



SPECIAL CUPTIE ARTICLE INSIDE!

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Every Wednesday.

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TOM MERRY TURNS OUT FOR THE FIRST XI.
(The Unexpected Result of Grundy's Little Scheme.)

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The ROMANCE OF THE CUP FINALISTS



FOOTBALL has become a big business, as well as a sport, but the romance of the game still lives, and the two teams which will do battle this weekend for the coveted silver bauble which is known as the English Cup have each their place in the history of the game.

At one time it seemed quite likely that London would again have an interest in the greatest battle of the football calendar, for, after having got to the Semi-final, Tottenham Hotspur were expected to win the trophy again. However, thanks to one or two bad slips in the Semi-final, they lost to Preston North End, and "Fanny" Walden, the little midget outside-left whose photo will be given away with next week's "Gem," is to-day a disappointed man.

Still, Walden will probably be ready to admit that he is partly responsible for the fact that the Spurs are not in the last great round. He had, near the end of the Semi-final at Sheffield, a great chance to save the game for his side, but, being over-anxious,

he "foozled" an easy opening by sending the ball over the bar.

All the same, it is just as well that the honours should go round, and Huddersfield Town v. Preston North End should be a struggle well worth seeing. The North End are, of course, quite an old club, but it is thirty-three years since they were in the Final Tie, and on that occasion they won the trophy. Incidentally, in that season they performed a double feat which has never been equalled in the history of the game. They won the League Championship without losing a match, and won the English Cup without having a goal scored against them in the whole of the ties.

As for Huddersfield Town, they have now accomplished the rare feat of going to the Cup Final twice in three seasons. A couple of years ago they were beaten by Aston Villa in the Final, losing by one goal during extra time. One wonders whether they will have with them at Stamford Bridge this weekend that magic lamp which was said to

have helped them through to the Final of 1920.

This lamp was a bit of stage property, which had been used in the pantomime "Aladdin," played at a Huddersfield theatre. It will be said that Huddersfield were that season mere preys to superstition, for I don't believe, and you don't believe, that a stage-property lamp could help a side to success on the football field. All the same, when Huddersfield were doing so well two years ago they carried their Aladdin's lamp with them everywhere they went, and the writer will never forget the solemn way in which the Huddersfield players marched round the lamp in the dressing-room just prior to the cup final of 1929, each man touching it as he passed. "The charm" did not bring them victory, though they came very near to it; but, at the same time, the incident serves to show that footballers—big footballers—are, after all, very human, with all the superstitions of ordinary people.

The appearance of Huddersfield in the Final for the second time in three seasons is really quite a wonderful achievement, when it is remembered that in November of 1920 there was serious talk of removing the club in its entirety to Leeds. It was said then that the people of Huddersfield did not appreciate the efforts of their football team. But now—well, if Huddersfield Town should win on Saturday, we may depend upon it that there will be no question about the popularity of football, and of the members of the football team, in the Yorkshire town.

(Another Special Article next week, dealing with "Fanny" Walden, Tottenham Hotspur's wonder man.)

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A Grand Long Complete School Story of the Chums of St. Jim's, telling how Tom Merry Saves the Situation in the First Eleven's Last Match of the Season.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Vaulting Ambition.

"DON'T, old man!" "Grundy, old chap—don't!" Wilkins and Gunn were beseeching—they beseeched Grundy of the Shell almost with tears in their eyes.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, coming along the corridor, heard the beseeching voices, and stopped. They were interested. Grundy of the Shell looked as firm as adamant; his arms were folded across his chest, and he regarded Wilkins and Gunn with disdain. He looked, indeed, as if he were understudying Ajax in his celebrated act of defying the lightning.

"No need to talk," said Grundy. "I've decided!"

"But—" said Wilkins.

"But—" stuttered Gunn.

"I'm going to see Kildare!" said Grundy. "I'm going to put it to him plain. No good talking! I've made up my mind!"

"But you couldn't—"

"You can't!"

"It's the last match of the season," said Grundy of the Shell. "It's my last chance! Where have I come in in footer this season? Where are all the goals I ought to have kicked for the House and the school? Haven't I been left out in the cold all the time? Has Tom Merry ever, even once, had the common-sense to play me? Not once! Look at the defeats he's suffered, owing to leaving me out!"

"My only hat!" murmured Tom Merry; and Manners and Lowther grinned.

According to the views of the Terrible Three, the defeats were not due to leaving Grundy out. The victories were due to that!

"But Kildare—" said Gunn.

"He will be riled!" said Wilkins.

"Do you think I haven't the nerve to talk to Kildare?" demanded Grundy disdainfully. "Kildare may be head of the Sixth and captain of the school, and all that. But I've yet to learn that he can teach me anything about football!"

"Oh!"

"I'm going to put it plain," said Grundy. "Kildare's a fairly reasonable chap in some ways; and he may see reason. I hope so, for the sake of the school. Leggo my arm, Wilkins!"

"But—"

"Oh, ring off!" said Grundy impatiently.

And Grundy shook off Wilkins' detaining hand, and walked with a firm stride down the Sixth Form passage to Kildare's study.

Wilkins and Gunn gazed after him. They had done their best—and they had failed! As if fascinated by the sight, they watched Grundy tap at Kildare's door, and disappear into the study.

"Well, he's done it!" said Wilkins, with a deep breath.

"We've tried to stop him, haven't we, Gunny?"

"We have!" said Gunn dispiritedly. "It was up to us! But it was no good—it never is any good talking sense to Grundy! I wonder if Kildare will slaughter him, or merely kick him out?"

"What on earth's the trouble, you fellows?" asked Tom Merry. "What's Grundy gone to old Kildare for?"

"Going to give him some tips about footer?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Or to help him select the eleven for the Greyfriars match?" grinned Manners.

