



GRUNDY'S DELUSION!



GRUNDY PUTS THE 'FLUENCE ON MONTY LOWTHER!

An Amusing Incident in the Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale in this Number. 8-11-19



GRUNDY'S DELUSION!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

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

CHAPTER 1. Alarming!

"A S I say, we stand a jolly good chance of hitting the New House on Saturday, to start with," remarked Wilkins thoughtfully. "There's— M-m-my hat!"

George Wilkins ended his remarks with that startled exclamation as his eyes happened to fall upon George Alfred Grundy.

Tea had been finished quite ten minutes in Study No. 2 in the Shell passage. But Wilkins and Gunn were still seated at the table engaged in an exciting discussion regarding footer prospects at St. Jim's.

Their study-mate and leader Grundy was also seated at the table, but for once the great George Alfred was taking no part in the discussion. Grundy's mighty voice, in fact, was silent. And Wilkins and Gunn were obliged to carry on the discussion themselves without Grundy's authoritative opinions and forceful eloquence.

But Wilkins and Gunn did not seem to mind.

Asounding as it may seem, Grundy's study-mates appeared to be getting along quite well despite the absence of Grundy from the discussion. Indeed, Wilkins and Gunn were so deep in their chat that they had almost forgotten the fact that Grundy was present until Wilkins' glance had happened to fall upon the face of that lofty personage.

Grundy's face was not beautiful at any time. Though it was perfectly open and not bad to look upon, its beauty was nothing to write home about. But just then Grundy's face was positively ugly. His rugged features were screwed up into a horrible grimace, his square jaw protruded grimly, and his eyes were fixed with fierce intensity upon the startled face of George Wilkins.

In fact, there was something rather terrifying about Grundy's whole appearance at that moment.

"M-m-m-my hat!" repeated Wilkins, staring at Grundy in great alarm. "What's the matter with you, Grundy, old man?"

Grundy did not reply. He sat back in his chair, arms folded on his chest, and eyes fixed unblinkingly on Wilkins, as if he were trying to bore a hole through that startled youth's head.

"Seems to be underestimating a blessed gargoyle!" remarked Gunn somewhat nervously. "What's up with the potty ass?"

Wilkins and Gunn blinked for quite a minute at their study-leader. Grundy's strange appearance seemed to indicate that he was ill—possibly about to indulge in an apoplectic fit. At any rate, there was certainly something extremely disconcerting and unnerving about Grundy's extraordinary manner.

"Grundy, old fellow!" exclaimed Gunn, in deep concern.

Grundy did not speak. His frown intensified a little, and his gaze grew a little fiercer—that was all.

Wilkins sidled cautiously from his chair.

"He—he's not ill," he said, almost in a whisper to Gunn. "I—I've noticed he's been rather queer all day—hardly spoken any more than an ordinary chap does. He—he's gone—Oh dear! It—it's come at last, Gunn, old chap!"

Gunn nodded in utter dismay, and slipped hastily from his seat. There was a wild, fierce light in Grundy's eyes, and it really looked as though Grundy had at last slipped over the border of sheer idiocy—a border he often dangerously approached, in the opinion of many St. Jim's fellows.

"We—we'd better get help, Gunn!" stammered Wilkins, in great distress. "I—I—I've seen this coming for a long time! Poor old Grundy!"

"George Wilkins!"

Wilkins fairly jumped as Grundy thundered out his name. Grundy had spoken at last. But Wilkins nor Gunn were relieved one bit.

They edged a little nearer the door, their startled eyes glued to the face of the unfortunate Grundy.

"K-k-calm yourself, Grundy, old fellow," murmured Wilkins soothingly. "K-keep quiet, there's a good fellow. We're just going—"

"You'll stay where you are, George!

Wilkins!" boomed Grundy in commanding tones. "And now look at me—straight in the eyes, mind you!"

"Y-y-yes, Grundy!"

"Listen to me, George Wilkins," said Grundy impressively. "Your will lies entirely under my command—see? You'll do exactly as I command you! Got that?"

"Y-y-yes, Grundy!"

"In fact, Wilkins," said Grundy, frowning horribly, "from this moment you are not George Wilkins at all. Do you know who you are?"

Wilkins did not answer that question. Both Wilkins and Gunn fancied they could guess what Grundy's reply would be if they did. He would inform them, possibly, that Wilkins was the Emperor of China, and that he himself was a poached egg on toast. They hadn't a doubt about that. It was now only too clear to their minds that it had indeed come at last.

"Good heavens!" gasped George Wilkins.

They stared at the unhappy Grundy in horror.

And then, as Grundy made a sudden movement to rise from his chair, the two Shell fellows gave vent to one simultaneous gasp and rushed for the door.

Crack!

"Whoop!"

"Oh, my napper! Wow!"

In their frenzied haste to get out Grundy's study-mates had collided in the doorway and, like the old lady at the turnstile, had "got stuck."

For a moment the pair struggled and roared frantically. Then Grundy leaped from his chair, made two tremendous strides across the room, and Wilkins and Gunn yelled in alarm as they were yanked back into the room.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wilkins. "He's got us!"

"Help! Murder!" yelled Gunn frantically. "Leggo! Oh, cr—"

"Yoooop!"

Wilkins and Gunn made that exclamation in one voice as Grundy got his grip and brought their heads together with a crack.

"You—you—you potty asses!" roared

Grundy wrathfully. "What on earth are you playing at?"

Wilkins and Gunn rubbed their heads and shot an eloquent glance at each other. Then, as Grundy stood staring, they hurled themselves suddenly upon their leader. Grundy went down with a crash and a yell of surprise.

It was really rather plucky of Wilkins and Gunn. The burly George Alfred was a heifer handful at any time. And it is well-known that madmen are endowed with the strength of ten. They knew they were up against it; but now Grundy had become violent, his chums gallantly forgot all personal danger in their desire to restrain him.

"Leggo! Stop! Stop!" roared Grundy furiously. "Wharrer you at? Leggo! I'll smash—"

"Don't let him reach the poker!" gasped Wilkins. "He's simply got to hold him down until he's fast asleep!"

Wilkins roared as Grundy's fist smote his nose. And after that neither Wilkins nor Gunn had any breath even to yell. Struggling mightily, the trio rolled and crashed about the study amid a terrific uproar.

Crash! Smash!

The table went over with a tremendous crash and clatter of breaking crockery. Next moment Tom Merry with a crowd of startled Shell fellows behind him appeared in the doorway.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Tom Merry, in alarm. "What on earth's the matter? Is Grundy breaking up the happy home?"

"Help us!" choked Gunn fiercely. "Help us! Poor old Grundy's gone mad!"

"G-g-gone mad?" stuttered Tom Merry in amazement.

For a brief moment the newcomers stared from the disordered room to Grundy's wild and wrathful face. Then as one man they rushed to the rescue. Even Grundy's mighty muscles availed him little against such numbers. And after a brief struggle the burly George Alfred was held powerless in the grasp of many hands.

"You—you—you—" "Calm yourself, Grundy, old fellow!" murmured Tom Merry, deeply moved. "You're quite safe—in good hands, you know. Just be quiet and—"

"You—you—you utter asses!" spluttered Grundy. "Oh, you—you silly chumps! Oh, if you'll only let go my arms, I'll—I'll—I'll—"

See if I don't!" But his captors hung on. Possibly they did not consider the inducement Grundy held out if they did was good enough. Wilkins and Gunn staggered to their feet, gasping but tremendously relieved. Wilkins was mopping a rapidly-swelling nose. Gunn was tenderly feeling an already darkening eye.

"Thank goodness you fellows came when you did," said Wilkins fervently. "We couldn't have held him down a minute longer. The poor fellow—"

"P-p-p-poor fellow—" stuttered Grundy warmly. "Look here, George Wilkins—"

"We only noticed it really just after tea," explained Gunn sadly to the astonished juniors. "He'd been rather queer all day through—actually been reading a book all day! The unusual strain on his mental powers must have been the final touch. I never liked to admit it being his pal. But he—he was always a bit—you know—"

Gunn shook his head, and looked sadly at Grundy. Grundy shook his fist, and looked murderously at Gunn.

"Better send for Railton," muttered Tom Merry, with an anxious glance at the glowering Grundy. "If you chaps don't—don't get loose, I'll run along to his study now. Expect he'll 'phone for a doctor."

"D-d-d-doctor!" shouted Grundy. "What on earth are you burling about, Tom Merry? And what the dickens are you silly asses staring at me like that for? Have you all gone dotty? Can't a chap biff his study-mates without all you chaps interfering? Why—"

"Yes, yes! Certainly, Grundy, old fellow," gasped Tom Merry hastily, thinking it best to humour poor Grundy. "You did quite right to go for 'em—I expect they deserved it, dear old chap. Now calm you—"

"I should just jolly well think they did deserve it," shouted Grundy warmly. "That ass Wilkins would have been off if he had only kept his eyes—"

"B-b-been off," stammered Wilkins. "I said 'off,'" asserted Grundy, more in disgust than anger. "I'd fairly got you under the 'fluence—"

"The—the 'fluence—"

"Didn't I say 'fluence,'" roared Grundy. "Blessed if you aren't deaf as well as a rotten subject, George Wilkins. I was a fool to waste my hypnotic powers on a silly ass like you, Wilkins! Might have known you'd make a mess of it."

"Hypnotic powers?"

"What?"

"Ye gods!"

Wilkins and Gunn fairly blinked at George Alfred, in sheer amazement—and enlightenment.

"Mean to say you were only trying to—hypnotise me, Grundy?" almost choked Wilkins.

"Trying to—well, I like that!" said Grundy indignantly. "Why, I jolly well had you fairly off. 'Nother second and I could have done what I liked with you, George Wilkins."

"Then—then—then you're not insane, after all, Grundy?" gasped Gunn, in astonishment.

"Eh? What's that?—insane—why, you cheeky rotter!" yelled Grundy. "I'll half spifficate you, William Gunn! Wasn't I practising hypnotism?"

"Hypnotism?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd of fellows simply roared as the truth began to soak in. All alarm had gone now, and the fellows released the angry hypnotist.

Grundy was not mad after all; he was merely practising his great gift of hypnotism on his long-suffering study-mates.

CHAPTER 2.

An Ambitious Programme.

THE faces of Wilkins and Gunn were studies in expression.

"And was thought you were insane, Grundy," breathed Wilkins at last, almost grinning in his relief.

"And you were quite right, old tops!" came the still, small voice of Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you grinning chumps! Why, I'll bump the lot of you!" howled Grundy, seeming to realise all at once that he was free. "I'll—I'll—"

There was a sudden rush for the door as Grundy, crouched round wildly and grabbed a handy fiver, but Grundy was almost as dangerous as Grundy insane. Thinking Grundy insane, the juniors hadn't hesitated to tackle him—it was in a good cause, then. But they didn't propose to get hurt for the fun of the thing.

In less than ten seconds, the great man had cleared the study save for his own study-mates. He slammed and locked the door, breathing deeply.

Then he turned and eyed his study-mates morosely and in silence for fully a minute.

"Oh, you—you—you chumps! You—you burling idiots!" he breathed at last, more in sorrow than in anger.

"I'm—I'm surprised at you, George Wilkins—and you, too, William Gunn. I must say—I'm surprised at you. Making fools of yourselves like that?"

"Eh?"

"Nice thing for me, isn't it?" went on Grundy bitterly. "Nice asses all the fellows! I think I've got for supporters, won't they? I'm ashamed of you both!"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"And the worst of it is," said Grundy moodily, as his chums glared at him speechlessly. "The worst of it is, you've made even me look a bit of a fool, too. You'd hardly credit it—but there it is. Chaps don't think for themselves. They won't understand. But that's the worst of having brainless noodles around a man—bound to let him down."

"You—you—you—"

"Mind," went on Grundy, oblivious of the Finnish glares of the "brainless noodles." "I don't exactly blame you chaps—can't expect you to look at things as I do, frinstance. But this sort of thing means loss of prestige to me. And loss of prestige is a jolly serious thing to any reformer—or any other great public man, for matter of that. It means lost confidence. And to lose the chaps' confidence at the beginning of my reform will, perhaps, mess up the whole campaign."

"Campaign?"

"Great pip!"

Grundy smiled at the looks of astonishment on the faces of his study-mates.

"I see you chaps are surprised," he said agreeably. "Well, I'll surprise a good many at St. Jim's before long. I don't mind telling you chaps that I'm going to make things hum at St. Jim's. I'm not a chap to brag—"

"You—you're not?"

"I'm not a chap to brag," repeated Grundy warmly. "But I dare say your fellows have noticed I've got rather a commanding personality—the power of ruling others to an exceptional degree—"

"Especially with a cricket stump!" murmured Wilkins.

Grundy frowned.

"That's enough, George Wilkins! I may as well mention once and for all that I don't intend to stand any cheek from fellows who're going to back me up. May as well mention that at the start!"

"So we're going to back you up, are we?" asked Gunn wearily.

"Of course!" ejaculated Grundy. "Now listen to me! I suppose your fellows have noticed the deplorable state St. Jim's is in—simply going to the dogs. Slackness and inefficiency everywhere," added Grundy, with a wave of his hand.

Wilkins winked solemnly at Gunn.

"Can't say we have, Grundy, old man," said Wilkins blandly. "Only your reformers can see these things, you know."

"It's hardly believable, but there it is," said Grundy, with a shake of the head. "I've been thinking things over seriously lately. I'm not at all satisfied with St. Jim's. I'm not satisfied with the Head, to start with. He's not a bad sort, I'll admit that. But he's weak! He wants more backbone! For a job like his, what's wanted is a chap who'd rule with a rod of iron—me, frinstance. But I don't want his job—wouldn't have it if it were offered me. I think he'd be all right if he had someone to back him up—someone with a stronger personality to rule through him. The power behind the throne, you know. And that's where I come in."

"D-d-do you?"

"I do!" said Grundy firmly. "I've definitely decided to take him in hand—to take charge of the helm of school, so to speak. And then there's Kildare! I'm not satisfied with Kildare."

"No?"

"No! I'm not! He doesn't handle the fellows as I would if I were captain," explained Grundy. "He's also weak! But I'm not bothering with either the Head or Kildare yet. That'll come later. I'm going to start with the Shell—begin the reform at home, as it were. I'm going to make my power felt gradually—this edge of the wedge, y'know. That's the programme!"

Wilkins and Gunn stared fixedly at Grundy. The great George Alfred was continually surprising and amusing St. Jim's. But this latest stunt—well, it was more than surprising and amusing.

"M-m-my only hat! And—and you're going to do all this, Grundy, old man," murmured Wilkins admiringly. "And to think that we humble chaps share a study with such a splendid fellow as you! And now tell us how you're going to do it all, do it!"

Grundy smiled.

"By hypnotism!" he said triumphantly. "Simply by hypnotism."

"Oh!"

Wilkins and Gunn stared, but they were not impressed. It was not the first time they had heard about Grundy's power of hypnotism—from Grundy. Though why he should imagine he possessed such a power, and what grounds he had for such an extraordinary delusion, they could not guess.

"It's really that book I've been reading on hypnotism I've to thank for it all," explained Grundy modestly. "Of course, I always knew I could do it; but until I read that book I'd simply no idea what a tremendous power I possessed, y'know. But now I know, I've decided now to hide my light under a bushel any longer. That's—"

"And—are you going to hypnotise the Head?"

"Exactly!" said Grundy. "I shall hypnotise him when it's necessary—unknown to himself, of course—and shall compel him to ginger up St. Jim's—compel him to carry out the reforms that are necessary for the efficiency and well-being of St. Jim's."

"Oh crumbs!"

"And we've got to back you up?" asked Wilkins meekly.

"Exactly! Not that I shall need the help of you chaps," said Grundy loftily. "You're more of a hindrance, really. Look at that business just now! Frinstance. You fooled them up! You don't mind my speaking plainly, do you?"

"Not at all," murmured Wilkins cheerfully.

"That's all right, then. I speak as I find. But it's only in the Shell I shall possibly need the help of you chaps. Chaps are like sheep. Get a couple of sheep to lead 'em—you two fellows y'know—and the other silly asses'll follow as a matter of course. See?"

Wilkins breathed deeply.

"Yes," he answered in deadly, measured tones. "We see the biggest, pottiest ass—'We see the biggest, pottiest ass'—that any public school was bored to death with. That's you, George Alfred Grundy! You don't mind my speaking plainly, do you?"

