

HERE'S THE BEST SCHOOL-ADVENTURE YARN OF THE WEEK!

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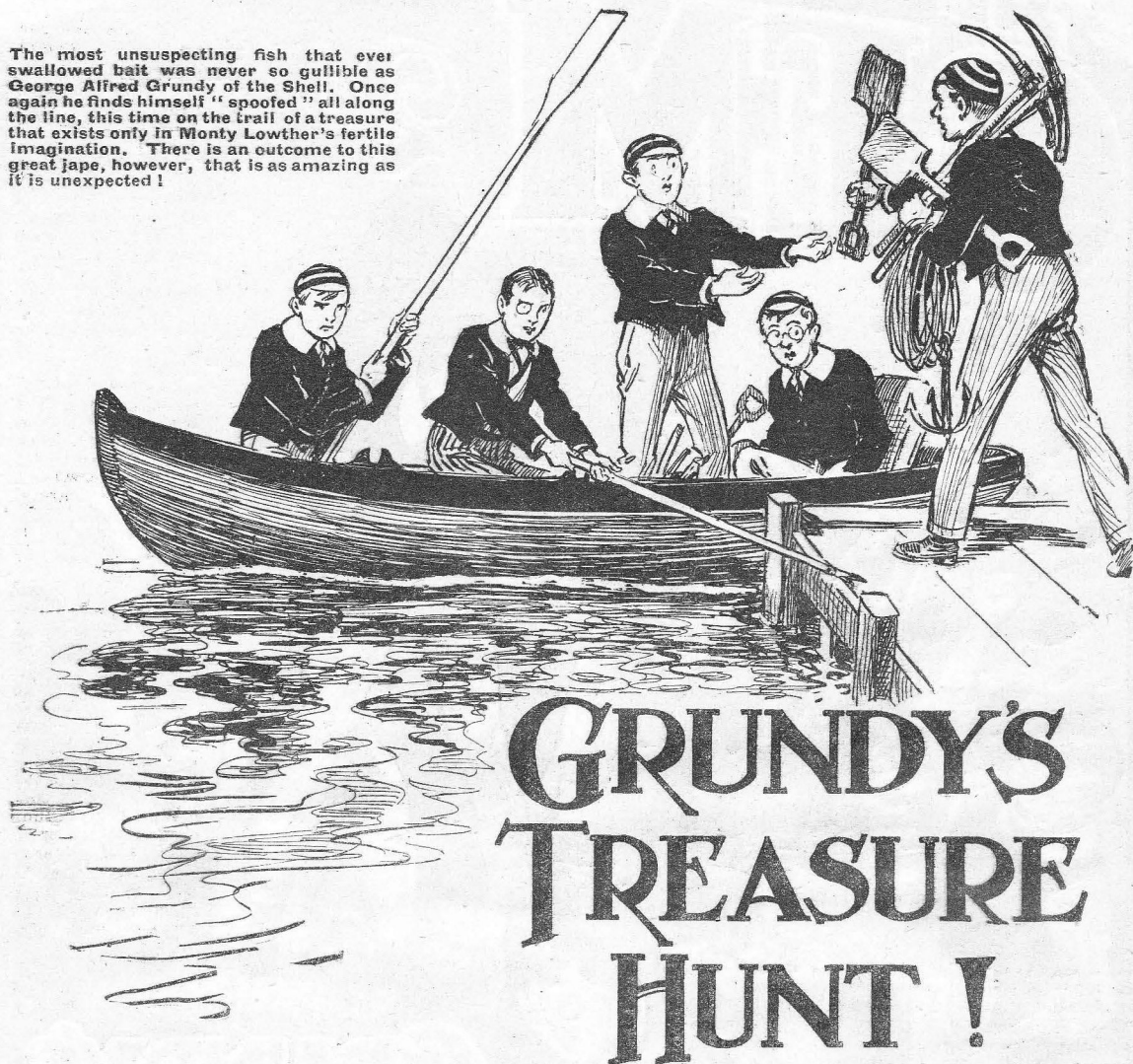


GRUNDY'S TREASURE HUNT!

Featuring Tom Merry & Co., the Cheery Chums of St. Jim's.

FUN, FROLIC AND THRILLS ARE ALL IN THIS LONG STORY—

The most unsuspecting fish that ever swallowed bait was never so gullible as George Alfred Grundy of the Shell. Once again he finds himself "spooed" all along the line, this time on the trail of a treasure that exists only in Monty Lowther's fertile imagination. There is an outcome to this great jape, however, that is as amazing as it is unexpected!



GRUNDY'S TREASURE HUNT!

CHAPTER 1. Grundy the Studicus!

"WHAT about Grundy?"

Tom Merry asked the question rather dubiously.

"Yes; what about Grundy?" echoed Monty Lowther, with a chuckle.

"Sure he'll be all right?" asked Manners, smiling. "We don't want it to turn out a tea-fight instead of a tea-party."

"Rather not," assented Tom and Lowther.

Wilkins and Gunn coughed.

"It—it's all right—right as rain!" said Wilkins, with a faint grin. "We told Grundy we were bringing you fellows along to tea after the match. He said it was all serene."

"In fact, he said he'd get some grub in," added Gunn. "That means a ripping feed, I expect. He's an awfully generous chap, you know."

"And he's in funds," said Wilkins. "So it's bound to be all serene, you fellows—at least—"

"At least," said Gunn, as his chum paused, "it'll be all right if Grundy's still all right. You—you know what I mean?"

The Terrible Three chuckled. They did not need telling what Gunn meant. George Alfred Grundy's mood was too well known in the Shell at St. Jim's for that.

"We understand," grinned Tom Merry. "Let's hope he's still all right, then. I'm hungry."

"He was all right when we saw him last," said Wilkins hopefully. "He'd quite got over not being included in the House match; he's used to having to get over that! He was

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mugging up some rubbish he'd got out of the library—fairly wallowing in it when I saw him last."

"Grundy mugging?" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Reading something out of the library—Grundy?"

"Yes!" chuckled Gunn. "Something new—what?"

"Wonders will never cease!" sighed Lowther. "What was he mugging up—cricket? He can't even spell the word!"

"Ha, ha! No. He's reading up a history of St. Jim's—all about the giddy time when St. Jim's was a monastery."

"Eh? Oh, my hat!"

"It's since that old professor johinnie lectured on the ancient ruins here!" grinned Gunn. "Grundy was no end interested, and he's collared some old books from the library to mug up about it."

"Fairly gone potty over it," sniffed Wilkins. "Fancy being keen on reading books out of the giddy library! Did you ever?"

"Still, it keeps him quiet," said Gunn. "You'd hardly believe how peaceful it's been in our study since Grundy started reading! We're hoping he'll keep it up."

"It gives his chin and fists a rest," said Wilkins. "Here we are, anyway! Come in, you fellows!"

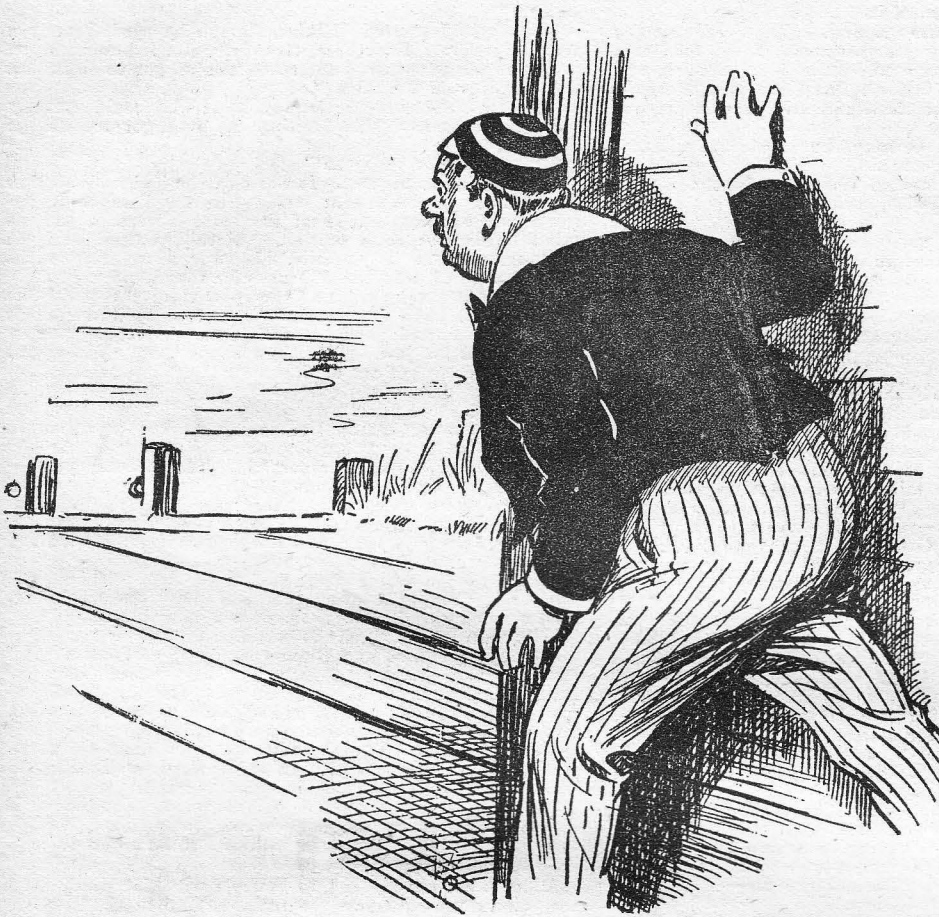
The Terrible Three and their hosts had reached the Shell passage, and George Wilkins opened the door of the study he shared with Gunn and George Alfred Grundy.

He paused on the threshold, however, and his face fell.

The famous leader of Study No. 3 was at home.

Grundy was seated at the study table. Before him was a large volume with time-worn leather binding. Grundy's nose was almost touching the book before him. To use a

—OF TOM MERRY & CO., OF THE LOWER SCHOOL AT ST. JIM'S!



popular term, he was fairly devouring the contents of the ancient tome he was sprawling over.

Over Wilkins' shoulder Gunn and the Terrible Three fairly blinked at the sight. It was very surprising indeed to see George Alfred Grundy studying a book so earnestly.

But unusual as it was, Wilkins and Gunn did not seem pleased at the sight now. They glared.

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Wilkins, walking into the room. "What about tea, Grundy?"

"You said you'd have it ready!" snorted Gunn. Grundy did not look up. He just waved his hand—obviously as a hint for them to leave him to his studies.

"Getting deaf?" asked Wilkins, a trifle warmly. "What about tea, Grundy? We've brought these fellows along."

"Shurrup!"

"That's all very well!" said Gunn indignantly. "You agreed to these fellows coming to tea, and you agreed to get tea ready—for once!"

"Shurrup!"

"But, look here—"

"Shurrup!" roared Grundy.

"But—"

"Shurrup, and gerout!"

It was a bellow.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Wilkins. He looked at Gunn, and then he looked a trifle shamefacedly at the honoured visitors. It seemed quite clear that Grundy was not still all right.

"Now, look here, Grundy," said Wilkins, almost appealingly, "we want our tea, old chap! Shove that muck away now! If you've been too busy studying to get tea ready it can't be helped. But clear away, and let us get it ready!"

"Did you get the grub in, anyway?" asked Gunn anxiously. Grundy looked up then. He fairly glowered at the juniors.

"Didn't you hear me?" he bawled. "I told you to shut up and get out! Getting deaf?"

"But we want our tea!" hooted Wilkins. "And we've invited these fellows! Don't be an idiot!"

"If you call me an idiot, George Wilkins—"

"Well, be reasonable, then!" said Wilkins. "Dash it all—"

"Get out, the lot of you!" roared Grundy. "Can't you see I'm busy?"

"But we want our tea!"

"Go and get it in Hall, then!"

"But we've asked these fellows to tea here!" shouted Gunn.

"Cancel the invitation, then! Postpone it! Tell 'em it's a mistake! And go and eat coke!" bawled Grundy, in great exasperation. "Now get out before I throw the lot of you out!"

And with that Grundy sat down and glued his nose to the weighty tome before him.

The Terrible Three chuckled. Grundy's temper could never be relied upon, and they had half-expected something like this.

Wilkins and Gunn eyed each other in wrath and dismay.

To ask fellows to tea, and then have them treated in this manner was too thick.

Grundy's study-mates went crimson.

"Look here, Grundy—" exploded Wilkins.

"Hold on, Wilky, old man!" said Tom Merry, with a laugh. "We can come another time."

"When Grundy isn't studying," added Lowther.

"Don't mind us, you fellows," said Manners. "We've plenty of grub in, and we can come another time."

"That's rot!" said Gunn, with a sulphurous glare at Grundy's bent head. "Look here—"

"We don't want to cause trouble in the family!" laughed Tom Merry. "We'll postpone the tea and call another time. Come on, you chaps!"

"Right-ho! Thanks all the same, Wilky!"

And, with polite smiles at their would-be hosts, the Terrible Three gently withdrew and closed the door. But out in the passage they looked at each other eloquently.

"If Grundy was in our study," remarked Monty Lowther feelingly, "we'd use his silly head as a punchball!"

"Yes, rather!" agreed Tom. "He's the outside limit! Still, no good causing trouble, and I'm not looking for a thick ear this afternoon. Let's go home."

And the Terrible Three went home to Study No. 10 along the passage. They were disappointed, and they yearned to use the great George Alfred's head as a punchball. But they had no wish to cause unnecessary discord in Study No. 3—there was usually more than enough there! So, from peaceable motives, the Terrible Three left Grundy & Co. to themselves.

CHAPTER 2.

Grundy's Latest!

GEORGE WILKINS and Cuthbert Gunn breathed hard and deep. George Alfred Grundy resumed his historical studies.

The matter was ended, so far as he was concerned. He had told his annoying interrupters to go, and they had gone. Like their cheek to dream of staying to argue the matter! As yet Grundy did not seem to be aware of the

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fact that his study-mates had not accompanied the Terrible Three.

He soon was made aware of it.

Wilkins and Gunn were raging. They felt deeply humiliated and intensely exasperated. They felt that Study No. 3 had been disgraced by the unneighbourly and inhospitable Grundy. To invite fellows like Tom Merry & Co. to tea, and then order them out when they came was the limit.

It was really just like Grundy, but that fact did not lessen the ire of his study-mates.

"Grundy, you rotter!" hooted Wilkins suddenly.

"Grundy, you mean cad!" spluttered Gunn.

Grundy jumped.

"Hallo! You silly owls not gone yet?" he snorted. "Am I to tell you again, or am I to boot you out? Of all the cheek—"

"Cheek!" choked Wilkins. "What about your cheek? What about those fellows? They've gone now—they wouldn't stay. You've disgraced the study, you—you outsider!"

"Wha-at?"

"Made us look fools, too!" choked Cuthbert Gunn. "You howling lunatic! You—you thick-headed mugwump!"

Grundy eyed them almost blankly.

"You fellows talking to me?" he stuttered.

"Of course we're talking to you!" howled Wilkins. "We asked those fellows to tea this afternoon; you agreed they should come. And this is what you do when they come—order them out! Oh you—you—"

"Well, my hat!" said Grundy. "And you think I'm going to allow a silly tea-party to interfere with my studies? Cheek! Those kids can come again, can't they?"

"Yes; but it's a nice thing—"

"You fellows make me tired!" groaned Grundy. "All you seem to think about is grub. Tea-parties—bah! Piffle! Blow those kids, anyway! I can't afford to waste valuable time discussing them! Now, look here, you fellows!" added Grundy, an excited look on his rugged features. "I've been fairly wallowing in this history of St. Jim's. It's ripping! That professor merchant was quite right!"

"Blow the footling professor, and blow you!"

Grundy scarcely heard Wilkins. He waved his hand eloquently.

"Somewhere about here," he said impressively, "hidden away for centuries, lies the treasure. That professor johnny said there were records of it having been hidden away when Henry VIII. dissolved the monasteries, but no records of it have ever been found. The question is—"

"What about tea?" snorted Gunn.

"Eh? Tea? Who's talking about tea?" said Grundy.

"Don't be an ass, Gunny! The question is, where was it hidden? Some authorities say it was hidden in the vaults; others say it was hidden in the ruins behind the chapel; others say it was buried on Abbey Island, and there's a legend that says the monks sunk it in the river when the soldiers came after it. Well, wherever it was hidden, I'm going to find it, you fellows!"

"Good! And now what about tea, Grundy?" said Wilkins, keeping back his wrath with a mighty effort.

"Tea? Oh, do dry up and listen!" implored Grundy, his eyes gleaming with enthusiasm. "I tell you I'm on a good thing, you fellows. If you back me up I'll let you have a share in the treasure, I might tell you."

"Oh, you—you—"

"If it's to be found, then I'm the man to find it!" said Grundy. "All I want now are the clues."

"The—the whatter?"

"Clues!" said Grundy impatiently. "K-L-E-W-S—clues! Getting deaf?"

"Oh, my hat! Is that how 'clues' is spelled, Grundy?"

"Of course, you ignorant dummy! Think it's spelled 'C-L-E-W-S,' or what?" demanded Grundy scornfully. "Anyway, all I have to do now is to find the clues. You don't tell me the monks hid the stuff without leaving clues! The question is, where are they?"

"Ask me another," said Wilkins, with a groan. "What I want to know is when we're going to have tea, Grundy?"

"Tea!" howled Grundy, almost stuttering with fury.

"Will you dry up about tea, you footling owls? Raving about dashed tea when there's fortune and glory waiting to be picked up. Oh, you—you—asses! Will you stop bothering me about tea?"

"No, we jolly well won't!" hooted Wilkins. "Blow you and blow the silly treasure! We want our tea! You promised to have it ready, and you agreed to those fellows coming. And now—"

"Now they've gone!" said Gunn angrily. "Aren't you jolly well ashamed of yourself?"

"Me?"

"Yes, you! You've disgraced the study!" choked Gunn. "What will Tom Merry and his pals think of this study now?"

Look here, Wilky, we're not standing this! Let's shift this,

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image and his dashed book, and get tea ready ourselves! Then we'll fetch those fellows back—whether Grundy likes it or not!"

"That's it!" snorted Wilkins, though he eyed Grundy a trifle uneasily. "Look here, Grundy, we're fed-up with you and your silly treasure-hunt rot! You've got to shift that dashed piffle off the table!"

"Got to?" ejaculated Grundy, as if he could scarcely believe his ears. "You telling me I've got to, George Wilkins?"

"Y-yes, I jolly well am!"

Grundy rose to his feet. It was clear he had realised that the matter was serious at last. For the time being the great and exciting matter of the monks' treasure left his mind. This was rank mutiny. Rarely, indeed, did his study-mates dare to question his orders, or dispute his authority. In Study No. 3 Grundy was lord and master.

"You—you cheeky rotters!" he spluttered. "Got to take your orders, have I, George Wilkins? We'll see about that!" He turned back his cuffs in a deliberate manner and squared his jaw. "We'll see about that! You've got three seconds to get out of this study!"

"But—but what about our tea?"

"Haven't I told you?" roared Grundy. "You can get tea in Hall for once. Think I'm having my studies disturbed because of tea? Are you going, or not?"

"Not!" said Wilkins desperately. "Look here, you—Oh, my hat! Back up, Gunny!"

Wilkins' voice ended in a yell.

Evidently Grundy deemed the three seconds more than up. He came on with a rush, and the next moment a wild and whirling struggle was taking place in Study No. 3.

Chairs went crashing over, and as the trio collided with the table, that went over, too, and the "History of St. James' Monastery" went to the floor with a thud.

Wild and furious raged the battle.

For once, Wilkins and Gunn were really roused to stern and desperate action. Usually they let Grundy "have his head"—it was much safer to do so. Grundy alone was more than a match for Wilkins and Gunn. On this occasion, however, Grundy's study-mates were really angry with their leader. It was bad enough to have to do without tea themselves, but for the fellows they had invited to the study to be treated in such a way made them "see red."

"Let him have it!" panted Wilkins ferociously, though it looked as if Grundy was not the one "having it." "Show the rotter he can't do just as he likes! Chuck him out and his dashed book— Yoooop!"

A hefty fist put an end to Wilky's wrathful tirade, and sent him spinning across the room, to fall in the fireplace with a clattering crash and a howl.

"Now, out you go!" gasped Grundy, addressing Gunn.

"I'll show you! Pitch me out, would you? We'll see!"

"Ow! Oh, crikey!" panted Gunn.

He struggled hard, but he struggled in vain. Alone against the mighty George Alfred his stout resistance availed him little. There was a brief, whirling struggle by the doorway, and then a form hurtled out and fell with a crash in the passage.

It was Cuthbert Gunn.

Wilkins was just scrambling to his feet when Grundy turned to deal with him. He was half-dazed, and Grundy had less trouble with him than with Gunn. There was an even briefer struggle, a wild yell for aid from Wilkins, and then he also went out like a sack of coke.

Crash!

"Yarrooogh!"

Gunn was just scrambling to his feet, and Wilkins crashed full upon him, sending him down again. As they struggled there in the passage Grundy gave them one disdainful glare, and then he went back into the study and slammed the door. The key clicked in the lock.

Once again, with the convincing argument of his hefty fists, George Alfred Grundy had proved his right of leadership in Study No. 3.

Wilkins and Gunn sat in the passage and gasped and panted as if for a wager. Both showed numerous signs of Grundy's handling—they looked wrecks, in fact. Grundy was undoubtedly a redoubtable fighter.

The row had been heard far and wide, and grinning faces looked out from doorways all along the passage. Most of them vanished when they saw what was "on," however; they did not need to ask what the matter was—the sight of Wilkins and Gunn sprawling outside the door of their study was not an unusual sight. Grundy's little ways were well known in the Shell.