"Worse than that!" groaned Wilkins. "He's gone to offer to play for the school in the Greyfriars match!"

"What!"

Tom Merry & Co. fairly jumped.

They had almost ceased to be surprised at anything Grundy of the Shell might do, or say, or think. But once more George Alfred Grundy had succeeded in astonishing them.

"Play for the school—in a senior match—and the biggest one in the list," said Tom Merry dazedly. "Play in a team that's specially picked out of the Sixth and the Fifth. Why, Kildare wouldn't dream of playing even little me! And Grundy—"

"He was pulling your leg," said Manners. "Even Grundy couldn't have the neck—"

"He has!" said Wilkins, almost tearfully. "His idea is that he's been left out of junior football all the season because—because he's too good, you know. Thinks fellows are jealous at the idea of seeing him bag all the winging goals."

"Dear old Grundy!" said Lowther.

"He thinks Kildare may see what a ripping footballer he really is, and give him a chance in a senior match," said Gunn. "He really thinks that. He doesn't know he can't play footer for toffee! It's really pathetic."

"It will be tragic, if he cheeks Kildare," said Manners, with a chuckle. "Good old Grundy! So he's going to put it plain to Kildare—and ask for a place in the senior eleven!"

"Let's wait here and see the tragedy," said Lowther.

"Grundy may need helping home."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The five Shell fellows waited with almost breathless interest.

How Kildare was likely to receive such an offer from any junior in the Lower School was rather a problem. The match with Greyfriars was a very important fixture; for weeks Kildare had been keeping a very special eye on his men, the pick of the two top forms, with a view to that match. The mightiest men of the Sixth and the very flower of the Fifth were selected for the expedition to Greyfriars. Even a first-class junior footballer like Tom Merry would never have dreamed of getting a chance in such a match. And Grundy—

It really seemed too good to be true. But there it was! Grundy had gone into Kildare's study to offer his services—and if they were refused, Grundy was quite likely to tell the captain of the school what he thought of him. So the Shell fellows were interested. It was interesting to watch and see whether Grundy left Kildare's study all in one piece.

"Look out!" murmured Manners, as Kildare's study door opened.

Grundy of the Shell appeared.

He was wriggling.

Of Kildare, all that could be seen was a hand and an arm. The hand was gripping Grundy by the back of the collar, the arm was extending him into the passage.

Bump!

Kildare's hand released its hold, and Grundy sat down, with a loud concussion. Then the door closed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy sat in a dizzy state for some moments. He blinked

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along the passage at the yelling group of Shell fellows, and then he blinked at the closed door.

"My hat!" he gasped.

He struggled to his feet.

"Come on, old chap!" called out Wilkins.

Grundy did not come on; he did not even heed. He turned back to Kildare's door and hurled it wide open. Evidently he was not finished yet with the captain of St. Jim's.

He rushed into the study.

"My only hat!" said Wilkins faintly. "What's going to happen now?"

What was going to happen happened rapidly and dramatically. Grundy appeared in the corridor again, and this time Kildare appeared with him. Grundy was propelled out of the study with an iron grip on his collar, but he did not sit down this time. Instead of that, Kildare of the Sixth raised his left foot, and his boot came into violent contact with Grundy.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Grundy.

"Goal!" chirruped Monty Lowther.

"Now clear off, you cheeky young ass!" said Kildare, shaking the hapless and infuriated Grundy till his teeth rattled.

"Groogh! I—I'll hack your shins! I—I— Groogh—"
Shake, shake, shake!

"Now travel!"

Kildare released Grundy and applied his boot again. Given a powerful start by that means, George Alfred Grundy came along the corridor, staggering. Kildare went back into his study and closed the door.

"Oh!" gasped Grundy. "Ow, wow! You—you fellows saw that?"

"Ha, ha! We did."

"Just because I asked for a place in the senior team—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And told him he was a fool to refuse!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've been kicked," said Grundy breathlessly. "Kicked out of the study! Me, you know! Because I tried to make Kildare see a little sense! Would you believe it? What are you cackling at? I don't see anything to cackle at in this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy was the only fellow present who could see nothing to cackle at. The Terrible Three roared, and Wilkins and Gunn could not keep serious. Grundy stared at them gloomily.

"You can cackle!" he snorted.

"We will!" chuckled Lowther.

"But you'll see! You'll jolly well see! So will Kildare! So will all the fellows! You just wait a bit—and you'll all jolly well see!"

And with that dark and mysterious hint, Grundy of the Shell tramped away, moody and wrathful, leaving Tom Merry & Co. on the verge of hysterics.

CHAPTER 2. Staunch Pals.

"YOU three, of course."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked up from a letter, in Study No. 6 in the Fourth, and made that remark thoughtfully.

Blake and Herries and Digby were busy with tea. They were also busy discussing the forthcoming senior match with Greyfriars. But Arthur Augustus, neglecting his muffins, and taking no part in the discussion, had been devoting his whole attention to the letter in his hand. Judging by the expression on the aristocratic features of Arthur Augustus, there was satisfactory news in that letter.

"You three!" he said again. "A chap is bound to stand by his own studay. That will be foah, won't it?"

Blake looked up.

"Burbling again?" he asked pleasantly.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Those Shell duffers are late for tea," said Digby. "There won't be many of the eggs left if they don't butt in soon."

"The question is," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully, "whetherah we can cwam 'n seven?"

"Of course we can," said Blake, with a stare. "There's been seven to tea in the studay before—a dozen, for that matter."

"I was not alludin' to tea in the studay, Blake."

"Oh! Just wandering in your mind, what?" asked Blake affably.

