real Irish grouche.

"The hogs!" he muttered. "Stuffin' themselves on nuts and grapes, an' me with dithers coursin' down me back worse than a fiddle tremolo movement. B' th' ten toes of Timothy, I'll be heavin' a stone through the windy an' wakenin' them up."

"You willn't," Lyle answered, taking firm hold of his arm. "The study is three rooms farther on—the third window from this. Come on, Jay, we'll do our prospectin' while they're good and quiet."

The sixth sense that comes to most of us in times of stress warned the chums to the utmost caution. The torches remained in their pockets, they groped their way by touching clammy tree-trunks, they slithered their feet slowly over soft turf to avoid the disaster of tumbling over exposed roots.

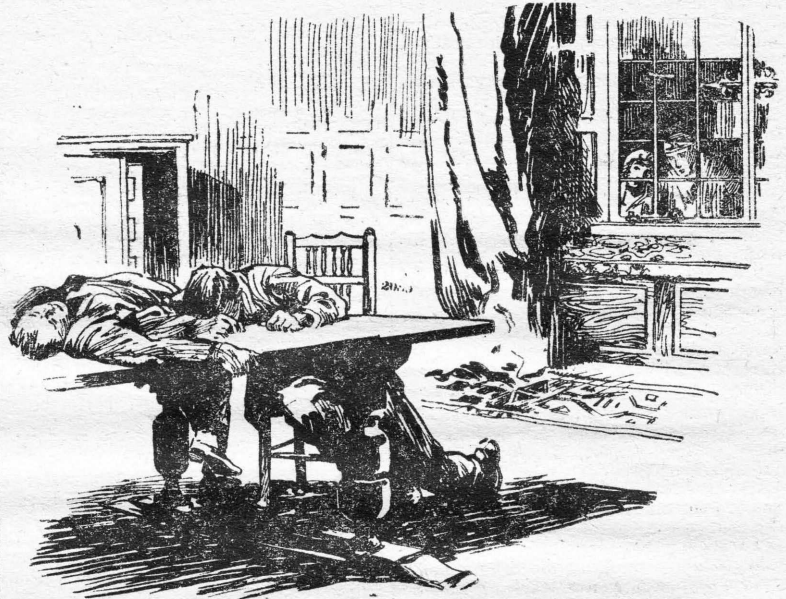
Then, from all these innumerable sounds, he picked out a regular tap, tap, tap! The thought of a woodpecker occurred to him, but he instantly abandoned the idea with a wry smile.

As Lyle had done seconds before, he now located the tap, tap as coming from the wall—from the vicinity of Weirdale's study. And his eyes, keener even than Lyle's, picked out a spreading shadow, perhaps one degree deeper than the darkness of the night.

"There's someone or something trying the study window," he whispered, overjoyed that his mind could again take hold of reality.

"I've just guessed the same," Lyle replied softly. "Cautiously now, Jay, we'll give the nightbird a shock!"

Six slow steps they took, then Jerry pitched face forward with a jolt and a yell that could have been heard a mile away. And Lyle, springing forward a moment later, echoed the yell, though from a very different cause.



Closing noiselessly in on the study window the two chums peered within. "My sainted aunt!" groaned Lindsay. "The safe door's open, and Mann and Weirdale are lying senseless across the table!" "But the window's bolted and the door's locked—and look, the key is on the outside!" said Jerry O'Gorman.

One darkened window was passed, and they were abreast the second when Lyle's grip tightened and warned Jerry to instant immobility.

"What's amiss, Lylesey?" stammered Jerry.

"H's'h!" Lyle warned. "Can't you hear something, Jay?"

Jerry knew that Lyle's super-sensitive hearing seldom played him false. He craned his neck forward, his head turned slightly sideways, and he strove to pick out any alien sound that was foreign to the night and the wind-stirred forest.

His tensed hearing registered many trifles that would have passed unnoticed at any ordinary time. Branches creaked as rhythmically as though worked by human hands. Insects called shrilly. The little animals that hunt and slay by night were heard from the dark depths behind them. Away off a screech owl swooped and made its terrifying call. It seemed as though deadly forces were converging on Jerry to his destruction. It needed all his proved iron nerve and indomitable will to prevent him from forcibly breaking Lyle's hold and starting away in panic fright.

Even as he sprang the black patch seemed to detach itself from the wall and to swirl straight over his head. Subconsciously aware of a shrill drone, he jumped at the thing, felt a heavy blow crash into his ribs, and snatched blindly. For one second the thin rod his hand now clutched lifted him clean from his feet; then, abruptly, it was released, and he fell backwards on the gravelled path.

Whilst one could count five the two chums lay full length, dazed and badly jolted. Their eyes told their bewildered brains that the shadowy unknown was climbing swiftly, their ears heard a buzz as of a myriad dragon-flies roused to unexpected danger. Then a scream, instantly followed by the shattering report of a bursting gun, broke the stillness overhead, and Jerry's torch sprang into being and focussed the castle battlements.

But the light came a second too late. The ghostly blue beam showed the scared form of a Yard man, his face ghastly, a smoking revolver in his hand.

"What's the game, below there?" he

called down. "Answer quickly, Armstrong, else I'll be loosening another bullet!"

"It isn't Armstrong, whoever he may be," Lyle answered. "It's the Lindmans, and we're as puzzled as you."

"Something flurried over my head—nearly knocked me to the ground, in fact," the fellow grumbled hoarsely. "Can't understand it, an' I'm coming down to report to the chief."

"Hallo, Lyle! Here's the cause of my fall!" Jerry called. "Be jabbers, I believe it's the missing Armstrong—clean knocked out!"

Lyle sprang to his side, the light of Jerry's torch showing a burly fellow spreadeagled on the grass, an ugly raw bruise on his upturned forehead.

"Armstrong, without a doubt," Lyle agreed. "Come, take his legs, Jay; the sooner he's indoors the better."

They found it no light task to carry the heavy man even as far as the path. Fortunately, their cries had already roused Weirdale and his guests, and just as the chums dumped their burden for a moment's breather the dining-room window opened and Mann's voice reached them.

"That you, Armstrong? Any trouble out there?" he asked anxiously.

"Plenty, sir!" Lyle answered. "We've found your man, badly damaged. He wants looking to immediately, I'm afraid."

Mann was about to climb out, when Armstrong suddenly opened his eyes, blinked, groaned, and staggered to his feet.

"What—what'm I doing here?" he began stupidly. Then he apparently recognised his surroundings, saw Sir William at the open lattice, and staggered over to him. "Hallo, chief! I'll have a word with you, if I may."

"Help him through, boys," Mann said, in answer. "H'm! Nasty knock you've had, Armstrong. We'll get Williams to dress it in a moment. Here, drink this, and tell me how it happened."

"Looks as if he's walked into a tree and come off second best," Weirdale decided.

"You're wrong, my lord," Armstrong said, tenderly stroking his aching head. "As it happens, I was standing still on the fringe of the forest, noting how the lights of this room were striking out into the trees. All at once it seemed as if a great bird fluttered past the window, and as I jumped forward to see what it really was, something hit me full in the face, and down I went." He shook his head and frowned in bewilderment.