The Terrible Three had looked out of Study No. 10; but, unlike the others, they did not merely grin and retire. They eyed the hapless two with smiling sympathy.

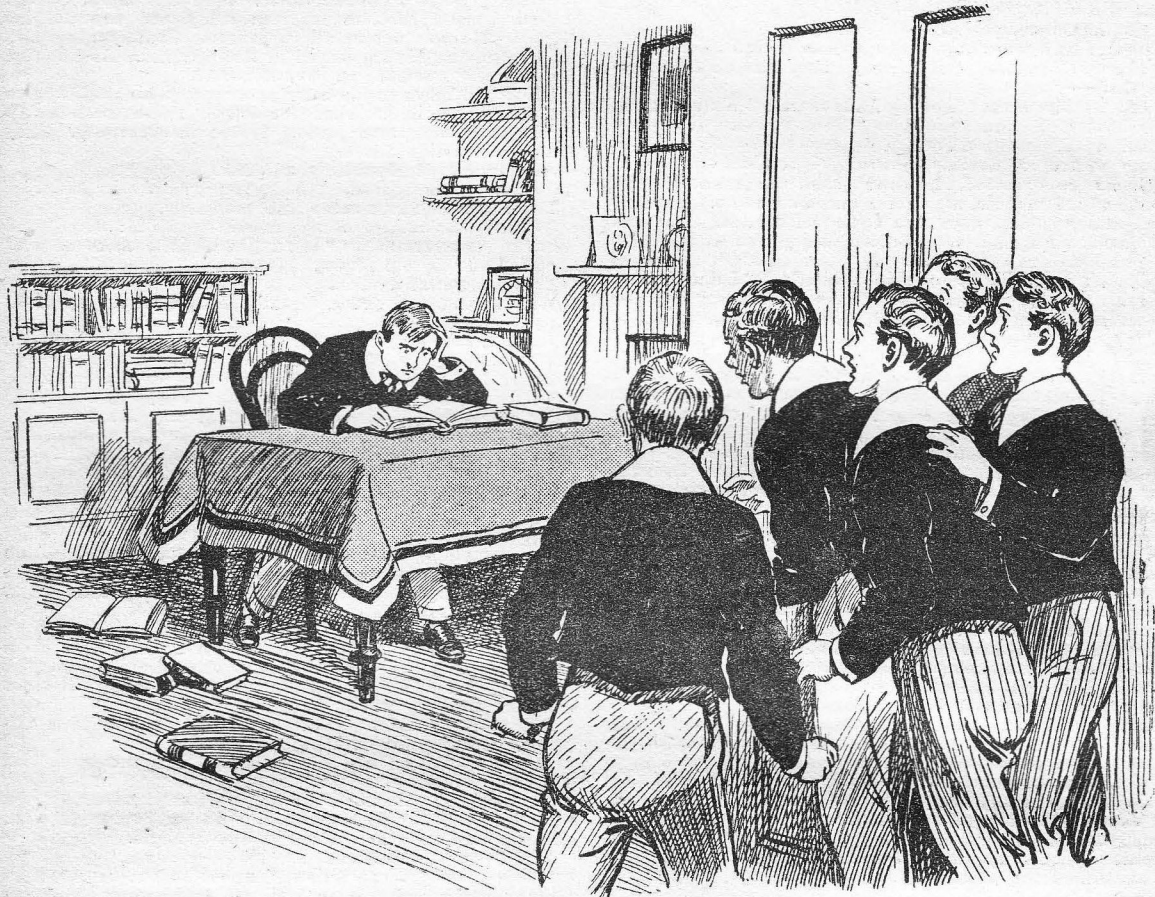
"Hard lines!" said Tom Merry.

"Been chucked out?" asked Lowther, somewhat superfluously.

"Ow!" gurgled Wilkins. "Ow-yow!"

"Yow-ow!" was Gunn's contribution.
 "Never mind!" said Tom Merry sympathetically. "I thought you'd have trouble with that awful idiot. Come along to us for tea."
 "Ow! Oh, crumbs!" gasped Wilkins. "I—I'll smash that bullying cad for this—sometime!"
 "We—we'll flay him alive!" said Gunn, staggering to his feet. "You wait!"
 "We will!" murmured Lowther. "A long time, I expect. Still, come along and have tea now, and blow Grundy. Did you try to chuck him out?"
 "Ow! We—we tried to make him clear his things and have tea!" groaned Gunn. "Then he set on us, and—and by a fluke he managed to chuck us out."
 "Just a fluke!" assented Lowther solemnly. "Hard lines. Next time you'll chuck him out, what? Good! Now, what about tea?"

Just drop a few clues about, and Grundy would swallow them whole. He was born to have his silly leg pulled."
 "Monty——" began Tom Merry.
 "Just leave this to me!" said Monty Lowther, with a soft chuckle. "I think I see a way of working the wheeze! Grundy wants a treasure, and I'll help him to find one."
 They all looked at Lowther and grinned. Monty Lowther was the biggest practical joker in the School House—if not in St. Jim's—and they saw that he meant business now.
 "What's the wheeze?" demanded Tom Merry. "Monty, you ass——"
 "I'll tell it you when I've fixed everything up!" grinned Lowther. "Just leave it to me. You'll see some fun soon if I'm not mistaken. I shall need the help of you fellows later on in the wheeze. We've got to find clues for Grundy as well as treasure."
 "But——"



As George Wilkins opened the door of the study he shared with Gunn and George Alfred Grundy his face fell. Grundy was seated at the table with a large time-worn, leather-bound volume before him, studying it earnestly. Over Wilkins' shoulder, Gunn and the Terrible Three fairly blinked at the sight. (See Chapter 1.)

And, with kindly sympathy, the Terrible Three piloted the dismal wreckages into Study No. 10, and seated them at the table. There, while they nursed their injuries, Wilkins and Gunn related what had happened.
 "He's potty!" said Wilkins. "Absolutely gone off his dot, you know! He's going to lift the St. Jim's treasure now."
 "Oh, my hat!"
 "If we behave ourselves and back him up," said Gunn, with a feeble grin, "he's going to let us have a share! Did you ever?"
 "He's getting more and more high-handed every day!" said Wilkins wrathfully. "I'm fed-up! He needs teaching a lesson! Why should he do as he likes in the study? Tell me that!"
 "Blessed if I can!" grinned Lowther. "I say, though, is he really serious about this treasure stunt?"
 "Absolutely!" said Wilkins. "You should just hear him. It's practically settled that the treasure's his; it's all fixed up. All he has to do—to hear him talk—is to find the clue to it. That's all!"
 "He's a priceless ass!" chuckled Tom Merry. "But he does need a lesson, and no mistake!"
 "Why not give him one?" inquired Lowther, whose eyes had a mischievous gleam in them now. "Why not let him find a treasure, for instance? It could easily be arranged.

"Leave it to your uncle," said Lowther airily. "I must crank up my intellectual motor and think things out well. If Grundy's so keen on a treasure-hunt he shall have one, and I hope he'll be pleased with the treasure when he finds it. Leave it me, anyway."
 And they had to leave it to him. Lowther took no part in the cricket conversation that followed. His face wore a reflective, far-away look, and more than once during the meal a deep chuckle escaped him. Monty Lowther's brain was working out the great "wheeze," and, judging by his chuckles, he found the process amusing!

CHAPTER 3.

A Great Discovery!

"STRATEGY!" said Lowther. "That's what's wanted—giddy strategy!"
 "Blessed if I can see how you're going to work it, Monty!" grinned Tom Merry. "You've drawn the plan all right—it's a fair corker. And the giddy clues should work, and the rest of the wheeze. But how do you propose to plant that giddy map where Grundy will find it without suspecting anything?"

"That's just it!" said Manners. "If you just shove the thing in the leaves of that musty old book he's reading, he'll smell a rat, dense as he is."

"Bound to," said Tom.

"I'm going to plant it in that book, anyway," smiled Monty Lowther. "As I say, it's strategy that's wanted in a case like this. It'll soon be bed-time, and I want Grundy to make the great discovery before then. But how to get hold of the giddy old book is the trouble now."

"Why not tell him his name's on the list for next Wednesday's match," grinned Manners. "That will send him rushing to the notice-board like a lunatic."

"Can't tell a fib just to suit Monty's wheezes," said Tom. "Grundy's name isn't down and never likely to be."

Lowther chuckled.

"I've got it," he said. "I'll tell him you want his advice about the list, Tom; that should fetch him. Top-hole! I'll do it!"

"But look here, you ass——"

Lowther had gone, however, and Tom glared after him.

"The ass!" he said. "If Grundy comes here on an errand like that——"

"Oh, let him come!" chuckled Manners. "We agreed to back Monty up, you know."

"All right!" growled Tom.

They waited for Grundy to turn up—they had not to wait long. As he expected, Lowther found the great George Alfred at the table, studying the ancient volume. Tea had gone, and prep had gone, but Grundy looked as if he had not deserted his studies for either. He glared at Lowther.

"You here again!" he bawled. "Get out!"

"Oh, all right!" said Lowther carelessly. "I don't mind. Tom Merry just wanted your advice on making out the cricket list for Wednesday next, that's all. But if you're too busy——"

"Eh? What's that?" Grundy almost jumped. "You say Tom Merry wants my advice? Well, my hat. I always thought that duffer had no sense at all. But evidently he's beginning to get a bit. Is that a fact, Lowther?"

"If you're too busy to come——"

"Great pip! Well, as a matter of fact," said Grundy, trying to speak carelessly, "I am rather busy at the moment. I've got rather an important thing on just now. Still, if Tom Merry wants my advice on that list, I don't mind giving it."

And Grundy jumped to his feet and hurried out, scarcely glancing at Lowther in his excitement. It had always been a sore point with Grundy that Tom Merry would never take his advice on cricket or anything else. Again and again Grundy had advised him to put G. A. Grundy in the team, and again and again Tom Merry had refused. But at last—or so it seemed to Grundy—Tom Merry had realised the value of his opinion.

Lowther chuckled as Grundy rushed away to give his advice. He waited until he saw him vanish into Study No. 10, and then he ran into the room.

On the table, opened as Grundy had left it, was the bulky, leather-bound, ragged, and time-worn "History of St. James' Monastery." The history had been written many years before—hundreds of years, judging by the appearance and condition of the volume! Lowther chuckled as he turned the volume over and took out his pocket-knife.

The knife-blade was sharp, and swiftly and neatly the practical joker slit down the leather cover at the back of the book, carefully loosening the ancient glue that held it to the boards. When he had finished there was a pocket made between the leather binding and the boarding.

Replacing the knife, Lowther drew from his pocket a folded, yellowish-looking sheet of paper. He opened it out, glanced over it, with a chuckle, and then he slid it carefully underneath the binding, smoothing down the leather with his hand.

This done, he turned the book over to its original position on the table, and swiftly left the study.

In Study No. 10 he found Grundy arguing heatedly with Tom Merry, with Manners looking on smilingly.

"Well," the great George was bawling angrily, "you asked me for my advice, didn't you? I've given it. There's only one fellow in the school fit for the job. That fellow's me—G. A. Grundy!"

"Then G. A. Grundy's the very last fellow at St. Jim's I shall dream of putting in the team," said Tom seriously. "I may come to putting old Taggles, the porter, in yet. He's about a hundred years old, and wields a broom better than a bat. But Grundy will be the very last man I shall choose."

"But—but——" spluttered Grundy helplessly. "Why——"

"Because of your advice," explained Tom blandly. "I asked for your opinion, so as to know who not to put in. See? If you'd advised me not to play you, I might

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have thought it over. You see, you know nothing at all about cricket, old chap. Therefore, your advice is worth something, because it tells me who not to play. Many thanks. Good-bye!"

Tom was anxious to end the interview when he saw that Lowther was back.

Grundy fairly gasped.

"You—you rotter!" he spluttered. "I—I believe you've brought me here just to pull my leg. Why, I'll—I'll——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That settled it. Grundy knew now that it was just a bit of playful leg-pulling, and his wrath boiled over. He gave a roar and rushed at Tom Merry.

But the Terrible Three had expected ructions. Tom easily dodged Grundy's blundering rush, and then the three of them bolted from the study.

They had vanished from sight when Grundy rushed out into the passage a moment later. Breathing hard, George Alfred walked back to his own study and resumed his studies. He was not at all suspicious. Grundy was quite used to having his leg pulled in that manner. As Lowther had said, he was born to have it pulled.

He settled down to his book again. But his studies were not to remain undisturbed for long. There came a tap at the door, and three juniors looked in cheerfully. They were the Terrible Three.

Grundy glared Hunnishly at them.

"Get out!" he roared. "Why, you—you cheeky cads!"

The Terrible Three came into the study.

"About that matter of the cricket team, Grundy," said Tom Merry pleasantly. "We'd like a little more of your splendid advice, old fellow. Now——"

That was as far as Tom got.

With a bellow of wrath, Grundy charged at the apparent leg-pullers.

But this time they did not bolt. As one man they grabbed the raging George Alfred, and the next moment the four were waltzing about the room locked in a deadly embrace.

This time, however, Grundy found he was dealing with a far different proposition than Wilkins and Gunn.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther were too much for Grundy, big and burly as he was. None the less, Grundy put up a terrific fight in his efforts to throw out his jaspers.

"I'll show you what's what!" he was bawling at the top of his voice. "Out you go!"

Crash!

The struggling four crashed into the table, and, either by accident or design, Monty Lowther sent the big volume flying off the table. It dropped, opened out on the floor, and the battle surged over it.

Crash!

All four juniors tripped over the volume and went down in a struggling heap. Grundy was underneath apparently, or it sounded like it from the muffled bellowing that came from beneath the pile of struggling figures.

But presently Monty Lowther struggled free from the melee. Grundy was on his face now, with Tom Merry and Manners seated on his heaving form. Lowther gave him a glance, and then he stooped over the book on the floor for a moment. What he did to it Grundy, naturally, did not see. And the next moment, with an expressive wink at his chums, Lowther joined in the struggle.

Tom Merry understood.

"That's enough, you fellows," he called out breathlessly. "Let this be a lesson to you, Georgie, never to attack defenceless and well-meaning playmates. I'm surprised at you, trying to bully us like this!"

"Ow! Grooogh! Lemme gerrup!" choked Grundy. "I'll smash you to a jelly, you cheeky cads! Ow-ow! Oh crumbs! Gerroff me chest!"

Lowther gathered a handful of soot from the study chimney and rubbed it into Grundy's dishevelled hair.

The next moment Tom Merry gave the signal, and they leaped up from Grundy's prostrate form as one man. Before Grundy even knew it they had left him and were outside the study.

The door closed behind them, and the great man of the Shell sat up, gasping and panting like old bellows.

"Ow!" he gurgled. "Ow, ow, ow! Oh, the awful cads! Ow-yow! Why, I'll—I'll smash 'em!"

He jumped up, raving. Seething with rage, and burning with the desire for vengeance, George Alfred Grundy dragged open the door and rushed out. Then he tore along to Study No. 10.

The door was locked. He kicked and hammered on the panels for a few seconds, and then he gave it up and returned to his study. It was useless arguing with a locked door—more than useless.

"The—the cads!" he panted. "Never mind. I'll—I'll settle with 'em another time. I'll teach 'em! I'll—I'll——"

Words failed Grundy. He dropped into the armchair to regain his breath and strength. Brief as the battle had been, it had taken a lot out of Grundy. But he recovered

after a while, and then he stooped to pick up the "History of St. James' Monastery."

He placed it on the table, and was just about to look for the page he had been reading, when something caught his eye.

It was a sheet of paper sticking half out of the book.

Grundy blinked at it in wonderment.

It had not been there before—he was sure of it. He remembered having gone through the pages from end to end. It was not there then. Then, quite suddenly, he realised that it was actually sticking out of the leather binding, not the pages themselves.

His heart leaped.

The paper was old—yellow with age, while the edges were almost black, and very ragged. What on earth was it?

In trembling excitement, Grundy drew out the sheet. Then he blinked at it.

It was a map—or so it seemed. On the yellow surface of the paper, in faded ink—or what appeared to be faded ink—was drawn a rough map or plan. The outline of it appeared familiar to Grundy—very familiar indeed. He recognised the old tower, and various other of the ancient parts of St. Jim's. He noted that one part was marked "Vaults," while near the tower itself was an arrow, roughly drawn. And above the arrow, in queer, printed capitals, was an inscription.

Grundy could have yelled as he read it, for it said:

"FEEK YE WER YE ARROW POINT."

That was all, but it was enough—for Grundy!

His eyes lit up, his rugged features fairly blazed with excited triumph.

"G-gug-good lor'!" gurgled Grundy, almost beside himself with excitement. "G-good heavens! It—it's it! It's the clue to the treasure! Oh, m-mum-my sainted Sam! I—I knew those monks must have left a clue behind. And this is it—I've found it! The blessed treasure's as good as mine. M-my hat! Won't the fellows be wild! Phew! Great pip!"

Grundy jumped up, and started to waltz round the room in a whirl of excited glee. He was still busy doing so when his study-mates, Wilkins and Gunn, came into the room. They looked at the waltzing Grundy, and winked at each other.

"Hallo! What's the matter, Grundy?" asked Wilkins. "Do you feel ill, old fellow?"

"Have you come into a fortune, or what?" inquired Gunn. "Or has it come on at last?"

"I always knew it would, sooner or later," said Wilkins, shaking his head sadly. "Keep calm, Grundy, old fellow—we'll soon have you safe in a home! Keep calm, and—Here, leggo, you ass! Only my joking—"

But Grundy had no intention of committing assault and battery. He just grabbed his startled chum round the waist and went on waltzing with him. But he gave it up quite suddenly. Rushing to the table, he grabbed up the precious yellow sheet.

"Hurrah!" he roared. "I've got it, you fellows—got it at last. I knew I should sooner or later. It doesn't take a chap like me long to get down to the root of things, I can tell you. Look at this—look at it! What d'you footling dummies think of me now? Wasn't I right?"

He flourished the sheet of paper aloft, and then he shoved it under Wilky's nose. Wilkins took it, and eyed it with a great air of expectation.

"What is it, Grundy?" he asked curiously. "A new crossword puzzle, old chap?"

"Looks to me like a cattle-yard," said Gunn, looking over Wilky's shoulder. "My hat! It—why, it's a map of the old part of St. Jim's!"

"Phew! So it is!" gasped Gunn, winking covertly at his chum. "Why it's—And what's this? 'Feek ye—? What on earth does 'Feek' mean, Grundy?"

"Feek!" repeated Grundy, in withering scorn. "Don't you know that F's were S's in those days? My hat! Of all the ignorant asses! Feek means seek, and Point means points, of course. The wer means where, and should be spelled w-h-a-r-e."

"Should it? Oh, my hat!"

"Yes. They knew nothing of spelling in those days," explained Grundy. "Still, some of you fellows can't spell for toffee, come to that. But—my hat! This is great—absolutely spiffing! Don't you fellows see what it means?"

"Quite, old chap!"

"Absolutely, Grundy."

Wilkins and Gunn saw only too well what it meant. Only five minutes ago Lowther had told them how he had drawn the map, and how he had "planted" it on Grundy. They winked at each other—a wink that was quite lost upon George Alfred.

"Shall you take it to the Head?" asked Wilkins innocently.

"Eh?" Grundy stared. "Show it to the Head and let him collar the treasure? Not likely! Don't be an idiot, George Wilkins! Now, look here, you fellows, this has got to be kept a dead secret until I've lifted the treasure. Mind that. It's rather a pity I've showed it you fellows, as a matter of fact—you talk so much."

"Do we?"

"Yes—like a pair of old women," said Grundy. "Still, now you know it can't be helped. In fact, as you're going to help me you would have to know, anyway."

"Are we going to help you?" gasped Gunn.

"Of course! I may even reward you—say, one per cent on the value of the treasure," said Grundy generously. "Back me up, and I'll agree to that! Now clear out, and leave me to think out all details. We shall want spades, and possibly picks. We'll make a start evacuating—digging, you know—"

"Sure you don't mean excavating?" asked Gunn.

"Eh? You shut up, Gunny—you gas too much. I mean what I said. We start ex—digging at the round tower immediately after dinner to-morrow. Got that? Right. Now clear off, and leave me to concentrate on the job."

Wilkins and Gunn cleared off quickly enough; they felt they would burst with suppressed laughter if they stayed much longer. They hurried along to Study No. 10, and there they gave full vent to their feelings, rolling about helpless with mirth.

"It—it came off, then?" demanded Lowther. "He swallowed it all right?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, rather! Like a whale! He's concentrating on details now, and we're to be ready to help him dig for the giddy treasure after dinner to-morrow. Oh, what a dream!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear old Grundy!" smiled Lowther. "What a lad he is! If he swallowed that, then he'll swallow the rest all serene. This is going to be the joke of the term!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're a fair corker, Lowther!" gurgled Gunn. "How you made that paper so ancient-looking beats me."

"I didn't make it," smiled Lowther. "I found an old book in the landing cupboard—a giddy ancient tome that's been chucked out of the library as unfit for further circulation, I suppose. Anyway, I tore out the end sheets, and that was one of 'em. It was already yellow with age."

"Ha, ha, ha! But what's the rest of the jape, old chap?"

"You'll see, Wilky," said Lowther airily. "I think I know where I can get one or two old iron boxes that'll do. I shall put another clue in first—Grundy's no end keen on clues. That clue will lead him farther afield—to Abbey Island, I think. Won't do to let Grundy do too much digging round St. Jim's. The giddy beaks might chip in and muck up the jape."