"Wats! I was alludin' to the First Eleven match at Gweyfwahs on Wednesday," said D'Arcy. "It is a whole holiday, you know, and the last big football match of the season. So it is wathah a special occasion, isn't it? Old Kildare has been takin' no end of twouble ovah his team, and I think he has got togethah a pwetty good one; though pewwaps there are wathah too many New House fellows in it."

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"Hear, hear!" agreed Study No. 6.

"I think it would wathah buck old Kildare if we were pwesent, to give the seniahs a cheeah, what?"

Blake grinned.

"I don't know whether it would buck them specially, but I'd like to see the match," he said. "But it won't run to it, Gussy. Railway fares are a bit too steep to follow the team that distance."

"Nobody's going, except one reserve, with the team," said Herries, shaking his head. "Can't be done."

"The study would be stony broke for weeks afterwards, if we went!" said Digby. "Nothing doing, Gussy."

The Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy smiled.

"We are goin'!" he announced.

"Rats!"

"I am takin' you fellows—"

"Rot!" said Blake. "We can't afford the fares, and we're not going to sponge on you, Gussy. Forget it."

"There won't be any fares, deah boy."

"Eh? Has a special train dropped down out of the sky for us?" inquired Blake.

"Wats! I have thought the matter out, you know," said Arthur Augustus, "and a day or two ago I wote to my patah. This is his weply. We are goin' to have the cah on Wednesday."

"My hat! Your pater's car?"

"The big Daimler," said Gussy cheerily. "I wequested the patah vewy specially to let us have it for a wun, you know, and the patah has vewy kindly consented."

Blake & Co. brightened up. They were very keen to see Kildare & Co. play Greyfriars; and perhaps still keener to take a long run across country in a big car, on a whole holiday.

"Good old pater!" said Herries. "Your governor is really a jolly old trump, Gussy! Worth cultivating, by Jove!"

"Yaas, wathah! Now, I am goin' to take you three, of course," said Arthur Augustus. "You fellows are my newest fwends, I believe."

"We are—we is—especially on an occasion like this!" said Jack Blake heartily. "Bursting with friendship."

"Yes, rather."

"But there will be woom in the big cah for two or thwee othah fellows, and one can sit beside the chauffeur," said Arthur Augustus. "Now, ought I to offah the places to Tom Mewwy and Mannahs and Lowthah? Or to some othah fellows? Cardew of the Fourth is a welayon of mine, and I wathah like Levison, and Clive is a vewy good chap. Talbot of the Shell might like to go, and Kangawoo is a vewy decent fellow. And Figgins & Co. of the New House—"

"Is your pater's car a motor-bus?" asked Blake.

"Nunno."

"Then you needn't run over the list of fellows who would like to go," grinned Blake. "The biggest motor-bus going wouldn't hold the lot. As soon as this gets out, this studay will be besieged by fellows who want to go."

"Yaas, wathah! Aftah makin' up the partay, deah boy, I think it would be a good ideah to keep the mattrah datk till Wednesday, to save the wowwy of wefusin' a lot of fellows. It is so howwid to say 'no' to anybody, you know, and if I say 'yaas' evewy time, there will be too big a crowd for the cah."

"Good egg!" agreed Blake. "But I'd say no for you, Gussy, if necessary—we can say no in my county quite emphatically. We come to the point in Yorkshire, I can tell you."

"Yaas, I have noticed that you have wathah gwuff mannahs, Blake—"

"What?"

"Wathah gwuff mannahs, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus innocently.

Blake half rose from his seat and then sat down again.

"Can't slaughter a fellow who's standing me a run in a car," he remarked thoughtfully. "I'll let you live, Gussy, though you don't deserve it."

"Weally, Blake—"

There was a thump on the door, and three Shell fellows came in with smiling faces. Tom Merry and Mannahs and Lowther seemed to be in great spirits.

"You're late!" said Blake chidingly. "Most of the muffins are gone, and the rest are cold."

"All Grundy's fault," said Tom Merry, with a chuckle. "Grundy has been entertaiming us again. He's no end of a funny merchant."

"What's his latest, then?"