"Next thing I knew, these young strangers were bending over me, Sir William, and you were calling my name." Mann nodded, and glanced at Lyle.

"I thought you intended visiting Roth?" he said.

Lyle briefly explained their change of plan.

"We'd passed this room, and were approaching the darkened study window, when we spotted a black patch up against the castle wall," he began.

"But it's already as black as a hat outside," Weirdale interrupted.

"Yes, the blackness of a moonless night—which is never really black," Lyle answered. "This, sir, was like a black splash on a dark grey background."

"We understand, Lindsay," Mann answered. "Well, what happened?"

"We crept forward until not a dozen feet separated us," Lyle continued. "Then, unfortunately, Jerry nose-dived over our friend here, and I sprang forward a second behind time. Whatever the thing was, it started hissing like a

nest of vipers, and went up the castle wall like a particularly active fly."

The silence that followed Lyle's amazing tale was broken by a loud chuckle from Lord Weirdale.

"Ha, ha! A regular Scottish awe yarn," he said; adding contemptuously: "Why, boy, I'd give fifty pounds to anybody that could climb these smooth walls, let alone run up them."

"Bedad, I saw it meself—an' I'm not daft, even if Lylesey is!" Jerry said indignantly.

Weirdale snorted. But before he could wither Jerry with a caustic tongue a newcomer stepped in through the open window.

"And if I didn't see it climb the wall, I saw it whizz over the edge," he said quietly. "I was tramping the roof, as you ordered, chief, when some great thing missed me by inches. Soon as I recovered from the shock I let fly with my gun, though it was simply shooting at a shadow."

"It pretty well confirms my yarn," Carruthers said, looking challengingly at Weirdale.

Even then the noble lord would have none of it.

"Pish! Nonsense!" he said explosively. "I tell you the thing's too fantastically silly for credence. You've been listening to my villagers, and the quietude of the place has got on your nerves."

"Easy, sir! I'll convince you yet!" Lyle yelled, and jumped from the window to the path before Weirdale could say a word.

In ten seconds he was back again, a thick, polished cane in his hands.

"Here you are, sir!" he said. "When that blessed black mystery lifted just beyond my reach, it awarded me a love-token in the shape of a hefty rib-tickler. My hands grabbed the tickler—this thing—and I've only just remembered dropping it when I fell."

Lyle handed the stick over to Weirdale, and the whole crowd gathered round in open curiosity; and Weirdale, after a moment's examination, laughed louder than ever.

"Young man, the joke grows," he boomed. "Why, sir, you've brought me a fishing-rod as evidence of a mysterious flying visitation!"

To prove these words, he rapidly unscrewed a brass cap, emptied out a nest of four rods, and as quickly assembled them into a really posh fly holding rod.

For a moment Lyle was staggered. He flushed as Weirdale's cackle increased; he grew rosy red at sight of the smile on Pallister's lips; but his jaw set firmly, and he looked fearlessly at the unbelieving old aristocrat.

"I don't care how much I amuse you, Lord Weirdale," he snapped. "I tell you we're up against something exceptionally clever, and I tell you, Carruthers' plans are in danger."

"Rubbish!" Weirdale snapped. "Even if some smart creature is monkeying round, I'd defy any man to get into my study, and I'd defy a black-beetle to get into the safe!" He flung the rod aside, and turned impatiently on Pallister: "The tide's going. In an hour's time it'll be too late to get the Fish in or out of the dock."

"Put the trials off until to-morrow, sir," said Lyle quickly. "Examine the plans to-night, Mr. Pallister, and have 'em sent to Whitehall right away."

"Shure, we'll have 'em there in three hours!" Jerry said eagerly.

But Pallister pursed his lips and slowly shook his head.

"I'm afraid it would be unfair to Carruthers to inspect the plans of something I may condemn," he answered. "No,

Mr. Lindsay; the trial must take place at once, and the envelope be opened on our return."

Lyle stepped back. He felt that further insistence would be an impertinence. But Sir William Mann immediately addressed the Navy expert.

"These youngsters are seldom astray, Pallister," he said. "I really think we ought to pay some attention to Lindsay's advice."

"That sounds strange from you, William," Weirdale barked, "considering that you have a dozen of your own men guarding the castle and the sub."

"I've a very healthy respect for the brains of men employed on espionage work—that is all," Mann replied dryly.

"Then, if you are so frightened, I'll tell you what we'll do," Weirdale said testily. "Pallister can go with Carruthers and satisfy himself that the flying sub is all that its inventor boasts it is. You and I, Willie Mann, will go into the study, lock ourselves in, and guard the safe until Pallister returns. Will that satisfy you?"

"Er—undoubtedly," Mann answered, after a momentary hesitation.

"Bedad, an' where do we come in?" Jerry demanded.

"You? Oh, you can fly that plane of yours over the Fish, so as to be sure the black bat doesn't swallow it," Weirdale said off-handedly.

Jerry would have said something indiscreet, but for Lyle's warning frown. It was hard luck, after rushing several hundred miles by special request, to be dismissed like two wayward children. But "Live Wire" Lindsay had an idea that they would be very much there at the finish—and his ideas somehow worked out wonderfully correct.

CHAPTER 4.

Lyle Comes Back!

CONSIDERING that Lyle was out on secret service, his conduct became amazingly noisy the moment he passed the castle gates.

"We'll look out for you, Carruthers," he called after the sub party. "We're quite anxious to see what the Fish can do, so expect our searchlight."

"Less row, Lindsay!" the commander rapped out. "This is not a public entertainment, remember."

Lyle winked shamelessly into the unseen night.

"Now, Jay, we'll uncouple the Lindman silencer off our engine, rise a couple of thousand and give a searchlight show," he said. "The wind's blowing straight in from the sea, our row'll be heard twenty miles inland, the light'll be visible for ten."

"Why the festive occasion?" Jerry asked, in astonishment. "You won't half upset the Important Persons by rousin' the natives, just when they've got a hush-hush job on."

"I'm gunnin' for the black bat and I'm giving him the idea that we're out of his way," Lyle explained. "We're showing ourselves openly over the ship, letting on we're guarding it; but, about thirty minutes from now, we're trailing noisily south, obviously making for home." He grinned and poked Jerry in the ribs. "Then, old dear, the band begins to play, but with the mute on."

A couple of minutes was sufficient to remove the Lindman shock-absorber which usually made the Linnet almost noiseless on the wing. Following that, Jerry inspected the petrol gauge, carefully cleaned a greasy plug and generally saw that things were ship-shape after their long afternoon flight.

"All's well an' waitin', Lyle," he announced, at last.

"Tally-o 'tis, then," Lyle answered, dropping into the "bucket" at Jerry's side.

He touched a lever that shot a blinding beam ahead, another that sent the engine roaring and racketing, and a third that freed the propeller. Then, Jerry nodding agreement, he deadened the light, his pal slowly edged the stick backwards, and the Linnet broke for the air with a rattle and bang that was dynamic.

Conversation was impossible, of course; but the thought struck each of them that a great amount of bewildered rage must be agitating those below when this devastating noise sprang into being.