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather."

"Anyway, we'll keep this to ourselves, in case it gets out and Grundy smells a rat," smiled Lowther. "And now I've got to get the clue ready for Grundy to-morrow. You chaps cut off now and leave me to concentrate on the job—like dear old George Alfred."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the other juniors cut off to spend the rest of the evening in the Common-room. In Study No. 3 Grundy concentrated on the details of finding the treasure, while in No. 10, Monty Lowther, the practical joker of the School House, concentrated on the manufacture of clues to help him to find it!

CHAPTER 4.

Trimble Takes a Hand!

"READY, you fellows?" George Alfred Grundy asked the question briskly. From the eager and satisfied expression on his rugged face, it was plain that he was in fine feather, and very pleased with life in general that bright summer day.

Dinner was just over at St. Jim's, and Wilkins and Gunn had strolled into Study No. 3. If they'd known Grundy was there, Wilkins and Gunn would not have strolled there. But, at the moment, both Shell fellows had quite forgotten Grundy.

They remembered him now, and they looked at each other and groaned.

All that morning Grundy had worn a rapt and excited expression, and it was obvious to all that his thoughts were not on lessons. Mr. Linton had soon noticed it, and Grundy had reaped quite a crop of lines that morning in consequence.

But he did not seem to mind. Many times and oft he had warned his study-mates to be "ready," after dinner,

and his chums had nodded vaguely—not wishing to have an argument with their heavy-handed leader.

Now, however, they felt they were really up against it. The moment had come. Grundy wanted them to help him—most likely to do all the digging and donkey-work while he superintended operations. And as Wilkins and Gunn knew there was nothing worth digging for the prospect naturally did not appeal to them at all. In fact, they were quite determined not to do any digging or searching for the spoof treasure. That would quite spoil the joke for them.

Yet Grundy would undoubtedly want to insist upon their loyal help—whether at the price of one per cent. of the treasure or not.

“Er—yes, we’re ready, old man,” assented Wilkins. “Ahem! Shall we just stroll round the quad or have a chat with the fellows in the Common-room?”

“Eh? What’s that?”

“You asked—if we were ready,” said Wilkins meekly. “I’m ready for a stroll or any old thing.”

“Why, you—you ass!” said Grundy, staring. “Have you actually forgotten, George Wilkins?”

“Forgotten what, old chap?”

Grundy breathed hard.

“Forgotten my treasure-hunt, of course!” he almost roared. “Hadh’t I arranged for you to come and help me dig after dinner, you footling asses? Are you potty?”

“Not at all,” said Wilkins. “You might have arranged that, but we didn’t, as far as I know. Gunny and I are going for a stroll in the quad. Cheerio, old man!”

Wilkins acted swiftly, after one sharp, meaning glance at Cuthbert Gunn.

Placing one foot behind Grundy’s, he gave his leader a hefty shove. Then he leaped for the door, Gunn scarcely a second behind him. Wilkins snatched the door-key as he went.

Taken completely by surprise, Grundy went sprawling full length on the floor, and as he sprawled there the door slammed and the key clicked in the lock.

Wilkins and Gunn had gone.

Grundy staggered to his feet.

“Well, I’m blown!” he gasped.

Astounded beyond measure, he rushed to the door and tore at it. He could scarcely believe it possible that his usually meek and obedient followers had dared to defy him to such an extent as this.

But the locked door proved conclusively that the impossible had happened, and Grundy began to hammer furiously on the panels. It was an unfortunate time to call for aid; most of the fellows were taking the opportunity of a stroll in the fresh air in the hour or so before classes.

Presently, however, a junior came along the passage—a fat junior wearing a fat grin on his podgy features.

It was Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

He stopped outside the locked door.

“You in there, Grundy?” he called, with a chuckle.

“Yes; lemme out, Trimble!” bawled Grundy. “Lemme out, or I’ll smash you!”

“He, he, he! Locked in, what?” said Trimble.

“Yes, you fat clam! Unlock this dashed door—d’you hear?”

“He, he, he! I say, it’s all right, Grundy!” called Trimble cheerfully. “I’ve got the key, old chap. Wilky paid me a tanner to let you out when the bell for classes rings.”

“Lemme out now, you fat toad!” roared Grundy.

“Hold on!” said Trimble. “One good turn deserves another, Grundy. I say, have you got that treasure-map on you, old fellow?”

“Wha-at?”

Grundy started. Then it had got out after all. The thought that Baggy Trimble, the biggest gossip in the school, knew about the treasure made Grundy gasp with dismay. Grundy did not stop to wonder how the fat Fourth-Former came to possess the secret, however. He knew Trimble’s little habit of listening at keyholes only too well.

“I’m rather interested, old man,” went on Trimble cheerfully. “Awfully interested, in fact. I say, you might let a chap have a squint at that map, old fellow.”

“You—you fat rotter!” shouted Grundy. “I suppose you’ve been eavesdropping again, you fat toad! Just you wait—”

“I say, it’s all right, Grundy,” called Trimble. “Rely on me—I won’t breathe a word to anyone, old chap. And, look here, no need for Wilky and Gunn to be in it. I’ll help you dig or do anything, old fellow. I say—”

“Lemme out!” roared Grundy furiously. “I’ll pulverise you when I get hold of you!”

“Hold on!” said Trimble. “I’ll let you out, old man—if you’ll just let me have a squint at that paper. Then

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you and me can hunt for the treasure, old chap. What about going fifty-fifty?”

Behind the locked door Grundy breathed hard.

“Trimble,” he gasped, “if you don’t lemme out of this—”

“Just shove the map under the door,” said Trimble. “I only want a squint at it—just to make sure it’s genuine, you know. Then I’ll let you out.”

“I’ll see you hanged first, you fat clam—”

“Oh, all right! On second thoughts I don’t think I’ll let you out, even when bell rings,” said Trimble. “A tanner’s not enough. Good-bye!”

“Here—come back!” bawled Grundy. “Look here, I’ll give you two bob to lemme out, Trimble.”

“Not good enough, old chap. Make it fifty-fifty in the treasure when it’s found!”

“What—what—?”

“I say, I mean it!” called Trimble grimly. “Shove that map under the door, and I’ll unlock it the very next minute, old chap—honour bright. Just a squint to let me know it’s genuine. Then I’ll help you search, old fellow. Is it a go?”

Grundy almost tore his hair. But time was going, and he was almost trembling with eagerness to start on the job and unearth the treasure before dark. Grundy always was rather an impatient youth. And in any case he could soon settle Trimble’s hash. In fact, he would settle the hash of anyone who tried to do him down! After all, just a “squint” at the map would do Trimble no good—he would see to that. If he caught Trimble searching for the treasure—

Grundy drew a deep breath, and after a moment’s hesitation he called out in almost trembling accents:

“All right, you fat rotter! Here it is. And if you don’t unlock the door the very next second I’ll break your fat neck!”

Something was pushed under the door, and Trimble’s gleaming eyes fastened on it at once.

He stooped and grabbed the sheet up, and then he blinked eagerly at it.

It was the map right enough—the map he had overheard Grundy speaking to Wilkins and Gunn about. With trembling fingers Trimble smoothed it out and blinked at it.

“M-mum-my hat!” he breathed.

So it was genuine enough! Trimble’s eyes nearly goggled from his head—it took him a very few seconds to recognise the spot marked by the arrow. But those few seconds were too long for Grundy.

“Are you going to open this dashed door?” he roared.

“Why, you fat clam, I’ll—I’ll—”

“All right, Grundy!” gasped Trimble.

He hurriedly inserted the key and unlocked the door.

Trimble had fully intended to make a further bargain with Grundy before unlocking it. He had meant to take the precaution of getting Grundy’s promise not to touch him for his bit of bargaining. But in his excitement at seeing the amazing chart Trimble quite forgot that important point.

He had good cause to regret doing so the next moment.

Grundy rushed out and pounced upon him with a bellow.

“Now, you little cad!” he bawled. “Gimme my map—quick!”

He snatched the map from Trimble’s hand, and shoved it into his pocket. Then, before the fat Fourth-Former could move, he grabbed him by the collar.

“Now, you fat worm!” he gasped. “I’ll teach you to bargain with me like that—little short of blackmailing, in fact. Why—”

“Oh, really, Grundy— Leggo!”

“I agreed to let you see the map,” said Grundy, his voice trembling with rage, “but I didn’t agree to let you go after that treasure, my fat pippin. Now, listen: Let me catch you within a hundred yards of that tower, and I’ll break your fat neck! Got that?”

“Yow! Leggo! Look here—”

“Treasure! I’ll give you treasure!” gasped Grundy. “You dare to chip in, and I’ll make mincemeat of you! And now this is for daring to bargain with me, Trimble! Take that!”

“Yarroooooop!”

“That” was a hefty kick, and Trimble took it—he had no choice in the matter. And Grundy followed it up with a series of hefty kicks that brought further woeful howls from Trimble.

But the fat junior managed to tear himself free at last, and bolted for his life, Grundy following him to the end of the passage. Then, feeling a trifle better, Grundy got his cap and hurried from the House, en route for the toolshed—and the treasure!

CHAPTER 5.

Unlucky for Trimble!

“OW-YOW! Grooogh!”

Thus Baggie Trimble.

Grundy might not be a good footballer, but he was a remarkably hefty kicker. Trimble thought so, at all events, as he nursed his injuries after Grundy had done with him.

“Ow!” gasped Trimble. “Ow-wow! Oh, the awful beast! Oh, crumbs! Why didn’t I make him promise not to touch me? Oh, crikey! Never mind. I know where that treasure’s hidden now. M-mum-my hat!”

And Trimble’s eyes glittered with excitement and greed. He was not done yet. He knew where the treasure was buried now. He had heard often enough about that legend of the St. Jim’s treasure. Every fellow in the school had heard of it. Only recently the professor who had lectured at St. Jim’s had spoken of it as being possibly more than a mere legend. And now he had seen the clue to it with his own eyes. Grundy had found it in that mouldy old book, of course. But that didn’t say he was entitled to

A sudden uproar of anguished yells and wrathful bellows reached the ears of the Terrible Three from the direction of the ruined tower. “That’s Trimble!” gasped Tom Merry. They rushed up to the spot to find George Alfred Grundy grasping Baggie Trimble by the collar and kicking him round in a circle. “Yarooooogh!” roared the fat Fourth-Former. (See Chapter 5.)



claim it all for himself. The fellow who actually found it was entitled to it. And Trimble meant to be the finder.

“Oh, the beast!” he breathed. “Well, I’m not done yet—no jolly fear!”

Grundy had gone out of doors, and Trimble followed him swiftly, forgetting his hurts in his excitement. The fat youth prided himself on being very keen, and he felt quite sure he could outwit that awful ass Grundy.

He sighted his quarry just vanishing into the toolshed, and Trimble approached the spot stealthily and cautiously. From the corner of the chapel he watched Grundy carry a spade out of the shed and then go inside again.

What he had gone in for again Trimble did not trouble to wait and see. He rushed forward on tiptoe, and with desperate haste he banged the door of the shed shut. Another second and he had slammed the iron bar across and rammed the peg of wood home, securing the door safely.

Once again George Alfred Grundy was a prisoner. From within the dark shed the prisoner did his best to let the world know it quickly enough. He bellowed with rage, and his fists and feet beat a terrific hammering on the door.

Trimble gave a fat grin of triumph, and then he grabbed the spade and hurried away. Where a treasure was at stake—a fortune—Baggie Trimble could not afford to take chances of losing it. He had offered to go “fifty-

fifty” with Grundy, and his offer had been turned down. It was Grundy’s own fault.

Three minutes later Baggie Trimble had reached the old tower in the ruined part of the school buildings. And in another minute the fat youth had located the spot and was digging for dear life, his fat face ablaze with excitement and greed.

In the toolshed Grundy fairly danced with rage.

Who had locked him in he did not know; he had not had the chance to get even a glimpse. All he knew was that he was a prisoner, and he suspected that someone else was after the treasure.

The thought made him rave.

He had gone inside to get a pickaxe, and with this he made a savage assault on the door.

Crash, crash, crash!

The thunderous blows echoed far and wide.

Three juniors, who had just come round the corner of the chapel heard them, and they stopped and stared.

They were the Terrible Three, who were just on the way to the ruins to see if Grundy had made a start on the work of excavating.

They soon knew.

“What the thump’s that row?” ejaculated Tom Merry. “Oh, my hat! That sounds like Grundy’s voice.”

“Yelling about something,” said Manners, staring about him. “Hallo! It’s from the giddy toolshed. Sounds as if Grundy’s breaking up the happy home—I mean the toolshed door. Come on!”

Wondering what the cause of the uproar could be, the Terrible Three rushed up to the shed.

“You in there, Grundy?” called Tom.

“Of course I’m in here!” came an angry roar from within. “Open this dashed door, you footling dummies! Open it, or I’ll spicate the lot of you!”

“What a nice way he has of asking a favour,” said Lowther. “I’m afraid Grundy hasn’t been brought up well at all.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Tom Merry unfastened the door smilingly; he did not need to open it. It went crashing open, and the captain of the Shell only just missed being sent flying.

Grundy rushed out, and Lowther and Manners dodged hastily out of the way.

“Here, what the—”

“Grundy, you ass—”

But Grundy had gone. He fairly flew, vanishing round the back of the chapel at a great speed.

“Well, my only hat!” gasped Tom Merry. “I say, we

must look into this. I wonder if Wilky and Gunny fastened him in."

It struck them as the only possible explanation at the moment. They hurried after Grundy, anxious to learn the truth.

The old ruins of St. Jim's were forbidden ground, but Tom Merry & Co.—not to mention Grundy—often went where they were forbidden to go.

In a few moments they came in sight of the old tower; but before that a sudden uproar of anguished yells and wrathful bellows reached their ears.

"That's Trimble!" gasped Tom Merry. "Oh, my hat!" They rushed up to the spot, to find Grundy busy—very busy indeed. He had Baggy Trimble by the jacket collar, and he was busy kicking Trimble round in a circle.

"Yaroooogh!" Trimble was roaring. "Yoop! Yar-roooooo! Oh crikey! Help! Rescue! Leggo! Yar-roooooogh!"

"Here, hold on, Grundy!" called Tom Merry, grinning despite himself. "What are you using Trimble as a footer for?"

"Yaroooogh!" wailed Trimble, wriggling frantically in the burly junior's wrathful grasp. "Leggo! Make him lemme go, Tom Merry. Yoooooop!"

"Double-cross me, would you!" roared Grundy. "Lock me in the dashed toolshed and collar the treasure for yourself, would you! I'll teach you better, my pippin!"

Kick, kick, kick!

"Yow-ow! Yooooop!"

"Here, that'll do, Grundy!" grinned Tom.

He grabbed Grundy by the collar, and Trimble gave a mighty wrench and dragged himself free. Then he bolted for his life and vanished from sight.

Grundy fairly gasped in breathless rage.

"What's he done, Grundy?" demanded Tom, releasing his grasp of the Shell fellow. "Dash it all—"

"Done!" gasped Grundy. "Can't you see, you dummies?" he went on, pointing a quivering finger at a hole in the ground where Trimble had obviously been digging. "That fat ass—that podgy burglar was after the treasure—my treasure! He fastened me in the dashed toolshed, and came after the treasure himself, the awful cad!"

"Treasure?" repeated Lowther innocently. "What treasure?"

"Eh? Oh, I forgot you fellows didn't know," said Grundy, cooling down a trifle. "The fact is—well, I might as well tell you chaps. I know you wouldn't try to do me down like that fat robber. Keep it dark. The fact is, I've found a clue to the monks' treasure at last. I knew I should, sooner or later. In fact, what I've found is the actual plan of the spot where it was buried."

"G-good lor!" ejaculated Lowther. "You—you don't say? And is this the very spot?"

"Just this," said Grundy. "I hope to unearth the treasure before dark, with a bit of luck. I was thinking of asking Linton to let me have the afternoon off; but he might smell a rat if I did."

"He'd lick you, in any case," smiled Tom Merry.

"That's what I thought. Actually, it's owing to you chaps, in some measure," said Grundy, quite affably. "You remember that book we knocked off the table last night? Well, I found it hidden in that."

"The treasure?"

"No, you silly ass! The plan showing the spot where it's hidden, of course. Here's the spot. That fat rotter's seen the map, and found it easily enough. Well, I mean to get the treasure up before any other rotters try to do me out of it. I'll do it now. Before I found that plan," said Grundy, "I thought I should have the dickens of a job before me. I expected to have to search the vaults and dig everywhere. In fact, I might have found it necessary to drag the river. There's a legend, you know, that the monks sunk it in the river to hide it from Henry the Eighth's men. Thank goodness, this map's saved me all that trouble!"

"Very lucky indeed," said Lowther solemnly. "You'll remember us when you're rolling in the giddy plunder, won't you, old chap?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see what there is to cackle at," said Grundy.

Tom Merry & Co. evidently did, however, they roared. Grundy made a furious rush at the almost helpless trio.

The Terrible Three took to their heels as one man. And, after following them for a hundred yards, Grundy gave it up and went back.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther, as the Terrible Three came to a halt beyond the chapel. "Isn't he a dream? Leave him to it for a bit now, chaps. I want him to get that hole dug. When it gets about six feet deep, I'll watch my chance, and put the second clue for him to find. What a lark!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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And the Terrible Three returned to the School House nearly weeping with laughter. Grundy was on the job now, and they were satisfied, at the moment, to let him get on with his excavating. So far, the jape was working quite nicely, and Lowther was quite pleased with the way his wonderful wheeze was progressing.

CHAPTER 6.

The Treasure-hunting Combine!

GRUNDY came in late for afternoon classes—very late.

He also came into the Form-room looking like a navy who had just finished work for the day. His belated entrance brought titters and chuckles from the Form and frowns and snorts from Mr. Linton, who instantly sent Grundy to make himself presentable.

When Grundy returned, more presentable, Mr. Linton rewarded him with a sound caning for being late and two hundred lines for being dirty.

George Alfred was an object of great interest that afternoon. The news of Grundy's great discovery had got out. To keep such a terrific discovery a secret was more than Baggy Trimble could be expected to do. It was more than he did do.

Most of the fellows instantly came to the definite conclusion that somebody was pulling Grundy's easily-pulled leg. At afternoon break a crowd surrounded Grundy, wanting to know all about it. Grundy was lofty and condescending. He was wrathful at finding his secret a secret no longer. Yet he realised that to get manual labour to help him the matter would have to be made known.

After explaining how he had worked it all out—and found the treasure-chart—Grundy went on to announce the fact that he was in need of fellow treasure-hunters.

There was no rush to enlist.

"I want to form a treasure-hunting combine," explained Grundy. "I shall reward the chaps who enlist, of course. It'll only be for an hour or two at most; in fact, I expect to raise the treasure this evening. You joining, Tom Merry?"

"Nunno," smiled Tom. "Too much fag."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see what there is to cackle at!" snorted George Alfred. "Dash it all, you fellows make me ill! A thumping fortune at stake, and not one of you seems to care twopence. What about you, Glyn?"

"Nothing about me, old chap!" chuckled Lwin.

"Trimble's fairly bursting to help!" said Lowther. "Here he is."

Trimble came rushing up.

"Oh, here you are, Grundy, old fellow," he said affectionately. "I say, you can put me down for the combine. I've just heard you were asking for—Yooooop! Here—Why, you—Yarooooh!"

Trimble departed with a rush, Grundy's heavy boot clumping home on his rear as he bolted. Evidently there was nothing doing as far as Trimble was concerned.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, looking rather perplexed. "I see no reason why we should not investigate this, you fellows. If Gwunday weally has discovered a clue to the treasure—"

"He has," said Lowther seriously. "Wilkins and Gunny have seen it, I believe!"

"Bai Jove! Then—then why—"

"Ask him to show it you, old fellow," suggested Lowther. "If you're keen on finding the treasure—"

"I am certainly keen to join in the treasure-hunt if Gwunday weally has dropped on a clue," said Gussy decidedly. "Gwunday is a fearful ass, but it is vevy likely he weally has stumbled on the secwet by accident."

"Rats!" said Lowther, pretending to be sceptical. "I don't believe it is the real monks' treasure at all. If it was I should be on the job like a shot! Wouldn't you fellows?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Like a shot!" said Manners.

"You bet!" smiled Blake. "Still, there's never any knowing! They say it's the fools for luck, you know!"

"Get him to show you the chart, Gussy," suggested Lowther.

"Bai Jove, I weally think I will, you fellows!" said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "It is weally vevy swange. But a treasure-hunt would be fwightfully intewestin', y'know!"

And Arthur Augustus walked away after Grundy, who had started a heated argument with Wilkins and Gunn some yards distant.

"That's a good idea of Grundy's to form a combine," said Lowther, smiling. "Bet you two to one in doughnuts that dear old Gussy joins it!"

There were no takers. When they came to think of it

Tom Merry and the rest decided that the innocent and unsuspecting Arthur Augustus was the most likely fellow to offer Grundy his valuable aid in unearthing the treasure—apart from Baggy Trimble, that is!"

"Keep dark!" said Lowther. "The more legs there are to pull the more fun! Not a word, you fellows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The only fellows in the secret of the jape yet were the Terrible Three, Wilkins and Gunn, Bernard Glyn and Blake, Herries and Digby. The japers had decided it unwise to tell the noble Arthur Augustus. Not for the world would the well-meaning Arthur Augustus have given away the secret, of course—knowingly. But he was sadly apt, on occasion, to give away a secret all unknowingly, innocently, and unsuspectingly.