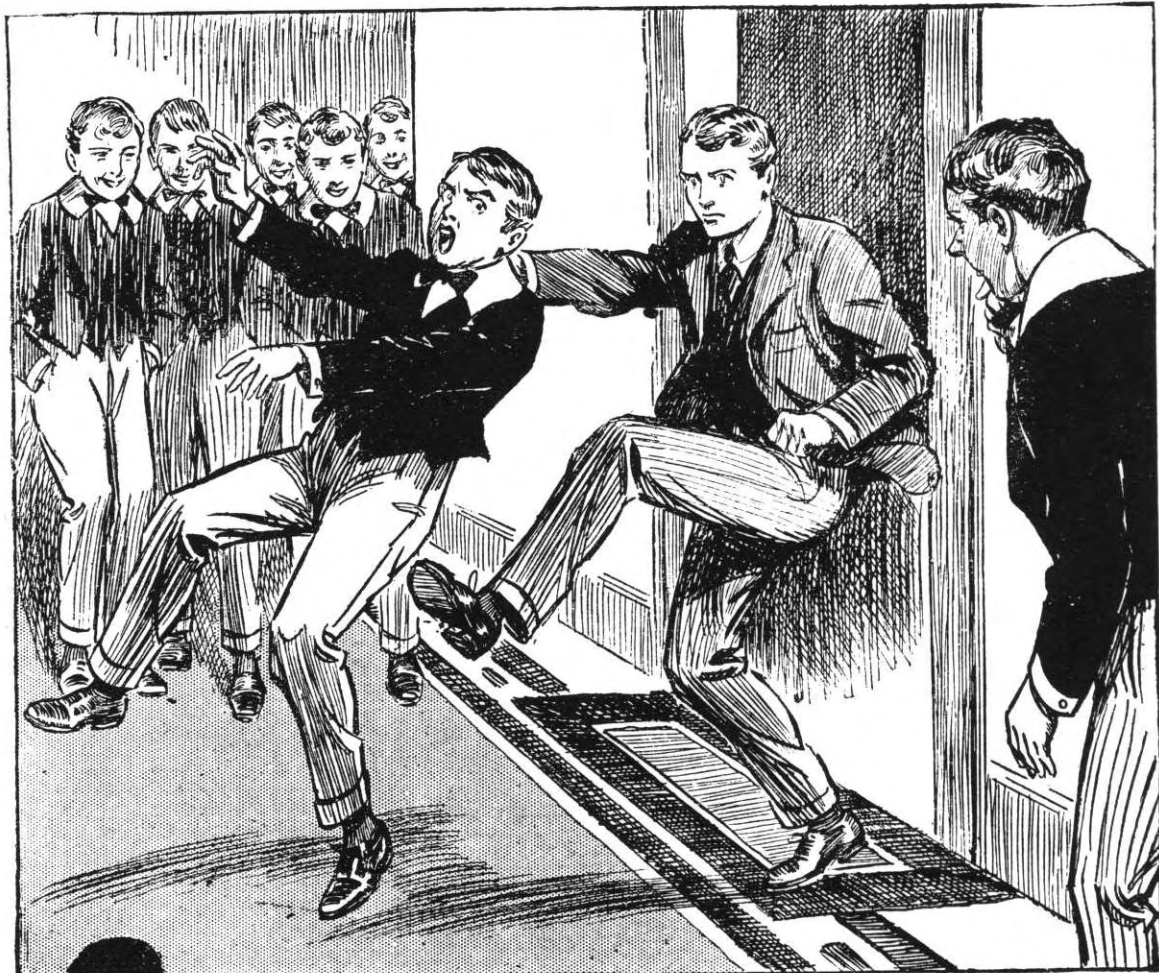
"Only offering his services to Kildare for the football match at Greyfriars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell in Study No. 6.

"Oh dear!" said Blake. "Grundy will be the death of me, I know that."

"Bai Jove!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "Of all the feahful cheek, you know. Why, Kildare would pwobably wefuse if I offahed."



Look out!" murmured Manners, as Kildare's study door opened. George Alfred Grundy appeared with Kildare's hand gripping him by the back of the collar. Kildare then raised his left foot, and his boot came into violent contact with Grundy. "Yarosh!" roared George Alfred. "Goal!" chirruped Monty Lowther. (See page 4.)

"Very probable, I think," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"I was thinkin' of it," said Arthur Augustus modestly. "But I felt that it would look wathah pushin', for a juniah, you know. But Gwunday—weally, that is the mewwy limit, you know."

The Terrible Three sat down to the tea-table. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave a gentle cough.

"I pwesume that you fellows would wathah like to see the match at Gweyfwiahs," he remarked.

"Just a few!" said Manners. "We've been talking it over, but it's too steep; the railway company sticks a fellow too much."

"Gussy to the rescue!" grinned Blake.

"There's a giddy car!" said Digby. "Room for us four, and two or three more. Gussy is trying to make up his mind about the two or three."

The Terrible Three looked interested at once.

"That is how the mattah stands, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I can cwam in two or thwee fwiends—"

"Good little man to think of us!" said Tom Merry. "I believe we are your dearest friends at St. Jim's."

"Bai Jove! Are you really?"

"Can you doubt it?" demanded Tom Merry warmly. "Haven't we stood you for whole terms without turning a hair? Haven't we listened to you singing tenor solos without even telling you what we thought of you?"

"Bai Jove!"

"I've always loved you like a long-lost brother, old chap," said Manners affectionately.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Haven't I been a pal to you, Gussy?" said Monty Lowther.

"Have you weally, Lowthah?"

"When your head did but ache,
I knit my handkerchief about your brow,
The best I had, a princess wrought it me,
And I did never ask it you again.
And—"

"Bai Jove! Pway don't spout Shakespeare at a chap, Lowthah. If you thwee fellows weally think—"

"Of course we do!" said Tom. "Take it as settled, Gussy. In us you have three faithful chums whose loyal friendship will last a lifetime—or at least till next Wednesday."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Vewy well, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus gracefully. "We will settle that all the gentlemen pwesent make up the partay for Gweyfwiahs. Pway don't mention the mattah outside this studay, howevah, or there will be a cwod wowwyin' for seats in the cah, and that pushin' boundah Twimble will not give me any wost. We can just cwam in seven, with one sittin' beside Wobinson—the chauffeur, you know. It will be wathah a surpwise for old Kildare to see us on the Gweyfwiahs gwound when he awwives there, what?"

"And Wharton will stand us some lunch," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah."

"Fancy old Gussy turning out useful like this!" said Monty Lowther. "It shows how you can save up rubbish for years and years, and find a use for it in the long run."

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry looked round.

"Gussy's a good little thing," he said, "and I vote that after tea we let him sing one of his tenor solos, and don't throw anything at him."

"Hear, hear!" said the whole study heartily.

To which Arthur Augustus D'Arcy only answered "Wats!"

CHAPTER 3. Very Mysterious!

"H UH!"

Grundy of the Shell made that observation. It was the following day, and there was a big crowd on the senior football ground at St. Jim's, watching the First Eleven in a practice match. Tom Merry & Co. had turned up in full force; and Grundy of the Shell honoured the footballers with his presence.

The Greyfriars match was quite a big affair, and all St. Jim's took the keenest interest in it. To the Lower School, of course, junior matches were more important functions; but they honoured the First Eleven with a very keen interest in their exploits. Kildare's team were in great form—Darrell and Langton and Rushden and North of the School House, Monteith and Stanley Baker of the New House, were in fine fettle, and the rest were quite up to the mark. But Grundy of the Shell did not seem to be wholly satisfied with what he beheld.