Racing steadily ahead in the eye of the breeze, Jerry attained a speed of seventy and a height of fifteen hundred before he risked the turn. Then, swerving with gracefully tilted planes, he rose to two thousand, and drove back towards Weirdale Castle.

The moment they faced land, Lyle sent the searchlight's beam wavering up and down the coast, sprayed the castle and the hinterland and finally focused on the little dock at the foot of the cliffs.

The gates were open, the submarine was slowly emerging like a hog-backed whale. Not a soul was visible on its rounded deck, and, even as the beam picked it up, it submerged and was gone.

Never for a single second did Lyle allow the light to rest. He threshed sea, sky and land, gave an amazing flicker show and made very sure that everyone on the Sutherland coast would know that the Lindmans were rattled and frenziedly searching for the mysterious black bat.

Two minutes later they saw the Fish swirl from the depths a mile or more from the coastline. They held the beam on it whilst it cleaved the water at destroyer speed, they watched with fascinated interest when it leapt fifty feet into the air and plunged its blunt snout back into the heaving sea. Again their thoughts ran on parallel lines—they visualised the awful fate of a dreadnought if a torpedo from that sinister silver streak had burst on its deck!

For a full twenty minutes after that they stunted over the sea, never approaching land, never flashing the beam near the castle, but using it with spectacular effect on clouds and water. Then Lyle touched Jerry on the wrist—a signal that stunt time was ended—and away the bus went south, with the roar and the rattle of a heavy goods train.

A full thirty miles Jerry maintained his course, knowing that the noise of a racing engine will carry all this distance on a quiet night. Then, tilting his wings until the altimeter registered five thousand, he shut off the engine, applied the helicopter brake that was his own special secret and gradually brought the plane almost to a standstill.

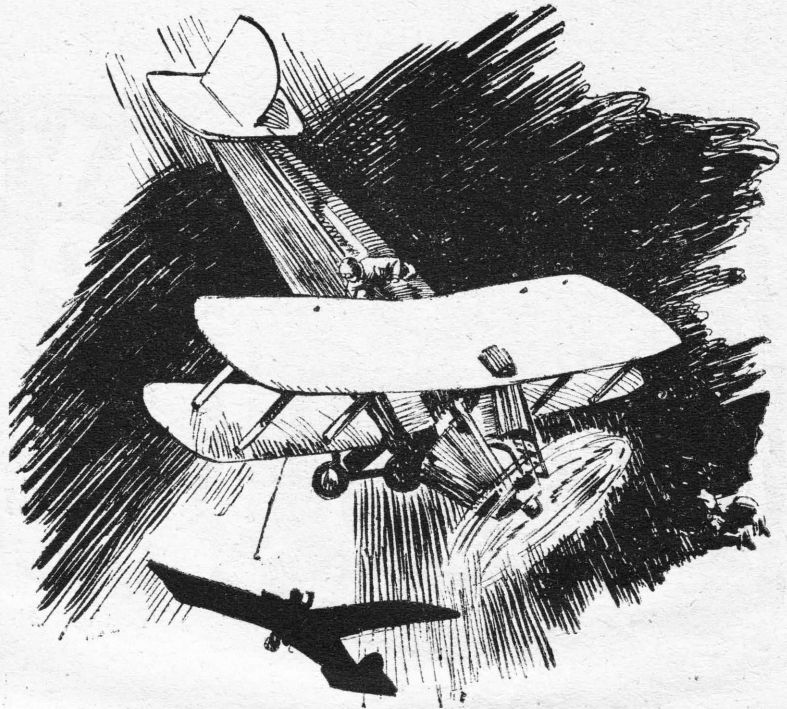
Two minutes was all that Lyle's nimble fingers asked in which to refasten the Lindman silencer. As he sank back into his seat, he echoed Jerry's sigh of relief and gently patted his aching ears.

"Shure, it's the same I am," Jerry groaned. "I've a singin' in me drums and an achin' in me head that'll kape me company a month or more."

But Lyle was anxious, and had no time for aches and pains.

"Think you can find the castle without showing the beam, Jay?" he demanded.

"I can an' all," Jerry answered con-



Letting the hook trail downwards and outwards from the plane's side, Lyle Lindsay angled for the mysterious airman!

fidently. "The sea's never dark o' nights, ye can see the coast aisy if ye'll peep down and the black bulk of me lord's ugly house can hardly be missed."

"Then whip her up, Jay," Lyle replied quickly. "We'll have given the bat a full hour to work his will and I'm beginning to doubt whether he won't have used it too well."

To such good purpose did Jerry nurse the bus that ten minutes brought them within measurable distance of the castle.

"Now, Lyle, I'm dropping near the gates," Jerry warned. "A splash of light to show the run's clear."

The sudden glare revealed two of Mann's fellows near the gateway—a shelter they thankfully bugged until the plane came to rest. Then, wrathfully, they closed in on the chums.

"A nice row you blundering idiots have—" one began.

"Ring off, laddie, we're busy," Lyle snapped. "Be good chaps, now, and slew the Linnet's nose round. Come on, Jay!"

Keeping to the grass that bordered the path, they raced round the castle and closed noiselessly in on the study window. The lights were going, the window closed, and all seemed normal—until they peeped within.

"My sainted aunt!" Lyle groaned. "The safe door's open—there's Weirdale and Mann lying senseless across the table!"

"But the window's bolted, and the door's locked—the key is this side!" Jerry yelled. "Hallo! There's Sir William stirrin'!"

Lyle wasted no time. He smashed in three of the tiny panes and cried Mann's name until his shouts penetrated to the slowly awakening mind.

"Sir William!" he yelled again and again. "Let us in! Rouse up, sir!"

Intelligence shot into Mann's eyes at last, and he hurried unsteadily towards

them. His brain was clearing rapidly now, and by the time he had unfastened the safety catch and flung the window wide he was alert, and almost his normal self.

"The plane, sir?" Lyle asked, springing into the room and racing for the safe. "Whereabouts are they? I can't even see any envelope."

One glance, then Mann's breath expelled in a short, sharp hiss.

"Heavens above! They were on this shelf—they've gone!" he groaned.

"But how could they have done?" Jerry cried. "How could anyone have got into this room, bedad?"

Mann's face had turned ghastly pale and he sank weakly into a chair.

"No one did," he answered amazedly.

"The thing's a nightmare—an impossibility." His glance turned on the window. "Something fell on the table between us—a fume bomb, flung through the open ventilator. Weirdale went over at once, but I held a semblance of consciousness long enough to see a fishing-

rod come slowly through the ventilator—a stiff wire taking the place of gut line, a dazzling point of burning flame on its tip. Through the glass I could see a creature, dressed completely in black, working the rod and directing the flame on the lock of the safe." He pressed his hands to his aching head and ended his tale rapidly. "In three minutes the lock was burned through, the line withdrawn, and returned with a hook replacing the flame. Boys, it's hardly credible, but the door was pulled back, the hook groped and stabbed into the envelope, and it was just emerging from the safe when I collapsed."

Lyle was already breaking for the window.

"At the double, Jay!" he called.