So Arthur Augustus went to Grundy, suspecting nothing, and with an open mind—a very open mind. And Blake was not at all surprised when, as they went into class again after the interval, Arthur Augustus told him that it was indeed a marvellous and remarkable discovery Grundy had made, and that he had decided to join the combine Grundy was forming.

Nor was he the only one who thought that and who had come to the same decision. Skimpole was interested from a scientific point of view, and he offered his services, as did Clarence York Tompkins, the duffer of the Fourth. Mellish also offered his help—from greed of gain. Mellish was a crafty youth, and though he was very suspicious that it was all spook, he took the chance. He was determined to do as little work as he could help, and, after all, Grundy was a wealthy chap, and there might be feeds, at least, for the treasure-hunters at his expense.

But those were the only fellows who did offer to join the treasure-hunting combine.

The remainder of the fellows smiled at Grundy's frantic efforts to get better material to help him than Gussy, Mellish, Skimpole, and Tompkins. They suspected a jape, and they were taking no chances. Naturally, Grundy did not show the chart to all and sundry—not likely; he was taking no chances of being "double-crossed," as he called it. It was only when Gussy & Co. had agreed to join the combine and been sworn to secrecy that Grundy showed them the chart.

Even Mellish was impressed then. His greedy eyes glistened, and he became very excited indeed.

So did Arthur Augustus, Skimpole, and Clarence York Tompkins.

At all events, Grundy had enlisted what he considered to be enough men to help him. They were not the sort of helpers he would like to have had—with the exception of Arthur Augustus, who would do his share of work, he knew. But they were all he could get, and he resigned himself to making the best of them.

Immediately school was dismissed the combine made by devious routes for the toolshed, where they commandeered spades, and then, with a great show of secrecy and caution, made for the ruins.

But their caution availed them little.

Grundy's treasure-hunt had aroused a great deal of interest, and, to the combine's disgust, quite a little crowd of grinning fellows came to watch them by the old tower.

Tom Merry & Co. went along—only Lowther being absent. Lowther had cut off to Rylcombe on his bicycle on a mysterious errand, as it happened. He was away nearly an hour, and when he returned he carried a bulky, square parcel which, after making sure he was unobserved, he hid behind the cycle-shed.

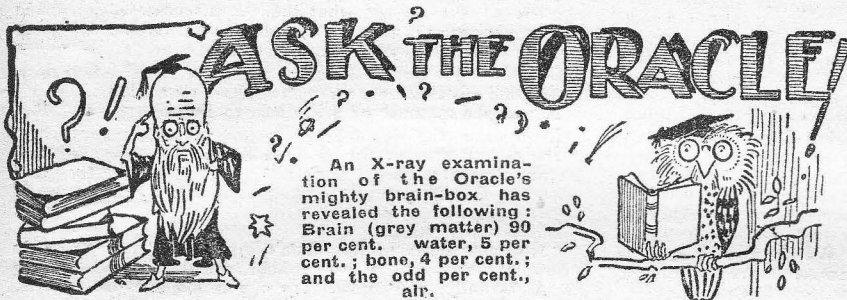
Then Monty Lowther went along to see how the work of excavating was progressing. He met Tom Merry and the rest of his chums just leaving the scene of operations in a laughing group.

Behind them came the treasure-hunters, carrying spades over their shoulders. All were red and dirty and perspiring. None of them looked very happy. Grundy was a hard task-master, and had kept them at it. Their hands were blistered, and they trudged wearily along at Grundy's heels, almost staggering under their spades. Grundy himself looked keen enough, but rather exasperated. The grinning onlookers had worried the workers very much, and George Alfred had found it necessary to rush from his labours to disperse the laughing, chipping crowd quite a number of times.

"Well, how are things going, Grundy?" called Monty cheerily. "Any luck yet?"

"Oh, shut up!"

(Continued on next page.)



An X-ray examination of the Oracle's mighty brain-box has revealed the following: Brain (grey matter) 99 per cent. water, 5 per cent.; bone, 4 per cent.; and the odd per cent., air.

Q. Who was Galileo?

A. A great astronomer and scientist, and the first man to turn a telescope towards the skies and learn some of the real secrets of the heavens. Among other wonderful things, Galileo—whose full name was Galileo Galilei—found that the moon was not smooth like a cheese, as had always been supposed, but that it had great hills and valleys like our own earth. For shattering some of the false teachings of Aristotle who lived 400 years B.C., he became greatly hated among men of his own time. When he said that the earth was round instead of flat, and that it moved round the sun, it was the last straw for the know-alls of the period. They took him before the Inquisition, and the luckless Galileo was thrown into prison. Galileo was born in Pisa, Italy, in 1564, and died in 1642 at seventy-eight years of age.

Q. Who founded Eton College?

A. Glad to answer "educational and erudite questions" as well as the others, "Inquirer," of Hornsey. Eton College was founded by King Henry VI, in the year 1440. With regard to your second question, there is no law to prevent you, a member of the Pipkin Road Mission Cricket Club, from wearing the Eton

colours in your tie. The colours, I believe, are light blue across a black ground, and I daresay the tie can be got for half-a-crown. But why the Eton colours? The colours of the M.C.C., the Guards or I Zingari are a deal smarter, and would doubtless impress your pals far more! But seriously, though, these things aren't done.

Q. How many new inventions were there last year?

A. My hat! Some of you fellows can sling in the giddy queries! No wonder my head is fast growing through the useful old thatch! My friend the Comptroller-General of Patents informs me, "Keen on Science," that no less than 38,556 applications were received by him for patents during the past year. Add to that a few million more inventions that their brainy sponsors couldn't afford to patent, and you will have a jolly good idea of the amount of inventing that goes on in these isles. Nor have I taken into account the inventions of our office boy for getting out of jobs of work and obtaining days off for the Derby and Test matches.

Q. Can a moth squeak?

A. A London schoolboy who signs himself, "Quick at Learning," has written to me as follows: "Old Tirrils, our

teacher, thinks he is a funny bloke and tries to make the clars lark at your expense, and in a tork about butterflies and sichlike he says there is a moth wot can squeek, and is it a fack or only a leg-pull, cos me and Charlie Higgins says their aint and it is all a myth about the moth." No, it is not all a myth about the moth, my chum. There is actually a British moth that can squeak—the Death's Head Hawk. It does seem a shame that they should have kept you four years in the second standard, but I do not think that this is due to any grudge that teacher may have against you, as you appear to think. Perhaps he can't bear the pain of parting.

Q. Is it true that the remains of a hippopotamus have been unearthed in a London suburb?

A. Yes, Thomas T. Your teacher was not pulling your leg, and you were unwise to make unpleasant noises in your throat that incurred his displeasure in class. The said remains were unearthed during excavation work in Ayleston Avenue, Brondesbury Park, London, N.W.

Q. What is a teredo?

A. A worm-like sea creature which is to be found practically all over the world. In size it varies from a few inches to two or three feet in length, and its head is so fitted that it can bore into wood like a gimlet. The teredo has done millions of pounds' worth of damage to ships, piers, breakwaters, and other things built of wood that float or rest in the sea. But it was discovered that the teredo hates iron rust, and by securing a coating of this over the wood, the pest is prevented from doing its stealthy damage.

Evidently Grundy was not in a communicative mood.

"We have had no luck yet, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus rather breathlessly. "The ground is vevy hard and stoney, and it is feanfully hard work."

"You've not given it up, Gussy?" asked Lowther.

"Not likely!" snorted Grundy. "You sheer off, Lowther!"

"Wathah not!" added Gussy. "We are just wushin' off to snatch some gwub at the tuckshop, Lowthah. Gwunday is tweatin' us."

"Can we all come?" asked Lowther.

"You'll get a thick ear if you do!" bawled Grundy wrathfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy and his fellow treasure-hunters housed their spades and hurried away to the tuckshop. Grundy had not wanted to take an interval of rest at all, but his men had insisted. They were hungry, as well as tired, and Grundy had realised that mutiny was imminent unless he did agree to a brief interval for refreshment and rest.

"Good!" murmured Lowther, his eyes gleaming as he looked after the treasure-hunters. "Now's my chance, you fellows. How deep have they got?"

"Four or five feet," grinned Tom Merry. "They wouldn't have got that far down if Grundy hadn't used his boot frequently!"

"Ripping!" said Lowther. "That's about far enough. You chaps can leave it to me."

"You've got it, then?"

"Just what I wanted—two beauties! I got two ripping iron boxes from that old iron dealer in Rylcombe. They look about a thousand years old, and they're just the things. I've tipped Grimy to hide one near the old oak opposite Abbey Island to be ready for us. I've got the other behind the bike-shed—a smaller one. I say, perhaps you'd better collar a spade and come and help, Tommy," added Lowther quickly. "I bet Grundy won't be long before he's back on the job."

"My hat! Yes, rather! You chaps can shove off!"

And Blake and the others "shoved off," to leave Tom Merry and Lowther to do the dark deed. Lowther recovered his parcel, while Tom Merry got two spades, and together they rushed off to the scene of the treasure-digging operations. With many chuckles, Blake and the other fellows "in the know" went indoors to get a hasty tea before returning to see the rest of the fun.

CHAPTER 7.

"Ye Fecond Clu."

"COME on!"

"Just another tart, Grundy!" pleaded Tompkins.

"Not one!" said Grundy firmly. "Dash it all, how can you expect to dig on jam-tarts? You've had more than enough already, and so's that greedy pig Mellish. Come on—time to get to work again."

"Lenme just finish this cheese-cake," said Mellish, grabbing one hurriedly. "I've only had—"

"Come on!" roared Grundy. "We've wasted enough valuable time, and— My hat! Someone may be on the job—trying to do us down for all we know! Come on!"

He almost plastered the cheese-cake over Mellish's features, collared him unceremoniously, and fairly hurled him out of the tuckshop.

"Dear me!" murmured Herbert Skimpole, shaking his head. "I fear you are a ruthless and rough taskmaster, my dear Grundy. I beg of you to exercise a trifle more restraint and— Yow!"

Skimpole leaped frantically for the door, just missing Grundy's boot as he went. Tompkins made a flying leap and followed. Arthur Augustus was already outside—the flesh-pots of Egypt never appealed overmuch to the noble Arthur Augustus.

Grundy followed them out, and fairly rushed them back to the old round tower that formed part of the ruins of the ancient monastic establishment of St. James'. The sudden fear that some unprincipled villains might be taking advantage of their absence to dig for the treasure—his treasure!—had made Grundy quite agitated.

But to his relief they found the spot deserted, and everything—apparently—as they had left it.

"Blessed if I don't think the dashed hole gets smaller instead of bigger," said Mellish sulkily. "Look here, Grundy—why not knock off until to-morrow?"

"What? Why, you lazy worm, I'll—"

"Oh, all right!" gasped Mellish hastily.

He had already come into painful contact with Grundy's ready boot, and he did not want to repeat the experience. Grundy's helpers were keen enough—to find the treasure; but they were finding the work more than a strain. They set to work again under Grundy's watchful eye.

"Grundy's getting a bit softer," said Tompkins thankfully.

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"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I noticed that, deah boy. I am jollay glad!"

They were glad, little dreaming why the ground had suddenly become softer. As it had been dug up and replaced a few minutes ago by Lowther and Tom Merry, however, it was not difficult to understand!

The workers toiled on apace. Presently the outsiders who were interested in the treasure-hunt began to turn up again, having disposed of a hasty tea. Tom Merry came along with Lowther first—they had been hiding twenty yards away as a matter of fact. Then Blake and the rest arrived.

"My hat!" said Jack Blake, with a chuckle. "They're fairly making the soil fly now, chaps. Go it, you cripples! There's gold in Australia, at all events. You'll come to that in time, if you come to nothing else!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Clank!

"Bai Jove!"

"Wha-what was that?" ejaculated Grundy.

A strange, metallic clink had sounded from underneath the spade Arthur Augustus was wielding.

There was a buzz.

Arthur Augustus, with a strange thrill going through him, struck again with his spade.

Clank!

"Bai Jove!"

"Great Scott!" yelled Grundy. "What is it, D'Arcy?"

"Bai Jove. It sounds like iron, deah boy! I do believe it is a box, or somethin', Gwunday! I do weally twust— Yawwoogh! Gweat Scott! Ow-ow!"

In his excited eagerness, Grundy, who was standing outside the excavation at the moment taking a rest, had slipped down the side of the hole and fallen on top of Gussy.

They rolled over together in the bottom of the hole, with soil still cascading over them from the sides of the excavation.

The delighted onlookers howled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy and D'Arcy howled in a different manner. But at last they sorted themselves out, and then, after removing soil from their eyes and mouths, and from down the backs of their necks, the combine set to work with a will.

Undoubtedly the spade had struck something interesting.

Grundy had ordered Skimpole and Mellish and Tompkins out of the way, while he and Arthur Augustus wielded their spades.

The excitement grew as the outlines of a box were exposed—a rusty old iron box it seemed.

Grundy was fairly shaking with uncontrollable excitement, and his followers were in a similar state.

It was the moment of a lifetime to them.

Even from the doubters and scoffers came murmurs of surprise and amazement as the old iron box was dug out. Arthur Augustus raised aloft his spade, intending to smash open the lid—it certainly looked as if a hefty smite would do it.

But Grundy yelled.

"No, you born idiot! Don't, you ass! I'm going to present that box to the school museum—presented by G. A. Grundy, you know. It's a genuine antique, and no mistake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and the fellows in the know simply could not help roaring at that.

But Grundy was serious enough. All he wanted was the treasure and the glory of having found it. As Lowther had only given sixpence for that box, Grundy's intention struck the japers as very funny indeed.

With trembling fingers, Grundy fumbled with the rusty fastenings of the lid. The box was quite small, and even Grundy was looking a bit disappointed now, while Mellish looked quite sulky and disgusted.

Tom Merry & Co. looked on, with expectant smiles.

Grundy got the rusty fastening undone at last, and managed to raise the lid an inch. Then he inserted the blade of his spade and carefully prised up the lid, amid a deep hush of expectation.

It came up and fell back at last, and the contents of the old box was exposed.

A gasp came from Grundy—a deep gasp of dismay, followed by similar gasps from his helpers. The box seemed empty, though—

What was that?

Even as the sudden disappointment came over Grundy his heart leaped.

There was something in the box. At the bottom lay a sheet of yellow paper, soiled and time-worn.

"Bai Jove!"

Grundy took it out with fingers that trembled. Once again the spirits of the treasure-seekers arose; once again came that expectant hush.

On the sheet of paper were a few words in faded ink—or what appeared to be faded ink.

That was all. But they were enough for Grundy, for they read as follows:

"YE FECOND CLU.
BY YE WATER FEEK YE. ONNE HUNDREDD
PACEF EAFT FROMM YE ROUND TOWER, AND
YE FHALL FIND."

"Bai Jove!" Grundy's face lit up with renewed excitement. Arthur Augustus, Clarence York Tompkins, Percy Mellish, and Herbert Skimpole crowded round him, and their eyes gleamed anew as they read the quaint message inscribed on the faded yellow paper.

As Grundy had carefully explained to his men that in days of old a letter "f" was used for an "s," they easily understood the message.

"Terrible spellers in those days!" exclaimed Grundy breathlessly. "Even the educated monks couldn't spell for toffee, you know. Look how they spell 'paces'! Any kid nowadays knows it should be spelled with an 's' instead of a 'c'—P-A-S-E-S."

"Bai Jove! Weally, Gwunday—" "Let's have a squint," put in Levison curiously. "Yes; let's all have a squint, Grundy!" called Lowther. "It'll be a lesson in spelling, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Cackling dummies!" said Grundy, his voice quite husky. "Think I'm letting everybody see a thing like this! Not likely! This scrap of mouldy old paper," he added, tapping the yellowish document impressively, "is worth a fortune. Well, you chaps," he went on, this time addressing the rest of the combine, "we've got to continue the search farther afield now. I never expected to lift the treasure quite so easily. Those monks knew what they were doing. I shouldn't be surprised if we had to rake up no end of further clues before we do get it. Well, a fellow can't expect to pick up a fortune without effort."

"Wathah not," said Arthur Augustus, wiping the perspiration from his aristocratic brow. "Bai Jove! This is vewy intewestin' indeed. I feel quite thwilled, deah boys! Luckily, it's a half-holiday to-morrow, so we shall be able to pursue our investigations then, Gwunday."

"What!" Grundy glared at him. "To-morrow? You footling idiot!" he bawled. "Think I'm waiting until to-morrow? Bosh! To-morrow fiddlesticks! We're going right away, my pippins! Plenty of time before lock-up, isn't there, ass? In fact, what's lock-up? What are thumping school rules when a fortune's at stake—eh? Are you potty?"

"Bai Jove! Vewy well, deah boy; I am quite weady for anythin', though my hands are weally in a dreadful state and vewy painful indeed."

"Mine are covered with blisters!" groaned Mellish. "But—but I'm game to go on!"

And the eyes of the cad of the Fourth gleamed with greed. After all, what were blisters and aching limbs when a fortune was at stake?

Skimpole and Tompkins also were in agreement. Much as they would like to have taken a long rest, the alluring prospect of treasure trove—almost within their grasp now—lured them on, despite their aching bodies and burning hands.

"Right!" said Grundy. "Matter of fact, I'll jolly soon see that you come, whether you want to or not! Anyway, leave this dashed hole as it is; we can easily fill it in again. In any case, nobody ever comes round here. Hallo! There's those cads Wilky and Gunn. Hi, Wilky, and you, Gunny, just take this box up to our study!"

"Eh?" "Mind you take care of it!" said Grundy, placing the "clue" in his pocket carefully and beginning to brush the dirt from his clothes briskly. "Now, you fellows, I'm ready. We'll want a boat from the boathouse, of course."

"A boat! My hat, he's going after the treasure in a boat!" said Monty Lowther. "Grundy, you've given the giddy game away! The treasure's on Abbey Island, then?"

"Just the very place!" said Tom Merry. "Thanks for the tip, Grundy! We'll come along to see the fun—I mean, the progress of the operations!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!" Grundy glared.

"Think you're clever, don't you?" he snorted. "Well, you're wrong. Think the blessed monks would cart the treasure all the way to Abbey Island?"

"Bai Jove! Then where is it?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus unguardedly. "The only othah wound tow—"

"Shurrup!" hooted Grundy, interrupting D'Arcy in time. "Don't tell these rotters! Think we want them hanging round cackling like a lot of hens! Think I don't know what that clue means! It's the very place I might have expected, in fact! Abbey Island! Tosh! Why, it's nearly a mile from here, while the— But come on!" added

Grundy hurriedly. "Collar those spades, and come on—sharp!"

"Oh, my hat!" mumbled Monty Lowther. The japer seemed to be quite taken aback by Grundy's remarks. Tom Merry and the rest of the conspirators also looked taken aback. Grundy & Co. shouldered their spades, and, followed by a chorus of chuckles, trudged off, apparently bound for the boathouse.

"Well, I'm blown!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "Done in the eye, after all, chaps! Where on earth does the born idiot think he's going after it now? The giddy clue was plain enough. There's only one round tower in the giddy district, and that's on Abbey Island."

"You never know with Grundy!" chuckled Blake. "His mind doesn't work like ordinary common or garden minds. I expect he— Oh, my sainted Sam! I've got it! He must think it means that giddy ornamental tower in the gardens of the Grange!"

"Wha-at? Oh, my hat! That's it!" "That's it for a pension!" gurgled Monty Lowther, as enlightenment came to him. "Oh, of all the—the—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tom Merry & Co. howled. "You've hit it, Blake!" said Tom Merry, wiping his eyes. "The tower's right at the bottom of the garden lawn—nearly at the edge of the river. Grundy would want to get to it by boat, of course."

"But—but that tower's not very old," said Herries, who was always rather slow at grasping things. "It's nothing like as old as the ruined tower on Abbey Island."

"Of course it isn't!" gurgled Lowther. "But Grundy never does see things like that. I expect it was built when Rylcombe Grange was built—about the time of George I. I should think. Still, it's a round tower, and that's enough for Grundy."

(Continued on next page.)



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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it mucks up the jape!" objected Digby, with a chuckle. "If you hide the treasure on Abbey Island, Lowther—"

"Plenty of time for that," said Lowther. "Let Grundy go ahead."

"But—"

"Don't you see?" choked Monty Lowther. "Grundy means to go digging on Colonel Bland's land, and you know what a crusty old fire-eater the giddy colonel is. And—and—haven't you worked it out? A hundred paces east of the square tower will just about land them in the centre of the colonel's lawn!"

"Oh! Oh, my only hat!"

"And Grundy will go digging the lawn up!" gurgled Lowther. "Think of it! Four chaps with four spades—four idiots digging up the colonel's lawn! It overlooks the river, you know, though it's at the side of the house! Talk about fireworks—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But Grundy wouldn't dare," suggested Herries.

"Dare?" echoed Tom Merry, almost hysterically.

"Grundy would dare anything when he's out for blood. Remember there's a fortune at stake—he said so himself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We mustn't miss this for worlds!" said Lowther. "After it's all over—that is, if Grundy still lives or isn't in the cottage hospital—we'll just drop the hint to him gently that it's really the round tower on Abbey Island the clue indicates. He'll swear he knew that all the time, of course. But we won't argue that point with him. And now let's get off up river after them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the japers of the School House made tracks for the boathouse in the wake of George Alfred and his enthusiastic band of treasure-hunters.

CHAPTER 8.

No Treasure—Only Trouble!

"BUCK up!"

"Weally, Gwunday—"

"Get a move on!"

"Look here, Grundy—"

"Get down to it!" snorted Grundy, leaning back comfortably in the stern of the skiff. "Blessed if you don't row like a sack of potatoes, Mellish! Now, Gussy, never mind your dashed eyeglass! Stick it in your thumping pocket, if it keeps dropping out, or throw it overboard!"