"Eh? What's that?" gasped Grundy. "Say that again, George Wilkins!"

George Wilkins was just about to say it again when he noticed Grundy's hand straying towards the fireside. He refrained.

Grundy snorted.

"Any more check, George Wilkins, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 613.

and there'll be trouble in this study," he said darkly. "I won't stand it! You fellows make me tired," he went on wearily. "I often wish you'd finish with these silly, childish ways. Drop 'em! Play the man—like me!"

"L—like you?"

"Exactly! And now about my campaign. The only trouble is that Tom Merry may actually refuse to be hypnotised. I don't say he will, but he might. Possibly play the fool, like you did to-night, Wilkins. In that case—"

"T-T-Tom Merry! You're going to hypnotise Tom Merry?"

"Of course! Didn't I say I was going to start with the Shell, William Gunn? Now, I don't think much of Tom Merry. He's not a bad youngster. I admit that. But he doesn't make an efficient junior captain. Take footer, Frinstance! Mind you, I don't go so far as to say he cannot play himself. He can—after a fashion. But not like me! In fact, I'll go so far as to say there isn't another fellow in St. Jim's plays footer after my style."

"I'm! There's Baggy Trimble," murmured Wilkins reflectively. "And then there's Skimpy—"

"That's enough, George Wilkins. I want none of your silly jokes!" roared Grundy. "Chuck it! Now, as I said just now, I'm not the fellow to blow my own trumpet—not at all. And yet, as you know, though Tom Merry cannot fail to see my exceptional abilities, he consistently leaves me out of footer. Call that efficiency?"

"Ahem!"

"That's how the matter stands," went on Grundy warmly. "Rotten state of affairs, but there it is. Now I'm putting an end to all that sort of thing. Under my guidance and control I shall ensure a continuous run of success during the coming footer season."

"S—say you," gasped Wilkins.

"I shall, Frinstance, take Saturday's match with the New House. I simply hypnotise Tom Merry—order him to put me in the team—and there you are!" said Grundy.

"But I thought you were going to ensure a continuous run of success for us," ejaculated Gunn.

"Of course! Didn't I say so?" said Grundy, in surprise.

Then why are you going to influence Tom Merry to put you in the team?" asked Gunn innocently.

"To win the match, of course, dummy!" snapped Grundy. "Stands to reason New House won't stand an earth—! Oh, I see, you were being funny! Why, I'll jollywell—"

"Nunno! Not at all," gasped Gunn hastily. "I was merely—"

"Oh, shut up! You chaps make me tired, snore at his watch. "And now back up. We haven't any too much time if we're to do the job before prep. Follow me!"

"Follow you! But why?"

"To hypnotise Tom Merry, of course!" said Grundy grimly. "No time like the present. If we're to beat New House on Saturday—"

"But—but I—I've got to see Talbot about—about a book," said Gunn hurriedly. "Sorry—"

"Rot!" roared Grundy.

"And—and I'd better stop and clear this mess up," began Wilkins hastily.

"Rot! Bosh! You'll come with me," rapped out Grundy. "I'm not allowing any slackness in this study, I can tell you! Follow me!"

Grundy's study mates looked at each other and groaned. It was useless and dangerous to argue with George Alfred when in war-like mood.

"All right, then, lead on," granted Wilkins. "If you're determined to make an ass of yourself, Grundy—"

But the autocratic Grundy was already through the doorway, and didn't hear Wilkins' last remark—fortunately for Wilkins. He glanced supporters following, stopped at the door of No. 10 study. He knocked firmly, and entered. And at the same moment Wilkins and Gunn turned and fled down the passage.

Grundy was half-way through the doorway, when, hearing the patter of receding footsteps, he turned—just in time to see his "supporters" vanish round the corner.

"Cheeky slackers!" snorted Grundy wrathfully. "Never mind, only make a mess of things if they did come! Here goes!"

And George Alfred Grundy entered No. 10 to open his campaign—the campaign that was going to revolutionise St. Jim's—perhaps.

CHAPTER 3.

Lowther Obliges,

"HERE'S Grundy!"

"Professor Grundy, the hypnotist!"

"The English Landru!"

Those remarks and a chorus of reminiscent chuckles greeted George Alfred Grundy as he marched into No. 10 study. There was a fairly large gathering present. Besides the Terrible Three—Tom Merry, Manners, and Monty Lowther—Blake and Co.—Jack Blake, D'Arcy, Berries and Digby—and several other fellows of the Shell and Fourth were there, and all were discussing footer prospects, until Grundy blundered in, in his usual autocratic manner.

Grundy glared around on the grinning faces.

It was plain, even to Grundy, that the story of his hypnotic experiment on Wilkins and its remarkable results had got about, though why it should cause merriment, the great George Alfred could not imagine.

But it did. As a matter of fact, the very entrance of Grundy into a room was, more often than not, the signal for smiles to break out—a remarkable fact that was a continual source of surprise and wonder to that great man.

Perhaps the secret was, as Monty Lowther once remarked, that Grundy was one of Nature's own comedians, though an unconscious one.

At all events Grundy's latest stunt certainly did seem to produce a humorous effect on the juniors. The innumerable things he couldn't do, and the innumerable things he thought he could do, always did.

But before Grundy could address the chuckling juniors, Monty Lowther jumped up and pointed an accusing finger dramatically at him.

"Where have you hidden the bodies of your victims?" he asked fiercely.

"B-b-b-bodies?" stuttered Grundy.

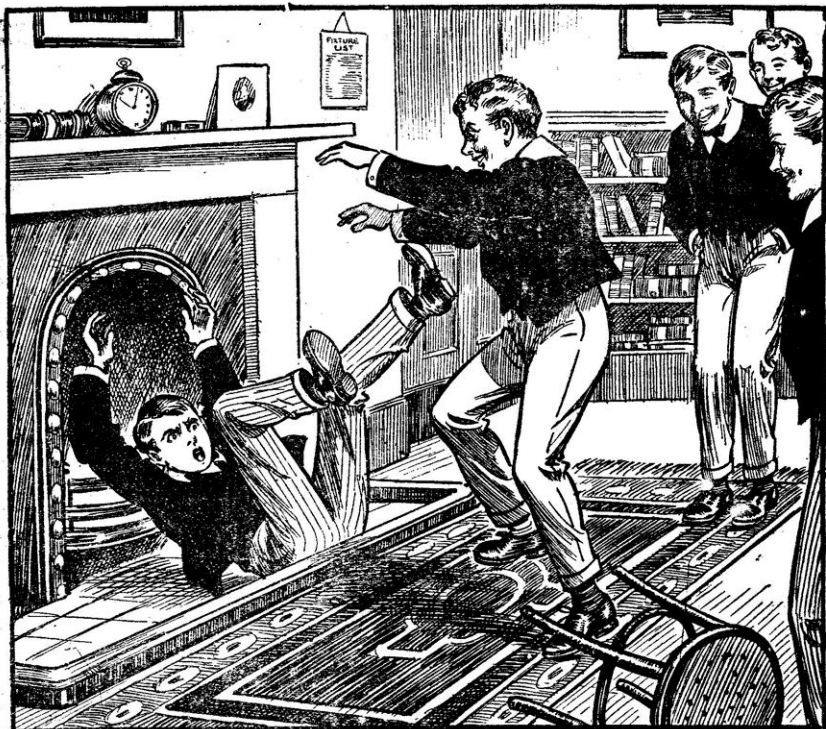
"V-v-v-victims!"

"Where," repeated Lowther tragically, "have you hidden the bodies of your victims—the unfortunate females you have drawn into your power by hypnotism, Grundy?"

"You—you utter ass, Lowther! You—you burbling chump!"

"If you've hidden 'em in the woodshed, or burned 'em in the common-roast, stove, then you could better confess, Grundy," said Lowther darkly. "Your deeds are discovered. My hat!"

To think we have a Bluebeard in the Shell at St. Jim's—a monster who captures by hypnotism—by the power of his evil eye!"



Lowther grasped the astounded hypnotist in a grip of iron. Whirling him off his feet, he dropped Grundy in the fireplace with a crash. (See chapter 4.)

"Eh! Bluebeard—Evil eye! If you jolly well say I've got the evil eye, Lowther, I'll thumpin' well dot you on the nose!" roared Grundy. "Evil eye, eh? Why, I—I'll—"

"Why, haven't you?" ejaculated Lowther. "I thought all hypnotists had the evil eye!"

"Rot! Rot!" roared Grundy. "Evil eye, eh? I'll smash you, Lowther, if you say that again. I'm a hypnotist, right enough—"

"You are?"

"Certainly! Haven't I proved it? Though, mind you," said Grundy warningly, "I'll admit that a fellow with no character possessing such a power could be a tremendous force for evil. I grant you that. It's a pity, but there it is. It's different in my case, of course. I'm fully conscious of the tremendous responsibility the gift places upon my shoulders, and I know my duty. I intend to use it, not as a force for evil, but as a mighty force for good."

"Oh, my hat!"

"For the benefit of St. Jim's, I suppose?" asked Lowther blandly.

"Well—yes! Charity begins at home sort of thing," explained Grundy. "But, besides the big things, there are lots of little things I could do—things hard, worthy of my powers, but things that

want doing badly. Frinstance, by a course of hypnotic treatment, I could cure Taggles the porter of over-indulgence in intoxicants—"

"Good!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Or cure that fat beast Trimble of over-indulgence in grub—"

"Splendid!" gasped Lowther.

"Or cure you yourself of perpetrating such rotten, piffing childish puns, Lowther—"

"Look here, Grundy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or cure that silly, empty-headed noodle D'Arcy of his effeminate, foppish manners and over-indulgence in dudish clobber."

"Bai Jove! Weally Gwunday, you—"

"There's lots of little jobs like those I intend to put right—but not yet. When I've time, I will—not before!" said Grundy firmly. "The more pressing matters must come first. There's the junior footer, for one thing. I'm not at all satisfied with the junior footer!"

"You're not?"

"I'm not! I don't blame the team as a whole, mind. It's the rotten captain they've got—doesn't know a good footballer when he sees one—me, you know. You don't mind my saying so, Tom Merry, but you're a rank failure as footer

captain! You're no good! You're inefficient!"

"Thanks!" gasped Tom Merry faintly.

"I'm sorry to have to say it. But I believe in facing facts," explained Grundy kindly. "I don't want to sack you, Tom Merry. And if, after my course of hypnotic treatment I see any improvement, perhaps I'll let you stick to your job. We'll see! And now, if you'll buck up, Tom Merry, we'll get to business. I shall want you to sit facing the light—turn your chair round, and do exactly—"

"So—so you're going to try your hypnotism on me, are you?" asked Tom Merry grimly.

"Exactly! That's what I've come for," smiled Grundy.

Tom Merry took a deep breath.

"You—you crass ass! You potty chump! You—you prize idiot!" he snorted. "If you try any of your silly slobber on me, Grundy, I'll—I'll strew the hungry churchyard with your bones, you raving maniac!"

"Wha-a-a-at? Do you mean to say you won't—you actually refuse to be made efficient for your own good, and the good of St. Jim's?" gasped Grundy. "If you call that patriotic, Tom Merry, I don't!"

"You-you-you—"

"I suppose," said Grundy, with crushing sarcasm. "I suppose you doubt my powers, Tom Merry? Why, haven't I proved it? Didn't you yourself see me hypnotising Wilkins to-night? And didn't I hypnotise Baggy Trimble this dinner-time in the tuck-shop?"

"Did you?"

"I did!" boomed Grundy. "You chaps should have seen me—fairly opened your eyes! I forced him—against his will, mind you—to eat twelve jam tarts and eight sausage rolls in five minutes!"

"Not really?" murmured Lowther admiringly. "And who paid for 'em? Did you?"

"Well, as it happens, I did," said Grundy. "Couldn't very well let him pay as I flummoxed him—could I?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"And what's more," went on Grundy loftily, "he liked it! He wanted me to hypnotise him again before tea! If that doesn't prove—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you—" began Grundy

traculently.

"It—it does, indeed, Grundy!" choked Lowther, winking at the assembly. "It beats me how anyone could doubt your powers after hearing that. And if Tom Merry is afraid to be hypnotised, then I will. You've such a splendid belief in yourself Grundy, that I cannot help having confidence in you."

Grundy smiled loftily, but he shook his head.

"Can't be did!" he said firmly. "Can't waste time on nonentities. And you'd not be a good subject for an experiment, Lowther. You chaps may not believe me, but the weaker a chap's mental powers and will-power, the more unsatisfactory he proves as a hypnotic subject. That's a scientific fact. I read that in a book. Queer—what?"

Lowther flushed as a yell of laughter went up.

"Eh, what's that?" he shouted. "Why, you thumpin'—Ahem! That is—Quite so, Grundy! But, just think what practice it would be! Besides," urged Lowther, "if you succeed in putting the 'fluence on me, Merry wouldn't dare to refuse—he'd be funking if he did!"

"H'm! Yes! Well, I don't mind! That alters the case!" said Grundy.

"Yes, I'll do it, just to convince you doubting Thomases, and as a test case. Now, Lowther, just keep quiet and do exactly as I tell you. Don't be afraid—there's no danger."

"You won't play any monkey tricks—make me bark like a dog, or bleat like a bloater?" murmured Monty Lowther.

"That I jolly well won't!" said Grundy indignantly. "No silly music-hall tricks about my hypnotism, I can tell you. Now, sit like that—so! No; keep your eyes open, ass! And do keep your feet still! That was my shin you hacked then, Lowther!"

"Sorry!" said Lowther.

"Now," said Grundy, turning to the audience, "when his subject was settled to his satisfaction, 'you chaps sit perfectly still. Be quiet! And for goodness' sake, stop that idiotic giggling. Might be a blessed punch-and-judy show instead of a scientific experiment you're about to see!" grumbled George Alfred.

"Sorry, professor!" murmured Blake.

"Only grinning with excitement," "Then stop it!" snapped Grundy authoritatively. "And now watch me; you'll see something interesting soon. You watch!"

And the juniors manfully restrained their grins, and watched with faces of owl-like seriousness. Grundy alone was always worth watching. But with a combination, so to speak, of Grundy—"Nature's own comedian," and Lowther, the humorist of the Shell, they fancied they would see something more than interesting.

CHAPTER 4. Overdoing It!

THERE was a breathless silence as George Alfred Grundy seated himself facing his subject, and gazed long and earnestly into his eyes. Monty Lowther returned the gaze steadily and gravely as befitting such a solemn performance.

"Half a mo', Grundy!" exclaimed Jack Blake, after a minute of this. "What about the hand-waving business? Saw a chap at Maskelyne and Cooks' once—fiddled about with his hands and did all sorts of funny stunts. But I suppose you've got past that, Grundy?"

Grundy looked round with an amused smile.

"Now, I'm glad you asked that question, Blake," he said, quite good-humouredly. "As a matter of fact, it isn't absolutely necessary. Some do, and some don't. I don't!"

"You don't! Fact is, I don't need such mechanical aid. I simply rely upon the enormous magnetic powers of the human eye—mine, you know," explained Grundy. "Now shut up and watch me!"

And Blake shut up and watched Grundy. So did the others, expectantly. For some minutes the amateur hypnotist gazed hard, frowned frightfully, and made peculiar faces at Lowther. Then suddenly Arthur Augustus gave a gasp. Lowther's eyes were gradually opening wider and wider in a fixed stare, and his body became curiously rigid.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy in a tense whisper. "I weally believe he's doin' it, deah boys! How weally wennaikable!"

A soft chuckle ran round the room; the "deah boys" did not appear to be as much impressed as Arthur Augustus evidently was. Perhaps they knew Monty Lowther better than D'Arcy, or perhaps they were not quite so innocent as the noble George.

Grundy himself looked fearfully excited. He waved his hand behind him frantically for silence.

"Lowther!"

Grundy rapped out the name sharply. There was a moment's silence; then Lowther's lips moved.

"Yes, Grundy?" he said, in a curiously far away voice.

"Listen to me, Lowther," said Grundy, in his deep, commanding voice. "You are now under my control, physically and mentally. You are the slave of my will. You will do as I order you. Now, stand up!"

With a curiously jerky motion, Monty Lowther stood up. From the assembly came gasps of amazement and murmurs of admiration.

"M-m-m-my hat!" gasped Manners.

"H-h-h-h's done it, you fellows. Fine! Splendid Grundy!"