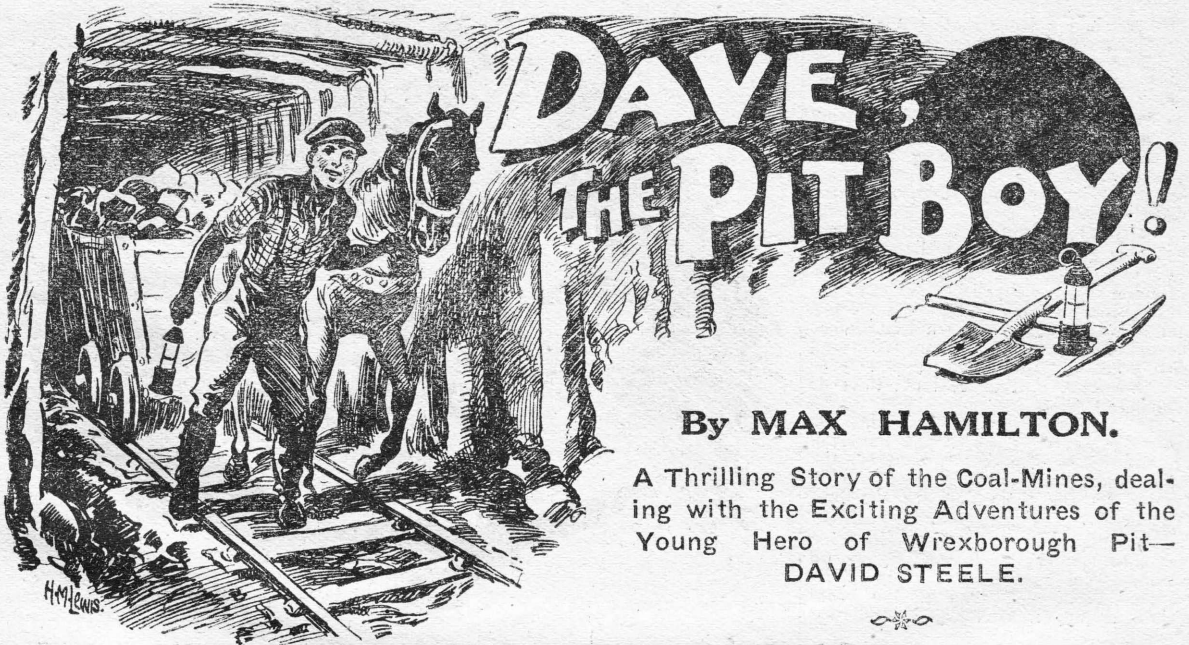
"There's a bare chance yet, I'm thinking!"

(Continued on page 27.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 901.

MORE EXCITING MOMENTS
FOR "DARE-DEVIL" DAVID!

You will be held spellbound with the thrilling adventures of this young hero—DAVID STEELE!



By MAX HAMILTON.

A Thrilling Story of the Coal-Mines, dealing with the Exciting Adventures of the Young Hero of Wrexborough Pit—**DAVID STEELE.**

WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

LEAVING the little North-country village of Thorpe Western, **DAVID STEELE**, an ambitious young lad of fifteen, decided to try his fortune in Wrexborough, a busy centre where work was not lacking to one who was willing to put his shoulders to the wheel.

With a few shillings in his pocket, and with a tramp of thirty to forty miles to his destination, the sturdy country lad set off.

Utterly tired out at night, the lad sought a sheltered place, into which he crept. But hardly had he dropped off to slumber when he was aroused by hurried movements near at hand. He was alert almost on the instant, and, on making investigations, found, to his horror, the bound figure of a man lying on the permanent-way at the mercy of an express train which was at that moment due. With great presence of mind, the lad dragged the inert form to safety just a fraction of a second before the great train rushed by.

But the perpetrators of the crime were returning; so, carrying

the unconscious form, Dave took refuge beneath the arched stone bridge which carried the railway over a canal.

His presence was detected, however, and in an effort to escape the clutches of the unconscious man's assailants, Dave and his burden found themselves in the canal, sweeping helplessly through the arch and out into the open waters beyond.

Fortune was at hand, however, for the two were just able to scramble on board a barge which lay right across the canal. David then learned that he had rescued Mr. Scott, the owner of the Wrexborough coal-mine. David was offered a job in the mine, and gratefully accepted.

Mr. Scott's manner was very strange after that; for not only did he ask Steele to keep the whole affair a secret, but he also found the lad accommodation with a man named Markham, his own assailant!

Markham had recognised Steele, too, and tried to get him out of the way by doping his tea.

David was too cute for him, and left the tea untouched. That night a stranger visited Markham via his bed-room window. David, who was lying awake, watched the mysterious visitor as he left.

In the Mine!

MARKHAM'S window was cautiously raised, and Markham's head was cautiously thrust out.

"No one in sight; it's all safe," he said.

His head was withdrawn, and the next moment his visitor lowered himself gently into the street. As he did so, however, his wide-brimmed hat was jerked from his head, and before he could stoop to pick it up, David, his own face pressed against the glass, saw plainly, by the light of a street-lamp, that of the man beneath him.

For a moment he could hardly believe his eyes, and as, like one petrified, he watched the tall figure disappearing hurriedly along the street, a cry of amazement all but escaped his lips.

The man he had just seen—Markham's midnight visitor—was none other than William Scott, the owner of the Wrexborough mine!

It was not until long after Scott had disappeared round the corner—not until an increasing sensation of cold set his teeth chattering in his head—that David, recalled to his surroundings, rose from his crouching position by the window and returned to his bed. For the time sheer astonishment had almost paralysed him.

As he drew the bedclothes over his shivering limbs he asked himself, for the fiftieth time, what could possibly be the explanation of the mystery which seemed to thicken around him at every step.

The unprovoked attempt to murder Scott had been strange

enough—stranger still the mine-owner's desire for secrecy concerning it, and absolute determination to protect the guilty parties at any cost; and now, strangest of all, came the undoubted fact that he, William Scott, the rich colliery proprietor, should pay a secret but, as it seemed, not unfriendly visit to one of the men who had tried to take his life—entering that man's room, too, like a thief in the night.

The tangle seemed utterly incomprehensible. The only point upon which the last turn of events had enlightened David was concerning Markham's motive for drugging him. That, as he had heard from the man's own lips, was to ensure his being unaware of Scott's visit. From his own lips, also, David had gathered that this was not the first time that Scott had come and gone in the same stealthy fashion.

Could it be possible that the miner had some terrible hold over his employer? Was it that some disgraceful secret connected with Scott had come into his possession, and that the latter dared not retaliate, even when his life was in danger, for fear of some dreadful exposure.

David's mind revolted at the thought.

And yet, if Scott had nothing to conceal, why should he slink to Markham by night, instead of meeting him openly and like a man?

"I wish I could ask somebody's advice," thought David, just as sleep began to descend upon him. "But I can't—that's the worst of this business. I've given Scott my word, and I can't!"

It was well for the boy that he was not left to wake himself in the morning. It was still dark when a series of thundering raps on the back door roused him with a start, under the impression that something strange and alarming

must be happening. His feet had barely touched the floor, however, when he heard "All right!" shouted in stentorian tones from Markham's room, and the rapping suddenly ceased.