"Bai Jove! Weally, Gwunday—"

"Don't gas and don't argue," said Grundy. "I hate fellows who argue and talk too much. This isn't an election meeting or a fashion parade. Skimpole, you duffer, sit still! Tompkins, you're not here to look pretty. Stop staring about like an old cow, and attend to your steering. You'll have us in the bank in a minute."

"Bai Jove!"

Grundy was undoubtedly a harsh and trying taskmaster. Though the summer afternoon was drawing in, the sun was still hot, and at the sculls Arthur Augustus and Mellish strained and toiled, perspiration streaming down their heated faces. They would have enjoyed nothing better than throwing George Alfred overboard.

They felt thankful they had not far to go.

All the same, they could not help feeling that if they wanted to find the treasure they would be better employed going further still—up to Abbey Island. Arthur Augustus had doubted Grundy's theory that the tower indicated on the yellowish document was the tower standing in the grounds of the old Grange. He had mentioned his doubt to Grundy several times. But Grundy would have none of it. He knew, and he hated a fellow who argued.

Mellish, Skimpole, and even the meek and inoffensive Tompkins, had also expressed their doubts on the subject of the clue, and tried to argue with the great George Alfred. But it was useless—indeed, dangerous. Grundy had threatened to present a thick ear to the next member of the combine who dared to attempt to renew the argument.

Grundy knew. The old round tower in the Rylcombe Grange Gardens was near "ye wate," and it was very near to the monastery of St. James—much nearer than was the ruined tower on Abbey Island. Was it likely, argued Grundy, that the monks were such asses as to cart it all that way up-river? Certainly not.

As for being afraid of Colonel Bland. My hat! Afraid of a mere row when a fortune was at stake! Didn't explorers and treasure-seekers always have to face danger, even death, cheerfully for the sake of gold and glory? Piffle!

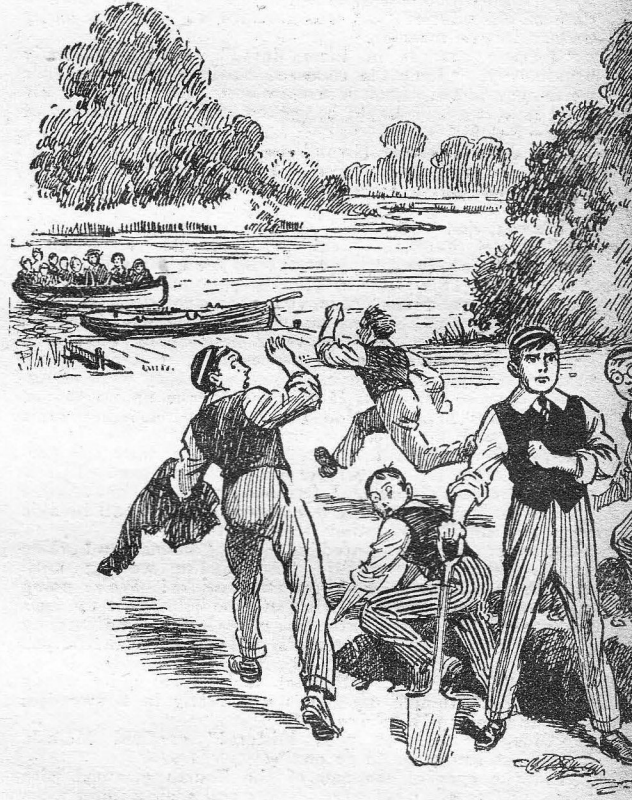
So Grundy argued with his wavering band of treasure-hunters, though he was a fellow who hated a fellow who argued.

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But Grundy's followers were not convinced. They still believed the tower in question was the ruined tower on Abbey Island, and they still felt qualms as they reflected upon the possibility of Colonel Bland turning up during the digging operations. The colonel was a very irritable and cross-grained old gentleman. Moreover, he was a governor of St. Jim's—rather an important point to remember.

There was no turning back, however. Whether there was a fortune at stake or whether there wasn't, there was obviously going to be no turning back for Grundy's Combine. Grundy had promised a first-class licking to the first fellow who breathed a word about turning back!

Therefore, it was to do or die for Arthur Augustus, Skimpole, Mellish, and Tompkins!



The tower was already in sight upstream. The sun glistened redly on the stonework and on the trees surrounding it. Behind rose the Grange, just visible through the trees. Probably the tower had been built as a sort of watch-tower in troublous times. Possibly it had been a mere whim of the builder of the Grange, and had been erected to add grace and dignity to the property.

At all events, there it was, and George Alfred Grundy's eyes gleamed as he gazed at it.

"A hundred paces!" he murmured. "Lemme see. That'll about bring us in the middle of the lawn. Good! No need to damage any of the silly old buffer's flower-beds—not that it matters in a case like this. I expect the colonel will be as pleased as punch at the treasure being found on his land. He'll be no end bucked, though I hope he won't start any silly arguments about the treasure being his just because it was on his land. Like his cheek if he does!"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that, Gwunday," said Arthur Augustus, ceasing to row. "But—but weally, Gwunday, I have been wathah worried about that point. I have heard somewhere, sometime or othah, that the

Government is entitled to claim treasure twice, or part of it, at least."

"Rot!"

"Bai Jove! What—"

"Bunkum! Bosh!" said Grundy. "I shan't allow anything of the kind. If I find it the treasure's mine, and blow the Government and blow old Bland! Like his cheek if he does try any games like that on us. Anyway, here we are. Pull in, and don't gas so much, D'Arcy!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus started to pull in, with the help of Mellish, though Arthur Augustus thought his help a hindrance. From the flower-beds close to the side wall of the old house the lawn stretched down to the river's edge,

Colonel Bland gave one long glare at the sight of George Alfred Grundy and his followers digging a hole in the middle of his lawn, and then a roar of mingled rage and amazement burst from him. "Good gad! What—what—HI! You young scoundrels." "Bai Jove!" "Look out! The colonel!" As the old warrior rushed towards them with a dog-whip in his hand the Juniors, with the exception of Grundy, took to their heels and flew! (See Chapter 8.)



where a smart little motor-boat was moored at the jetty. It all looked very neat and tidy, and the grass looked like green velvet.

More than one of the treasure-seekers couldn't help wondering whether the colonel would feel so "bucked" at having his lawn dug up, even to find an ancient treasure.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, shaking his head as he blinked over the quiet, peaceful scene. "I weally do think, Gwunday, that we had better ask the colonel's permission first, you know. I wathah fancy—"

"Oh, will you dry up?" snorted Grundy, in sulphurous accents. "My hat! I never saw such a funky lot in my life! Fat lot of good you'd be on a perilous expedition into the wilds after treasure, when you're funkng a peaceful, simple bit of a job like this. Bah! Jump ashore. Here, don't forget the dashed spades!"

"Bai Jove! Pway do not make such a wow, Gwunday. I hate bein' woahed at, and the colonel might heah."

"Oh, dry up! Ring off! Cheese it! Blessed if I ever— Oh, blow! Here's those cackling fools after us again!"

Grundy had just sighted a boat coming upstream. In it

were the Terrible Three, Blake, Herries, and Digby, and Glyn, Wilkins, and Gunn.

They stopped rowing in mid-stream, and Grundy glowered out across the gleaming river at them. How they had guessed his destination he could not imagine.

"Clear off!" he bawled.

Then he turned to superintend operations. Apparently he took it for granted that his word would be obeyed at once. The spades were lifted ashore, and Arthur Augustus tied up the boat to the jetty. He tied it very loosely. Possibly he fancied they might find it necessary to rush off with the treasure in a hurry—possibly he did not think it necessary to tie it very securely.

The treasure-seekers then started up the grassy slope, with their spades over their shoulders.

Grundy left them presently, and strode across to the old tower. A white, iron rail separated the lawn from the little wooded hill on which the old tower stood.

He vaulted the rails and soon reached the tower. He stood reflecting for some moments, and then, having decided the problem as to which was east and which was west, he started to pace off the ground.

It was rather difficult work in the undergrowth, but it was only a matter of a few yards, and the going was easier on the smooth turf.

Grundy stopped at last, and nodded, after a calculating glance about him.

"Here we are," he declared. "One hundred paces exact."

His fellow treasure-hunters approached, trying to keep one eye on Grundy and the other on the house. Fortunately, no windows overlooked that part, but there was always the possibility of someone appearing suddenly round the corner, and a still more likely possibility of Grundy's brazen voice being heard.

Mellish looked as if he was ready to bolt at any moment.

"Bai Jove!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "I should think it will be a vevy difficult mattah to find the exact spot after all these centuwies, Gwunday. We may have to dig up the whole lawn, deah boy. Colonel Bland will stwongly object to that I am quite—"

"Rot! Arguing again?"

"Wathah not. But—"

"Dry up! Think I don't know what I'm about?" snorted Grundy, who seemed quite sure of himself. "Here is the exact spot."

He rammed his spade into the turf to show the exact spot. "One hundred paces due east," he said loftily. "I've measured it off. Now, get down to it!"

They got down to it, Grundy himself cutting the first turf, so to speak. The die being cast, the others gripped their spades desperately and followed his example.

From the river came a subdued cheer mingled with laughter. The beginning of operations had quite cheered up Tom Merry & Co., who were getting rather bored, not being able to hear Grundy's illuminating remarks—or not many of them.

The digging went on apace.

Grundy talked all the time—chiefly on the subject of himself and what he intended doing with the treasure when he got it. He mentioned motor-bikes, motor-cars, world tours, and how he'd always longed to buy a schooner and sail the South Seas in search of further treasure.

Under this entrancing conversation his somewhat fed-up helpers gained renewed strength and courage. They remembered the treasure and the things they had already—privately—decided they would buy with their share of it. The fear of Colonel Bland appearing gradually faded at the thought of motor-bikes and wireless sets and unlimited tuck.

Once the turf was churned up the soil fairly began to fly.

"Getting on splendidly!" gasped Grundy, pausing to wipe away the beads of perspiration from his heated features. "Go on—cackle!" he bawled, turning to shake a fist at the laughing juniors in the boat which had now drawn in close to the stage at the bottom of the garden. "Go on; you'll laugh on the other side of your faces soon! You mark my words!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cackling asses!" grunted Grundy, resuming work again. "Never mind them chaps. They'll be green with envy soon. My hat, it's warm work!"

"Better take a west," suggested Arthur Augustus, raising a crimson and streaming face. "Bai Jove, it's feahfully warm! And this is vevy dirty work, Gwunday. I am thankful I changed into this old suit, you know."

"You'll have no old suits soon," said Grundy carelessly. "You'll be able to have a Bond Street shop of your own, Gussy. That's about the height of your ambition, ain't it? And Mellish will be able to pay chaps to sneak for him; and Skimmy here will be in a position to pay chaps to

hear him spout on Determinism, and Tompkins will be able to pay chaps to fight for him—what?"

Grundy held out these entrancing prospects in the hope of encouraging his fellow members of the combine still more. They needed encouragement a little now. It was undoubtedly warm work. The sun was hot, and they were sticky with perspiration and dirt. They were aching all over, and their hands were blistered and sore. They felt they could not hold out much longer—even Grundy looked tired.

But the hole was growing.

It was quite four feet deep now. But it was not written in the book of fate that it should be dug deeper.

The interruption they had feared—and forgotten, and which Tom Merry & Co. were beginning to think would never come, came quite suddenly, startling, and alarming. Round the corner of the house strolled an elderly gentleman with a rather light, check suit, a very red face, and fierce white whiskers.

It was Colonel Bland, the owner of the Grange!

The treasure-hunters did not see him for a moment, but they soon heard and saw him.

The choleric old colonel gave one long glare at the scene, and then a roar of mingled rage and utter amazement burst from him.

"Good gad! What—what— Hi, you! Hi, you young scoundrels! Good gad! What—what— Good gad! Hi, hi! What in the name of thunder—"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"The colonel!"

"Great pip! Look out!"

"Stand your ground!" bawled Grundy. "Never mind the old buffer! I'll explain—I'll explain!"

But the others did not stand their ground. They left George Alfred Grundy to explain. The sight of the old warrior rushing towards them with a dogwhip in his hand overcame the inducement of the thoughts of motor-bikes, world-tours, and unlimited tuck.

They flew!

"Go it, chaps!" yelled Tom Merry, from the river. "Come on, Grundy, you idiot!"

Now matters began to look serious, Tom Merry, at least, was beginning to regret this part of the jape. If any of them were caught—

But regrets were rather late now. In any case, Grundy was not the fellow to obey or take advice from anyone.

He stood his ground.

The colonel pounded up, his eyes nearly starting from his head, his moustaches fairly bristling with rage as he sighted the piled-up earth and the excavation.

Really it was no wonder Colonel Bland looked as if he was angry.

CHAPTER 9.

Grundy's New Theory!

"**H**OLD on, sir!" exclaimed Grundy. "Stop! I want to explain, Colonel— Here— Yoooooooh!"

Grundy's wild howl was enough to waken the celebrated Seven Sleepers. It rang over the river, and echoed and re-echoed through the dim woods.

A wrathful slash with a dog-whip was no joke; it was enough to make anyone howl, in fact. Grundy got it across his broad shoulders, and he howled.

"Dig my lawn up, would you?" roared the colonel, fairly spluttering with rage. "Upon my word! G-good gad! Ruined my turf! Take that, and that!"

Whack, whack!

"Yarrooooh Yoooooop! I tell you— Hold on, sir! I'll—yoooooop!—explain. Oh crumbs! I'll—Yarrooooh!" roared Grundy, wriggling as the colonel's clutch fell upon him. "I tell you you don't—ow-yow!—understand why— Yoooooop! Oh crickey!"

It was really too much for George Alfred, stout-hearted as he was. It was clear that Colonel Bland refused to hear him explain the facts of the case. After all, apart from the treasure itself, Grundy believed they were doing a praiseworthy and public-spirited action in finding it. Once the colonel understood that, Grundy felt quite certain it would be quite all right.

But, unfortunately, the colonel refused to listen to the explanation. It would have to be done at a more suitable moment. The old buffer was not in the mood to hear it now—and his dogwhip was decidedly painful.

In the sad circumstances there was only one thing for Grundy to do, and he did it.

He made a desperate wrench, tore himself free, and took to his heels.

Colonel Bland, with amazing agility for his years and bulk, tore after him, lashing out with his dog-whip. Obviously, the old gentleman had lost his temper—badly.

The sight of him was too much for Mellish, who had

been holding on to the staging. As the colonel came pounding down scarcely a yard behind the fleeing George Alfred, Mellish gave a gasp of alarm and pushed off desperately.

Unfortunately, it was just as Grundy made a flying leap for the boat that he lost his nerve and pushed off.

The next moment—

Splash!

Grundy was in. A great, high fountain of river water showed where he had gone.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, who had just grabbed the skulls. "Mellish, you fearful coward, why didn't you wait another moment for him? Now— Oh, bai Jove!"

It almost seemed for the moment as if the old gentleman was about to follow Grundy's example and jump into the river, so great was his excitement and wrath. But, fortunately for himself, he pulled up on the brink of the staging, roaring and stamping and waving his arms with rage.

"Better rescue Grundy!" gasped Tom Merry, who was nearly weeping with merriment. "Oh, my stars. I shall die of laughing if Grundy keeps this up much longer! Pull in, chaps—sharp!"

By the look of things, Grundy would drown before his own boat could reach him. Tompkins had quite lost his head, and while Arthur Augustus was trying to back the boat towards Grundy, he was trying to pull it round, and great confusion was the result.

But, luckily, Tom Merry & Co. were at hand.

They forged up swiftly, and, leaning over the side of the skiff, Jack Blake took a strong grip of Grundy's wet hair, while Manners inserted a boat-hook in his jacket.

With all lending a hand excepting Tom at the skulls, they hauled the drenched and gasping Grundy aboard. Then Tom pulled swiftly out into the river.

A roar of wrath followed from the staging where Colonel Bland still danced about helplessly.

"The old gent will have a fit if he keeps on!" commented Monty Lowther huskily. "I really don't wonder he was waxy, though. Still, with a fortune at stake— What's that, Grundy?"

"G-gug-groooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy sat up in the bottom of the boat. He gasped, and he choked, and he spluttered.

"Ow!" he gurgled. "Ow-ow! Grooogh!"

"Feeling better, old fellow?"

"Ow-ow! Gug-gug-gug! That awful old rotter! Groooogh! Wouldn't—groooogh!—listen, the old fool! Ow-ow! Hit me with his—grooogh!—dog-whip, you know-me! Must be—must be mad! Ow-ow! I wish I'd stopped and—ow-ow—licked him, old as he is!" gurgled Grundy.

They pulled out of range of Colonel Bland's voice at last. In the second boat, Arthur Augustus and Mellish had managed to get going now, and they followed rather erratically.

Grundy staggered up, and dropped on to the thwart, water streaming from his clothes.

"Any luck, Grundy?" asked Lowther.

"Oh, shut up!" panted Grundy. "My hat! Would you—ow—believe it? That old fool must be absolutely potty. Just because we were obliged to dig a hole in his mouldy old lawn! Of course, I'll admit he didn't understand the real position! Still, he'd no right to lay into a fellow with a dog-whip! I've a jolly good mind to report him to the Head for attacking a St. Jim's fellow."

"Oh, my hat!"

"But I'll make allowances for his being a crusty old fool!" said Grundy, still panting wheezily. "Look here, you fellows join me, and we'll go back; between us we ought to handle that old buffer and put him in his place. I can't rely on those funky asses behind. You see how they let me down."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing doing, old bean!"

"Rather not!"

"Wouldn't take the glory from you for worlds, Grundy."

"Cackling rotters!" grunted Grundy. He sat frowning deeply for some moments, whilst the juniors watched him smilingly. Evidently Grundy's great and powerful mind was working on a problem. He looked up at last. "I've been thinking things over," he said at last. "That wasn't the spot at all. In fact—"

"I knew you were on the wrong trail," commented Lowther, winking at his grinning chums. "It's the round tower on Abbey Island, of course! This tower was built ages after the monks hid their giddy treasure—if ever there was any!"

"Eh? What utter rot!" snorted Grundy. "Take me for a fool, Lowther? I'll admit I've been wrong in my calculations, though."

"You admit that—you?"

"Well, yes! Thinking it over, I don't believe it was

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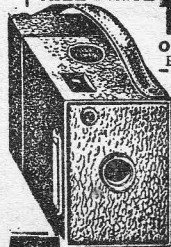
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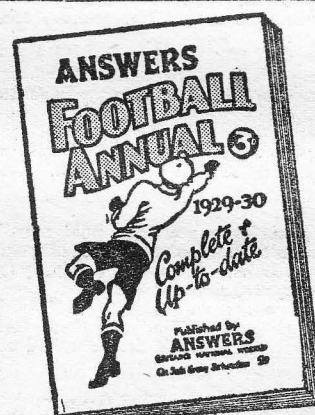
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GRUNDY'S TREASURE HUNT!

(Continued from page 16.)

hidden under the lawn there at all. Stands to reason they'd have left some mark, some sign to mark the spot, you know. Above the spot where the clue was buried at St. Jim's they carved an arrow on the stonework of the tower, pointing downwards, you know."

Lowther chuckled. As he himself had carved that arrow and rubbed dirt over it to make it look old, he rather doubted the statement.

"Told you it was meant for Abbey Island!" he said.

"Eh? Don't talk rot! I don't believe it was buried at all," explained Grundy, his eyes beginning to gleam again. "I've just worked it all out. They sunk it in the river!"

"Wha-what?"

"The river—just opposite the tower there," said Grundy, turning and pointing behind towards the Grange tower. "I don't mind telling you fellows—I know you wouldn't double-cross a chap. It said on that paper 'By ye water seek ye!' What they really meant was 'In ye water seek ye!' See! And the hundred paces they said from the tower was just a blind to throw people off the scent. They meant a hundred yards out into the river!"

"Oh, my sainted Sam!"

Lowther was quite overcome by Grundy's powerful reasoning. It was really amazing how Grundy worked things out to his own satisfaction as he did.

"I see it all now," said Grundy. "In fact, I always did hold the theory that the legend of the stuff being sunk in the Rhyl was the correct one. Well, this has been a bit of a set-back. But a fellow after treasure has to take risks of things working out badly. I know exactly where I am now, and can go to work accordingly."

"Oh! Ah! Yes, old chap! What's the next move, Grundy?"

"Eh? Oh, grappling irons!"

"Wha-at?"

"Grappling irons!" repeated Grundy triumphantly.

"Things you drag the river with, of course. There are some in the boat-house store-room, if I remember rightly. I shall borrow them. It'll be a long job, I expect, but we've time yet to do a bit this evening. In any case, blow lock-up, and blow school! I shall soon be able to tell Dr. Holmes and Railton to go to pot!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Grappling's rather a long job!" said Grundy. "But we may have luck right away. If that fails, I may have to engage a diver!"

"A whatter?"

"Diver! But I'm hoping it won't be necessary. Buck up and pull down to the boathouse as fast as you can. No time to be lost."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Here, Grundy, you can transfer to your own boat now," said Tom faintly. "I—I can't stand much more of you, old chap. Sorry, but there it is. Wait for Gussy, you fellows. I think we'll pull upstream for a bit!"

"Hope you'll be at work when we come back," said Lowther affably. "Cheerio, Grundy! Mind you don't fall in again and get your feet wet. And don't drag the bed of the river up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, dry up, you cackling dummies!" sniffed Grundy.