"Wonderful!"

"Marvellous!"

The amateur hypnotist stared dumbfounded for a moment. Strangely enough, he appeared to be more surprised than anyone at the astonishing success of the experiment. Then, his face fairly beaming, he turned and bestowed a lofty smile of triumph upon his audience.

"There! You fellows see that?" he gasped, in a voice almost quivering with excitement. "It's a success—a great success. I must say, I'm surprised, considering the subject's rather feeble mentality. I admit, I am surprised! Nothing wonderful, of course, but it shows you chaps what I can do. Now, I'll just make him do a few simple exercises—no monkey stunts, mind you. I don't hold with monkey-tricks. Just a few simple movements as samples of my powers. Now watch! Grundy fixed his eyes on the subject. "Lowther!"

"Yes, Grundy?"

"Move your right arm out, straight from the shoulder, and—Yaroooohh!"

Crash! Grundy yelled fiendishly, as Lowther's fist smote his nose, and the luckless hypnotist disappeared backwards over his chair, and fell with a tremendous crash and clatter into the fender.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared, as Grundy sat up, clapping his damaged nose with both hands. Though his subject had obeyed his order promptly, and to the letter Grundy did not look pleased. He glared a trifle suspiciously at Monty Lowther.

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Grundy looked up with a start. On the bank were a swarm of fellows laughing hysterically. He gave a start as he spotted Lowther calmly putting on his jacket. Then slowly, but emphatically, the truth dawned upon his mighty brain—spoofed! (See Chapter 4.)

But that youth was still standing with right arm rigidly outstretched, and eyes staring before him.

Then before Grundy could say or do anything, a startling change came over Lowther. With startling suddenness he began to shoot out his fists one after the other, as though he was punching an imaginary punchball. Then his legs also began to shoot out, like a man doing the goose-step.

Straight for Grundy he made, and the unfortunate George Alfred was just staggering to his feet, when one of Lowther's fists thumped his chest. He sat down again with a bump and a roar. Lowther marched over his prostrate form, and advanced on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Arthur Augustus backed in alarm. "Bai Jove! Keep off, Lowthah, deah bay! Stop him, Grundy—varooogh!"

Like a piston-rod one of Lowther's fists shot out, and the alarmed Gussy sat down with a bump. But Lowther didn't stop at that. And the laughter of the on-lookers changed suddenly to gasps and yells of wrath, as the humourist of the Shell, his limbs going like clockwork, continued his peregrinations in the crowded study.

"Stoppit! Lowther, you ass! Wow!"

"Here, that's enough, you silly chump!"

"Yoooop! Stop the raving madman, somebody—"

"Cut the blessed fluence off, Professor—"

"Oh, crumbs! He's gone mad! Now you've done it, Grundy!"

Grundy was indeed looking as if he thought he had "done it." In fact, he appeared to be at his wits end to know what to do. He sat on the floor, and stared at his unfortunate victim, who was still tramping about the room like a bull in a china shop.

Amid a roar of voices, and the crash of falling chairs, the juniors hopped and jumped out of the way like youngsters playing blind man's buff. It was truly alarming.

At least, it was to Grundy. It was only too plain to him what had happened. He had evidently under-rated his tremendous powers, and had gone too far—had overdone the 'fluence.

It was an alarming thought, but Grundy did not despair. It was a serious state of affairs, but George Alfred felt equal to the occasion.

He bounded to his feet with a growl.

"Stop that row, you fellows!" he

boomed. "Silence! Be quiet! Leave him to me!"

There was an expectant hush, as Grundy made a sudden rush, and gripped poor Lowther by the arms.

"Stop!" he ordered sharply. "Look at me, Lowther!"

Monty Lowther looked at Grundy, but he did not stop. He marched on. Grundy howled, as the back of his head was brought against the wall with a crack.

After that Lowther seemed to go mad. He grasped the astounded hypnotist in a grip of iron. Whirling him off his feet, he dropped Grundy in the fireplace with a crash.

Then with a yell like a red Indian on the warpath, he dashed from the study.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Now you've done it, Grundy!"

"He's gone to do away with himself," murmured Manners, with a sob. "P-p-poor old Lowther! No more stale jokes. No more rotten puns—"

"Better follow him, an' bring him to, Grundy!" gasped Blake urgently. "Oh Crumbs!"

Grundy withdrew his head from the coal-scuttle, and blinked dazedly around. He was looking more than alarmed now. Without a doubt, Lowther was

beyond his control. Possibly he had indeed gone off his rocker, and would do grievous bodily harm—to himself or someone else, unless he was stopped.

Grundy didn't stay to dwell upon the terrible thought. He jumped to his feet, and dashed from the room in pursuit.

The Shell fellows and the Fourth Formers followed. Strangely enough, they did not appear to be at all alarmed at the serious turn events had taken. In fact, they were laughing uproariously as they followed the flying figure of George Alfred Grundy out of the room.

"Oh, my hat!" roared Blake. "Poor old Grundy! What a scoundrel! The bubbling chump thinks Lowther's gone to do away with himself. Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors rushed after Grundy, and reached the schoolhouse steps just in time to see the figure of Monty Lowther vanish through the gates. Grundy was already half-way across the quad, thundering in hot pursuit.

Quite a number of fellows were grouped round the gate chatting. They asked enquiring questions at Grundy, as he dashed through, with face set and eyes staring from his head in apprehensive alarm.

But Grundy did not heed if he heard. Ahead of him, down the white stretch of Rylcombe Lane, could be seen the bare-headed figure of Monty Lowther—still running. Then suddenly Grundy gasped, and put on speed, as the distant figure of Lowther disappeared through a gap in the hedge.

George Alfred reached the spot breathless and panting. Squeezing through the gap in the hedge, he looked anxiously around. In front was an evil-looking, evil-smelling duck-pond. And beyond was an open field. But of the unfortunate Lowther there was no sign.

Suddenly Grundy gave a jump, and his rugged face paled.

Lying on the edge of the mud fringing the pond, was an Eton jacket—Monty Lowther's without a doubt. On the green, shiny surface of the water floated a handkerchief—Lowther's without a doubt.

Then the terrible suspicion dawned upon Grundy. Poor Lowther had done away with himself whilst under the "fluence." And the very thought of such a terrible possibility was enough for Grundy.

With a choking gasp, he braved the horrors of that awful duck-pond, and a moment later had waded out to the splash of white on the verdant, green surface. One brief glance at the initials in the corner of the handkerchief was enough for Grundy. And never in its existence had that stagnant pond received such a stirring up as it got the next few moments.

Grundy was still frantically searching amid the slimy depths when a veritable howl of laughter rang out from the bank.

Grundy looked up with a start. On the bank were a swarm of fellows. And for some reason or other they were laughing hilariously. Then Grundy jumped, as he spotted the shirt-sleeved form of Monty Lowther, climbing from his hiding-place in the dry hedge ditch.

At that moment Grundy would have welcomed the diversion if the green surface of the pond had opened, and swallowed him up for ever.

The humorist of the Shell strode to his jacket, and put it on calmly. Then he turned a surprised face to Grundy.

"Hallo, Grundy!" he ejaculated. "Fishing for tadpoles? My hat! Fancy a fellow of Grundy's standing fishing for tadpoles, you fellows. Have you no sense of dignity, Grundy?"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

For quite sixty seconds George Alfred stared speechlessly at Lowther. Then slowly, but emphatically, the hideous, and almost unbelievable truth dawned upon his mighty brain. He had been spoofed—actually spoofed. He—George Alfred Grundy, cock of the walk, mighty man of muscle, cricketer, footballer, cookery expert, detective, hypnotist, and reformer—had been spoofed!

It was amazing, but true. And Grundy did not linger to dwell upon the unpleasant fact. With a roar like unto that of the ball of Bashan, he made for the shoe—and vengeance.

But Monty and his hilarious chums did not wait to let Grundy have his vengeance, badly as he wanted it. They fled.

And with feelings too deep for words, and slimy festoons of weeds clinging to him like a shroud, George Alfred Grundy wended his weary way back to St. Jim's alone and uncomfortable.

At the gates a crowd of fellows were waiting. And many kind inquiries concerning hypnotism and duck-pods were made, as he passed through—inquiries that George Alfred did not deign to reply to.

Outside the school tuckshop the fat figure of Baggy Trimble was hovering disconsolately. Spotting Grundy approaching he rushed up breathlessly—unfortunately not noticing that great man's strange appearance.

"I—I say, Grundy," he gasped eagerly. "I don't mind being hypnotised again—Yarrococoo! Oh help! Murder! Fire! Police! Yoooon!"

The fellows at the gates had a fleeting glimpse of the fat Baggy as he streaked across the quad with the infuriated Grundy thundering in pursuit. Then the School House doorway swallowed them up. And Baggy's shrieks died away into silence.

Evidently Grundy was fed up for the moment with hypnotism.

CHAPTER 5. Medical Treatment!

"NOW'S the time!"

George Alfred Grundy stopped short as he made that statement.

It was after dinner the next day. Grundy, with his faithful benchmen, Wilkins and Gunn, was strolling towards the gates, feeling the need for a breath of fresh air before afternoon classes commenced.

"Now's the time," repeated Grundy impressively, pointing through the open door of the porter's lodge. "There's my opportunity if you like, now. Look at that!"

Wilkins and Gunn looked, but they saw nothing out of the ordinary. Inside the lodge could be seen the ancient form of Taggles the porter, busily engaged in pouring something out of a bottle into a glass. Taggles' well-known weakness was an over fondness for strong waters. Evidently he was just about to indulge in a drop of his favourite beverage—gin.

"Well, what about it, Grundy?" grunted Wilkins. "Only Taggy taking his medicine. Nothing to do with us, and nothing to make a song about."

Grundy surveyed his study-mates in profound contempt.

"Now, isn't that just like you ordinary, commonplace, selfish, unthinking Pharisees!" he said bitterly. "Just glance down on the weakness of others, and look away again. Never think of helping a lame dog over a stile! Same old excuse—not your business! Upon my word! Talk about Homer fiddling while Rome was burning—"

"Ahem!"

"What utter rot!" growled Wilkins warmly. "What business is it of ours—or your's either—if Taggy does—"

"Business!" echoed Grundy, in astonishment. "Of course it's my business! You fellows don't realise the tremendous responsibility possession of such a power as hypnotism places upon one's shoulders. I do. And I'm not the fellow to shirk my responsibilities. Some chaps might, but not me. Now it says in that book that the habit of indulgence in innocents can be cured by hypnotic treatment. Quite right, too! I'm going to prove it! I'm going to cure Taggles! No time like the present!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Wilkins and Gunn groaned wearily as they blinked at their leader. They were fed up with hypnotism, and they were fed up with Grundy as hypnotist. But they were more surprised than fed up to learn that Grundy was not fed up also.

The Grundy should imagine he could hypnotise at all was astonishing enough. But that he should still cherish the delusion after his dismal failures the previous evening astounded them.

But apparently Grundy was not fed up. In fact, he appeared to be keener than ever. And considering the fact that the whole school had howled over the story of how Grundy had "hypnotised" Lowther, and the endless chipping the great George Alfred had been subjected to in consequence—it was indeed astounding.

But Grundy was a stickler; it was just like Grundy.

"Mum-my only hat!" breathed Gunn, at last. "So-so you're going to hypnotise Taggy, now?"

"Exactly! Matter of fact, I hadn't intended to attend to these trivial cases yet," explained Grundy. "But this opportunity is too good to miss. I'm taking it! You chaps can come and see me do it!"

"Rats!"

"Eh? What's that?"

"Rats!" repeated Wilkins warmly.

"You—you utter ass, Grundy! Mean to say you're still going on with that rot? Haven't you had enough with last night's farce? Aren't you satisfied with making yourself the blessed laughing-stock of St. Jim's? It's Grundy's? Why—"

"Well, I—I'm—You cheeky cad!" roared Grundy wrathfully. "You dare to say 'rats' to me, Wilkins? Why, I—I'll— Just you say that again!"

Wilkins fled back hastily. He decided not to say it again. Possibly the fact that Grundy had presented before his eyes a formidable set of knuckles helped him to that decision.

Look! here, Grundy, old man, do chuck it!" implied Gunn earnestly. "For goodness' sake don't make such a blessed row! You'll have a crowd round soon. There are Blake and his Fourth-Form chaps gazing at you now. Do chuck it!"

It was true enough. Attracted to the spot by Grundy's booming voice, were Blake, Berrie, D'Arcy, and Dierby, and several other fellows. And all were gazing at Grundy was plainly on the rant again, and they did not mean to miss the fun.

Grundy lowered his fists and glared around.

"That's right, Grundy!" called Blake cheerfully. "Don't hit him—hypnotise him—put the 'fluence on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, you cheeky fags, clear off!" roared Grundy, in great wrath. "Why, I'll whon the lot of you if I come to you! Get indoors at once!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"My hat! What check!"

There was a series of gasps from Blake & Co. For a Shell fellow—and the biggest duffer in the Shell—to order them indoors like a master or a prefect, was the limit.

"Bai Jove, Gwunday! If you chawtawise me as a cheeky ag—" began D'Arcy warmly.

"Get indoors—eh?" growled Blake.

"My hat, Grundy, you clump—"
"Do you hear?" thundered Grundy.

"I'll jolly well teach you fags better than cackling at me! Clear off, before I— Hold on, though—"

Grundy paused and frowned reflectively.

"Hold on a minute! You chaps can stay after all," he went on quite genially.

"Come here a sec!"

The grinning juniors approached warily.

"I'm going to hypnotise Taggles," explained George Alfred. "I shall want you chaps as witnesses, and to be at hand in case Taggy objects."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Mind," added Grundy, "it's not a stunt—so no larks. It's medical treatment, in fact. But Taggy may possibly object at first. You see, I shall have to destroy his gin-bottle to start with. It's absolutely necessary to remove temptation whilst he's undergoing treatment. I don't suppose he will object when he knows it's for his own good. But he may."

"Very likely!" assented Blake gravely. "In fact, extremely likely!"

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy.

come no monkey-tricks 'ere Master Grundy. You get hout afore— Here, wotcher doin' wi' that there—"

Taggles' words ended in a startled roar, and he made a clutch at Grundy's arm as that would-be reformer snatched the bottle from the table. The gin bottle was uncorked. As Grundy jerked it to wardly him a stream of the fiery liquid shot over his coat and collar.

"Groooch! Oh, by gad! Pooh! Pah!" coughed Grundy, in disgust. "Oh my hat! The rotten stuff—whoop! Leggo, you ass!"

But the wretched Taggles laid a horny hand on Grundy's collar as he made another clutch at the bottle.

"Crash!"

The infuriated porter howled with dismayed wrath as the bottle smashed to the floor, and his precious "medicine" ran merrily over the carpet.

"There, now!" snorted Grundy.

"Look what you've— Yoop!"

This time Grundy howled as the infuriated Taggles snatched up a handy broom and gave him a hearty clump over the head with it.

"My heye! I'll larn you!" shouted Taggles, wielding the broom vigorously.

"I'll skin you! I'll larn you—"

"Whack, whack, whack!"

"Yoop! Stop it!" roared Grundy frantically, dodging round the table.

"Oh, murder! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors round the doorway scattered, roaring with laughter, as Grundy shot out of the quad like a stone from a catapult. After him came Taggles

"I'll—I'll put 'im! My heye—"

Taggles broke off abruptly as Wilkins jingled a handful of silver suggestively before his eyes. It was the only sort of argument that ever pacified the porter on these occasions. And it succeeded now.

Grumbling and murmuring something about "Hasytums" and "Lonities," he departed towards his lodge, the richer by five shillings, and the poorer by half a bottle of gin and an immense amount of energy.

And though he wasn't aware of the fact, he had thrown away a splendid opportunity of being cured of his little failing by a free course of hypnotic suggestion—according to Grundy.

CHAPTER 6.

Another Experiment!

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY sat up with a gasp and stared dazedly around. He was sore all over and aching in every limb. But, like the poet: "Beneath the bludgeonings of Fate, his head was bloody but unbowed!"

"D-d-did you chaps see him?" he stammered, in amazement. "Turned on me—me, you know—like a blessed madman. And all for nothing. Talk about ingratitude—well, I'm hanged!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at, you idiots!" roared Grundy. "Turned on me like—like—I'm hanged! And all because I smashed his blessed gin-bottle. I suppose—for his own good, too! Would you believe it?"