According to George Alfred Grundy, there was one thing needful to make that team a real success. That was the inclusion of the great Grundy in its ranks.

"Don't think much of them—what?" asked Wilkins. "Well, I'll be fair," said Grundy considerably. "Kildare's jolly good. So is Darrell. Langton's not bad. Monteith of the New House is certainly a pretty good winger. Macgregor keeps goal fairly well. But they want a little more spirit in the front line. They want me there."

"They don't seem to know it!" murmured Gunn. "Lots of fellows don't know what they really want," said Grundy oracularly. "Look at Tom Merry! He could beat most rival teams hands down with me in the front line—he prefers risking defeat by playing awful duds like Blake, and Figgins, and you, Wilkins."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wilkins. "Nothing personal, you know, old chap," said Grundy kindly. "But you wouldn't be as enough to say your footer's anything like mine, would you?"

"No fear!" said Wilkins fervently. "Nothing like yours, Grundy, for a cert. At least, I hope not!"

"What?" roared Grundy.

"You have a style of your own," said Wilkins affably. "You take your own line, you know."

"I do!" said Grundy.

"Some fellows," said Wilkins, "would blush to kick the ball through their own goal. You can do it and be pleased with yourself, can't you, Grundy?"

"If you're going to be funny, Wilkins, I—"

"Not at all! That's your province, when it comes to footer!" said Wilkins.

Grundy gave his chum a morose look. Even in his own study there was no belief in Grundy's wonderful powers as a footballer. But it was said of old that a prophet is without honour in his own country.

"I say, they're playing up jolly well," said Gunn. "Not going, are you, Grundy?"

"Yes," grunted George Alfred. "Come on! I've got to think it out."

"Think what out?"

"I think I've mentioned to you fellows that I'm going to play for St. Jim's at Greyfriars on Wednesday."

"But Kildare—"

"Blow Kildare! You see, this isn't a matter of personal conceit, or anything of that kind," Grundy explained patiently. "I happen to know that Wingate's lot, at Greyfriars, are in tremendous form. St. Jim's has simply got to put its best foot foremost. Do we want to wind up the football season with a defeat? I imagine not! Well, by leaving out a fellow who may be classed as the best forward in the school, Kildare is deliberately risking throwing the match away."

Wilkins and Gunn made no answer to that. Really, there was no answer to be made. Besides, they knew from old experience that George Alfred Grundy was impervious to argument.

"If I can fix it," continued Grundy, "I shall play for St. Jim's on this special occasion. The result will justify me. Nothing succeeds like success, you know. I feel justified in taking any possible measures to get into the team—for the sake of the school. See?"

"I've got an idea," went on Grundy darkly and mysteriously. "Feeling that it's up to me to save Kildare from his own folly, as it were, I shall not baulk at a trifle, I can

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assure you. I've been thinking it out, and I think I can work it."

"Work it!" murmured Gunn.

"Yes, I think so. Don't say a word about what I've told you, you know," added Grundy.

And George Alfred walked off Big Side, leaving Gunn and Wilkins staring at one another helplessly. Wilkins tapped his forehead.

"Off it at last!" he said.

"Looks like it!" agreed Gunn.

And that was all the consideration that Wilkins and Gunn bestowed upon Grundy's dark and mysterious hints. They devoted their attention to watching the football match, and forgot all about Grundy.

That youth walked away to the School House and went up to his study. His expression was gloomy, but determined, and his rugged face was very thoughtful. In his study, No. 3 in the Shell, he threw himself into a chair, and his rugged brow grew even more deeply corrugated with thought. Great and startling thoughts were working in Grundy's powerful brain—thoughts that certainly would have surprised the other fellows, had Grundy revealed them. But Grundy was very dark and mysterious just at present; even to his own chums he had not revealed the amazing scheme that was forming in his mighty intellect.

"It will work!" Grundy spoke aloud at last. "Easy as falling off a form! It can't get out—and even if it does I don't care—winning the match will be my justification! The end justifies the means, of course. It will work, and I'm jolly well going to do it! The telephone will do it; old Dr. Locke, at Greyfriars, couldn't have a suspish. Why should he? There'll be only one reserve with the team; and if two fellows are missing, that leaves a place open—and I shall be there! I've simply got to get somebody to telephone—and I can fix that up! Can't ask a St. Jim's chap; and, besides, it had better be a man's voice. I can find somebody in the village—that fellow Banks at the Green Man would do anything for a ten-bob note! I don't like speaking to such a rotter; but a fellow has to work with what tools he can. I'm jolly well going to do it!"

Wilkins and Gunn came into the study and found Grundy in the midst of his deep and amazing cogitations. "What about tea?" asked Gunn.

Grundy rose.

"I'm going out," he said.

"It's tea-time."

"I've got to see a man in the village," said Grundy. "It's important—my playing in the Greyfriars match depends on it. So-long!"

He walked out of the study.

"His playing in the Greyfriars match!" said Wilkins, blinking. "I'm really blest if I don't think he is fairly off his rocker! I should have thought that Kildare had made it plain enough—even for Grundy."

"He can't be up to any silly tricks, can he?" said Gunn.

"He's got a jolly queer look—"

"What could he do?"

"Blessed if I know! But he seems to have something in his poor old wooden head," said Gunn.