The two boats touched, and Grundy transferred his drenched person, Arthur Augustus and the rest looking none too pleased. In fact, but for his agreement with Grundy and the combine in general, Gussy would undoubtedly have transferred to Tom Merry's boat and told Grundy to keep his treasure.

But Gussy was loyal to his word and, tired and weary and fed-up as he was, he stuck to the combine.

The two boats parted, Grundy & Co. going back to the boathouse for the grappling irons, and Tom Merry & Co. making their way upstream for a little exercise in the hope that the treasure-hunters would be at work on their return.

It was a hope that was fated to be realised.

CHAPTER 10.

A Little Accident!

"HI!" Tom Merry & Co. looked round in startled surprise.

It was getting on for lock-up, and the juniors had just turned the boat, having decided it time to return home in any case.

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They were just opposite the Abbey Island at the moment, and that frantic hail certainly came from the thickly wooded island.

Moreover, there was something curiously familiar about the hail.

"That sounds like—Phew! It is!" gasped Manners. "It's dear old Baggy. Well, of all the queer things!"

The juniors stared across at the island. At the edge of the water, just through the fringe of shrubs, showed a short, fat form. It was undoubtedly Baggy Trimble. He was jumping about and waving his arms frantically to call their attention.

"What on earth is he doing there at this time?" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Looks to me as if he's marooned there. Did you ever!"

Monty Lowther gave an explosive chuckle.

"Don't you spot the game?" he gurgled. "Well, this is rich! Trimble's after the treasure, of course!"

"What? Oh, great pip! Of course!"

Tom Merry saw it all now—they all saw it.

"Trimble was there when Grundy unearthed the clue!" said Lowther. "In fact, he's been booted by Grundy no end of times for hanging round."

"Yes, but he would have followed Grundy—"

"I don't know. He's a crafty owl—a bit more cute than Grundy. He may have heard something—or he may have seen that giddy clue! I remember he vanished suddenly just as Grundy and his men started for the boat-house. He'd think Grundy was going to Abbey Island and he went off to get there first."

"Ha, ha! That's it, you bet!"

It certainly seemed like it.

They pulled into the island. Trimble was looking quite pale and in a frantic state of mind.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Thank goodness! I thought I was booked to stay here all night, you fellows. And with that rotten poacher hanging around—"

"Eh? What the thump do you mean, Trimble? How on earth did you get here? Where's your boat?"

"It's drifted away, or else it's been stolen," said Trimble, his fat features still showing the scare he had had. "I left the boat drawn up safely—at least, I think I did. But when I came back it had gone. I've been waiting here for ages for some of you fellows to come along. I expected Grundy to come—I—I mean I didn't expect Grundy to come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you think I thought Grundy was coming here—"

"We do—we do!" grinned Lowther. "You heard what Grundy said, what? And you thought the giddy treasure—"

"Not at all. I didn't hear Grundy mention a boat at all, nor did I hear Gussy mention the round tower. As for me being at that little window watching them digging by the tower," said Trimble, "that's all rot! I wasn't there at all, and I didn't even get a glimpse of the paper."

"So that's it!" chuckled Tom Merry. "I see now. You were inside the old tower, you fat ass! And you peeped through and saw what was on the paper."

"Not at all. Nothing of the kind. I didn't even know there was a paper or a clue."

"What?"

The juniors stared at Trimble. They understood now. The fat Fourth-Former had been hiding in the tower. And they remembered that the treasure-seekers had been digging just below that little window, and that Grundy had read the message found in the box when standing with his back to the window.

And Trimble's keen, eager eyes had glimpsed it.

If they wanted any proof of that the sight of the soil on Trimble's person and especially his boots settled the matter.

Trimble had been digging—there was little doubt about that. He looked absolutely done up, too. Evidently he had not spared himself in his frantic desire to get the treasure before Grundy & Co. came along.

As they understood, Tom Merry & Co. doubled up and howled with laughter.

Trimble glowered at them. He was disappointed with the result of his labours—bitterly disappointed. And only sheer fatigue had made him realise it was getting late, and wonder what had happened to delay Grundy & Co.

He had given it up at last when he could dig no more, and he had trudged back to where he had left the boat.

Then he made the dreadful discovery. The boat was gone. He was marooned on Abbey Island with its ghosts of the dead past amid its eerie ruins.

But here were Tom Merry & Co. at last, and he was safe enough now. Really, Baggy Trimble might have looked more thankfully at his rescuers.

"You needn't cackle, you silly owls!" he said wrathfully. "I tell you you're mistaken. I—I came here to—to have

a stroll round. I'm awfully interested in old ruins and things like that. Anyway, I've had an awful time. I thought I was booked to stay here the night."

"But you must have come in a boat!" laughed Tom Merry. "Where is it, ass?"

"That's what I want to know!" grunted Trimble, clambering into Tom Merry & Co.'s craft. "I bet that rotten poacher's collared it!"

"What poacher?" demanded Tom, staring.

"An awful-looking ruffian he was!" said Baggy. "Scoundrel all over! Fairly glared at me when I refused to row him across!"

"Across? What the thump—"

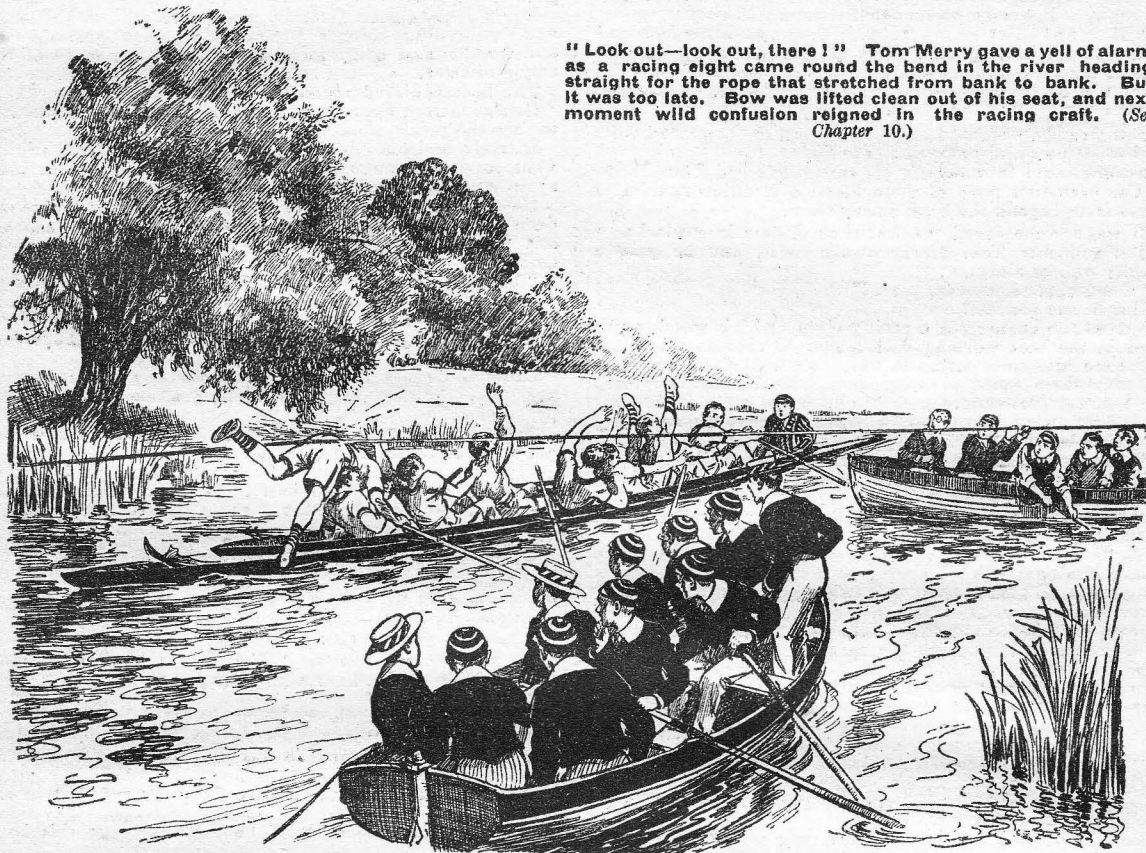
It was. Rocking gently on the water, with its nose rammed in some rushes, was a small skiff, with the sculls in it. It was Trimble's boat, and it obviously had drifted there from the island.

The juniors recovered it and tied it on behind their craft. Then they resumed their voyage downstream. Trimble's theory that the poacher had taken the boat was obviously off the mark.

"He was on the other bank!" grunted Trimble. "I'm sure—"

"Oh, rats! You careless young ass!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Good job for you we did come along, anyway."

"Look out—look out, there!" Tom Merry gave a yell of alarm as a racing eight came round the bend in the river heading straight for the rope that stretched from bank to bank. But it was too late. Bow was lifted clean out of his seat, and next moment wild confusion reigned in the racing craft. (See Chapter 10.)



"It was when I was coming—just opposite on the other side!" explained Trimble, as Tom Merry pushed off. "He called to me—offered me a bob to row him across to the island. I refused, of course!" said Trimble loftily. "I couldn't accept money from a ruffian like that. Besides, it's hardly what a St. Jim's fellow—"

"You mean you funked the fellow," said Tom Merry, with a curious look at Lowther and Manners. "Well, I don't blame you, Baggy. If I'm not mistaken, it's the same merchant who asked us to row him over on Saturday—low-browed, ugly-looking merchant!"

"That's the chap!" said Trimble. "Awful-looking rascal! A poacher, of course."

Tom nodded. "He said he wanted to lay night-lines," said Manners, with a chuckle. "Likely yarn, too! Said his mate would fetch him off later! Anyway, if he has pinched your boat—"

"He'd have to swim over first," said Tom, glancing across the broad stretch of water. "And he'd have swum over before this if it's the same chap and he wanted to cross so badly—and it's a pretty hefty swim, too. That's rot, Baggy. The boat must have drifted away."

"Well, I won't say it didn't!" grunted Trimble. "I say, why didn't Grundy— Ahem!"

Trimble halted, suddenly remembering he wasn't supposed to know anything about the clue. The juniors chuckled at the slip, and then the return trip was started, Trimble taking things easy in the stern. He suddenly sat bolt upright, however, and gave a gasp and pointed towards the bank.

"There you are!" he gasped. "Oh, good!"

"That poacher, you mean?"

"No, the silly old boat! There it is."

"Hallo, hallo!" called Lowther suddenly. "Here we are! The merry old dredgers are at work already."

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Trimble. "What's Grundy up to now?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was the Treasure Combine again.

They were very busy. Grundy had evidently found the grappling-irons in the boathouse store-room, and once again the treasure-seekers were at work.

Only George Alfred Grundy seemed at all enthusiastic, however. He had not even changed his clothes, though the hot sun would probably soon dry them for him—if they were not dry already. Not only had Grundy got the grappling-irons, however, but he had obtained a long rope from somewhere and had stretched it right across the river, which at that point was very narrow.

Grundy had selected the spot exactly opposite to the round tower, and the thick trees and the tower itself screened the operations from the view of anyone at the Grange.

There was no sign of Colonel Bland about—fortunately for Grundy & Co.

"Well, of all the cheek!" gasped Tom Merry. "Fancy stretching a rope right across the river like that!"

"It's to keep the boat in line with the giddy tower all the time," chuckled Lowther. "Grundy does have brain-waves at times! He's getting quite brainy, in fact! What a pity they're sheep's brains!"

"Any luck, Grundy?" called Blake.

"You shut up!" snapped Grundy, who seemed rather cross. "You rotters can sheer off! You can easily duck under that rope!"

"We've found a few old kettles and other pots and pans!" said Arthur Augustus, with some heat. "Gwunday is vewy

much off the wails in thinkin' he'll find anythin' heah! I'm about fed-up with this, deah boys!"

"So am I!" growled Mellish savagely. "The treasure's on Abbey Island, Grundy. What's the good of fooling about like this?"

"I also am of the same opinion," mentioned Skimpole mildly, and not a little wearily. "I really do wish I had not offered my services to this expedition. Grundy is really——"

"Will you stop grouching?" roared Grundy furiously. "I'm fed-up with your grouching and grumbling! Blessed if I don't kick you all out of the dashed combine and go on with it on my own! Anyway——"

"It's close on lock-up, Grundy!" called Tom Merry, with a laugh. "Better be getting that rope in, old chap!"

"Shut up! I'm going on with this, and blow lock-up—and blow the lot of you!"

And Grundy went on dragging at his rope, while Mellish—warned by his glare—went on pulling on the rope across the river, thus hauling the boat along.

But Grundy was fated to find no treasure—or more kettles and other pots and pans—that evening.

So engrossed in watching the operations had Tom Merry & Co. been that none of them heard a familiar sound that came from beyond the bend downstream.

It was the measured, musical click of oars in rowlocks.

But suddenly Tom Merry awoke to it, and he gave a sudden yell of alarm.

"Look out! Look out, there!"

But it was too late.

Round the bend came a racing eight at high speed, every man in the boat working with measured rhythm and keeping time like clockwork. It was the St. Jim's senior crew out for their usual evening spin, with Kildare stroking. Tom Merry just caught a swift glimpse of eight bent backs and the startled face of young Wally D'Arcy, the coxswain, and then——

What happened next was too swift to follow clearly.

Fortunately, Grundy's boat was close to Tom Merry & Co.'s on the left side, quite near the bank. But it was much too late to do anything with the rope that stretched across the stream.

Wally D'Arcy scarcely saw it at all. But it was there, and as the boat swished up the rope snapped off the flag in the prow, and then it seemed to swish up the canvas-covered prow itself.

Bow was lifted clean out of his seat, and the next moment wild confusion reigned in the racing craft as bow tumbled over the man before him. Then followed a confused glimpse of waving legs and arms and flashing oars; and then over went the boat, and the water was filled with floating blades and swimming forms and sweaters and scarfs.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake. "That's done it!"

"Oh crikey!" groaned Grundy.

He had done it now with a vengeance!

"Quick!" cried Tom Merry, in great alarm. "Quick with the boat, chaps!"

But the help of Tom Merry & Co. was scarcely necessary. All the seniors were good swimmers—they would not have had a place in the boat otherwise. And, luckily, all of them had managed to kick their feet from the stretcher straps.

They swam round, and, under Kildare's orders, started to push the boat ashore, while Tom Merry & Co. collected the floating oars and other things.

Grundy & Co. concentrated their attention upon getting the prow from across the river at the very earliest possible moment.

Working almost in silence, the seniors raised the boat from the river, emptying the water from it; and then they lowered it carefully into the water again. Luckily for Grundy, nothing save the flag in the prow had been damaged so far as could be seen. The oars were placed into position again, and then the seniors were at liberty to attend to George Alfred Grundy.

It was quite easy to see that he was responsible—indeed, Kildare had heard a rumour at the boathouse of that great man's grappling intentions, and he had intended to keep a look-out for Grundy while up the river.

He had come upon him quite unexpectedly and much sooner than he had expected.

Kildare fixed a deadly glare on Grundy as that youth finished untying the rope from the post on the near bank.

"There, that's done!" remarked George Alfred. "It's rather unfortunate about this, Kildare. But you should have looked where you were going to, you know. Dash it all—Here, leggo! I say, lemme explain—Yoooooop!"

But they did not need an explanation from George Alfred Grundy. His handiwork spoke eloquently for him. As one man, without any orders from Kildare, the St. Jim's senior crew rushed at Grundy.

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They had had a startling shock—especially bow—they were drenched through, and their practice spin was "mucked up."

And that born idiot Grundy was responsible!

They grabbed George Alfred where they could—even Wally D'Arcy taking a hand.

"Better go while the going's good, Gussy!" called Jack Blake. "May be your turn next!"

"Oh, bai Jove! But weally it would not be fair to leave Gwunday in the lurch. Though, weally, Mellish—Weally, Tompkins——"

But Arthur Augustus called in vain. Mellish and Tompkins did not wish to see what might happen to them; they followed Blake's advice and went while the going was good.

Being luckier than Grundy, they were still in the boat, and, unheeding Gussy's protestations, they grabbed the sculls and pulled away for dear life from the scene of the tragic disaster.

The boat vanished round the bend.

George Alfred Grundy, deserted by his followers, was left to face the music alone.

Scarcely had his boat gone when Grundy, yelling wildly, went soaring through the air, to drop into the river once again with a resounding splash.

He crawled ashore quickly enough, for the water was not deep near the side. He was immediately grabbed again—and Grundy had good cause to regret crawling ashore so quickly.

"Turn him over!" panted Kildare, who was crimson with wrath. "We'll teach him to come such silly-ass tricks as that! He must be potty—absolutely potty—the born idiot! What he's doing outside a home I don't know! Turn him over!"

Grundy, despite his bellowing protestations, was turned over until he was in a suitable position for corporal punishment.

Then Kildare took a switch from the nearest hedge and got down to business in earnest.

The skipper of St. Jim's was a very thorough fellow in all things, and he put his beef into it now. And certainly George Alfred had asked for it and deserved it.

At all events, he got it!

His howls, mingled with his bellowing efforts to explain, rang far and wide.

Colonel Bland came down to the edge of his jetty across the river, and he stared at the scene in amazement—and possibly with satisfaction if he recognised Grundy.

"Go it!" gasped Darrell of the Sixth, wringing water from his vest and shorts. "Give the young villain socks, Kildare! Here, I'll have a go after you!"

"Yarrooogh!"

Grundy roared wildly and apprehensively again at that. He certainly did not want Darrell to have a go. Kildare was enough for him, and he was praying that the skipper's arm would soon tire.

It did tire at last, and Kildare flung the switch into the river.

"Now get back to school!" he panted. "Let this be a lesson to you, Grundy! He's had quite enough, I fancy. Darrell! Where are those grappling-irons, you young idiot?"

"Yow! Grooogh! Ow, ow, ow! Oh, you rotter, Kildare! Ow, ow! They—they're in the river! I dropped the dashed—ow!—rope when you came up! Yow-ow! Grooogh! They're gone for good, and now you've—ow-yow!—mucked up my plans! Ow!"

"Then you'll have to pay for them, I expect!" snapped Kildare. "Now get back to school, and don't be a bigger idiot than you can help after this!"

"Yow! Look here——"

"Get off!" roared Kildare.

And Grundy went. He tottered off along the towing-path towards St. Jim's in a decidedly parlous state, and once again dripping with water. Grundy had hoped this was going to be his lucky day. But, so far, it certainly didn't look as if it was.

CHAPTER 11.

Trimble on the Trail!

THE whole school roared over the story of Grundy's treasure-hunting adventures. Grundy's Treasure-Hunt Combine was looked upon as the joke of the term. That a clever japer was at the bottom of it all, few doubted. It was really surprising, considering the general hilarity on the subject, that Grundy and his fellow-members of the Combine did not smell a rat. Possibly Mellish did, and possibly he would have backed out if he had dared.

There was a prospect of payment at last for his labours, however. For late that evening George Alfred had come to a great and important decision, after prolonged reflection upon the matter in the privacy of Study No. 3.

He called a meeting of the Combine just before bed-time. "I've been thinking things over, you men," he announced. "I'm afraid we went at the job a bit too hastily, you know. That was where we went wrong. All the time I felt we were on the wrong trail, you know."

"D-did you?" stammered Arthur Augustus. "Then why on earth did you go on with it, Gwunday?"

"Shut up, Gussy. Am I the speaker, or are you? Ring off, blow you!"

"Bai Jove. But weally—"

"Shut up!" hooted Grundy. "You're like a blessed sheep, Gussy, all jaw! Blessed if I can stand a fellow who's always gassing! Now, listen to me. As I say, we've been on the wrong track. If you fellows hadn't insisted upon digging up Colonel Bland's lawn and dragging the blessed river—"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Mellish. "What a yarn! Why—"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "That is weally the limit, Gwunday! Why, weren't we all twyin' to tell you that—"

"There you go again!" bawled Grundy. "Wagging that chin of yours, D'Arcy! I tell you my theory that it was the round tower on Abbey Island was right. I'm certain of it now. The more I think things over the more I'm convinced that the ruined tower on the island is the one

mentioned in the clue. We wasted our time, and got into hot water all round, through not sticking to my theory. In fact, we haven't heard the last of it yet. If old Bland reports us, as I bet he will, we'll get it hot for what we did. Now, in future, you fellows, I'm going to have my way. What I say goes. No more rushing off on side-issues and fooling mares'-nests."

"Oh, bai Jove! Gwunday, you feahful—"

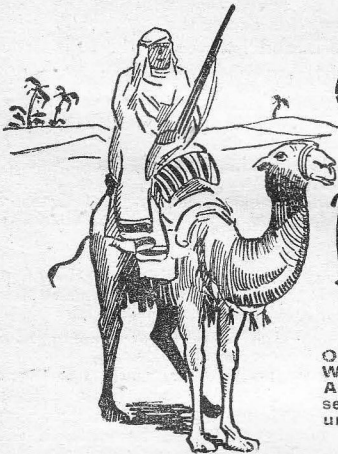
"Dry up! Shut up! Now I've got my plans cut and dried. We've lost those other spades, but I'm going to hire some from Rylcombe this afternoon. We'll rush off for the spades right away after dinner. No lagging behind, mind! Remember, time is precious, and there's a fortune at stake, as I've mentioned before. Any fellow who talks of funking now is booked for the licking of his life. And, for goodness' sake, be careful our plans don't get out this time! I'm fed-up with being stared at by a gang of cackling idiots!"

"They seem to think it's a jape, Grundy," said Mellish sulkily. "They don't believe in the treasure at all."

"Of course they don't!" said Grundy scornfully. "Of course they think it's all spoo! But if they'd seen that chart, and the clue we found in that box, they'd sing a different tune, wouldn't they?"