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"Then follow me!" tapped out Grundy. "And for Heaven's sake stop that idiotic grinning. This is serious!"

The juniors manfully restrained their grins, and followed Grundy. They were inclined to think that Grundy would find it very serious. Wilkins and Gunn followed also. They were looking very unhappy. They realised that the great George Alfred was making an ass of himself, and being his loyal chums, they did not like it.

"What a blessed clump!" breathed Jack Blake, as Grundy disappeared inside the lodge. "If the born idiot starts monkeying with Taggy's gin-bottle, there'll be trouble!"

"Yaas, wathah! I fancy old Taggles will waver," exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I am beginning to think, dear boys, that poor old Gwunday is really potty."

"Stand back a little, you fellows," grinned Herries. "Better leave a clear passage for Grundy. When he comes out he'll be in a hurry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chortling juniors left a clear passage to the doorway of the lodge. From inside came the booming voice of Grundy. He was standing by the table, evidently arguing with Taggles, who had been about to settle in his easy-chair for his usual after-dinner siesta.

"Now do be reasonable, Taggles, old fellow! It's for your own good, y'know. I'll just—"

"Wot I ses is this 'ere," came the porter's voice angrily. "Don't you dare

in hot pursuit, making shrewd lunges with the business end of the broom.

"Oh, crumbs!" yelled Blake. "Go it, Taggy!"

"Put the 'fluence on him, Grundy—"

"Oh, my hat! He's got him!"

Taggles had indeed "got him." Half-way across the quad the unlucky Grundy had stumbled and gone flat. He yelled furiously as Taggles resumed operations with the broom.

"Whack, whack, whack!"

"Yoooop!" roared Grundy frantically. "Oh, help! Yarrrough!"

"Bai Jove! Old Taggy will bewain Gwunday!"

"Impossible!" chuckled Blake. "But he'll crack his empty brain-box if we don't stop the old scout. Hallo! There go Wilkins and Gunn to the rescue! Come on!"

At top speed Blake and the others rushed to the help of Grundy's study-mate, who were struggling mightily to restrain Taggles from utterly annihilating the unfortunate reformer.

Even Wilkins and Gunn felt that their egregious chum had got what he asked for. But they didn't want him to be slaughtered. Between them they managed to disarm and hold the infuriated porter.

"Lemmegeratim!" raved Taggles, struggling furiously. "I'll skin the young imp! I'll report—"

"Keep cool, Taggles, old sport!" murmured Gunn pacifically. "He can't help it—he's potty! Tag—"

"Amazing!" agreed Blake solemnly.

"Perhaps he didn't want to be cured?"

"Perchance he didn't like it, I must say."

groaned Grundy, getting to his feet painfully. "Oh, crumbs! He's nearly

brained me—me, you know. You'd scarcely credit it, but he went for me just because I smashed his blessed gin-bottle. Well, I don't mind. It's his own fault. I've done my best. He's lost his chance, and can go to the dogs—can sink to the depths of degradation for all I care after this. I've finished. I wash my hands of the whole business."

"Good!" said Wilkins, with a tremendous sigh of relief. "I'm jolly glad to hear it, Grundy, old man! Blessed if I know what you ever wanted to start the silly rot for!"

"Same here!" agreed Gunn heartily.

"Hypnotism is a dangerous thing to play with—even when you can do it, Grundy. And I'm jolly glad you're chucking it."

Grundy stared.

"Chucking it?" he stammered. "Me chucking hypnotism? Do you know what you're saying, Wilkins?"

It was Wilkins' turn to stare.

"Of course! You said—"

"I said nothing of the sort!" roared Grundy. "I said I'd finished with that raving lunatic, Taggles. I said, I've washed my hands of Taggles—and I have. He can jolly well drown himself in gin, and I won't raise a hand to save him. That's flat! That's what I said! But as for giving up hypnotism—my hat! Not likely! Why, I haven't started my

reform really yet. If you think those trivial—

"Then what on earth are you like when you do start, Grundy?" gasped Wilkins, in astonishment. "You've already been taken for potty, you've already made yourself the laughing stock of St. Jim's, and you've nearly been brained by Taggles. If you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The little crowd of juniors roared at the expression of surprised wrath on the face of Grundy.

"You—you— Now, look here, Wilkins," said Grundy, in a tone of deadly politeness, "if you are asking for a thick car—"

"Nunno—not at all," said Wilkins hastily. "I was merely pointing out—"

"Then don't!" snorted Grundy. "And as for chucking up hypnotism just because my first three subjects happened to be idiots—not likely. That's not me! Matter of fact, I never expected any startling success with such weak-minded subjects. I think I mentioned to you that the weaker a chap's mentality, the worse subject he proves for hypnotic treatment. That's a fact. I've proved it! Now, it'll be different with Linton—"

"With Linton?" gasped Wilkins, in alarm.

"With Linton!" repeated Grundy firmly. "I'm going to confine my experiments in future to chaps with stronger characters—more powerful personalities. And I'm going to start with Linton this afternoon. At once, in fact! You fellows can come and see me—"

"Great pip!"

"This afternoon—"

"With Linton—?"

"Oh, crums!"

Grundy smiled round affably at the startled juniors. Wilkins and Gunn were eyeing him in horrified alarm.

"You—you—you're going to hypnotise old Linton?" ejaculated Wilkins blandly.

Grundy nodded with a smile of lofty amusement.

"That's the idea! Matter of fact, it's the real beginning of my campaign. I think I can promise you chaps a new era for St. Jim's football on Saturday. New House won't get a look in. I shall be playing. I'm going to—but I'll tell you the idea when we're alone, Wilky. I don't want these grinning idiots"—Grundy bestowed a lofty frown on the grinning faces of Blake & Co.—"to hear it. Might tell Tom Merry and spoil the whole thing. But it's rather a neat notion—in fact, it's a corker! Idea flashed on me—"

Grundy stopped, and looked at his watch.

"Hallo! Wants fifteen minutes to class! Good! Follow me!"

"But—here you mad idiot!" shouted Wilkins. "Old Linton will smash you!"

"Rot! Follow me!"

"Now, look here, Grundy, old fellow—" pleaded Gunn.

"Rot!"

And with that crushing rejoinder Grundy started for the School House, followed by his alarmed henchmen, and followed by a loud chortle from his audience.

"Well, upon my word!" ejaculated Blake, staring after the jaunty figure of Grundy. "Did you ever, in all your born days, see such an utter duffer?"

"Never! He goes alone," chuckled Herries. "My— Wonder what his little game is?"

"Come out! We mustn't miss this," went on Blake. "I'm rather curious to see what Linton does when he's hypnotised. But what was the burbling chump

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saying about Saturday's match? What's his idea, I wonder?"

"Perhaps he proposes to command Linton, whilst under the 'fluence,' to order Tom Merry to play the silly ass on a Saturday!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "Weally, he is ass enough!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And, chortling at the bare idea of such a thing, the Fourth-Formers hurried indoors, after the three Shell fellows, to see the entertainment.

But they would have chortled still more had they known that Arthur Augustus had hit the nail on the head. For Grundy was indeed ass enough. In fact, that was the idea—the 'corker' of an idea that was swimming in Grundy's mighty brain just then, and which he was at that very moment confiding to his weary study-mates as they proceeded indoors.

"It's a corker—simple as A B C," Grundy was remarking, with enthusiasm. "All I do is to put old Linton under the 'fluence,' command him to instruct Tom Merry to put me in the team to play to-morrow, and there you are! The match is assured! Tom Merry cannot help himself; he daren't refuse."

"Don't be an ass!" answered Wilkins. "Of course he dare! Even if you could work such a silly, fatheaded wheeze what right has Linton to interfere in footer? He's no authority whatever over such matters. Tom Merry would simply refuse to obey such an order."

"Rot!" snapped Grundy. "Utter rot!"

"It isn't rot!" exclaimed Gunn

warmly. "You raving chump, Grundy! If you start that silly nonsense on Linton, you'll get scalped. Don't do it!"

"Rot!" repeated Grundy, with a snort. "Don't be an ass, Gunn! I know what I'm doing. Now, you chaps will have to wait outside the study. But I'll leave the door open a little, so that you can see me do it. I expect I shall have to be pretty smart, y'know. Must get the 'fluence on him before he starts asking questions. And now, come on! Follow me!"

"But look here—"

"Dry up!"

And with that emphatic remark Grundy started towards Mr. Linton's study. Wilkins looked at Gunn. And then they started along the passage, too—but in the opposite direction.

Apparently they did not wish to see Grundy do it.

CHAPTER 7.

Misunderstood!

BUT other fellows did, if they did not.

Along the passage, treading lightly, came Blake & Co. And with Blake & Co. were the Terrible Three, and several other fellows. Very plainly, the news of Grundy's proposed stunt had got about. At any rate, all were grinning in anticipation as they followed the great George Alfred, apparently to see him do it.

Grundy did not look round—not then. Perhaps the daring possibility of his loyal henchmen daring to desert him never entered his head, or possibly he heard the sound of footsteps behind, and was satisfied.

At the Shell master's study door he stopped, and knocked boldly and confidently.

"Come in!"

From within the room came the deep voice of Mr. Linton. Grundy turned the knob, and was about to enter, when happening to glance round, he discovered, to his astonishment, that Wilkins and Gunn had snatched. He gave an indignant snort. Then his eyes fell upon the group of grinning fellows, who had wisely stopped a few yards along the passage. He frowned wrathfully.

"Go it, Grundy!" hissed Blake, in a tense whisper.

"On the ball, Grundy!" whispered Lother encouragingly.

A chorus of soft chuckles floated down the passage, and Grundy paused irresolutely. But it was too late then. From within the study came a second impatient "Come in!" And Grundy, only stopping to shake an angry fist at the grinning juniors, pushed open the door and marched in.

Cautiously and noiselessly the juniors approached the study door. Grundy had obligingly left it open a little, and it was quite possible to see and hear what happened within the study.

Through the aperture could be seen the figure of Mr. Linton, seated at his desk. Facing him, with legs set far apart, and arms folded in an Ajax-defying-the-tigress attitude, stood George Alfred Grundy.

The master of the Shell was speaking. "Did you hear me, Grundy?" he was saying, somewhat testily. "Kindly state what you wished to see me about, instead of standing staring at me in that impudent manner, boy!"

The juniors in the passage gasped. "Oh, my only hat!" murmured Blake softly. "He's started putting the 'fluence on already. Oh crums! What a nerve!"

Evidently Grundy had, for he did not answer the master. He still stood in the

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The juniors stared—hardly able to believe their eyes. Grundy had sawn up the goal-posts and had used them to erect a platform from which to deliver his great speech. (See chapter 11.)

same attitude, his eyes fixed in a concentrated gaze on the Shell master's face.

But apparently Mr. Linton did not appear conscious of the 'fluence. He rose to his feet, his brow darkening thunderously.

"Are you mad, Grundy?" he rapped out angrily. "Answer me at— Good gracious! How dare you stand and make such ridiculous faces at me, boy? Have you taken leave of your senses, Grundy?"

But again Grundy did not reply. His commanding eye did not appear to be sending Mr. Linton off somehow. But Grundy did not despair. He persevered with his frowning and glaring, cheerfully and silently. Mr. Linton stared at him as if he could scarcely believe his own eyes.

Only for about sixty seconds, though. Then, with a snort of anger, Mr. Linton reached for his cane, and gripped the hypnotist by the shoulder.

"Grundy, enough of this nonsense!" he thundered. "If you are not insane or ill, boy, answer me at once. What do you mean by this astounding insolence?"

Grundy gave it up. He fell back, eyeing the wrathful master in dismay. It was plain even to Grundy then, that Mr. Linton was not going "off." Something evidently had gone wrong with the 'fluence. Or was it possible Mr. Linton was, after all, like his previous subjects,

too weak-minded to make a suitable subject for hypnotic experiments?

But before Grundy could say anything, even had he wanted to, Mr. Linton snuffed loudly, and released the surprised Grundy as if he had been red-hot.

"G-g-g-good heavens! Is—is—is it possible, Grundy, boy," he asked, in an awful voice—"is it possible—sniff, sniff—that you have been indulging in—in intoxicating liquors? Bless my soul!" Sniff, sniff. "Why the boy simply reeks of spirits!"

"S-s-spirits?" stammered Grundy.

"This is terrible! I can scarcely believe it possible!" gasped Mr. Linton, in an astounded voice. "And yet am I to believe, Grundy, that this explains your extraordinary conduct—that you have been actually drinking?"

"Drinking?" gasped Grundy. "Me drinking?"

"No. I cannot believe any boy of my Form guilty of such a disgraceful thing!" ejaculated Mr. Linton. "Answer me at once, you wretched boy! How came you to be in such a disgusting state?"

"Disgust— Oh, my hat!" Light suddenly dawned on Grundy as he remembered the accident to Taggles' gin-bottle.

He smiled reassuringly at the astounded and shocked master.

"It's all right, sir," he smiled calmly.

"Don't worry about that. It's only gin!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"It's only gin, sir," explained Grundy agreeably. "It got spilled over my clobber, y'know, when I was smashing Taggles' gin-bottle."

"Taggles' gin-bottle!" repeated Mr. Linton, staring bewildered at the cheerful reformer. "Do I understand that you have actually destroyed a bottle of gin the property of Taggles, the porter, you absurd boy?"

"Exactly! It was, in my opinion, sir, absolutely necessary to remove temptation before attempting any hypnotic treatment."

"What?"

"I see you don't understand, sir," remarked Grundy pleasantly. "The fact is, sir, that having discovered I possess the power of hypnotism to an exceptional degree, I deter—"

"Grundy!"

George Alfred fairly jumped as Mr. Linton thundered out his name.

"Yes, sir!"

"Enough of this foolery, boy!" said Mr. Linton, in a grinding tone. "I will give you three minutes, Grundy. Unless you have explained, briefly and clearly, how you came to be in that disgusting

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state, I shall take you to Dr. Holmes immediately. Now!"

"There was a gleam in Mr. Linton's eyes that Grundy did not like. And—well, Grundy had explained well within the three minutes. And when he had finished the Shell master was eyeing him in wonder.

"Bless my soul! You—you utterly absurd boy," he exclaimed, in astonishment. "But now, Grundy, perhaps you will be good enough to explain your object in wasting my time, and your astounding insolence to me—Ah! I see!" Light seemed to dawn suddenly upon Mr. Linton, and his brow grew thunderous. "Is it possible," he asked, in a terrible voice, "that just now you were attempting to hypnotise me—that you had the astounding impudence to attempt to play absurd hypnotic tricks on me, your form-master, Grundy?"

"Ahem!" gasped Grundy. "Bless my soul, sir, Mr. Linton, 'Is this, then, the explanation of your remarkable behaviour, Grundy? Answer me, sir-r-r! Does this mean that you had the audacity—that you were actually trying your childish, absurd tricks upon me, Grundy?"

"Nunno! Certainly not, sir," gasped the unhappy reformer. "It—it wasn't a trick at all. I—I was merely going to hypnotise you—for the good of the School-house, sir."

"What?"

"I was going to force you, whilst under the power of my will," explained Grundy, somewhat warmly, "to order Tom Merry to put me in the team for Saturday's match, sir. So that we should win—see? It wasn't a trick! Certainly not!"

"You—you—you dare to admit it, then?" gasped Mr. Linton. "Then—then I will endeavour to instruct you, Grundy, for your own good and the good of the School-house, that your form-master is not a suitable person for such ridiculous experiments, boy. Hold out your hand!"

"But—but—I say, sir. What—Xaroooooh!"

The exasperated form-master hadn't waited to hear what Grundy had to say—nor for that astonished youth to hold out his hand. His left hand grasped the reformer's collar, and his right wielded the cane—with terrific vim.

"Whack, whack, whack!"

"Xaroooooh! Yooooop!"

Grundy's booming voice echoed far and wide. It was a red-hot licking, even for Grundy, and it nearly doubled up that luckless youth.

"There!" gasped Mr. Linton, pausing at last, breathless. "Perhaps that will drive some sense of the fitness of things into your obtuse brain, and also, I trust, will teach you not to meddle with things you don't understand. And now go to your form-room—at once!"

There was the sound of flying footsteps in the passage as Mr. Linton strode to the door and pulled it open. But fortunately the master did not hear. He bundled the groaning and writhing Grundy into the passage, and slammed the door.