"What's the matter?" he called out, tapping at the wall of the miner's room. "What's that knocking for? Has anything happened?"

There was a hoarse laugh from Markham in reply.

"That's only th' chap as comes round to wake us all up i' th' morning. Did ye think 'twas the fire-brigade? He hammers and hammers till we call out, and then he goes on t'next. Don't ye hear him lower down now?"

"I should have thought it would have been enough to hammer at one door in each street," said David, as he began to dress. "He makes noise enough to wake up half the town!"

"You won't think so when you're used to him" returned Markham. "In a month or two you'll go on sleeping till he's been a-thundering on the door for the best part of five minutes!"

Early as it was, Mrs. Nichols was already afoot, and a crackling fire and steaming kettle welcomed Markham and David as they descended to the kitchen to snatch a hasty meal before setting off for the day's work.

"Come along, lad," said Markham at length, rising from the table; "we must hurry up if we don't want to be late!" His manner to the boy was good-natured and even cordial.

Already David could hear the sound of many feet hastening along the street; and as they stepped out into the raw morning air it seemed to him that the whole male population of Wrexborough must be making for the mine. Men and boys were walking and running towards the spot where, just outside the town, on the edge of the moor, rose the tall framework that marked the opening of the shaft.

He kept close to Markham, not from any attraction towards that worthy, but from a sense of strangeness among the hurrying throng, which grew thicker as the pit was neared.

Mr. Grafton had told him the day before to inquire at the pit's mouth for Mr. Hobbs, one of the overseers; and as they neared the shaft he asked Markham where he was likely to be found.

Markham jerked his thumb towards a short, wiry man who at that moment came hastening up; and David, touching his cap, presented himself nervously to the overseer.

Hobbs nodded kindly.

"Ah, yes, the lad Mr. Grafton told me about! Right you are, my boy! Let me see, what's your name Steele—David Steele? Good! You can come down with me, and I'll set you to work!"

And a few minutes later David, in company with the overseer and a load of miners, found himself in the cage and sinking down into what seemed the very bowels of the earth.

For the time being his interest in his new surroundings had driven the thought of the events of the night before entirely out of the boy's mind.

This was the first time he had ever been below the surface of the earth; and as he followed Hobbs through one of the long galleries leading to the seam, he stared about him eagerly.

What he saw was a passage of rough stone, its roof propped here and there with stout timber; it was rather more than a couple of yards in width, and a line of rails extended along it from the shaft.

"Well, what do you think of a coal-mine, eh?" asked Hobbs good-naturedly.

"I don't see any coal, sir," returned David.

"You're looking for it in the wrong place, my lad. This part of the mine has been all worked out; we're a long way from the face as yet. Here's some of it coming, though," he added, drawing the boy to the side of the passage or gateway, as it is termed, as a horse, dragging behind it a small train of loaded tubs, came into sight on its way to the shaft.

"Nearer the face," Mr. Hobbs explained, "where the seam is too low to employ horses, we use small ponies, which draw the tubs singly from the face where they had loaded, to the station or 'flat,' where they are coupled together, and hauled to the shaft by a horse. Your duty as a trammer will be to take a tub from the 'flat' to the face, and bring it back after it has been loaded by a 'filler.'"

If his new duties were fairly arduous, David soon found that at least they were simple of comprehension. The little mine ponies, long unused to the light of day, trotted stolidly along between the rails from the "flat" to the spot where the "filler" was waiting to load the coal which the "getter" had brought up, and the "holer," or skilled miner, wielding his pick as he lay outstretched upon the ground, had undercut from the face of the seam.

He soon made acquaintance with several of his mates, lads of his own age, who gave him a hearty if unceremonious welcome, and who were all anxious to hear from his own lips the story of his rescue of "Left-handed Billy," as they one and all termed their employer. In fact, when the dinner-hour came round, and the lads were free to surround David, he had no little difficulty in parrying their questions on his adventure, and at the same time sticking as far as possible to the truth.

One thing he soon gathered from their talk—that Mr. Scott was thoroughly popular with those in his employ.

"A right good chap, our Billy!" declared Jim Cottrell, one of the trammers heartily. "There ain't a man in the pit as wouldn't be glad of a chance to do what you did for 'im!"

"Cept Markham and his lot," broke in Joe Benson, with a grin. "You forget Markham, Jim. If he saw Left-handed Billy a-tumbling into th' water I don't think he'd hurry much to get 'im out."

David leaned forward eagerly.

"Has Markham got a grudge against Mr. Scott?" he asked eagerly.

Jim Cottrell nodded.

"Ay, that he has," he replied, with his mouth full, "though why, it beats me to say. He's allus a-grumblin', and trying to make others like him; but, bless you, 'e only gets laughed at for his pains, 'cept by a few silly 'uns as foolish as himself. Seems 'e's got a taste for making mischief."

"Do you remember," broke in Joe Benson, "what a row he made when Phillips was turned off? Called a lot of the chaps together, and wanted to lay the case before the Miners' Federation."

"Ay," chuckled Jim; "and my dad spoke up to him straight. Told 'im that if he thought the Miners' Federation 'ud bother their heads about a chap as hadn't been fit for work through drink for months, he was jolly well mistaken. You should 'ave 'eard the others call out 'Ear, 'ear!' when dad finished," continued Jim, turning to David with evident pride in his parent's speech-making powers. "Markham was sick, 'e was. 'E grumbled something about taking away a chap's character, and letting his wife and kiddies starve—as if we didn't all know what Phillips was! 'E left 'is own character at the Miners' Rest long ago."

"And as for 'is wife and kiddies," Jim went on, "there weren't no need of the subscriptions t' chaps were going to get up for them, for Left-handed Billy he started 'er in a little shop all on her own, and without saying a word to



With a snarl Skirling turned on the boy, and raised his arm for a blow. But it was never given, however, for a sudden rending crash struck upon David's ears, while at the same moment a blinding cloud of dust almost choked him. He staggered back, wondering what had happened.

anyone. A right good 'un, he is! Hallo, boys, time's up! Come along and get back to t' tubs!"

What Happened in the Mine!

DAVID STEELE was not naturally suspicious, but his experiences of the last few days led him to receive Markham's apparent friendliness with considerable mistrust.

Nor was he wrong in this. In reality, Markham stood in mortal terror of the lad, whose knowledge of past events, if he chose to make use of it, could consign him to a respectable term of penal servitude.

He believed that David was spying upon his actions; and he had the best of reasons for wishing certain transactions in which he was engaged to be kept as secret as possible. Such being the case, he racked his brains for some means of getting the lad out of Wrexborough for the present. Violence—coming from him, at least—was too risky. What, then, was to be done?

It was only after deep consideration of the subject that an idea struck him.

"Skirling and his lot!" he exclaimed. "Why didn't I think of him before? Skirling'll set his whole gang on the boy for a pound; and if that don't make the pit too hot to hold Master David Steele, why, I'm a Dutchman!"

And, with a satisfied grin on his face, he set off at his earliest spare moment to the Miners' Rest, where he was certain of finding Job Skirling and a circle of admiring followers.

He was not disappointed. A glance round the tap-room showed him the burly, bullet-headed figure of Job Skirling—nicknamed, as he would have been proud to tell you, the "Wrexborough Terror."