There was no getting over Grundy's argument. Once

(Continued on next page.)



This Week:

FAMOUS DAREDEVILS!

One of the most sensational epics of the Great War was Colonel Lawrence's Campaign in Arabia. Single-handed, this quiet Englishman set out into the heart of the Arabian desert to unite the wandering tribes of Arabs, and lead them against the Turks.

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA!
"DO you know, one of the most thrilling sights I have ever seen is a train load of Turkish soldiers ascending skywards after the explosion of a tulip!"

That was one of the astonishing remarks made by Colonel Lawrence of Arabia, the quiet, retiring Britisher who set out into the heart of the Arabian desert in the early part of 1916, determined to unite the wandering Nomadic tribes, in spite of the fact that they had been kept apart by blood-feuds for centuries, and lead them, as an Army, against the Turks.

That he succeeded in his amazing resolve was one of the wonders of the War, and his life, during those epic years when Great Britain was fighting tooth and nail for freedom, is one long chapter of thrills and hairbreadth escapes from death.

His favourite hobby at that time was blowing up sections of Turkish railway line with his "tulips" as he called them, or actually, powerful charges of blasting gelatine. And so successful did he become as a dynamiter of trains that he was awarded the title of champion train wrecker, and when the War closed was credited with no less than seventy-nine mine laying expeditions.

Whether this is true or not it is difficult to judge, but certainly he created a panic among those Turks who were obliged to travel by rail. In fact, Lawrence had blown up so many trains on the Hedjaz Railway, that seats in the rear coaches cost seven or eight times as much as those in front, because it was known that Lawrence invariably fired his charges

beneath the engine, and damaged the first few coaches immediately behind it.

Strangely enough, although Lawrence carried his life in his hands throughout his Arab Campaign, taking part in dozens of fierce engagements and hot skirmishes with the Turks, it was after the Turkish Armistice was signed at the Peace Conference in Paris that he experienced what was probably the greatest thrill of his career. It came about thus!

Lawrence had left many important papers stowed away in Cairo of which he found himself in need, and not wishing to waste more time than he could help or run the risk of being torpedoed by German U-boats, while returning by the sea route across the Mediterranean, he cast round for some other means of paying a flying visit to Cairo, and returning with all speed.

He was told that ten great Handley-Page planes, with Rolls-Royce engines, were about to set off from London to Cairo. Lawrence immediately decided to go with them.

From the time he ascended in one of those machines en route for Egypt, his life was one long, hazardous thrill. For one thing, his pilot was a young daredevil, reckless as they make 'em, who had never flown a Handley-Page before, and who didn't know much about a Rolls-Royce engine. The result was that between Cologne and Lyons the plane had to come down four times for repairs. Indeed, most of the machines had to be reconstructed during the journey. So that it was a wonder that Lawrence reached Rome without mishap.

Then things began to happen with a

vengeance! The pilots had some hazy idea that there was an aerodrome at Rome, but for the life of them they couldn't locate it. At last, Lawrence's pilot fancied he had spotted a suitable landing ground, and down he swept, full pelt, until he realised he had made a mistake, and that it was only a deep quarry.

Switching on his engine, the pilot desperately sought to zoom upwards, but his scant knowledge of how to handle the big machine, and the sad state of its air-worthiness, proved too much for him. Down came the plane—down, down, until it touched the ground, ran for some distance, toppled over the quarry edge, hit a tree and crumbled up, a mass of wreckage!

Luckily Lawrence was in the gun-pit. The two pilots on board were killed, the two mechanics were pitched out, both temporarily stunned, while Lawrence was pinned helplessly in the midst of the wreckage, with a collar-bone, shoulder blade, and three ribs all broken.

Luckily one of the mechanics recovered consciousness within a few moments, and came to Lawrence's aid. It was then that the latter exhibited the true spirit of the great daredevil. When the mechanic explained that the machine might catch fire, ere he could drag his distinguished passenger clear, Lawrence answered cheerfully.

"Well, if she does, when I arrive in the other world, I may find it a bit chilly!"

Nothing so serious happened, however! Within a week, Lawrence jumped into another machine and continued his journey, making light of his injuries, which were enough to have incapacitated any ordinary man for a considerable time.

Not so Lawrence! But then he is no ordinary man! During the War he was a great daredevil in every sense of the word, careless of his own safety, if by risking his life he could further the great cause upon which he had set his heart, and incidentally aid his country in the defeat of her foes.

One could cite countless thrilling incidents in which Colonel Lawrence of Arabia proved his mettle. Let this one instance suffice to show what manner of man he is!

(Next week our special contributor deals with Charles Blondin, the tight-rope walker.)

again the wavering members of the Combine were reassured.

"That's settled, then," said Grundy, with satisfaction, quite pleased that his followers were showing no further signs of mutiny. "Remember, immediately after dinner we go after some spades, and then make straight for the boat-house. I tried to get old Mumble, the gardener, to let me have some more, but he's waxy about the others—says I've got to pay for the dashed things. It can't be helped. Still, we've got the whole afternoon and evening at our disposal."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And with that the meeting broke up, all the members eagerly looking forward to the treasure-hunt on Abbey Island the following afternoon. Grundy himself was feeling more hopeful than ever. As a matter of fact, it had struck Grundy quite suddenly that it was queer that, while Abbey Island was mentioned several times in the "History of St. James' Monastery," the tower on the Rylcombe Grange was not even mentioned.

Possibly, as Lowther had said, it was not built then. Grundy wondered how he could have allowed his followers to persuade him into such hasty and unreflective action.

Feeling very satisfied and confident, Grundy followed his men out and went down to the Common-room.

His heavy footsteps had just died away when a fat, dusty form crawled from beneath the study couch.

It was Baggy Trimble.

"So that's their game—eh? Jolly good job I thought of hiding in here to find out what they're going to do. Blow them and their blessed Combine! I'll beat 'em yet!"

Trimble dreamed of treasure and wealth untold that night. Yet, somehow, the otherwise delightful dream was spoiled by a vague face that would come between him and the treasure. A bristly-chinned, low-browed face it was—the face of the man he had seen on the river-bank, the poacher.

Morning lessons the next day—Wednesday—seemed endless to Grundy & Co., and also to Baggy Trimble.

At about half-past eleven, Baggy Trimble suddenly gave a loud, heartrending groan, and dropped his head on his arms on the desk.

Mr. Lathom was petrified and quite startled. The Form stared; and then, remembering Trimble's "wangles" of old, they grinned expectantly.

"Trimble!"

Groan!

"Are you ill, boy?" demanded Mr. Lathom, in great concern. "I trust you have not again been overloading your digestion with indigestible pastry, Trimble! Are you—"

"It—it's all right, sir," panted Trimble, stifling another groan by a truly artistic effort. "I—I shall be all right presently, sir. Don't mind me! I've stood this fearful headache all morning, so far, and I think I can stand it a bit longer without collapsing. It—it's all right, sir. I'll bear up. Groogh!"

"Bless my soul!"

Groan, groan, groan!

"My dear boy, but this will not do!" said Mr. Lathom kindly but firmly. "If you really have been suffering from a headache all morning, you should have mentioned the matter to me, and I would have excused you further lessons."

Trimble felt a sudden wish that he had mentioned the matter earlier—much earlier.

"As it is," resumed the good-hearted little gentleman, "you may go and lie down until dinner, Trimble. I think you had better go straight to see the matron first, my boy, and then keep yourself as quiet as possible."

Trimble raised his head wearily.

"If you insist upon it, sir, I'll go!" he gasped. "I'm sorry to disturb the lesson, sir. Shall I tell the matron you sent me, sir?"

"Yes, yes; of course, my boy."

"Thank you, sir!" said Trimble faintly.

Groan, groan, groan!

Amid a series of artistically-rendered groans, Baggy Trimble staggered from his place and tottered to the door through rows of grinning faces. Trimble, as a malingerer, was well-known to his Form-fellows, if not to his Form master.

The door closed upon Trimble.

Out in the passage his agonised expression fled, giving place to a fat, satisfied grin. He executed a short, eloquent sort of war-dance, placed a thumb to his nose, with outstretched fingers pointed at the closed door, and then rolled away hurriedly in high feather.

But he did not go near the matron's room. He had got out of the Form-room before Grundy could leave his, and that was all that mattered. He would soon be in a position to laugh at school and masters and matrons.

Getting his cap Baggy Trimble hurried out of doors, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,124.

keeping a careful look-out and taking care not to be seen from the school windows.

He reached the school wall without incident, and soon he was racing as hard as his bulk would allow towards the boat-house.

It was open; inside the long, low sheds Adams and his assistant boatman were busy getting boats ready for the afternoon. Out at the staging were already several boats just drawn up over the edge of the stage, in readiness.

Trimble pushed a small skiff gently into the water and clambered in. Then he pushed off and grasped the oars.

It was warm work rowing, and Trimble was not fond of exertion of any sort. Yet the thought of the treasure on Abbey Island, simply waiting there to be dug up, spurred him on.

The boat danced upstream in the glimmering sunshine, past green, wooded banks and smiling meadows. The island came into sight at last, and by that time Trimble was panting and streaming with perspiration. Moreover, he was very hungry indeed. He began to wish now that he had waited until dinner, but it was only a fleeting wish. After all, what was missing a meal to missing a fortune? Nothing!

So Trimble mentally tightened his belt and pulled on.

He was opposite the island now. From the wooded bank of the mainland a voice suddenly hailed him—a husky, almost threatening voice:

"Hi, hi, young 'un! Hi!"

Trimble started. He had heard that voice before. He glanced hastily round over his shoulder.

A figure appeared half-in and half-out of the foliage on the far bank. Distant as it was, Trimble recognised the man's face just as he had recognised the husky voice.

"Cheeky villain!" mumbled Trimble. "Wants me to row him over to the island, I bet! As if I would, the low beast! Here goes for the island, anyway!"

And Trimble pulled for the island, ignoring the shouts of the man on the towing-path.

Yet somehow Trimble felt rather uneasy now, and when he reached the ruins at last he glanced almost fearfully about him.

All was silent and still.

Hardly a breath stirred, and the sudden rattle of a rabbit in the undergrowth made him jump. Even in the daytime the ruins seemed strangely eerie. And the sight of the man on the river bank had quite disturbed Baggy Trimble.

Yet the fellow, poacher or no poacher, could not reach him, much less harm him.

With this thought Baggy Trimble found his spade, which he had hidden in some bushes, and then he resumed his excavating.

The ruined tower stood a little way from the main ruins, and actually it was only a shattered relic of a tower, its highest wall being less than twenty feet high. On the previous evening Trimble had followed out the instruction in the "clu." He had paced off one hundred paces, making careful allowance for his own paces being shorter than a man's. And, luckily, he had known in which direction the east lay!

The hundred paces east had taken him right across a patch of stone-covered grass and then along the wall of a ruined nave of the ancient building. But before he had quite completed the hundred he was brought to a stop against a stone wall that branched off at right-angles, the two walls, shattered as they were, forming a corner.

It seemed to Baggy a remarkably likely place for anyone to hide anything. And then Baggy Trimble made a thrilling discovery.

Roughly hacked in the ancient stonework, almost covered with mossy green, was a sort of arrow-head, pointing downwards.

It was enough for Baggy Trimble. This was the spot, and no other. Whoever had made that arrow-head had hidden the treasure there.

Baggy had set to work with a will, and only sheer weariness and fear had made him desist. And now here he was again to resume the struggle for the fortune. And he had a good clear hour and a half at least before the troublesome Grundy came along.

He set to work with a will. So far he had only dug a couple of feet down, for the ground was stony and hard to dig. Perspiration streamed from him, but he kept at it, his breath coming in gasps. Trimble was not used to work. Yet he worked like a Trojan now, and the hole widened and deepened steadily. It was fully four feet down now, and he was just about to take a well-needed rest when—

Clink!

His spade struck something that gave out a metallic clink!

CHAPTER 12,
Treasure Trove!

TRIMBLE'S heart leaped.

There was no doubt about it.

His spade had struck something, and the next moment the fat Fourth-Former, fagged as he was, was setting to work feverishly again. Spadefuls of earth and stones fairly flew out of the hole under his mad onslaught. And at last Trimble felt certain—nay, he knew!—that victory was within his grasp.

It was a sack—or, rather, something within a sack—that Trimble's spade had struck against. And it was something that gleamed brightly in the sun where his spade had scraped the metal.

Silver!

With trembling fingers, Baggy Trimble opened the sack, plunged a hand in, and drew out one of the silver articles. It was a goblet of precious metal and obviously of great value. The fat Fourth-Former thrilled through and through. "M-m-m-y hat!" he gasped. (See Chapter 12.)



Trimble had hoped that it might be gold. Still, silver was good enough to be going on with.

He managed to loosen all the soil round the sack at last. It was not a very big sack, but it was very heavy indeed. It appeared to be made of some thick, canvas material, but it was rotted through in parts now, and many of the articles in it protruded here and there, showing the dull glint of tarnished silver.

With trembling fingers Trimble opened the sack at last.

Then he plunged his hand in and drew out one of the silver articles. It was a goblet of solid silver, finely chased, and obviously of great value.

Trimble thrilled through and through.

His dreams of wealth had come true at last.

"I suppose I'd better buck up and get the hole filled in again before Grundy comes," he muttered shakily.

Laying the bag very carefully on the grass, Trimble set to work at great speed to fill in the hole again. It was an easy task in comparison with the digging of the hole, and it was done at last. But Trimble was almost dropping with fatigue at the finish. He stamped down the earth in frantic haste, and then he rolled big stones over the spot and flung handfuls of small ones to help to cover the fresh earth.

Gasping and panting, and in a bath of perspiration, Baggy staggered away with his load of treasure-trove. His

first intention had been to make for the boat, but caution had brought a second thought. He was likely to meet Grundy & Co. on the way down-stream, and in any case the boatmen at the boathouse would want to help him in with the boat, or see to it, and then—how could he explain why he was carting about a sackful of solid silver, obviously of great value?

Had Trimble's conscience been quite easy in the matter he would have gone forth boldly, anxious to gain glory as well as the treasure. That was what Grundy would have done without the slightest doubt. Grundy felt he had a perfect right to the treasure if he found it, and he would have not hesitated to "tell the world," so to speak.

But Baggy did not. Possibly he was not quite certain that what he had found was the monks' treasure; possibly he was afraid of Grundy collaring it from him; possibly

he feared the Government would claim half and the owner of the land the other half!

At all events, Trimble did not at all feel easy in his mind in the matter. He hesitated once or twice, and then, changing his direction, he made for the centre of the island. He stopped at last. It was not the first rest he had been obliged to take by any means. But this time he stopped for good and lowered the sack carefully to the ground.

Before him was a great, shattered oak-tree. On one memorable occasion Baggy remembered having hidden some tuck in the hole under the roots—tuck he had raided from a picnic party. So, dragging out handfuls of dead leaves and soil to make the hole larger, Baggy, after a desperate struggle, pushed the sack and its contents right into the secret hiding-place.

He almost collapsed when he had finished. The strain of carrying that weighty bag after the fatigue of unaccustomed digging had been almost too much for him. Indeed, only greed had enabled him even to lift the bag.

It was done at last.

After a breathless rest, Baggy rose and carefully covered all traces of his work at the roots of the tree, dragging bracken round the big hole to hide the disturbed soil. Then, with a reluctant glance behind him, the treasure-hunter rolled away towards where he had left his boat.

From somewhere, not far away, he heard voices and the tramp of feet through the undergrowth.

Grundy & Co. had arrived, then! Trimble decided to make quite sure before he made for the boat. He hurried towards the sounds, softly and cautiously. He stopped suddenly just within the fringe of trees bordering the ruins. What he saw made him jump.

It was not the Treasure Combine at all—it was Tom Merry & Co. And they carried a box between them—a large, rusty, iron box that appeared to be very heavy. They were just entering the ruins from the far side when Trimble blinked at the scene.

"Buck up!" said Lowther cheerfully. "Those asses will be here soon now. We've not a second to waste. Get at it, my hearties! Dig's keeping a look-out, but he won't be able to keep 'em back long. Buck up!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I did intend to let Grundy and his pals dig a really whacking great hole before doing anything!" chuckled Lowther. "But Gussy and Mellish, and the other two, are getting fed-up, and it can't last much longer. We really can't let 'em have all their trouble for nothing. It would be disappointing—especially for us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 13.

"Eureka!"

"H A, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. roared as they set to work on the spot Lowther pointed out. Trimble gasped as he realised it was the very spot where he had been digging. He felt thankful he had remembered to hide his spade before leaving the spot. He saw Tom Merry suddenly pause and point to the faintly-seen arrow-head.

"Yes, I noticed that!" grinned Lowther. "Rather a queer coincidence, what? Look well if there really is treasure hidden here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Apparently Tom Merry & Co. did not think it at all likely. They little dreamed of the truth. Trimble grinned gleefully as he watched and heard the scoffers. If they only knew!

Really, it was very funny—for Trimble! He had already guessed something of the truth—at least, he guessed Tom Merry & Co. were engaged upon some jape upon Grundy & Co. But what was the box for, and what was in it?

He was soon to know.

Tom Merry & Co. were not the fellows to waste time, and they fairly made the soil fly. Deeper and deeper became the hole, and at last Tom Merry was satisfied.

"Deep enough now, Monty," he said. "Let's have that giddy box of tricks in."

"Right-ho!"

The box was lowered into the hole, and then the soil and stones filled in and stamped down hard. Again stones and moss were trampled artistically over the fresh earth.

"Grundy will never spot anything, though old Gussy might," remarked Lowther critically. "Still, we've done all we can to prevent Grundy being disappointed, haven't we? I—Hullo, here comes Dig!"

Digby came rushing up.

"Here they come!" he said crisply. "You chaps ready?"

"All ready."

"Then get out of sight—quick! The boat's hidden safely all serene."

"Good!"

The plotters went into hiding amid the stones and bushes.

A few seconds elapsed, and then Grundy, with a spade over his shoulder, and followed by Gussy, Skimpole, Mellish, and Tompkins, also carrying spades, tramped into the clearing.

"Here we are!" said Grundy, glancing round the ruins. "Now we'll soon get on the job, you men. I know quite well, as I've said before, that this is the spot where the stuff was buried. You fellows get ready while I survey."

He walked over to the ruins of the round tower. Placing his back to the wall and facing east, he started to pace the distance. His solemn seriousness nearly made the hidden watchers explode with mirth.

But fortunately they restrained themselves. Grundy found the spot at last—he would have been very dense indeed had he failed to find it. And it did not take him long to spot the roughly-chiselled arrow-head.

He yelled aloud with excitement, and that moment was a thrilling one for the Treasure Hunt Combine. It did not need Grundy's disciplinary methods to make Gussy and the rest work hard after that.

They simply jumped to it, their eyes gleaming with eagerness and anticipatory joy.

Even Grundy grabbed a spade and dug madly, trembling with excitement. With every spadeful the excitement grew.

Clank!

It was Grundy's spade striking iron!

"Eureka!" he roared.

"Bai Jove! Oh, gweat Scott!"

All lent a hand after that. The excitement grew and grew. Grundy was red in the face and panting. The box was disclosed at last. Willing hands made light work, and the heavy box was lifted out and laid on the ground.

Grundy tore at the fastenings, his men standing round in a fascinated group.

Again Grundy found it necessary to prise the lid open with a spade, but it was wrenched upwards at last, and clanged back on its hinges.

But alas! No array of gleaming gold and precious stones was disclosed.

Grundy almost fainted; Gussy's jaw dropped. Mellish, Tompkins, and Skimpole could have wept.

Yet something was in the box. First, there was a gleaming silk hat—a thing of beauty and a joy for ever! Arthur Augustus recognised it in a flash.

"Oh, bai Jove!" he articulated faintly. "It—it's my best Sunday toppah! Oh, gweat Scott! I missed it from my wardrobe last night, and I thought Twimble had boned it. But—but—"

Words failed the astounded Arthur Augustus.

There was something else in the box, and like a fellow in a dream, the almost petrified Grundy removed the tissue-paper covering it, disclosing to view a fine, large plum-cake, covered with icing.

"M-mum-my cake!" gulped Grundy. "Oh, mum-my hat! It's my missing cake! Somebody boned it from my study yesterday. I thought it was Trimble. But—"

"And dear me!" mumbled Skimpole, reaching down dazedly into the treasure-chest. "Here is my missing volume of Professor Ballycrumpet's series on Determinism."

"And my Latin Grammar!" wailed Mellish. "I say, you fellows, it must be—Oh dear!—a rotten swizz! We've been had!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a perfect howl of hysterical laughter from the hidden watchers. There was still something else in the box—it proved to be Tompkins' favourite volume on English Butterflies, but nobody heeded that—they were too busy laughing. All, that is, excepting the Treasure Combine!

While Tom Merry & Co. emerged from hiding and showed themselves, nearly rolling about helplessly with laughter, the Treasure Combine glared and glared, nearly weeping with disappointment.

"Oh!" gasped Grundy, finding his voice at last. "Oh, great pip! So—so it's all a swizz, then?"

"Go hon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all spoof!" roared Grundy furiously. "Is that it? Did you fellows hide these things in here? And—oh, great pip! Does this mean that you fellows also hid that dashed clue for me to find?"

(Continued on page 28.)

NEXT WEEK'S FEAST OF FUN AND FICTION.

"BAGGY'S BARGAIN SALE!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

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HERE'S ANOTHER FULL-O'-THRILLS INSTALMENT OF—

The Robot Man!

By H. J. ALLINGHAM



(Introduction on next page.)