At the end of the passage quite a crowd of fellows were waiting. And—once again kind inquiries concerning the punishment were put to Grundy—inquiries that were really superfluous, considering the inquiries themselves had seen and heard practically all that had taken place in Mr. Linton's study.

At all events, Grundy, as he limped past the chortling crowd, writhing and groaning dismally, did not reply to them. And he certainly did not attempt any more hypnotism upon Mr. Linton that afternoon. It was only too clear to

Grundy that Mr. Linton, like his earlier subjects, was not a suitable subject, after all.

CHAPTER 8.

A Bid for Fame!

"**B**AT JOVE! What a fearful wow!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Sounds like a blessed earthquake," grinned Jack Blake.

"With a couple of festive air-raids thrown in," added Higgins.

Blake, Higgins, Digby, and D'Arcy passed in astonishment as they were passing along the Shell passage after tea. The chums of Study No. 6 were just on their way out of doors for an hour on the footer field, when sounds of a furious scuffle, intermingled with terrific bumps and sundry wild yells, assailed their ears from behind the closed doors of Study No. 10.

"What on earth are those Shell-fish up to? Sounds like old—Look out!"

Blake & Co. scattered just in time, as the door of No. 10 flew open suddenly, and a whirling bundle whizzed through the doorway, and landed in the passage like a sack of coke falling.

"Crash!"

"Xarooooop!"

"M-m-m-my hat!" gasped Blake, in alarm. "What—why it's Grundy!"

It was! The great man of the Shell sprawled in the passage, gasping and groaning. In the doorway appeared the somewhat wrathful faces of Tom Merry, Monty Lowther, and Manners.

"Now clear off, you burbling chum," remarked Tom Merry, wrathfully. "We're off with you, Grundy, and your silly swank! You've asked for your place, and now you've got it—on your neck in the passage. And you'll get the same again if you come bothering us any more."

"Ow!" spluttered Grundy in reply.

"Ow! Yow! Yooop! Wow!"

Slam!

The faces of the Terrible Three vanished, and the door closed. Grundy sat up, and blinked dizzily at the closed door. Then he gasped, and turned a red, wrathful face to the grinning spectators.

"Ow! Oh crumbs!" he choked. "I—I've been thrown out—me, you know, out—me! My hat! The—the cheeky rotters! An' all because I demanded my rights—because I demanded my place in the team for Saturday's match. What do you chaps think about that? Would you stand it?"

"I—I shouldn't, Grundy, old man," exclaimed Blake gravely. "I should sit it—like you're doing now. I advise you to accept the place Tom Merry's given you, and be used as a door-mat. Much more suitable place for you than in a footer team, Grundy."

Grundy ignored the advice—though it was doubtful if he heard it. He staggered to his feet.

"You'd scarcely credit it, you chaps," he said excitedly. "Cheeky cads chuckled me out just because I told Tom Merry plainly what I thought about him. Y'know, I merely told him he wasn't fit to skipper an infant school marbles team. I simply pointed out the fact that he wasn't loyal to St. Jim's by keeping the best footer player out of the team—that it was sheer personal jealousy on his part to leave me out of Saturday's match. And—would you believe it!—all three of the rotters started on me, y'know."

"Bat Jove!"

"Astounding!" murmured Blake.

"But you watch me," said Grundy darkly. "Just you watch me sling 'em one by one on their necks. Chuck me

out—oh? Why, I'll mop up the blessed study with 'em. T'll—I'll!"

Leaving his hearers to guess what else he intended doing, Grundy tore open the door and dashed in. There followed the sounds of a terrific struggle inside. Then a whirling form came hurtling through the doorway, and, striking the passage wall with a bump, slid down on the linoleum with a crash.

"Whoop!"

Blake stepped forward and scrutinised the bundle of sprawling arms and legs curiously.

"Now, is that Tom Merry or Lowther, or—Oh! crumbs! Why—it—it's Grundy again!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Once again the faces of Tom Merry & Co. looked out after Grundy. Tom Merry grinned, apparently spotting Blake and Co. for the first time.

"Hallo! You chaps there?" he ejaculated. "Good! Just lend a hand to clear this rubbish out of the passage. Blessed if we're ever going to get down to the footer unless we get rid of it."

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather," chuckled Blake. "Lend a hand, you fellows. Yank him up!"

Grundy was just struggling painfully to his feet. He fairly yelled with surprise as he felt himself gripped on all sides. He yelled with something more than surprise a moment later. Numerous ungentle hands grasped him by limbs, ears, and hair, and he was swept from the floor squalling.

"Here—loggo! Oh crumbs! Rotters!" roared Grundy, wriggling frantically. "Wow! Oh, won't I just whop—yooop! Oh crickey!"

"Quick march!" ordered Tom Merry. Along the passage the unfortunate reformer was frog-marched. He was bumped at every step, and was fairly bellying by the time his own study was reached.

Gunn was alone in No. 2, Wilkins having already gone down to footer. Gunn was sitting at the table, reading a copy of "Kenilworth." He jumped to his feet with a startled gasp, as something heavy bumped against the door and hurled it open with a crash.

"M-m-m-my hat!" ejaculated Gunn, in astonishment.

"It's only Grundy—found him sitting in the passage, and brought him home," said Blake severely. "Don't let him get loose again, Gunn!"

Bump!

George Alfred Grundy roared as he was swung and dropped on to the study table.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake & Co. and Tom Merry & Co. streamed from the study, yelling with laughter. Grundy sat up on the table dazedly.

"Ow—ow—ow!" he remarked, with a gasp. "I—I—I'm hanged! I—I—I've been frog-frog-marched—me, y'know, I'm hanged! An' all because I demanded my place in the team. What do you think of that, William Gunn?"

"Got what you asked for, I expect," grunted Gunn. "You silly ass, Grundy. Why don't you drop this mad game? You'll get slaughtered before you—"

Gunn broke off, and backed a little, as Grundy climbed painfully from the table. But Grundy was too excited and wrathful to heed—even if he heard Gunn's daring remarks.

"Well, that settles it," spluttered Grundy. "I've given Tom Merry his chance. He's refused it. I've offered him the chance of resigning the captaincy in my favour. He's turned it down. I've warned him of the consequences. So he can't blame me. I've told him plainly and candidly that I intend to be up against him all along the line, and that I

won't rest until the Shell has a captain I can have confidence in—that's me. Well, as I say, that settles it. Hand me that sheet of paper, William Gunn!"

Gunn groaned wearily, and tossed the sheet of impot. paper across to his study-leader. Grundy seated himself at the table, and picked up a pen. For a moment he sat with brow wrinkled in a thoughtful frown. Then he began to scribble furiously. Gunn watched him curiously.

"There," said Grundy, at last, handing the document to Gunn. "What do you think of that?"

Gunn glanced at the document and gasped. It was like Grundy. It was a good sample of that great man's sprawling handwriting, and original style of spelling. It ran:

"NOTISS TO THE SHELL AND FORTH FORMS!"

In consequence of the present diabolical stait of the junior sports and gains, and especially the diabolical stait of the junior footer at St. Jim's, and in consequence of the diabolical infishunsy of the present footer captain.

A MEATING is hereby called by GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY to consider this diabolical stait of affairs, and to discuss the measures to be taken for the elckshion of a more iffishunt footer captain.

THE MEATING will take place in the Shell Form room at Seven 45 P.M., and the chare will be taken by GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY at Eight P.M. GRUNDY FOR IFISHUNSY.

Sined GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY ESQUIRE."

"Drawn up rather well—what?" smiled Grundy.

"Ahem!" gasped Gunn. "Wha-a-at are you going to do with that, Grundy?"

"Put it up on the notice-board, of course," said Grundy. "Then I'm going to get the room ready in time for the chaps coming in from footer. I expect it'll be a bit of a crush, but that can't be helped. Won't be able to get 'em all in the Form-room, I mean. It's a pity, but as I say, it can't be helped. And now, come on!"

"But—but I—I—look here, Grundy—"

"Shut up, and follow me!" ordered Grundy.

"Ahem! But—I say, hadn't I better be, er—rounding up the chaps? You see—"

"H'm! Not a bad notion, that," agreed Grundy. "Yes. And—oh, if any of the Fifth or Sixth want to come, you can tell 'em they can. No objection, far as I can see. No objection to masters, either, for that matter—long as they keep their place, of course!"

"Oh, me ha— Ahem! Quite so," murmured Gunn.

Grundy picked up his "notiss," and strode jauntily from the room. But Gunn didn't follow his leader out for quite a minute. He had no more intentions of rounding up the chaps than he had of attending Grundy's "meeting."

At the end of the minute, however, he left the study, and, keeping a sharp look-out for Grundy, walked towards the Hall. A glance inside showed him that George Alfred was not there, but a glance at the notice-board told him that he had been there.

Not only had Grundy put his "notiss" on the green baize-covered board, but he had had the colored nerve to pin it over a first eleven footer notice pinned up that day by Kildare, captain of St. Jim's.

"My hat!" gasped Gunn. "Wha-what a nerve! Good job nobody's seen the blessed thing yet!"

And William Gunn jerked the precious document from the board. Tearing it to pieces, he dropped them into the stove.

Despite Grundy's amoying little ways, William was very fond of his study leader. And he felt that that was only partly to Grundy under the circumstances. Then he went back to his copy of "Kenilworth."

And, quite unaware of Gunn's chummy act, Grundy was busy preparing for the "meeting" in the Shell Form-room. It was necessary, in Grundy's opinion, to address the meeting from a commanding position. And Grundy had made one by placing Mr. Linton's chair on Mr. Linton's desk.

Then, having torn a few pages from an exercise book of Mr. Linton's, Grundy picked up Mr. Linton's fountain-pen from the desk, and climbed up to the chair. Seated on this lofty pinnacle, he began to make a few notes for his great speech. It was to be an epic making speech, and it took Grundy rather a long time to prepare his notes. In fact, it was only the

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sound of eight o'clock striking from the schoolhouse tower that made him pause. It also made him begin to wonder when the fellows were going to turn up.

"Dash it all! That's jolly queer—thumpin' queer," he reflected. "Perhaps they've mistaken the time. Anyway, I'll give them another ten minutes."

And Grundy, with a hope and confidence that was sublime, waited. He was still waiting when Mr. Linton came in to get a book from his desk. And then Grundy decided to postpone his meeting—indeinitely. Perhaps the difficulty he had in explaining his position—and especially his lofty position—to the Shell master, together with the sentence of five hundred lines, and a scathing lecture he received from Mr. Linton for his "childish and idiotic buffoonery," helped him to that decision.

But when the unhappy reformer passed the notice-board a little later, and saw that his notice was missing, and when, after asking numerous Shell and Fourth Formers concerning it, and discovering that nobody knew anything about it—or the meeting, well, then Grundy's feelings were indeed too deep for words.

CHAPTER 8.

T.M.M.G.

"I'VE got it, you chaps!"

George Alfred Grundy made that announcement impressively, and with the deepest satisfaction.

He made it to his study mates, Wilkins and Gunn, as they came into the study the following day after dinner.

Since the previous evening relations between Grundy and his chums had been somewhat strained. Grundy had felt that an explanation was required from Gunn concerning the notice he had pinned up, and the resulting fiasco. And Grundy had brought the fives bat into the discussion. Then Wilkins had taken Gunn's part—to save that youth's life—and trouble had ensued between Grundy and his patient and long-suffering pals.

They were not now on speaking terms, in fact.

So that Wilkins and Gunn were not a little surprised when Grundy met them with that genial and triumphant statement as they entered. But they were greatly relieved.

George Alfred was rather hard to get on with at times—most times. But they were rather fond of old Grundy, for all that. Besides, Grundy's regular remittance was about due from his Uncle Grundy.

They put on their best smiles. "You've got what, old fellow?" asked Wilkins, quite affectionately. "Has—your consignment of Bradburys come, Grundy, old chap?"

"My what?" roared Grundy. "Don't be an idiot, George Wilkins!"

"Ahem!"

"The fact is," said Grundy affably, "you chaps will be glad to hear that I've got an idea at last—in fact, the very idea I've wanted. It'll make the fellows sit up, and no mistake. And what's more important, it'll make them take notice, and will give me a chance to draw the fellows' attention to the deplorable state of affairs things have got into under Tony Merry's rule."

"Oh!"

Wilkins and Gunn looked at each other, and then at Grundy. The great George Alfred had been looking very subdued and dispirited all morning. And in view of what had happened, his chums naturally supposed he was at last fed up, and had abandoned his campaign in disgust.

But it was very plain now that he had not—far from it. Evidently his ambitious schemes had revived as the morning passed.

Without a doubt Grundy was indeed a stickler.

"So—so you're still going on with that silly— Ahem! I—I mean your—campaign, Grundy?" asked Wilkins.

"Certainly."

"After what has happened already?"

"Of course! You don't suppose," asked Grundy witheringly, "that such little set-backs deter or daunt me, George Wilkins? What's happened only makes me all the more determined than ever to carry through my programme of gingering up St. Jim's. You chaps know my programme—I'm starting with the Shell footer. I'm determined to improve the junior footer at all costs. And my motto is, T.M.M.G."

"Eh? What's that?"

"T.M.M.G.—Tony Merry must go—see?" smiled Grundy.

"And when Tony Merry has gone," murmured Gunn, "I suppose it'll be G.G.M.C.—George Grundy must come—what?"

"Exactly!" agreed Grundy, blissfully unconscious of Gunn's heavy sarcasm. "Now, as you fellows know, I've already."

told Tom Merry how the matter stands. I've told him candidly that I intend to get the fellows to back me up in shifting him from his job. I thought that only fair. Well, I mean it! I'm a chap of my word. That's why I called a meeting of the fellows last night. You chaps know what happened last night."

"Then,"

"Well, I've decided to let the matter drop," remarked Grundy generously. "I've decided to forgive you, William Gunn. I overlook it. But no more of that, or I'll drop on you—heavily. Bear that in mind! Matter of fact, I've got a better notion—a regular corker it is. And I shall want you chaps to back me up!"

"Is—is it hypnotism?" asked Gunn casually.

"Grundy frowned.

"It's not hypnotism," he explained, glancing a trifle suspiciously at Wilkins. "Fact is, hypnotism isn't necessary. I don't need it in a case of this sort. I simply rely on overcoming all opposition by the sheer force of my personality—see?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Mind," warned Grundy, "I'm not dropping hypnotism; not a bit. But it's plain to me that there's a little scope for my hypnotic powers at St. Jim's, very few chaps with the necessary mental strength to make suitable subjects. I shall probably need it when I come to deal with the Head."

"The Head!"

"Exactly! But that will come later. Now, about Tom Merry. As you chaps know, my persuasive methods have failed. It's a pity, but there it is. And it's up to me now to take more drastic measures. For some reason or other the fellows don't seem to want to back me up in sack-ing Tom Merry. That's the trouble. They don't seem to realise the seriousness of the position."

"You don't say?" murmured Wilkins.

"How very strange!"

"Very! What I've got to do," said Grundy, striking the table with his fist emphatically, "is to do something out of the ordinary, something that will make the fellows sit up and realise the state of affairs. And especially something that will draw the fellows' attention to me; that's very important."

"Ahem! Yes; but look here—"

"Now, my idea is to saw the goalposts down on Little Side before the match this afternoon—"

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"And to make a platform of the pieces—"

"M-m-m-my hat!"

"And to address the fellows on the subject," explained George Alfred. "I've worked it all out. Don't you see? Chaps will come strolling on the field, and, finding the match off and the goalposts down, are bound to sit up and take notice."

"W-w-without a-a-a doubt!" gasped Gunn feebly.

"Then they find me standing on the cut-up goalposts," went on Grundy enthusiastically. "And—well, they're simply bound to stop to listen to what I have to say about it. That's the idea. It will be a splendid and striking protest on my part, and, without a doubt, it will draw the chaps' attention to me—see?"

"Oh, my only hat!" choked Wilkins.

"It is, it will, indeed, Grundy!"

"That's what I thought," said Grundy, getting up and starting for the door.

"And now, come on! We've not too much time to do it. There's an old saw of Taggles' in the woodshed—"

"You howling idiot!" roared Wilkins, in alarm. "Come back!"

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"Rot! Follow me!"

"But you'll get sacked! You'll get

slaughtered! Oh, you—you—"

But evidently George Alfred Grundy was in deadly earnest. He did not come

back. He strode out of the study loftily.