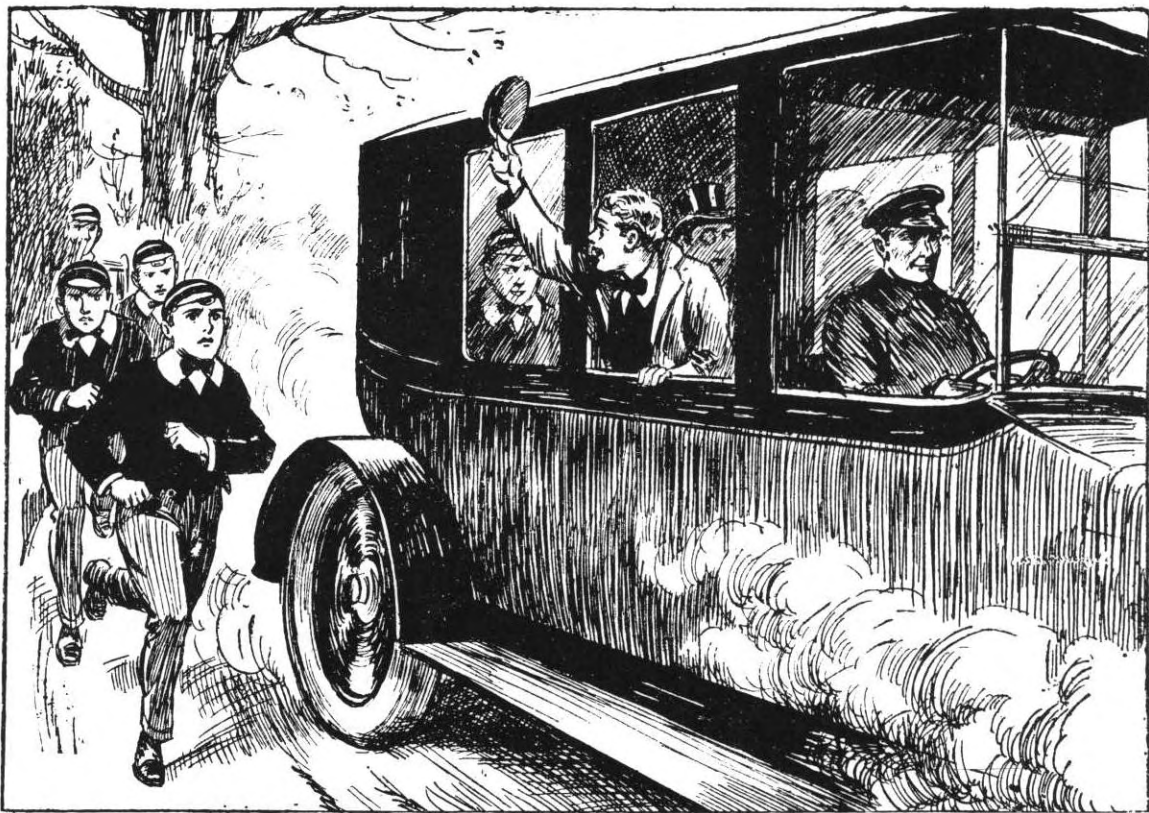
"Nothing in it," said Wilkins, "no brains, at any rate! Solid all through, I think—heart of oak, you know. Let's have tea."

Tea was long over in Study No. 3 when Grundy came back. He had had his tea while Wilkins and Gunn did their prep. And he made several weird and mysterious remarks, throwing out dark hints, which would have puzzled Wilkins and Gunn very much if they had heeded them. But they were busy with prep, and they didn't!

CHAPTER 4. Grundy Too!

WEDNESDAY dawned bright and clear—a glorious spring day. It was a whole holiday at St. Jim's, and everybody seemed to be in the best of spirits. There were many things "on" for that day. Kildare of the Sixth and his merry men of the First Eleven were starting early for Greyfriars—it was a long journey by train. Cutts of the Fifth was going with the eleven as a reserve. In the Lower School, the Terrible Three and Study No. 6 were looking forward to a rush across country in the big car from Eastwood House, which was to arrive at St. Jim's for them in the morning. And Grundy of the Shell was wrapped in deep and mysterious reflections; it was a great day also for Grundy.

Twelve sturdy seniors turned out to walk to the station,



"Wobinson!" yelled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy from inside the car. "Pway get goin'! Let her wip, Wobinson! Make ner hum! Do you heah, Wobinson?" The chauffeur let the car out as the crowd of fags came swooping into the road. Wally put his head out of the window. "Cut off, you fags!" he cried. "This isn't a Bank Holiday charabanc!" (See page 9.)

and the St. Jim's fellows gave them a cheer as they started. They were Kildare, and Darrell, Rushden, Langton, North, Monteith, Baker, and Macgregor, of the Sixth Form; and Lefevre, Jones major, and Gilmore of the Fifth, as well as Gerald Cutts. And as they turned out of the gates of St. Jim's a junior followed them out, with a bag in his hand—Grundy of the Shell.

As it was a whole holiday, there was no reason why Grundy of the Shell should not walk out of the gates, with a bag in his hand, if he wanted so to do. But Wilkins and Gunn saw his proceeding with surprise, and they hurried out after Grundy.

"Whither bound, old bean?" asked Wilkins.

"Not following the team?" asked Gunn.

Grundy nodded.

"Well, you've got the dibs!" said Wilkins. "Wouldn't run to three tickets, what, so that your old pals could come?"

"Sorry!" said Grundy. "I'd stand you the tickets with pleasure; but I don't want you at Greyfriars to-day!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"You'd be in the way," said Grundy.

"Look here, Grundy—"

"You see, Wilkins, you're a footballer, of sorts," said Grundy. "Kildare would be just as enough to take you on instead of me—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Nuff said!"

"What's in the bag?" asked Wilkins, in wonder.

"My football clobber."

"But—but you're not still thinking—" stammered Wilkins.

"I think I told you I had made up my mind."