A big, hulking fellow was Job Skirling, a man with whom few of the better sort of Wrexborough cared to be seen, but one with whom fewer still cared to quarrel. If he had possessed a little more pluck he would have made a first-class prizefighter. As it was, he took advantage of his physique to make himself feared and hated. His "gang," as they were called, consisted of a few of the rougher and younger pitmen, who, under his leadership, had succeeded in getting themselves into very bad odour in the district.

Such was Job Skirling, the worthy who turned a contemptuous eye on Markham when the latter accosted him with:

"Hallo, Skirling! I want a word with you!"

"Want a word wi' me, do you, mate!" returned Job politely. "The question is, how long you'll have to go on wanting!"—a sally which was received with uproarious applause by his neighbours in the tap-room.

It would not at any time have suited Markham to quarrel with the Wrexham Terror, but to-night less than ever. So he betrayed no anger at that man's remark, merely approaching his mouth to Skirling's ear to whisper:

"I can put a bit o' money in your pocket, Job!"

Job Skirling looked up incredulously, but Markham's face convinced him that he was in earnest. Money never came amiss to the Wrexborough Terror, who was generally in debt for his score at the Miners' Rest. Signing to Markham to follow him, he shouldered his way into the street.

"How much is the job worth?" was his first inquiry.

"Twenty bob!"

"H'm! What's to do?"

"Look here!" said Markham. "You know that kid, David Steele, that the boss has been making such a fuss about?"

"Yes; stuck-up little beggar!"

"You're right," returned Markham; "he is a stuck-up little beggar. More than that, he is a sneaking little beggar—a spy o' Scott's. I've found him out in his tricks, currying favour with the overseers by peaching, and I want the place made too hot to hold him!"

"Well, why don't you do it yourself?" inquired Job.

"Cause I haven't got a dozen chaps to back me up; and a dozen can do a sight more to make it disagreeable for him than me by myself. Tell you what, Job. I believe it was he who split on you to Hobbs t'other day, when he was so down on you!"

Skirling's eyes sparkled angrily. He was too vain and stupid to see that Markham was making a tool of him.

"Did he, the young cub!" he muttered. "Then I owe him one, as well as Hobbs. Here, hand over the pound, and consider the trick done. I'll make his life a terror. He'll find it the best plan to quit Wrexborough before I've done wi' him!"

The pound note changed hands, and Markham returned home, chuckling at the thought of the enemies he had raised up against David Steele. If any man could make a boy's life unbearable, that man was Job Skirling! Markham guessed rightly that to whatever bullying he might be exposed, David would be too proud to complain to the authorities, and that very pride would make it all the easier to render his existence intolerable, and force him in sheer misery to leave the Wrexborough pit.

Partly from fear, and partly from admiration of their leader, the Skirling gang were well disciplined, and when the word was passed round that David Steele was to be bullied into leaving the mine, the whole crew prepared to obey orders implicitly.

They began by throwing every possible hindrance in the way of his work; and more than once David was sharply reproved by the overseer for his slowness in carrying out his duties when he had, either by force or by a trick, been purposely delayed by some member of the gang. In vain the boy remonstrated; blows, and the taunt that he was "Scott's spy," were the only satisfaction he received. David was no coward, but there was not a single one of his tormentors for whom he was physically a match. He was, therefore, practically helpless in their hands—a fact which Job Skirling himself demonstrated by intercepting him in one of the lonelier galleries of the mine and inflicting an utterly unprovoked thrashing, which he wound up with an assurance that there was plenty more of the same kind to follow.

From his fellow "trammers"—boys of his own age—David got plenty of sympathy, there being few of them that had not at some time or other smarted at the hands of the Skirling gang; but more than sympathy they were powerless to give, and they, as well as the victim himself, were quite unable to guess at the reason for this sudden ill-treatment and organised animosity.

Job Skirling fulfilled his promise that the boy's life should be made a terror to him. It was with a feeling of relief that another day was over that David knocked off work each evening. His enemies had told him plainly that they meant to drive him out of the mine; but by that very statement they had roused all the pride in the lad's nature, and he determined that he would never give in to them. But if he was obstinate, so was Job Skirling, who, quite apart from his promise to Markham, had begun to grow furious at having his authority defied by a "blooming kid!"—a frame of mind that was strengthened by Markham's cunningly-worded taunts on his lack of success.

"I'll teach the little beggar to defy me," he growled in answer, "next time I come across him!"

That next time was not long in coming. On the following day, as David was leading his pony from the "flat" to the face of the seam, the little animal suddenly stopped short, and, with unaccustomed obstinacy, refused to budge an inch. In vain David tried to coax him forward. Planting his forefeet firmly on the ground, the pony resisted all his attempts.

"Why, what's the matter with you, Toby?" the lad said, patting the creature's neck soothingly, for Toby was trembling all over.

"Won't go on, won't 'e?" said a voice in his ear. "I'll show you how to make him."

And Job Skirling—for he it was—planted a well-aimed kick in the beast's ribs. Even when it was repeated again and again, however, Toby did not stir; but, with his ears laid back, struggled to retire rather than advance.

His anger overcoming all considerations of prudence, David sprang to the pony's head.

"Leave him alone!" he said fiercely. "He's in my charge, not yours; and I'm responsible for seeing that he's properly treated!"

The answer was a blow that sent him reeling backwards; and Skirling, delighted at the opportunity of tormenting his victim, seized Toby by the head, and, by main force, dragged him and his load a few paces onwards, pausing now and again to inflict a brutal kick on the struggling pony.

"You're responsible, are you?" he jeered. "Well, then, you'd better try and stop me from treating your mangy beast as I like!"

"You let him go!" cried David, as, still giddy from the effects of the blow which Skirling had dealt him, he rushed once more at his antagonist. "Let him go, you brute!"

With a snarl, Skirling turned once more on the boy, and raised his arm for another blow—one that was never given, however. For a sudden, rending crash struck upon David's ears, while at the same moment a blinding cloud of dust almost choked him.

He staggered back, wondering what had happened. He was in utter darkness. His own lamp, which he had placed

upon the ground when he rushed at Skirling, as well as that of his antagonist, had in some way, of which he was as yet ignorant, been extinguished.

A moan, that seemed to come from somewhere near his feet, made him stoop and feel for Skirling; and his late enemy seized his hand and clung to it desperately.

"Don't leave me!" he almost sobbed. "I can't move, Dave. There's a great bit of rock on the top of me. Ye won't leave me alone to die in the dark, will ye, lad? I'm sorry for what I did to ye, I am, indeed! Don't leave me—don't leave me!"

His voice rose nearly to a scream. David realised how poor a creature was this bully who had made his life a misery. There was little of the bully now about the wretched man who clutched the lad's hand, frightened out of his wits by the prospect of loneliness and death.

"I won't leave you," David returned contemptuously. "But what has happened? I don't understand!"

"A bit of the roof given way," said Skirling. "The walls must 'a' been 'creeping.' I suppose that blessed pony of yours could feel it coming. Oh, I wish I hadn't been such a fool as to meddle with the beast! My leg's broke, for sure. It hurts awful. And we're cut off from the shaft. Most likely we'll die afore they get us out!"