Wilkins and Gunn looked at each other

aghast.

"He—he—he can't mean it!" stammered

Gunn.

"He's ass enough for anything!"

groaned Wilkins. "Oh, crickey! Come

on! We must stop the raving chump!"

And, rushing to the door, Wilkins lost

the way in hot pursuit of the reformer.

Out in the quad they saw the sturdy

figure of Grundy walking with big strides

towards the woodshed.

"Let the chump get in!" gasped

Wilkins suddenly. "I've got an idea!"

Grundy disappeared inside the wood-

shed. He was rummaging about within

the gloomy interior, evidently searching

for the saw, when his two chums arrived

in the doorway. He looked round and

spoke over his shoulder.

"Good! So you chaps have decided to

back me up, then?" he exclaimed.

Wilkins stepped inside, and reached the

key from the nail on the inside of the

door.

"Yes, we're backing you up all right,"

said Wilkins grimly, slipping the key in

the lock on the outside. "We wouldn't

be your pals if we didn't."

"Now, that's what I call pally. Here,

what the dic—"

Slam! Click!

The door crashed to, and Grundy, to

his astounded surprise and indignation,

found himself in darkness. From outside

came two clunkies and the sound of

retreating footsteps. Grundy stared for

a brief moment across the darkened shed.

Then, with feelings that were really in-

expressible, he began to hammer on the

door of his prison.

CHAPTER 10.

Very Strange!

"Bai Jove! That is vewy swange!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy

stopped, and, adjusting his

monocle, stared around him in

astonishment. The swell of St. Jim's

happened to be crossing the quad im-

mediately after dinner, when a terrific

uproar of thumping and yelling assailed

his noble ears.

But he looked this way and that way,

and there was no man.

"What a weally remarkable thing!"

murmured D'Arcy. "Theah does not

appeah to be anybody about, and yet—"

"Open this thumpin' door!" Bang!

"Help!" Crash! "Let me out!"

Thump! "Wilkins, you rotter!" Smash!

"Gunny, you—"

"Theah it goes again!" gasped D'Arcy,

glancing up at the sky. "Weally, it is

most—" Bai Jove! I weally believe it

is somebody in the woodshed!"

And having at last come to that con-

clusion though it was rather surprising

that he hadn't sooner—he approached

that somewhat dilapidated building

cautiously. The thumping and yelling

ceased as he stopped at the door.

"Is that you, George Wilkins?" came

from within, in a voice of concentrated

fury.

"Bai Jove! Is that you, Gwundav?"

"Can't you see it's me?" roared

Grundy, ungrammatically and somewhat

unreasonably. "Open this dashed door,

you blessed tailor's dummy! I'll smash

you if you don't open this thumpin' door,

D'Arcy!"

That was Grundy's way of asking a

favour.

"I shall certainly not open the doah if

you address me in that wude and dis-

respectful mannah. Gwundav?" re-

marked Arthur Augustus through the

keyhole, with dignity. "And, in any case,

the key is not in the lock, Gwundav."

"Then get it—find it, you—you howling

idiot!" shrieked Grundy. "Oh, won't I

just whollop those rotters for this! I'll

—I'll— Will you get that key, D'Arcy,

you—"

No, Gwundav! I will not raise a

hand unless you immediately apologise

for your wuffianly wernah—"

Crash!

D'Arcy fairly jumped, and the door

rattled violently as Grundy flung his

burly weight upon it from within.

Evidently Grundy had decided not to

apologise or to wait for the key.

Crash, crash, crash!

Again and again the door shook under

the thunderous blows. Then came a loud

snap as the rusty lock gave way, and the

door flew open. The startled Arthur

Augustus tumbled back just in time as

Grundy rushed out. He was brandishing

Taggles' saw above his head, and looked

rather dangerous.

But, to D'Arcy's profound relief, he

merely glared at that startled youth, and

tucking the saw under his arm, departed

at top speed towards the gates.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy, staring

after him in amazement. "What a

twuly remarkable affiah. Poah Gwundav

must be off his wockah!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy entered

the Schoolhouse looking very thoughtful

and not a little distressed at the thought

that poor old Grundy was off his rocker.

Blake, Herries, and Digby, who had

already changed for footer, regarded him

somewhat wrathfully as he entered Study

No. 6.

"Look here, Gussy, you chump!"

roared Blake. "When the dickens are

you going to change for footer? You're

only half an—"

"Weally, Blake, pway do not woaah at

me!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus

warmly. "I have just met with wathah a

remarkable experience, deah boys.

Poah old Gwundav—"

"Blow Grundy!" snorted Blake.

"You'll be late for the match if you

don't—"

"Pway listen a moment, Blake! I

meahly wish to welaate—"

"If you stay to welaate you'll belate,"

chuckled Herries humorously.

"Weally, Howies—"

"You're stopping to relate nothing,

you chump!" snapped Blake warmly.

"You take such a thumpin' long time to

change. It'll take you at least ten

minutes to decide which of your twenty

pairs of footer boots you'll wear."

"Weally, Blake—"

"And ten minutes to decide which of

your thirty pairs of footer pants—"

"Bai Jove—"

"And another ten minutes to decide

which of your forty vests—"

"Wah!"

"And then there's changing—"

"Wats! I wpeat, wats!"

And with that crushing rejoinder

Arthur Augustus marched out with his

noble head in the air. Evidently he de-

ecided to relate his "remarkable expe-

rience" at a more favourable time. He

left his study-mates chortling.

He returned twenty minutes later,

changed and in his right mind, to find

they were still chortling. With them

were Tom Merry, Manners, Lowther, and

Wilkins of the Shell, who had looked

in to see if Blake & Co. were ready to go

down to the match. And they were all

chortling.

But they were not chortling at Arthur

Augustus, but at something Wilkins was

relating to them—something evidently

highly amusing. Wilkins was, in fact, relating to his fellow footballers the astonishing story of Grundy's latest stunt.

"Old Gussy and I," Wilkins was remarking, "were too flabbergasted at the moment to stop the silly ass. But when we saw the chump was in deadly earnest, we rushed after him at once; and, luckily, we managed to lock the raving madman in the woodshed."

"Ha, ha, he!"

"And he's there now?" chuckled Blake.

"Yes. We were sorry to have to do it," said Wilkins sadly. "He's not a bad sort when he's sane—old Grundy, y'know. But we—

"But Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy, who was staring at Wilkins in astonishment. "Then it was you, Wilky, dear boy, who locked poor old Gwunday in the woodshed?"

"Yes. I expect he'll simply rave when we let him out after the match. But that can't be helped. We'd simply got to save him from—"

"But weally, dear boy, Gwunday is already out!"

"Wha-a-ut?"

"Yaas! He was in a fearful rage. And I refused to get the key owing to his rudeness, he smashed the door open and rushed out like anythin'!"

"Oh, my only hat!"

"But it's all right, dear boy," said D'Arcy reassuringly. "He did not appear to be botharding about you or Gussy, Wilky. He rushed off towards the gate, vunnin' like anythin'. I wather fancy he was goin' to see Taggy, for he had Taggy's saw in—"

"Gussy, you howling chump! How long ago was this?" almost shrieked Wilkins.

"Ovah half an hoob ago," answered Gussy, in surprise. "But—"

"Oh cricker!"

The startled juniors looked at each other in sheer stupefaction for a full thirty seconds.

"He—he he wouldn't dare—" muttered Tom Merry, aghast.

"Wouldn't dare!" yelled Wilkins. "Of course he would. Come on!"

And Wilkins dashed like a madman from the study. Barely a second behind him went Blake, Herries, and Digby, and the Terrible Three. And the Fourth Form passage echoed to the clattering of footer boots as they swarmed out in a wild stampede.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stared after them in sheer astonishment. And it began to dawn on his noble brain, then, that it was not, after all, "all right."

CHAPTER 11.

Too Much Grundy!

"THERE! I think that'll about do."

George Alfred Grundy had been busy very busy indeed. And he was looking very ruffled and very worn as he made that remark.

But he was satisfied. The job he had set himself had been accomplished. The goal-posts on Little Side had been sawn into lengths, and the platform had been erected—the platform from which he intended to make his great speech—the speech that was, so to speak, to bring the mighty from their seats, and to put George Alfred in the seats of the mighty perhaps!

It had not been an easy job. Grundy had found the wood very hard, and Taggles saw very blunt. He had also had a great deal of trouble with the nets. The nets seemed to take an unholy delight in wrapping themselves round Grundy, and on several occasions he had

only saved himself from strangulation by frantic slashes of his pocket-knife.

But Grundy's indomitable will and spirit of stick-at-it-iveness had won the day. The wood, cut in yard lengths, had been carried to the centre of the field. And there, by crossing them two by two in squares, and wrapping the netting round to keep in place, Grundy had erected his super-structure.

Certainly it was neither lofty nor dignified. But possibly Grundy hoped to make up for this by his own loftiness and personal dignity. "There! I think that will do," he repeated again, eyeing his handiwork with great satisfaction. "It looks a bit rocky, but—

"Hullo! Chaps beginning to turn up already! Good!" They were. In ones, in twos, and in groups, the fellows were leisurely vending their ways from the old school building towards Little Side. They came expecting to see a football ground, ready for the match. They came and saw a field—and Grundy.

And they were not pleased, to say the least of it. But they did not show their displeasure—not at once. They stood on the touch-line, simply too astounded to do anything but stare across the field in utter stupefaction. Other fellows came along, and the group on the touch-line swelled into a crowd. Then suddenly someone gave a shout.

"Why, it—it's Grundy!"

"What!"

"Grundy!"

"Great Scott!"

For a brief moment there was a dead silence. Then a perfect bowl of wrath and surprise went up. The fellows couldn't understand it at all. But they knew Grundy; and, naturally enough, they guessed it was only another of Grundy's starting stunts.

Out in the field Grundy heard the roar, and smiled. He thought it was a yell of surprise, and he had expected it. But he did not expect all that followed. The crowd on the touch-line were still staring, stupefied with surprise, when the sound of running feet came from behind, and Wilkins, followed closely by the Terrible Three, Blake, Herries, and Digby, came rushing up.

But they did not stop. They dashed past, and made a bee-line for Grundy. Then the crowd awoke from its stupor and swarmed on to the field in one yelling, raving mob. Grundy smiled triumphantly. His little scheme was turning out a great success. As he had hoped and expected, his splendid and "corking" idea of cutting down the goal-posts and thus stopping the match had indeed caused the fellows to sit up; and it had drawn the fellows' attention to himself—undoubtedly.

He climbed gingerly on to the platform, and he was ready to address the meeting. From this coign of vantage he surveyed the approaching crowd with a lofty smile on his rugged face. He stood waiting, arms akimbo, in solitary state, looking and feeling monarch of all he surveyed.

Grundy looked magnificent just then—at least, Grundy thought he did. His lofty smile faded a little, however, as the crowd drew nearer and he beheld their somewhat unfriendly appearance. He gave a sudden start of surprise as the roar of voices became clearer.

"Scash! the howling rotter!"

"Scalp him!"

"Mop him up!"

"Lynch him!"

"M-m-m-m-my hat!" gasped Grundy. For a brief second he gazed petrified at the oncoming sea of wrathful faces and brandishing fists. What he had done to raise such a storm of anger in his school-

fellows' breasts he could not imagine. But there was no mistaking the intentions of the infuriated mob.

Grundy gave up all ideas of giving his great speech. He turned to fly—but too late.

The crowd swarmed around him like an incoming tide. And Grundy yelled in alarm as a score of fellows made a savage rush at him.

"Here, what the— Wilkins, you rotter, you! What'll you do? Tom Merry, you cad— Yooop! Leggo! I'll smash— Oh, my hat! Leggo!"

Crash!

The flimsy platform collapsed, and the reformer disappeared from sight beneath a heaving, entangled mass of arms, legs, faces, and whirling lengths of wood and netting. And when he became visible again he was a picture.

Gone was his cap, his collar, and his tie. His jacket was ripped up to the back, and he was smothered from head to foot with mud, and his wrath and amazement were indescribable.

He sat up gasping on the muddy ground.

"Ow! Yow! Ooooooh!" he cried. "You-up! Oh crumbs! Ow-! Rotters! Howling cads! Oh cricker!"

But they hadn't finished with Grundy yet. As a rule, St. Jim's could stand a lot from George Alfred Grundy—and did. But this time he had passed the limit. Footballers and spectators alike were incensed beyond measure. Grundy had to go through it.

And he went.

"Tar and feather him!" roared George Herries, whose nose had come into violent contact with Grundy's fist during the scrimmage. "Teach the raving lunatic a lesson!"

There was a roar of approval, and the suggestion was acted upon. Numerous hands were laid upon the hapless reformer's limbs, ears, and hair. And Grundy howled hideously as he was swept from the ground, and marched away towards the woodshed.

It was the second time within two days that the great George Alfred had been frog-marched. And he enjoyed the second experience, if anything, less than the first. The crowd were not at all inclined to be gentle with him. At nearly every step he was bumped, and at every bump he yelled. Outside the woodshed, the procession of avengers halted, breathless.

"Yaroooooh!" shrieked Grundy, as he was dropped with a bump to earth. "Oh, you—you—you! Ow! Oh, won't I just wallop the lot of you! Oh—"

Grundy broke off suddenly and paled as Tom Merry came out of the woodshed. He had a bucket of tar in one hand, and a long tar-brush in the other. Behind him came Father, carrying a bucket of whitewash—evidently to be used in lieu of the feathers.

Tom Merry dipped the brush in the bucket and advanced grimly.

"Don't you dare touch me with that muck!" shrieked Grundy frantically. "Leggo! Grooooooh!"

Tom Merry had dared and done. And Grundy's yell ended in gurgles as the dripping tar-brush came into contact with his open mouth.

Dab, dab, dab, dab!

Deftly and swiftly Tom Merry obliterated Grundy's features. And, after a few further dabs on the top of Grundy's head, he sprang back, chuckling.

"Stand clear!" yelled Talbot, swinging the bucket.

The fellows holding the almost frantic Grundy, jumped back hastily, as Talbot up-ended the bucket.

Swoosh!

A flood of whitewash descended on Grundy, and covered him from head to foot like a shroud.

"Gug-gug-gug-gug! Gruuugh!" came in a choking splutter from beneath the whitewash. "Gug-gug-gug! Groooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" A howl of laughter arose from the fellows as Grundy staggered about blindly. He gasped and spluttered and raved, scattering around him streams of whitewash the while. The uproar was at its height when Kildare strode up, his face grim and set.

"What the thunder——" exclaimed Kildare, staring at the apparition as it petrified.

"Groooch! M-m-m-mum!" replied Grundy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Grundy made a furious rush at the juniors, and they scattered, roaring. They were not exactly afraid of Grundy. But they were afraid of the whitewash. The unfortunate reformer gave it up. He staggered across the quad scattering whitewash at every step.

Tom Merry and the others returned to where Kildare was standing. The captain of St. Jim's was looking very

sharp. "Is it true, Merry," asked Kildare sharply, "that that born idiot has destroyed the goalposts on Little Side?"

Tom Merry nodded with a grunt.

"The fellow must be mad!" said Kildare. "Anyway, the thing's done now. I wanted to say, Merry, that you had better play your match off on Big Side. There's no senior match on, and our chaps have agreed to forego practice for once."

And, without waiting for thanks, the generous skipper of St. Jim's strode away smiling somewhat grimly. For a moment Tom Merry and his fellow-players stared at each other. And a moment later they were rushing in a cheering, laughing swarm towards Big Side.

And ten minutes later the cheery echoes of thunderous shouts and cheers were wafted on the breeze towards St. Jim's as School House battled with New House on Big Side. The echoes even penetrated the steamy and soapy atmosphere of a certain bathroom in the School House, where, behind a locked door, a certain disillusioned, would-be reformer was scrubbing and rubbing in a state of mind that was Bolshevick and almost Hunnish.

But Grundy did not find the echoes cheery. He murmured remarks that were not loud, but very, very deep, and resumed his rubbing and scrubbing.

George Alfred Grundy did not appear in public that evening. But when he did appear, he was a very subdued Grundy.

It was known that he had had a rather unpleasant interview with Dr. Holmes on the subject of goalposts, and that he had been informed by the Head that his future remittances from his Uncle Grundy would be commandeered until the bill for a new set of goalposts had been paid. And possibly this accounted for his lack of high spirits.