"But—but you can't be potty enough to suppose that Kildare will leave out a man he's taken with him to put you in, Grundy, even if you could play footer!" stuttered Gunn.

Grundy's brow darkened.

"Some of his men may get left out," he said. "They may miss trains at the connection—"

"Not jolly likely!"

"Or go for a walk!" said Grundy satirically. "Or they may turn back to St. Jim's for some reason."

"Why should they?"

"Echo answers 'why'!" said Grundy mysteriously. "I only say they might."

"But—but—"

"Ta-ta! I've got to catch the train!"

Grundy hurried on after the seniors, leaving Wilkins and Gunn dumbfounded. Grundy had fairly taken their breath away.

Heedless of them and their amazement, Grundy of the Shell, bag in hand, trotted into Rylcombe after the football party.

Kildare glanced at him, as the senior crowd waited on the platform for the local train. But he did not give him more than a glance. Certainly he never dreamed of guessing what was in Grundy's mind!

Kildare & Co. changed at Wayland, and Grundy changed, too.

He was in the express that bore the party eastward at a great rate, though in a different carriage.

There was another change at Ashford, in Kent, and on the crowded platform the seniors caught sight of Grundy again.

"Hallo, there's that kid!" said Darrell, with a smile. "Is the young ass coming on to Greyfriars?"

"Young duffer!" said Kildare. "Throwing away his pocket-money on an expensive ticket!"

"Rather an honour for the First Eleven!" said Langton, laughing. "He seems to be the only kid that has spent the money on us."

And the footballers laughed.

"Wasn't it Grundy who offered his services for the match?" chuckled Lefevre of the Fifth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was!" said Kildare. "Young fathead! He seems to have forgiven me for butting him out of my study, though, as he's coming on to see us play."

"Perhaps he hopes that we may drop a man by the way, and that he will be called on!" said Lefevre.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy eyed the seniors from a little distance, and frowned as he observed their merry mood. He guessed that he was the subject of their conversation—like the gentleman in the play who knew that he was being talked about because the speakers "laughed consumedly." Grundy did not smile; his look was lofty and morose.

In the Courtfield express Grundy was in the same carriage as five or six of the football party. Some of them eyed his bag with curiosity.

"Brought your football things, Grundy?" asked Langton.

"That's it!" assented Grundy coolly.

Kildare gave him a stare.

"What on earth for?" he demanded.

"In case I'm wanted."

"What?"

"Anybody here going to stand out to make room for a budding International?" asked Langton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You crass young ass!" said Kildare sternly. "I really wonder a little whether you're quite right in your head, Grundy."

Grundy snorted.

"I don't wonder about you," he retorted. "You can't be quite level in the crumple, or you wouldn't leave out the best forward at St. Jim's!"

"Why, you cheeky young rascal——" exclaimed Kildare.

He made a motion towards Grundy, but restrained his wrath. After all, the duffer of St. Jim's was not worth licking.

Grundy sat tight in his corner, heedless of the wrath of the St. Jim's captain and the smiles of the other footballers. At Courtfield he alighted with Kildare & Co., and there was a brake waiting to convey the team to Greyfriars School.

Wingate, the Greyfriars captain, was there, and greeted Kildare & Co. heartily. The footballers crowded into the brake; and Grundy of the Shell followed on.

"Get out, you cheeky young sweep!" growled Cutts of the Fifth.

"Can't you give me a lift, Kildare?" asked Grundy.

Kildare glanced round.

"Let the young ass come!" he said.

And Grundy rolled off in the brake with Kildare & Co., and arrived with them at the gates of Greyfriars. The St. Jim's party walked in cheerily, little dreaming of the surprise that was awaiting them there—which was to be no surprise to George Alfred Grundy!

CHAPTER 5.

Full Inside!

WEADY, deah boys?"

"Yes, rather!"

"The cah's waitin'!"

Quite an army of fellows surrounded the handsome car that was drawn up on the drive outside the School House at St. Jim's.

Baggy Trimble, who saw it arrive, affected to believe that it was his pater's car from Trimble Hall; but on closer inspection Baggy announced that it was not quite so large or so well got-up.

But although it was not the great car from Trimble Hall, Baggy was more than prepared to take a drive in it, if it could be managed. When Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his friends appeared, Baggy Trimble bestowed his most affectionate smirk upon the swell of St. Jim's.

"Your car, Gussy?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I was thinking of telephoning home for a car to-day, as it's a whole holiday," remarked Trimble. "But I'll tell you what, Gussy, I'll come with you instead. Then we'll have my pater's car next half-holiday—what?"

"Bai Jove!"

"No room for barrels," said Monty Lowther politely. "Tumble in, you fellows. We don't want to be late at Greyfriars."

"You fellows going to Greyfriars?" exclaimed Wilkins of the Shell.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Room for two little ones?" asked Wilkins modestly. "Grundy's gone, and we'd like to go."

"I should like to take you vewy much, Wilkins——"

"Done, then!"

"And you, too, Gunn——"

"Good!"

"Only there isn't space in the cah, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus.

"Oh!"

"Gussy's only got just room for me!" said Trimble. "I shouldn't mind sitting beside the chauffeur, Gussy."

"Hewwies is goin' to sit beside the chauffeur, Twimble."

"Well, I'll come inside," said Baggy. "I'm not the fellow to give any trouble. Make room for a chap, Tom Merry."

"Rats!"

"Look here, you beast——"

"I feah, Twimble, that we shall have to depwive ourselves of the pleasuah of your company on this occasion."

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Arthur Augustus D'Arcy followed his friends into the car. With six inside and one out the car was well laden. Baggy Trimble hung on to the door and blinked in morosely.

"I'll tell you what," he said, "I'll sit on your knees, Lowther."