And the "Wrexborough Terror" fairly gave way, and began to blubber. Perhaps it was as well for his self-esteem that the darkness hid the contempt on David's face.

"Well," said the latter. "If we're cut off from the shaft, we're not the only ones. There's two or three others at the end of the gallery. And—Hallo, there's a light! They're coming to see what's the matter!"

David was right. Three miners who had been working at the end of the gallery, warned by the sound of the falling rock that something serious had occurred, were hurrying to the scene of the catastrophe; and, as they reached it, the light from the lamps showed what had happened. As Skirling had surmised, a portion of the roof had given way, blocking up the gallery and burying beneath the debris David's tub and the unfortunate pony, whose instinct had vainly warned him of danger. Both Skirling and David had narrowly escaped the same fate; the former, in fact, had been knocked down and bruised by a shower of rubble.

It did not take the newcomers long to realise their position; but the phlegmatic coolness with which they accepted the situation was in marked contrast to Job Skirling's moans and cries.

"Eh, lad, not quite so much noise about it!" said Nathan Benn disdainfully. "Here, Dave boy, lend a hand while we get him clear o' the rubbish!"

"Take care!" shrieked Job, as they began to clear away the stones from his recumbent form. "My legs is broke!"

"What, both o' them?" returned Benn coolly. "No fear! Take my word for it, you wouldn't make so much noise if they were. Now then," he went on, having freed Job from the heap of rubble, he knelt down beside him and ran his hand along the prostrate man's legs, "where's the damage? It's not in the bones, for they are sound enough. It strikes me you're more frightened than hurt, Job Skirling!"

Even the peril in which they were placed could not prevent a grin going round the little group at the expense of the "Wrexborough Terror."

"Stand up and don't fool!" went on Nathan Benn sternly. "If ever a man looked like a pricked bladder, that man was Job Skirling at that moment. Benn wasted no more words on him."

"Now, lads," he said, turning to the others, "while the lamps hold out we'd better set to work wi' our picks on the rock, to meet t' other chaps as'll be digging away on t' other side."

The suggestion was at once acted upon. And Benn, who was a cool-headed, sensible fellow, arranged his little party of five to the best advantage. While two used their picks, two removed the fragments of rock they had displaced, and the fifth rested for half an hour at a time till his turn came round again.

Of the depth of rock through which they had to cut they were, of course, ignorant; and every now and then they would pause and knock loudly, in the hope of obtaining an answering signal. It was not until the last of their lamps was just expiring that one came, however; but when it did come, it was received with a cheer from five thankful throats.

Only a few minutes later their lamps went out, and they were left in utter darkness—a darkness that could be felt. Further work was impossible. All they could do was to sit and wait for a deliverance that might come too late.

Those long hours of darkness were a horrible strain upon the nerves. More than once Job Skirling gave way entirely, and burst into incoherent sobs; the others sat for the most part grimly silent. David had not the vaguest idea of how long they had been entombed. He only knew that it seemed to him years since he had looked upon the light of day.

As a matter of fact, the time during which the five men had been imprisoned might now have been reckoned by days, not hours; and foul air and lack of nourishment were doing their deadly work. Skirling had long ceased his lamentations and Benn his attempts to raise his comrades' spirits. The exhaustion that precedes death was stealing over them. Even hunger had ceased to be painful, and their ears had become dulled to the sound of the distant blows upon their prison wall.

Gradually, however, these sounds grew nearer; and at length, in an interval of consciousness, David awoke to the fact that voices were close at hand.

It took him a minute or two to realise what those voices meant, then he called weakly to his fellow-prisoners, but received no answer. The horrible fear that he was the only one left alive forced itself upon him. Shuddering, he rose and staggered in the direction of the sound. As he did so, a ray of light met his eyes. He gave a faint cry that was answered by a glad one from without.

The rescuers were still some distance away, but they had reached a point at which the fallen rock was more loosely piled together. In fact, by creeping under a huge slab which was supported in its place by small boulders, it was possible, though dangerous, in view of a subsidence, for a slight lad like David to work his way through the debris.

At another time the boy would have thought twice before taking the risk; but in his eagerness for release he did not hesitate, and began to creep painfully along the tortuous little tunnel that led to safety. Exhausted as he was, it was no easy job; and when he was seized by the shoulders and dragged out into a group of miners, his senses had almost left him.

It was Scott himself who supported him in his arms, while Grafton held a mixture of beef-tea and brandy to his lips. It brought new life to him, and he was soon able to answer the questions put to him.

"Are the others alive?" asked Scott anxiously. *(There was no time to waste if the entombed men were to be rescued! What will be their fate? Be sure you read next week's thrilling long instalment of this powerful serial, chums!)*

"THE FLYING WRAITH!"
(Continued from page 23.)

They raced openly back to the bus and wasted no time in explaining the disaster to the bewildered detectives. Instead, they waved the fellows out of their path, drove the plane aloft at hurricane speed, and climbed to four thousand in less than a minute.

"Now, Jay, let her out to capacity!" Lyle yelled. "Chain circles, both lights on, eyes peeled for that black fisherman—the black bat, I'm also confy."

From the ground it must have been an eye-dazzling display of blue brilliancy—a darting, stabbing, raking glare, whose

source span at bewildering speed. To the chums it was a period of concentrated strain that lasted less than sixty seconds.

"Steady her, Jay! Straight on!" Lyle yelled suddenly. "Thought the light flashed over some moving thing—ease down a bit. Ah!"

The beam, slowly groping to right and left again, passed over a tiny dark object, returned, and this time held. Eating the intervening miles as though their prey was stationary, the chums gradually saw a flying thing take a shape that looked like a grotesque overgrown condor.

Then Lyle laughed and worked the light so that it pinned the swiftly-falling nightbird remorselessly.

"Great scheme, pard, and one that almost deserves to scoop the pool," he

chuckled. "An up-to-date glider, plus a lifting engine, cleverly disguised to take the place of the black bat that local superstition holds in such reverence!"

"I'll black bat him!" Jerry growled. "You watch me crash him—th' sueakin' thayif!"

But Lyle had other ideas. "Here's the fishing-rod he barged into my ribs," he said significantly. "You circle round his majesty and speed up when I yell."

Jerry grasped the idea, grinned, and edged away from the drooping bird. And Lyle, quickly assembling the rod, let the weird hook trail downwards and outwards from the plane's side.

Undoubtedly that disgusted flying man must have had the fright of his life in the next ten seconds. The light that had been on his back suddenly struck into his face and came straight at him,

"THE FLYING WRAITH!"

(Continued from previous page.)

like a flash of lightning. A swerve, then the whirling propeller passed over his wings, he fluttered dangerously in the rush of displaced air, and felt himself jerked violently backwards.

"Hooked him!" Lyle yelled joyously. "Now to land him. Back to Weirdale, Jay. Not so quickly, you ass, or you'll break his neck!"

Jerry grunted. "Shure, you'll break ours if you don't aise his weight away," he grumbled, eyeing the tilted wings anxiously.