His study-mates, Wilkins and Gunn, however, were looking merrier, and brighter than they had done for some days—in fact, since their leader had started his campaign of hypnotic treatment and reform.

Perhaps that was because Grundy, in a burst of confidence after tea that evening, had confided to them his decision to drop his campaign of hypnotism and reform. It appeared, as Grundy carefully explained, that there was no scope for a hypnotist of his ability at St. Jim's, owing to the lack of suitable subjects; and that, in his opinion, St. Jim's was not yet ripe for reform.

How he had arrived at these conclusions, Grundy did not explain, and his study-mates did not inquire. They merely winked at each other and agreed with him.

Another long, complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co. Next Week, entitled "THE TYRANT OF THE FOURTH."

A Thrilling Instalment of our Great New Adventure Serial Story.



THE TREASURE SEEKERS

A TALE OF ADVENTURE

IN

THE SOUTHERN SEAS

by

REGINALD WRAY

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Dick Danby, a stalwart lad of sixteen, obtains the promise of partnership from Captain Morgan Kidd, skipper of the auxiliary schooner Foam, and his daughter Stella, in a treasure cruise to the wrecked Pathan. Dick is the sole survivor of the Pathan, which was torpedoed, and is lying, half-submerged, off an island in the South Seas. In the strong-room of the ill-fated ship is two million sterling in bar-gold and money; also the Dragon's Eye—a wonderful diamond.

Otto Schwab, posing as a Dutchman—though in reality the commander of the U-boat which sank the Pathan—and Sulah Mendoza, a villainous Malay, are their unscrupulous rivals for the treasure.

Harry Fielding and Joe Maddox join the expedition, also Wang Su, a Chinese boy. They are nearing the island off the Pathan was wrecked, when the Red Rover appears. A fierce battle ensues, and Schwab's men are attempting to board the Foam when, suddenly, clouds of pepper descend amongst the attackers, completely disabling them. Then something from the air bursts upon the deck of the Red Rover, scattering the foes.

The Red Rover's Defeat.

THEN the breeze brought a small portion of the mysterious cloud over the Foam. A single breath, and the bows was deserted.

"Ugh! Wad a fearful smell!" ejaculated Harry Fielding, holding his nose.

"Smell! Dat's nod a smell, id's a stink!" gasped Joe Maddox.

"Devil Island!" cried old Kao, without pausing at the hauling of the rope he had grasped, in obedience to Stella's orders.

"Bones and barnacles!" growled Captain Kidd, scratching his head in perplexity. "If it didn't smell like that, I'd think it was dropped from above on purpose to save us!"

Dick Danby glanced up at the spars above his head. Then he burst into a loud roar of laughter.

"There's the little cherub that sits up aloft, Skipper!" he cried, pointing to the top-gallant spar, astride of which Wang Su was seated, a well-pleased smile on his yellow face, and a good-

sized basket, hanging by a strap from his neck.

"Me flist chop, cheilub! Makee top-hole stinkpot!" he announced complacently.

Speechless with astonishment, the four Britishers gazed open-mouthed at him.

Wang Su tapped his forehead.

"Blains!" he murmured proudly.

The next moment he had slid down to the deck.

"Wang, you celestial Chinaman, how did you do it?" demanded Dick.

"Me velly, frightened Chinamans. Skipper says no good Malays cuttee thloat. Me no wantee thloat cuttee!" explained Wang Su, the little almond slits which he called his eyes sparkling mischievously. "Me vellee vellee flight-cut. Lun belowee. Pattee pepel in lilly bags."

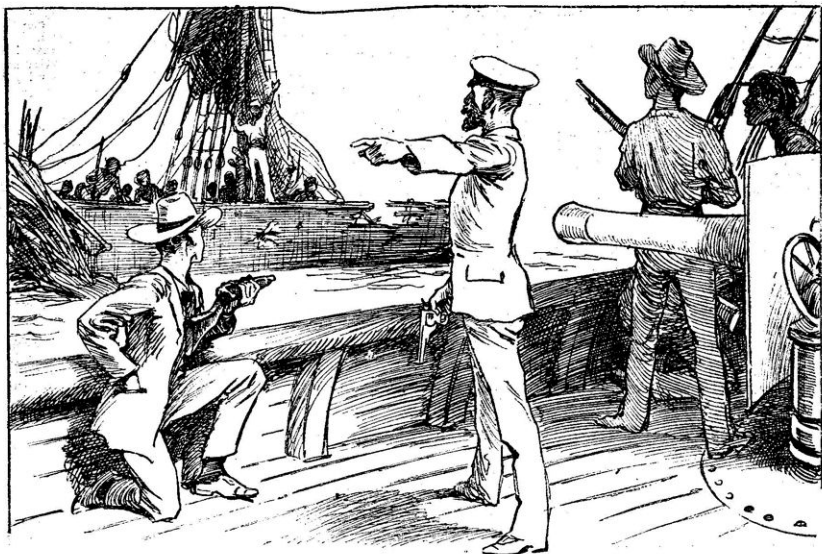
As he spoke, the Chinaman proudly opened the basket, disclosing the fact that he had still half a dozen of his strange missiles left.

"But that awful smell, you Chinese wonder?" queried Dick.

"I telee you, that top-hole stinkpot!"

Now Read on.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 613.



"If you're not hull down in less than two hours I'll follow, and sink you, or my name is not Morgan Kidd!" shouted the captain of the Foam.

"One, two, three in cabin, aller same as leady!" continued the Celestial. "Wang comes on deck. Phit, phut, bullets hehe, bullets thele. No place for pool fighted Chinaman. Me climb mast. Velly frightened. Shake muchee, shake pepel-bags on low classe Malay. Shakes so dloppee stinkpot!"

"And to think I kicked that precious gem of China down the companion-way!" cried Dick remorsefully.

"And to heap coals of fire on your unregenerate head, he saved our lives!" said Harry, half-seriously, half-laughing.

"And spoilt the best scrap I've been in for many a long day!" grumbled Captain Kidd. "But perhaps the skunks will stand up to us again. Bear down on them, Stella!" he added, more hopefully.

But the Malays had evidently had enough of the Foam, for the time being, at any rate, and, finding her head turned towards them, made off as quickly as their crippled condition would allow.

Captain Kidd returned to his loved quick-firer, and took careful aim at the Red Rover's stern.

But even as his finger crooked round the trigger, he paused.

"They're worse than a shipload of poisonous snakes; but it'd be nothing short of cold-blooded murder to sink 'em!" he muttered, and, elevating the muzzle of his gun, he sent the shell hurtling between the schooner's slender masts.

It took two more shots before he brought down the Red Rover's other mast, then the sweeps were stilled, and Mendoza, jumping on the stern, frantically waved what was evidently a tablecloth as a white flag.

"Take us alongside, mate, not too close, but just within hailing distance! Snuggle up to the Bull Pup, Dick, and if they show any signs of treachery, plug

them between wind and water!" he ordered.

Anxiously those on board the Foam watched the distance between themselves and the Malay schooner decrease, until at length Captain Kidd held up his hand as a signal to Stella, and the Foam fell off.

"It was all a mistake our fighting you, Captain Kidd!" shouted Mendoza, in conciliatory tones.

"Oh, you've found that out, have you?" returned the skipper drily. "Now don't you make another mistake about what I'm going to say. You're whipped dogs, and you've got to obey your master's orders!" he added sternly.

"I'll have no truck with half-baked scoundrels like you, who'd be a disgrace to any honest pirate that ever sailed the sea. What you've got to do, and to do quickly, is to sheer off due south. If you're not hull down in less than two hours, I'll follow, and sink you, or my name is not Morgan Kidd!"

"Can't we come to terms? I'm sure—" began Mendoza when Captain Kidd issued an order.

The next moment a shell from the quick-firer whistled so close past Mendoza's head that the Portuguese jumped hurriedly on deck, and a few minutes later the Red Rover was moving as rapidly through the water as her damaged state would allow.

The Foam followed her for a short distance, then returned to seek a safe anchorage amongst the islands ere night fell.

Elated though they were with the victory they had gained over the Malay vessel, with treble their crew, they were saddened by the loss of a Kanaka killed and another somewhat severely wounded.

But, save for a slight flesh wound from a ricocheting bullet, which had struck Harry Fielding a slanting blow on the

leg, and a scratch on Captain Kidd's neck by a Malay kris, the whites had got off without injury.

What the Lagoon Revealed!

THE next morning they had the boat out, and, armed with the glass-bottomed bucket, subjected the whole ocean bed to a close examination.

They saw many strange sights—monstrous fish, crabs, and crayfish of a size such as they had never deemed possible; long, snake-like monstrosities, which seemed to be something between an eel, and a base.

Deep, well-like pits in the ocean-bed, and huge chasms, at the bottom of which fearful creatures such as naturalists have only guessed at, might lurk, but no sign of the Pathan's stern and the missing millions.

Dejected, and almost despairing, Dick Danby returned to the Foam in answer to the signal that dinner was ready.

"No luck, Dick?" asked Stella, looking deliciously cool in her white ducks, though the day was oppressively hot, even for those tropical regions, as she rose from her deck-chair to greet him.

Dick Danby shook his head. "Not a sign! The whole after part of the Pathan seems to have vanished. I am beginning to fear that I have brought you on a fool's errand," he replied dolefully.

"Cheer up, my lad! We'll find the gold yet! That is to say, unless—" began Captain Kidd, who had accompanied Dick and Wang Su in the boat.

"You mean unless she has dropped into one of the vast chasms with which this coast abounds," interposed Dick Danby.

"I hate the place! It seems to be

nature's submarine-forcing house. There is something weird and uncanny about the whole bottom of the sea so far as I could see it. The fish are larger than is quite canny, the very coral and anemones have a sinister beauty, different to any I have seen elsewhere!" he added vehemently, with a sudden burst of passion.

"Hum! You noticed that, did you? The Devil's Island, the natives call it; and they're generally within hailing distance of the truth," mused the skipper thoughtfully.

Stella looked anxiously at Dick, and noted the unwonted depression on his usually smiling face.

"I never saw two such weak-kneed mortals in my life! Just because we haven't dropped on the treasure first time of asking, you're as mopey as a pair of Fiji chickens on a feast-day!" she cried merrily. "Now I'm the real skipper of this craft, though I let dad think he is, as it pleases him, you know; so what I say goes! We will take a holiday this afternoon. Dad shall have his nap, and you and I will have a good long swim!"

"Avast there, my girl! You're not going overboard in these waters, I can tell you! The sea is alive with sharks!" objected Captain Kidd.

The mate of the Foam glanced over the low bulwark.

As though to enforce her father's caution, three large dorsal fins were cutting lazily through the water within a hundred yards of the schooner.

Her face fell.

Then it brightened as she said:

"We'll row to the reef. There are never any sharks in an atoll. What do you say, Dick?"

Needless to say, Dick readily agreed, and Wang Su announcing dinner at that moment, they all sat down to a meal such as only the clever little Chinaman could so prepare. One of the salted pigs they had shot on the island which had sheltered them during the typhoon, and various kinds of tinned meat.

Dinner over, Stella disappeared into her cabin, and a few minutes later returned, clad in her bathing-dress beneath a long, white dustcoat.

It had been agreed during dinner that two Kanakas should row them to the reef and then return, for Captain Kidd had determined to cruise round a bit, and make sure that Mendoza had not returned. He did not intend to be caught napping a second time.

"You two lazy beggars had better change your minds, and come with us," suggested Dick, as they were about to enter the boat.

But both Harry and Joe shook their heads. The idea of swimming about in that hot lagoon under the broiling sun did not appeal to them, and Dick and Stella went off alone.

The coral reef reached, the boatmen backed the boat against the foam-kissed coral, and, throwing off her outer garment, Stella stepped lightly over the rocks and plunged gracefully into the still placid waters beyond.

Dick Danby followed, and the Kanakas rowed with unnecessary haste back to the schooner.

Devoted to the lovely Flower of the Islands though they were, they would not remain longer near the dreaded Devil Island than they could help.

But neither Stella nor Dick Danby gave a thought to the supposed supernatural terrors lurking beneath those calm waters, as they thrust themselves

through the tiny waves, scarce more than ripple, that covered the surface of the lagoon.

Although we have described Treasure Island as an atoll, it has been for want of some more convenient term.

Strictly speaking, an atoll is a circular island, formed during countless ages by the small coral insect, on which the sea has slowly accumulated, and planted by floating grasses, and the tops of trees, or ferns, or been blown by storms, to the newly-formed island.

In this case, the island on which the Pathan had been wrecked had undoubtedly risen first, as its precipitous cliffs, broken here and there by tiny bays of silver sand, and the towering peaks, which could just be seen rising towards its centre, proclaimed.

Then the corals had begun their patient toil, and working as usual, in a circle, had surrounded the rock, which, hemming it in with a stout reef that broke up the huge Pacific rollers, and left the island standing in a lake of clear, calm water.

For nearly half an hour Dick Danby and his girl chum sported in the clear, cool waters of the lagoon.

Both were splendid swimmers, and now floating, now treading water, now swimming slowly side by side, drinking in the beauty of the fairy land beneath them, they were absolutely unconscious of the flight of time.

And a fairy land indeed it seemed.

It was as if a gorgeous carpet, of the most perfect colour and tone, had been spread over the bottom of the sea.

But a carpet gives the idea of level spaces, but here there was scarcely a yard which had not been built over, in a thousand fantastic shapes, by the millions upon millions of tiny insects which had their homes, and spent their lives of unceasing toil, at the bottom of the sea.

And, as the miniature pinnacles, and, stately, if grotesque, towers of red or white coral, were sea-cumbers, long-stemmed sponges of all kinds, some of that strange, goblet shape known as Nelson's Cups, whilst others showed delicately-patterned skeletons, like mazes of the whitest mother-of-pearl.

Now and again a goblin-shaped fish of many hues, its very ugliness having a strange fascination for the wondering boy and girl, would swim sedately amongst the anemones, corals, and sponges, seeming to disappear now and again, as it remained motionless in the midst of that blaze of colour.

But all was not lovely in the lagoon.

Stella had just beaten Dick in a race round a rock, which rose from the water, looking for all the world like a mighty giant's chair, when the lovely mate of the Foam swung round, and, just keeping herself afloat, gazed intently into the liquid depths below.

"Come here, Dick, and tell me what you make of this," she cried over her shoulder.

A couple of strokes took Dick to her side.

"I mean those two long, thin, reddish-bald things, to the right of that white coral rock," continued Stella, pointing through the water.

Following with his eyes the direction of the girl's extended arm, Dick saw what might easily have been mistaken for a pair of tapering fishing-rods protruding from a nobbly lump of coral of the same colour, that lay at the end of a long, round rock, covered with barnacles, shell-fish, and anemones.

"It—it can't be a huge lobster!" gasped Stella.

Dick Danby laughed teasingly.

"No more than that rock to the left of it is an elephant," he replied.

"But it is a lobster! Look at its huge eyes!" persisted Stella, as a pair of tower-shaped structures, as big round as a man's arm, surmounted by a big, round, staring eye, appeared at the base of the rocks.

Slowly two pair of long, jointed legs uncurled from beneath the waking monster, as it lifted its feeler-armed head, whilst a pair of enormous claws, so covered with shells that it had been indistinguishable from the bed of the sea, and a good six feet in length, rose towards them.

Dick and Stella did not wait to make closer acquaintance with the giant lobster. They were quite content with a fleeting glance at an enormous, armoured body, and a huge, fan-shaped tail, as the creature rose sluggishly from amongst the coral.

"Do I sleep, do I dream, or are visions abroad?" quoted Dick, when they had reached the rock, and clambered on to the flat surface which formed the seat of the "chair."

Stella shuddered. "Dream! I'd call it a pretty useful exhibit in a nightmare show! No wonder the Kanakas want to give this place a wide berth!" she cried.

"At any rate, it didn't attempt to follow us," replied Dick cheerfully. "I wonder if the brute has swallowed the poor old Pathan's stern?"

"Let us go and see," suggested Stella, plunging into the sea like a mermaid.

Dick Danby hesitated.

It seemed rather like asking for trouble to go to the anemone, but where the mate of the Foam led he was bound to follow.

Besides, he realised, as probably Stella had done, that it was just as well to know exactly where so formidable an enemy was, as they were practically confined to the lagoon until the Foam returned.