Steadfast courage and grit have carried Jack Carter & Co. through many a perilous adventure since they first arrived in the deserted valley ruled by a mad scientist. But they realise in the closing stages of the battle with Professor Rollins that they are not yet out of the wood!

The Attack on the Bungalow!

"WERE you paid to kill Captain Storm?" asked Jack Carter quietly.

His voice was gentle, almost friendly. It had no animosity or indignation in it whatever. His gaze was fixed on the pinched, rat-like face of the sick man.

"No, no," replied Tench, "not Storm! Only young Frobisher, but the others had to go, too—witnesses, you know. Dead men tell no tales. Now there's only you and me, and we go halves. No one will ever know. Anything might happen in a country like this. We get back to England safe, and then we squeeze old Hawkins for all he is worth!"

"Hawkins?"

"Ah! Raymond Hawkins, Esq., a great swell, my governor. Uncle to young Frobisher, and the boy was rich. Didn't you know that? Tremendously rich! And now Hawkins gets it all. That's why we've got to get back—so as to get our share! You must help me, Carter; I can't do it alone! I'm weak, and I'm all on fire, and a million wheels are spinning round in my head!"

"Did your employer, Mr. Hawkins, tell you to kill Harry Frobisher?" asked Jack, in the same quiet tone.

"No—too cunning for that! Told me to look after the boy and keep near him always, and then, as we were leaving, he said: 'If anything happens to my nephew and he never comes back you will deserve something for all your trouble, Tench, and I will pay you five thousand pounds.' A nod is as good as a wink, eh? What do you think of that for a toff? Tempting a poor man! Five thousand pounds! Five thousand—"

He closed his eyes, and his voice trailed off into incoherent mumblings.

Jack determined that in the morning he would compel the man to repeat his confession before the others, but this was not to be.

Paul Tench did not recover consciousness, and on the following day, just before noon, he died.

The body of Paul Tench, the miserable tool of an infamous employer was buried in a grave on the edge of the forest.

"So much for Master Tench!" said Teddy White grimly, as the four friends completed their dismal task.

"That will do, Teddy," said Captain Storm quietly. "The man is dead and beyond our enmity. His fate may be the fate of anyone of us—or of all of us—before long."

"A cheery thought, cap'n—a cheery thought!" said Teddy, who refused absolutely to be sentimental about Paul Tench. "Let's hope as how we've better luck."

Nothing more was said, and they were trooping back to the bungalow when suddenly, by a mutual impulse, they came to a halt and stood staring at one another.

"Wot's that?" said Teddy, in a startled voice.

No one answered him, but instinctively they all turned and looked towards the forest upon which they had just turned their backs.

And as they stood there motionless there fell upon their ears a new and unfamiliar sound.

Far away in the depths of that wilderness of tree, shrub, and tangled vine something was stirring.

The noise was of crackling wood and rustling leaves. It was not loud, but it was extended over a wide area, and every moment it increased in volume.

Jack glanced at Captain Storm.

"What do you make of it?" he asked quietly.

"Sounds like an army advancing through the forest," said the captain.

Jack nodded.

"And in our direction," he suggested.

"Yes; it is coming this way!"

"Shall I go and do a bit of scouting?" said Harry eagerly. "I'm rather good at that."

"No," replied Jack promptly. "We had better all get back to the bungalow and keep a good look-out from there. It may be nothing to do with us. Our best policy is to lie low."

But, although he spoke encouragingly, his face was very grave.

On reaching the bungalow Jack gave a few quiet orders. The chums secured their rifles, saw to their ammunition, shut and made fast the doors both at the front and back, and stationed themselves at the windows, without, however, exposing themselves to view from the outside.

The long, low room in the front of the house had two

windows. Jack stationed himself at one, Captain Storm at the other.

Harry and Teddy White were in the bed-rooms at the back of the house.

"You think we are going to be attacked?" said the captain, in a low voice.

"I don't know, but I think it likely," replied Jack. "The professor, in spite of his madness, was a man with an extraordinary personality. He must have obtained enormous influence over the people who worked for him. Some of them are pretty certain to try to avenge his death. I am afraid I have stirred up a hornet's nest, and you are likely to suffer through me."

"Stuff and nonsense!" replied the captain vigorously. "You got me out of a pretty ugly corner. The professor did not seem to me to be a man likely to have many friends. If he is dead we ought to be able to deal with his followers. Hallo, here they come! Look—beyond that palm to your right."

Even as he spoke there emerged, not merely from one point, but from a dozen points along the edge of the forest, a swarm of men.

At the same moment Harry and Teddy called out that figures had appeared in the garden at the back of the house.

"We are in a ring, and it is closing up!" said the captain.

"Keep quiet and out of sight. Let no one fire till I give the word!" commanded Jack quietly.

As he spoke he put down his rifle and picked up the mysterious tube by which he had obtained his liberty.

Glancing at it, he observed with surprise that it had changed its colour. It was no longer glittering, but had assumed a dull, leaden hue.

He paid little attention to this at the time, however, his mind being occupied by other thoughts.

He looked again through the window, and observed that the crowd had halted and that from it had emerged a tall, powerful-looking, dark-skinned fellow carrying a white flag.

Instantly Jack went to the door and began to open it.

"What are you doing?" demanded Captain Storm, almost fierce.

"That's all right. I am going to parley. You stay here," said Jack; and before the other could protest further he had stepped out on to the veranda.

The man with the white flag halted twenty paces away. "Pardon, senor," he said politely, "but does a young Englishman by name of Carter dwell in this house?"

"What do you want with him?" asked Jack.

"I come to call upon him in friendship, and I would speak with him."

"All are welcome who call in friendship, but we do not like to see them with arms in their hands," said Jack dryly.

"My men are armed, but I carry no weapons," replied the man.

"Well, then, speak. My name is Carter. What have you to say to me?" said Jack.

The man looked at him very hard, seeming to size him up and down.

"I am Roderigo, a messenger from the great Professor Rollins, and I speak in his name!"

"Professor Rollins is dead," said Jack curtly, "so please speak in your own name."

"The professor lives," replied the other quietly. "No one can kill him. He will die only when his work is done, and then only in the hour he has chosen."

"But—"

Jack was about to argue, but checked himself, a sudden doubt seizing him.

Suppose, after all, this fellow spoke the truth? Suppose the amazing professor had, after all, escaped from that pit of death? The thing was just possible.

With this doubt in his mind Jack decided to speak cautiously.

"I will hear what you have to say," he said

"The professor wishes me to say that if you will return quietly with me he will overlook all that has passed. It

shall be as though it never happened. But you must come at once and re-enter his service."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then my instructions are to take you by force."

"And my friends?"

Roderigo shrugged his shoulders.

"They do not interest me or my master. I have given my message. What is your answer? If you refuse to come with me at once I shall be regretfully compelled to order that house to be burned down above your head; and then, when you have been smoked out, my people will deal with you all as I see fit to command. Do I make myself clear, senor?"

"You do, and if you don't get back to your cut-throat gang in double-quick time I'll put a bullet into you!"

The words were spoken not by Jack, but by Captain Storm, who had appeared suddenly on the veranda, rifle in hand.

There was a very ugly look in the captain's face, and the half-breed did not stop to argue with him.

He turned and ran. But on getting back to his comrades he recovered his courage, and could be seen waving his arms excitedly and giving orders to the men who gathered round him.

"This means the end," said Jack, looking at the captain.

"They are going to attack."

"Well, we will put up a fight," replied Storm grimly.

"If they mean murder we will sell our lives dearly. Quick! Get inside."

Jack obeyed gloomily. Even now he was wondering if it might not be possible to save his friends' lives by giving up his own.

Captain Storm, however, had no doubts as to the situation.

"They are out to kill the lot of us, and bullets alone can help us now," he said. "Get to your station, and aim to kill."

The door was again made fast, and each went back to the window appointed.

"Teddy! Harry! How is it on your side?" called the captain over his shoulder.

"They are a-creeping up through the long grass, millions of 'em!" replied Teddy's excited voice.

"All right. Hold your fire until you are sure you won't miss, and then blaze away."

"Right-ho, cap'n!"

"And Harry? Are you all right?" called Jack; and, in spite of himself, he could not prevent a note of anxiety in his voice.

"Rather!" came the cheery response. "I've got a chap covered. Ugly-looking beggar he is, too. I think he is going to make a rush; then I'll get him."

"How many on your side?"

"About a dozen, I think."

Teddy's millions had dwindled, but the house was obviously surrounded.

Jack could see at least fifty men, under the command of Roderigo, at the front of the house.

They were advancing slowly and steadily, but with deadly purpose, wriggling through the long grass.

And then suddenly came a shower of bullets and small shot rattling against the walls of the bungalow and shattering the windows.

A howl came from Teddy White.

"Hit, Teddy?" inquired Captain Storm, without turning his gaze away from the window, which had been shattered before his eyes.

"Not yet, cap'n; but I don't like it. I don't like it at all. This ain't my game. Oo-er!"

The last ejaculation was occasioned by an explosion inside the bungalow. Captain Storm had fired.

With a scream of agony, a figure out there in the garden leaped up from the long grass and then fell headlong.

That single shot seemed to act as a signal, for immediately a swarm of figures leaped up into the view, and, shouting excitedly, dashed forward in an attempt to rush the little fortress.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Captain Storm, in company with Teddy White, a middle-aged Cockney, and two youngsters named Jack Carter and Harry Frobisher, set off in search of Professor Rollins, a missing scientist reputed to be held in captivity somewhere within the vicinity of the regions through which the mighty Amazon flows. After several days' tracking through the unexplored forest a huge steel monster formed like a man suddenly appears, seizes Captain Storm by the waist, and carries him away. Almost following this, Jack Carter comes face to face with Professor Rollins, whom he learns is none other than the inventor of this strange monstrosity known as the Robot. To save his fellow explorers from the ruthless hands of the mad inventor, Jack agrees to enter a gas-filled tunnel at the end of which Rollins declares is a deposit of radium worth untold millions. While Jack is carrying out the task allotted him, an attempt on the life of his chums is made by Paul Trench, a former member of the party, who has a grudge against Frobisher. Receiving a prearranged signal, and not knowing of Paul Trench's treachery, Jack holds the professor responsible. Waiting his opportunity, he seizes the professor in his powerful arms and sends him hurtling into the radium pit. The professor, however, is rescued by his faithful servant, Gonzales, and forthwith gives orders for Carter's recapture, who, meanwhile has rejoined his comrades in a bungalow near the coast. The four chums are discussing future plans when a rustling in the long grass attracts Jack's attention. Rushing to the spot, he discovers Trench in a state of collapse, his face distorted with pain. Lifting the man tenderly in his arms, Jack carries him to the bungalow where he gathers from a few coherent sentences that the would-be assassin is the miserable tool of an infamous employer.

(Now read on.)

Both the captain and Jack fired, but the mob swept forward with scarcely a check.

A dozen men reached the veranda and began to clamber over.

Roderigo, who had kept well behind, now came racing forward, urging on his men.

"Take him alive!" he yelled excitedly. "Kill the others, but take the boy alive!"

Jack stood back from the shattered window, clubbed his rifle, and prepared to sell his life dearly.

It was at this moment, when all seemed lost, that there came an extraordinary diversion.

Out of the heart of the dark, gloomy forest there suddenly came the sound of voices raised in song.

The volume of sound was great, and its effect was amazing.

The whole battle came to a sudden pause. Even the men clambering over the veranda rail, bent on slaughter, their eyes full of the lust of battle, stopped, and, turning their heads, looked back.

Roderigo himself looked round, and then, standing like one petrified, stared at the dark and gloomy forest from which that mysterious sound was coming.

Slowly his men gathered round him, as though seeking his protection. They were all agitated, and their whole demeanour betrayed the fact that they were the victims of a superstitious fear.

"I say, the beggars on this side have bolted!" came Harry's excited voice. "And I haven't had a pot at them!"

"Running like rabbits! Wet's up?" cried Teddy.

And the next moment both Teddy and Harry came running into the front room, where Jack and Captain Storm stood staring stupidly at one another.

"What do you make of it?" asked Jack, with a queer catch in his breath.

"Nothing!" replied Captain Storm. "But, thank goodness, those cut-throats out there seem to be equally in the dark! They are scared stiff!"

And, indeed, the men who were so boldly attacking a few minutes ago were now huddled together in a group like a flock of frightened sheep.

And all the time the singing in the forest rose in an ever-increasing volume of sound.

The words could not be distinguished, but the song was unquestionably a song of triumph or joy.

It had in it a fierce, exultant ring as coming from the throats of men who had achieved great victory, or a great deliverance.

Nearer and nearer it seemed to come, and then slowly it passed and became fainter and fainter, and then died away in the distance.

It was as though a ghostly, invisible army had come quite near and then passed on.

When the last note had died away, the first to recover from the trance-like stupefaction into which all had fallen was Roderigo.

He turned to his men and urged them to renew their attack on the bungalow.

But now they had no stomach for the job.

They could be seen shaking their heads vigorously, and the more Roderigo stormed the more obstinate they became.

And presently they began to melt away in little groups and then mysteriously to disappear.

Before long the big half-breed was left alone, raving impotently at the empty air.



The two men were gripped in a deadly struggle, reeling to and fro and fighting like tigers. "Pretty!" said Teddy. "I seen somethin' like that in King Street, 'Ammersmiff!' Scarcely had he uttered these words when Roderigo was swung high in the air and then crashed to the ground. (See page 28.)

Captain Storm gave a short laugh, and, striding up to Jack, gripped him by the hand.

"A close call, lad," he said; "but for the moment the danger seems past. I would like to put a bullet through that rascal; but I won't kill a fellow-man except in self-defence, so let him go."

But Roderigo seemed reluctant to leave the scene just yet.

He looked at the bungalow, then at the forest, then at the ground, and finally at the sky, and seemed to find inspiration nowhere.

He was the picture of irresolution and distress.

Finally, with bowed head, he turned to leave the garden, and with slow and laggard steps made his way towards the forest.

He had not gone a dozen paces, however, when he was brought to a halt in a most unexpected way.

There was a sudden crashing among the undergrowth of the forest, and then another figure emerged, and, leaping into the garden, stood before him.

The newcomer was a tall, muscular, broad-shouldered fellow as big as himself, with a round, close-cropped, bullet head and fiery black eyes.

The two men were only a dozen yards apart when they saw one another.

With one accord they came to a halt and stared.

Jack and his chums, standing at the window of the bungalow, could see the stranger's face.

Roderigo had his back turned to them.

But into that dark, forbidding face with the black, fiery eyes they saw a look of diabolical rage.

The man crouched low, his hands clutched tight, and then in a kind of snarl he spat out a single word:

"Roderigo!"

"Jose!" gasped the other, and his voice betrayed fear as well as surprise.

"Hallo! Two ole pals!" commented Teddy, and darted out on to the veranda.

The others followed, and what they saw when they got outside was a very lively hand-to-hand fight.

The two big men were gripped in a deadly struggle, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,124.

reeling to and fro and fighting like tigers, all the time emitting growls and snarls which were scarcely human.

"Pretty!" said Teddy approvingly. "I seen something like that in King Street, 'Ammersmiff, on a Saturday night!"

He had scarcely uttered the words when Roderigo was swung in the air, and then hurled with a crash to the ground, where he lay like a log.

The victor stood over him for a moment, and then turned away nonchalantly and came towards the bungalow.

"On seeing the friends he inspected them one by one, and then bowed low.

"Pardon me, senors, but is the good master within?"

His attitude was strangely meek and humble, and he presented a remarkable contrast to the terrific fighter of a moment ago.

"Your master?" said Jack.

"Yes, senor; the good doctor. I served him for many years, and then I deserted him. I come back to ask his forgiveness. I am much ashamed. In the hour of danger I left him; only when the danger is past do I return. But, like all the others, I was afraid."

"But is the danger past?" asked Jack.

The man smiled.

"Oh, yes, senor! Did you not hear the singing? All the people have come back to claim their lands, for they are no longer afraid. The Robot Man is dead!"

Peace at Last!

THE startling news brought by Jose, Dr. Slater's old servant, proved to be correct.

The simple and industrious people who had been driven from the fertile valley and the surrounding country by their superstitious fear of the Robot Man were flocking back to reclaim their lands and to rebuild their ruined villages.

They were coming with their flocks and herds, their wagons and their goods and chattels, for the news had spread with the rapidity of a forest fire that the Robot Man was dead.

In these remote and semi-civilised lands news travels fast, and when the monster of mechanical ingenuity created by the perverted genius of Professor Rollins crashed to the earth in ruins the report of the event soon spread far and wide.

In remote villages a hundred miles away terrified refugees discussed the great news with bated breath, and gradually their courage and their hope revived.

And now, with shouts and songs and laughter, the people were swarming back to their homeland.

Jose, when he found his master was dead, gratefully took service with the party of friends, and they soon found him of immense value.

He knew the country, and he was able to keep them informed from hour to hour of what was going on.

That evening, after a brief expedition into the forest, he came back with the news that all the followers of the Man of Magic, as he called the professor, had scattered, fled, and disappeared, while the returning refugees were camped in thousands on the great plain, where they intended to stay the night, and in the morning hold a great celebration.

"We will have a look at them to-morrow," said Captain Storm, "and perhaps join in the fun. Meanwhile, a night's sleep will do none of us any harm."

"I will keep watch while you sleep," said Jack quietly. "I don't suppose we shall be disturbed, but we won't take any chances. Besides, I feel very wide awake, and not at all like bed."

There was some argument about this, but Jack was obstinate, and in the end, as usual, he got his own way.

The others went to bed, and Jack sat on the veranda with his rifle across his knees.

The night was very still and warm, and silent save for the hum of insects and the occasional cry of a night-bird in the forest.

Jack sat motionless, musing over the strange turn of events which had wrought such a startling change in the circumstances of himself and friends.

A few hours ago they were all face to face with what looked like certain death, and now all was peace and security.

His friends were sleeping in their beds, and he was seated here undisturbed by any fear of danger.

Their enemies had melted away like a foul mist before a noonday sun, and this once deserted land was now thronged with a happy and rejoicing people.

For the concluding chapters of this gripping adventure yarn see next week's bumper number of the GEM.

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"GRUNDY'S TREASURE HUNT!"

(Continued from page 24.)

Really, Grundy was getting quite bright. It looked as if the little jape had done him some good.

"Yes, old bean!" said Lowther sweetly. "Just a little lesson, you know, not to be so high-handed and clever. I hid that dinky chart in that history book you were swotting up. I tore the paper from an old book, and I watered the ink to make it look old. Follow, or shall I spell it in words of one syllable?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you—you—"

"Oh, bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, his utter dismay and amazement giving way to towering wrath. "Oh, you—you frightful wascal, Lowthah! Not only have you interfered with my best toppah, but you have held me up to widicule and contempt! Put your—"

"Leave him to me!" bellowed Grundy. "You just leave him to me."

"Here, I say— Oh, my hat! Back up, chaps! Back up!"

But the chaps were too late—in fact, too helpless with laughter to back anyone up. So Lowther had both Grundy and Gussy all to himself.

Hot and furious raged the battle. Both Grundy and Gussy were in a towering rage, and they let Lowther know it in no uncertain way. When Tom Merry and the others did go to the rescue at last, Monty Lowther was a wreck—he looked anything but a successful joker!

They dragged him free, and then as Grundy seemed inclined to take them all on together, they gave him a wide berth and bolted, feeling it was time to go.

Really, it was no wonder Grundy was wild—and no wonder Tom Merry & Co decided to leave him to it. They had no desire to be brained with a spade. Yelling with merriment—with the single exception of Monty Lowther, that is—they bolted for their boat and tumbled in.

Baggy Trimble followed Tom Merry & Co. off Abbey Island, and he was looking unusually thoughtful, despite his joy, as he pulled his skiff downstream with much stress, and many escapes from capsizing. He was brimming over with joy at his great find, and actually he had reason to see more humour in what had happened amid the ruins than the others. He had, indeed, quite enjoyed Grundy's dismal downfall—for a time! And then, quite suddenly, his fat, gleeful grin had faded, and he had jumped, almost yelling in sudden fear.

For, happening to glance across the far side of the clearing, he had seen something that nobody else had seen.

It was a face peering from the bushes—an evil, bristly face, with lowering brows and glittering eyes. It was the face of the poacher, if poacher he was, who had asked various people, including Trimble himself, to row him across to the island.

And here he was, staring at the scene before him in mingled rage and bewilderment. How had he got over, and why was he here?

But the man had vanished from sight now—a fact Trimble was thankful for. And, somehow, as he pulled downstream homewards, Baggy could not feel quite so happy about his find as he should have done. Baggy had a conscience of sorts beneath his layers of fat, and though he told himself the treasure was the treasure hidden by the monks long centuries ago, and that as the finder he was fully entitled to claim it boldly, he knew he dared not do so. Moreover, he felt very uneasy in regard to the poacher—the man who had been watching the scene at the ruins so fiercely, so intently. He could not help feeling that the unknown man was, in some strange way, connected with the treasure he had found! The thought filled him with dread and fear.

What should he do? The treasure was there, waiting for him to take it away. It spelled wealth, power, and unlimited tuck to Baggy Trimble! But how was he to dispose of it, and—more worrying still to Baggy—how was he to fetch it away with that evil-looking ruffian prowling about Abbey Island?

Baggy Trimble wondered!

The great jape was ended—the brief and exciting adventures connected with Grundy's Treasure-Hunt were over. But they were to have results to others as well as to Baggy Trimble!

THE END.

(Now look out for the sequel to this grand story, entitled: "BAGGY'S BARGAIN SALE!" which will appear in next week's GEM. Make sure of your copy by ordering it early!)