But Lyle played his catch skilfully, and Jerry nursed the bus superbly until the castle grounds were reached. The searchlights, questing ahead, gave ample

warning of their return, and it was a full and anxious company that watched them droop slowly to earth.

Until the bird-man was secured by several armed detectives Jerry kept the bus circling slowly overhead. Then, the crowd opening out, he dropped the machine lightly to the turf and held its beam full on the spy.

Sir William stepped from the shadow and stared intently at Lyle's catch.

"Ah! Ivan Dimitri, international espionage agent!" he said quietly. "Dimitri, half the capitals of Europe want you badly, but I fear they'll wait a long, long time!"

"Luck ebbs and flows," Dimitri answered coolly. "Who knows, Sare Policeman, I might be on your side—on England's side—when next I seek fortune and fame."

"I more than doubt it," Mann answered dryly, taking a sealed envelope

from the rogue's pocket and passing it to Carruthers.

He smiled at the Lindman pals. "Youngsters, you are piling up the debt I owe you," he said. "You've done a big thing, and the thanks you deserve will come from a more important person than a mere Assistant Commissioner."

"You'll save us from that or we'll help the other side next time," Lyle grinned.

Weirdale looked up, comically humble. "I want to take it all back," he said.

"I seem to remember calling you tender chicks—"

"An' that's a compliment, sor," Jerry interrupted. "It's generally bad eggs or addled asses we're called."

THE END.

(Look out for the first of a series of splendid boxing yarns next week, entitled: "BIG BEN DERBY!" By Louis Alfriston. It is bound to please you!)



FACTORY TO RIDER

Packed Free. Carriage Paid. Fifteen days free trial, from £4 19s. 6d. CASH or 2/6 WEEKLY. Prompt delivery. Save Dealers' Profits. Big Bargains in Factory Soiled Cycles. Juveniles' Cycles CHEAP. Accessories and Tyres at popular prices. Satisfaction guaranteed or Money Returned. Write for Free Lists and Special Offer of Sample Bicycle.

Mead CYCLE COMPANY, Incond. Dept. B601, BIRMINGHAM

JOIN THE ROYAL NAVY AND SEE THE WORLD.

THE FINEST CAREER FOR BRITISH BOYS.

Boys are wanted for the Seaman Class (from which selections are made for the Wireless Telegraphy and Signalling Branches). Age 15½ to 16½ years

Men also are required for

STOKERS Age 18 to 25
GOOD PAY. **ALL FOUND.**
EXCELLENT CHANCES FOR PROMOTION.

Apply by letter to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. & R.M.L., 5, Suffolk Street, Birmingham; 121, Victoria Street, Bristol; 55, Whitehall, London, S.W.1; 259, Deansgate, Manchester; 116, Ryehill, Newcastle-on-Tyne, or 6, Washington Terrace, Queen's Park, Southampton.

NO LICENCE REQUIRED.

8-CHAMBER SAFETY REVOLVER



Exact replica of real revolver converted to fire blank cartridges only. Accidents impossible. Safe and harmless. Useful for theatricals, race starting, etc. Can easily be carried in pocket.

8-Chamber NICKEL or BLUE 12/- carr. free.
 6 SAFETY PISTOLS 9/6 " "
 Cartridges, per 100 3/9 " "
 Cartridges, per 100 2/0 " 9d.

Illustrated Catalogue, Cinemas, Cameras, Cycles, etc. post free. **JAMES MANSFIELD & CO., 71, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.**

YOURS for 6^d.



This handsome full-sized Gent's Lever Watch sent upon receipt of 6d. After approval send 1/- more, the balance may then be paid by 6/monthly instalments of 2/- each. Guaranteed 5 years. Chain Free with every watch. Ladies' or Gent's Wrist Watches in stock on same terms. Cash returned in full if dissatisfied. Send 6d. now to—

SIMPSONS (BRIGHTON) Ltd. (Dept. 1194)
 94, Queen's Road, Brighton, Sussex.

STAMP COLLECTOR'S OUTFIT AND 60 DIFFERENT STAMPS FREE!
 Triangular, British Colonials. Just request approvals. **LISBURN & TOWNSEND, London Road, Liverpool.**

WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS : PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER. :

YOURS for 6^d.

Our World-famous Gent's Full-size KEYLESS LEVER POCKET WATCH. Deposit.

Highly polished cases, accurate timekeeper, patent recoil click. Soudly constructed.

Official 10 Years' Warranty with each Watch.



FREE A Solid Silver English Hall-marked Double Curb Albert given FREE to every purchaser.

Note our remarkable offer to send this Watch post free upon receipt of 6d. deposit. After receipt, if entirely to your satisfaction, a further 1/- is payable, and balance at the rate of 2/- monthly until 17/6 is paid. Cash with order or balance within 7 days, 15/6 only. Deposit refunded if not perfectly satisfied.—**J.A. Davis & Co.** (Dept. 200), 26, Denmark Hill, London, S.E. 5.

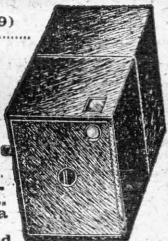
WONDERFUL "MONARCH" (Regd.) Offer of Large CAMERAS (Sold Last Season at 2/9)

Takes perfect Photos 3 1/2 ins. by 2 1/2 ins. British Made with latest 1925 improvements. Optically Ground Lens, Viewfinder, &c. Also complete accessories—best quality Plate, Developing and Printing OUTFIT, together with easy and clear instructions for use. Send P.O. 2/- to-day. Thousands of Testimonials received.

Miss E. Le Cheminant writes:—"I was astonished to see the result of my first effort. The picture is as good as that done by a proper photographer."

W. J. Thomas, Esq., writes:—"Developed and printed photo, and think it as good a photo as if it was taken with a camera which cost £3."

Special Sale Price **1/9** only Postage 3d.



1925 Illustrated Catalogue, 1,000 Bargains, Post Free. **THE LEEDS BARGAIN CO. (U.J.), 31, Kendal Lane, LEEDS.**

DON'T BE BULLIED

Special offer. **TWO ILLUS. SAMPLE LESSONS** from my Complete Course on **JUJITSU** for four penny stamps, or a Large Illus. Portion of Course for P.O. 5/6. Jujitsu is the best and simplest science of self defence and attack ever invented. Learn to take care of yourself under ALL circumstances. **SEND NOW**, (Est. 20 years.) **"YAWARA"** (Dept. A.F.11, 10, Queensway, Hanworth, Feltham, Middlesex)



MY GREAT OFFER

I supply the finest Coventry built cycles **ON 14 DAYS' APPROVAL, PACKED FREE AND CARRIAGE PAID**, on receipt of a small deposit. Lowest cash prices, or easy payment terms. Write for Free Bargain Lists NOW.

O'Brien THE WORLD'S LARGEST CYCLE DEALER, DERBY 18 COVENTRY

MAGIC TRICKS, etc.—Parcels, 2/6, 5/6. Ventriloquist's Instrument. Invisible. Imitate Birds. Price 6d. each, 4 for 1/-.—**T. W. Harrison, 239, Pentonville Rd., London, N.1.**

STOP STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars Free.—**FRANK B. HUGHES, 7, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1.**