As he swam by his girl chum's side, keeping a sharp look-out for the lobster, he noticed that many of the fish were far larger than any of the same species he had seen in other lagoons, especially the anemones, some of which attained a truly gigantic size.

"Here's where the great-grandfather of all the lobsters was taking his afternoon nap," said Stella merrily, as they reached the spot where they had seen the awful apparition.

"And his your elephant," she added, pointing to an enormous rock to the left of the lobster, and been lying.

Dick Danby made no reply, and the girl had only time to notice that a sudden flush of joy had swept over his face ere he disappeared beneath the surface.

A sudden thought sent her after the diving boy.

She saw Dick swerve round the end of the shell-and-anemone-covered mass, then sink to the bottom, dig his hands into what looked like a heap of golden sand, ere he dashed to the surface again.

Wondering what it was that had caused her boy chum to take that headlong dive, Stella chased him to the surface, where she found him treading water as he gazed at some half-dozen sovereigns which he held in his hand.

(Another 'long instalment of this grand adventure story will appear in next Wednesday's GEM. Order now.)



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers.
Address: Editor, The "Gem," The Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

LIKES AND DISLIKES.

It is always a compliment to the author, if not to the character, when a correspondent writes to say that he hates So-and-So. This time it was Cardew who had earned the dislike. It is all a splendid tribute to the man who originated Cardew, and made him lifelike.

Some of my earnest-minded friends clamour for certain of the characters to be tamed, bag and baggage, out of the yarns. Mention of baggage suggests Baggy, who is not really over-popular. Listeners at keyholes seldom are much liked, but a story series would be incomplete if it did not show a myriad types. As it is, I am frequently told that Tom Merry is too good! I cannot agree. What I say is that one must have all kinds to make a yarn, just the same as one has to have every sort to make a world—the big and the little, the lean and the fat, the mean and the open-handed.

Mr. Martin Clifford contrives, very successfully, to hold the mirror up to nature, and I fancy, in the main, his stories are appreciated even by the few grumblers who write in to abuse one fellow or another. They take the yarns so seriously that they want matters all their own way!

Just think of that now! It is so, and yet, funny enough, the big lesson we all have to learn is that we cannot have the said things like that. The world has to be taken as it is.

COMIC HISTORY.

History is not really comic, as we all have some reason to know, but running through it all is the wit that often enough saves the situation. I was looking the other day at that old book called "The Comic History of England," with its many drolleries about this king and the other in the back centuries, who mounted the throne at seven o'clock in the morning, did the work of the day, and came down again towards evening, had supper, and went to bed as per usual.

There is any amount of interest in history, and if a fellow who has a bent that way writes up some incident which he has studied, and reads it to the members of his family, or his own debating society, he will be supplying material for a very good and entertaining evening. It need not specially be English history. The chronicle of all countries is tremendously intermingled.

Froisart began the business with his stories of the old wars in France and Turkey in the fourteenth century, and the tournaments, etc., which filled in the time.

Monstralet, the ancient French chronicler, carried the work on. But whichever way you turn there is sure to be something with a historic significance, and it is often worth while looking into it.

I expect my many Birmingham friends remember the writing-table and mirror fixed behind, at Aston Hall, the old seat

of Sir Thomas Holt, the man who was so angry with his daughter for refusing to fall in with his wishes.

The looking-glass in question was an ingenious affair, and was the property of King Charles the First. It enabled the ill-fated monarch to see whoever was in the room, and that sort of precaution was quite a useful one in the old days. You never knew what might be happening.

In the old print and book-shops of Paris and London you see some quaint reminders of the old times, mementoes of kings who have retired from business. I know a great many of my chums read history by the yard. They know as well as I do that one of the ways to get well acquainted with all the odd, old things which happened in the past is to read historical stories. You cannot beat Dumas in this line, for he gave lifelike pictures of the time, and these were far more valuable in many ways than a studious attention to dry-as-dust details could ever have been.

I always like the scene where Henry the Third of France said to Chicot the Jester that he would hang the monk called Gorenflot. "You can't do that, your Majesty," said Chicot. "Why?" asked the king. "He has no neck."

And a good reason, too! But try a few remarks on history this winter if you are so minded. You will please everybody.

WINTER IN THE COUNTRY.

We hear plenty about winter in town, with the shops looking their best and brightest, and the theatres and cinemas hard at it, and all that sort of thing. But what about winter far away in the wilderness?

Of course, there is football; but I am not for the moment thinking of the great winter game, nor of the keen, frosty spells. The latter come seldom in our climate, as we all know, and the skater gets his usual disappointments with the frost giving out just when it seems fixed for weeks.

Really, the great charm of the English country in the months now on till March lies in the rain and shine weather we all know so well. To nature-lovers—and we are all more or less to be described that way—it is a wonderful period. The country seems to be resting, but actually it is hard at work, preparing for the spring.

It is worth while to walk out and see things in the off season. The woods with their pathways moist and leaf-strewn are sort of stock-taking, in preparation for what is to come. The lanes are for the most part quiescent, but you do not mind that detail if your boots are sound.

Of course, the fellow who earns his living in a big town cannot take a holiday in the country in winter time; but if he did I feel pretty sure he would enjoy a few days in the land of farms and crops as much in that season as in the summer.

AMATEUR MAGAZINES.

Chill October brings plenty of things in its train, and among them is the general look-up on the part of amateur magazines. These provide any amount of amusement, and, besides, they are a real help to the coming writer. Really such periodicals are immensely important.

Men who have done tremendous things in the profession of letters have started that way. Let's be careful to give the amateur magazine its right place. There is bound to be earnestness about it. No fellow sets to and organises such a publication unless he has the real stuff in him, along with energy and grit.

Of course, all amateur magazine editors and authors are not going to make literature the prime business of their lives; but anyway, the work is an outlet for their activities, and a few find they have discovered their real calling. You see, literature is a quality which never stops. It is an agency for those sort of ideas which are the arch-enemies of the trivial, and the mean, and well directed, it brings new and splendid meaning to the life of the day. It interprets mysteries, just as do all branches of knowledge.

It is as well to remember that "the" book has never been written yet. There is always something better to come along—a book which will be a real help to humanity and make folks happier. And the fellow who is going to write that book may be, in fact, he is sure to be, some amateur who starts trying his hand at the writing business just because he feels he must.

I appreciate amateur magazines, for they give a chance to busy and fertile brains, and enable future geniuses to have a preliminary canter. Big as is the literary output to-day, there is still room for the best, and always will be.

Of course, it is not every humorist who is going to win the fame of a Jerome, or make folks laugh as Random can, or stimulate thought like Wells, or touch on the tender and lasting things as did Mrs. Ewing, and Mrs. Gaskell, or, for that matter, deal with boyhood like Eden Philpotts, or Sidney Drew, or Henty, or Frank Richards; but out there in the crowd are the great writers of to-morrow, and if you watch the carefully written-out amateur magazines which are circulated among a few friends, you will see the early efforts of these riant of the future.

The big Republic of Imagination gives everybody a chance. It is merit, and merit alone, that tells.

So good luck to all the amateurs this autumn and winter!

Your Editor

READERS' NOTICES.

BACK NUMBERS.

Miss Lily Weeth, 2, Seaward-street, Road, Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green, E. 2. No 1 "Penny Popular," 2d. offered. Also "Taming of Henry Wharton," "The Making of Henry Wharton," "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," and "Victory," 85, Osborne Road, Oldham, Lancs. offers "Magnets" and "Gems," from 500, 1d. each. Write first.

Joseph Cohen, 1, Stirling Street, Cape Town, South Africa, offers "Magnets" and "Gems," 548-522, "Nelson Lee," 160-70; "Boys' Friend," 891-901, 1d. each. Write first.

Alan Southgate, care of Goods Dept., L. & Y. Ry. Co., Rose Grove, Lancs, wants "Greyfriars' Herald" complete, 1d. each offered. Write first.

James Mayne, 35, Barnhill, Larne, co. Antrim, Ireland—also "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," "Bob Cherry in Search of His Father," "Schoolboys Never Shall be Slaves," "The Honour of a Jew," "The Boy Without a Name," "Under Hunter's Thumb," (Charles A. Milledge, 27, Troil's Crescent, Brighton, Nos. 1 and 2 "Greyfriars' Herald," 2d. offered, and postage. Write first.

Sidney Miles, 25, China Street, Llanidloes, Montgomery, will pay 1d. each for red-covered "Magnets." Write first.

Allan B. Tunnock, Fairholme, Eccleston Park, Prescott, Lancs.—Under "Hunter's Thumb" and "Billy Butler's Postal Order," 2d. each offered. Write first.

Miss Evelyn M. Bartlett, 51, Christie Road, South Hackney, E. 9.—"Gems," 475, 477, 489, 502, 2d. each offered. Write first.

A. O., 23, Little Mansions, Little Road, Fulham, S.W. 6, offers "School and Sport" for red-covered "Magnets." Stamped envelope, please.

H. Makin, 12, Whitby Street, The Brook: Liverpool—also "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," "Figs' & Pudding," "Hunter & Butler," "Hunter's Forecell," "The Bounder's Chance," any stories about the Bounder, 2d. each, and postage. Write first.

H. Ashton, 118, Admiral Street, Dingle, Liverpool, offers 24 green-covered "Gems," 4 red-covered "Magnets," and 6 "Boys' Friend" Libraries, including "After Lights Out."

A. Fisher, 34, High Street, West Bromwich, Staffs, has a large number of "Boys' Friend" Libraries to dispose of, starting with 555.

H. Swindells, 10, Vernon Street, Buxton Road, Macclesfield, offers "Penny Populars" and "Gems" for sale.

Robert Hutton, 19, Elgin Street, Dumfrieshire, Scotland, wants "Fatty Wym's Hunter Strike," "Tom Merry, Miner," "The New Captain," "Captain Tom Merry," 2d. each offered. Write first.

M. C. Dowdell, 175, St. Helen's, Ipswich—also "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," also Nos. 11, 153, and 151 "Nelson Lee Library." M. Long, 10, Bishop Street, Dublin, Ireland, has for sale "Magnets" Nos. 554, 556, 557, 559, 567-5, 601.

F. T. Shopton, 10, Royal Road, Clapham, S.W. 4, with G. G. East of South-West Coast, interested in photography.

Edward Eyo, Hargrave Street, Castlemaiden, Victoria, Australia—"Gems," 324-8, 499, 525, 541-3. Clean, with covers, 2d. each offered. Write first.

Harry McFadden, Dublin Street, Monaghan, Ireland, will pay 2s. for "Tom Merry & Co.'s Ice Carnival," "Figs' & Pudding," "Under a Cloud," 2d. Jim's Invictors," "Manners, Minder," "Tom Merry's Peril." Any reader with old "Gems" is invited to send list and prices.

A. Burke, 11, Kennir Street, Felling-on-Tyne, co. Durham, has for sale "Gems" Nos. 520, 522, 536, 541, 547, 549, 591, 593, 518, 519, 571, 596-7-8-9; "Magnets" Nos. 529, 536, 540, 547, 553-4-5, 561, 577. He also wants "Magnets" 250-5, 255. Write first.

Hugh Page, 38, Chester Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, offers 2d. each for stories about Talbot. He also offers 4d. each for double numbers of either "Gem" or "Magnet."

Thomas Vian, 25, Harwood Avenue, Margate, N.W., has for sale "Magnets" Nos. 547-602; "Gems" 544-602; "Penny Populars" (new series) 130; and "Nelson Lees" 105-219. Write first.

Bernard Greco, Rockvale, Heaton Grange Road, Gidea Park, Romford, wants "Magnets" Nos. 1-4. Must be clean. Write first.

E. J. Barber, 110, Mortimer Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, has for sale 125 Companion Papers, 48 "Nelson Lee" Libraries, at 11d. each. He also wants "Gems" Nos. 539, 562, 566-7-8-9, 570, 571, 290, 292, 1d. each offered.

Norman W. Sibley, 41, Marlborough Place, Brighton, wants "Boy Without a Name," and also first stories dealing with the coming of Talbot. 4d. each offered.

A. H. Moran, 99, Masterman Road, East Ham, London, E. 6, wants any colour "Magnets" or "Gems." Write first, stating price.

W. Goldrey, 151, Carlton Hill, Carlton, Notts, has for sale fifty "Magnets" and "Gems" from 399-594, at 1d. per copy. Write first.

W. Tremere, 32, Sea View Avenue, Plymouth, has over four hundred books for sale, consisting of "Gems," "Magnets," "Boys' Friend," and "Nelson Lees." Write first.

F. H. Joubert, Stonegate, Edwards Bay Road, Mosman, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wants "Magnets" Nos. 151, 162, 167, 541, each offered; 257, 259, 273, 429, 2d. each. "Gems" Nos. 496, 500-503, 507, 512, 513, 519, 521, 522, 527, 528, 2d. each offered. Write first.

T. Lawes, 10, Cromwell Road, East Ham, London, E. 7, wants "Magnets" 65-380; "Gems" 1-280, 2d. each offered.

Frank H. Turton, 21, Farrar Road, Abbeydale, Sheffield, has back numbers of the Companion Papers for sale.

N. Woodward, 109, St. Michael Street, Sutton-in-Ashfield, wants "Boys' Friend" Libraries dealing with St. Jim's or Greyfriars juniors. One shilling offered.

R. Goldberg, 59, Bignor Street, Cheetham, Manchester, has for sale "Gems" Iron No. 437 to current issue.

D. Wayte, Weethley, Alesder, Warwickshire, has several "Magnets" for sale.

J. H. Brerley, 19, Oxford Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, wants "Magnets" Nos. 1-107, 2d. each offered.

R. Robertson, 2, Argyle Park Terrace, Edinburgh, has for sale "Magnets," Nos. 577, 579, 581-3, and 587-603; "Gems," 590-593; and "Boys' Friend," 906-951. Best offer.

Fred Berckelman, 91, Yule Street, Petersham, Sydney, Australia, wants "The Flooded School," "Tom Merry's Peril," and "The Spy of the School."

A. T. C. Leicester Road, Asend, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, wants "Gems," Nos. 516, 581, 582, 597-542, 544, 6d. each offered. Write first.

W. Mayes, Kismet, Illidilla Street, Nairn, Bays, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wants "Magnets," Nos. 382 and 523, 1d. each offered.

Frank H. Turton, 21, Farrar Road, Abbeydale, Sheffield, will exchange "Magnets," and "Gems," "Penny Populars," or "Nelson Lees," for books on engineering.

Thomas Griffin, Railway Cottage, Darfield, near Barnsley, Yorks, has for sale back numbers of the Companion Papers.

James B. Horan, 1, Upper Rome Street, Westford, has for sale "Gems," Nos. 17, 20, 63, 83, 114, 151, 163, 262, 280, and 455-602; "Magnets," Nos. 435-603. What offers?

Arthur Harrison, 7, West Street, South Shields, has back numbers of the "Magnets" and "Gem" for sale, 1d. each; also "Penny Populars" (new series), 1d. each.

C. F. Rickard, 172A, Hollingdale Terrace, Ditchling Road, Brighton, wants "Boy Without a Name," "School and Sport," "Through Thick and Thin," and "After Lights Out"; Sexton Blake Libraries, Nos. 42, 33, 34, and 35. Write first.

William Mann, 35, Palmer Street, Jarrow-on-Tyne, has for sale a number of "Gems" and "Magnets."

Miss Dorothy Preston, 121, Bedford Street, Routh, Cardiff—with readers 17-21. All letters answered.

F. Dunlop, 27, Heystersburg Street, S.C. Road, Dublin, Ireland, wants a partner to run a Correspondence Club.

John Rosewater, 29, Howarden Grove, Horne Hill, S.E. 24—with readers interested in walking, with a view for forming a club, 15-1.

M. Isaacs, 98, Bailey Street, Brynmawr, Breconshire—with readers anywhere.

T. Bradley, 177, York Road, West Hartlepool, co. Durham—with readers in the United Kingdom, with a view to exchanging post-cards.

W. Kirk, White Lion Inn, Bulwell, Notts, wants members for a Sale and Exchange Club.

George Hargreaves, 211, Queen's Road, Blackheath, Lancs, wants members for a junior dramatic society, 13-15.

D. Hutchison, 131, Legrams Lane, Bradford—with readers in the United States or Canada.

Wm. Sawers, 3, Conely Green Place, Edinburgh—with a boy reader in France.

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