"I'm afraid my knees wouldn't support the weight of a ton, dear old bean," answered Lowther politely.

"Yah!"

The door was closed, but Trimble blinked in at the window. He seemed loth to let the car start unaccompanied by his weighty and worthy self.

"Gussy, old man——"

"Good-bye, Twimble——"

"Hold on, Gussy, old top!"

"Pway let go the dooah, Twimble; the cah is startin'."

"Look here——"

"Wats!"

Wilkins jerked Baggy Trimble away from the door. The car started down the drive. Baggy broke into a run after it.

"Gussy! I say, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove! That fat boundah is a feahful stickah!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What is it now, Twimble?"

"Sure you can't make room for a chap, D'Arcy?"

"I feah not, Twimble."

"Well, who wants to come?" asked Trimble, changing his manner quite suddenly. "Who wants to rumble around in a dashed old car? Go and eat coke."

"Bai Jove!"

"Catch me travelling in a dashed charabanc like that with your blessed Bank Holiday crowd!" said Trimble disdainfully. "Yah!"

That was Trimble's parting shot. The big car glided out into the road, and Arthur Augustus sank back in his seat with a quite extraordinary expression on his face. He glanced at his watch.

"Pewwaps we had bettah hold on a few minutes, deah boys, while I get out and give Twimble a feahful thwashin'!" he remarked.

"Perhaps we hadn't!" suggested Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Let Trimble rip!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"I wegard his wemarks as extwemely dewogatory to our personal dignity, Tom Mewwy."

"Bow-wow!" said Digby, cheerfully. "I say, it's going to be a jolly fine day. No end of a ripping wheeze to bag this car."

"Topping!" said Manners. "I hope to get a good snap of the match at Greyfriars. Lucky I thought of bringing my camera, wasn't it?"

"Awfully lucky!" said Blake, with sarcasm. "Really, the thing wouldn't have been complete without that. Hallo, what's up now?"

The car slowed down.

Tom Merry & Co. looked out. Half-way along the lane to Rylcombe the chauffeur was drawing to a halt. In the middle of the road stood the figure of D'Arcy minor—Wally of the Third. Reggie Manners and Levison minor, also of the Third, could be seen sitting on a fence by the roadside. Wally was holding up his hand as a signal to the chauffeur to stop, and as the car could not have proceeded without running over the cheerful fag, it came to a halt.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus put out his head. "What twicks are you up to now, Wally?"

Wally of the Third opened the door.

"Thought you were leaving us behind, what?" he asked, with a cheery grin. "Not in your lifetime, old turnip."

"I have already explained to you, Wally, that there is no space in the cah for cwammin' in a swarm of fags," said Arthur Augustus severely.

"Little boys should be seen, not heard," admonished Blake. "Give him a ha'penny to buy some toffee."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally of the Third snorted. Manners minor and Frank Levison joined him at the door, with grinning faces.

Walter Adolphus D'Arcy put a foot in the car. Arthur Augustus looked perplexed.

"You see, Wally——" he began.

"I see," assented Wally. "Make room for a chap. I've brought only these two fellows. I've left out Frayne, and Hobbs, and Gibson, and Jameson, and a few more, purely out of consideration for you, Gussy. Jameson offered to travel on the roof."

"Bai Jove!"

"And Frayne said he would hang on behind," said Wally. "But I put my foot down, out of consideration for you, Gussy. I knew you'd like to keep the party select. Jameson was going to bring his trumpet if he went on the roof."

"Oh, deah!"

Wally of the Third insinuated himself into the car. Manners minor followed him, and sat down on his major's

knees. Manners of the Shell bore that infliction with all the fortitude and brotherly affection he could muster for the occasion. Levison minor wedged in after his chums, and Wally closed the door.

"Is this a car, or a sardine-tin?" asked Blake.
"Bai Jove, it weally seems more like a sardine-tin than a cab, at pwsent," said Arthur Augustus, in distress.

"Weally, Wally, you know—"
"I'll sit on your knees, Gussy."
"You will make my twousah knees baggay, if you do. Weally—"

"Better get on," suggested Wally. "There's a crowd of the Third that mean to go, only we've dodged them. If they come up—"

"Here they come!" exclaimed Manners minor.
"Oh, cwumbs!"

Across a field, towards the lane, half a dozen of the fags of the Third could be seen sprinting, headed by Jameson. They waved their hands and yelled.

"Stop for us!"
"We're coming, Wally!"

"Hold on a tick!"
"Gweat Scott! Wobinson—Wobinson, pway get goin'! Let her wip, Wobinson! Make her hum, Wobinson! Do you heah, Wobinson?"

The chauffeur let the car out, as the crowd of fags came swooping into the road. There was a disappointed yell from Jameson & Co.

"Stop, Wally, you rotter!"
Wally put his head out of the window.
"Cut off, you fags!" he said loftily, waving a rather grubby hand at his comrades. "This isn't a Bank Holiday charabanc. Cut off!"

"Why, you cheeky rotter!" yelled Jameson.
The car glided on fast, leaving the yelling fags behind. Wally sat down on his major's knees, and grinned.

"That all right, Gussy?"
"It is not all wight, Wally."
"Sorry, old bean. You'll get used to it. I'll tell you what. I'll have your seat, and you can sit on the floor."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made no reply to that suggestion. But evidently he did not intend to act upon it.

Certainly, the car, big as it was, was crowded now, not to say crammed. But it was a matter for congratulation that the rest of Wally's numerous friends had been left behind. And there was plenty of good humour in the car as it ate up the miles, only Gussy's noble countenance being a little clouded with apprehension. There was no doubt that the knees of his elegant trousers were suffering, and his alarm intensified when Wally produced a packet of aniseed balls and handed them round with royal liberality. When the car arrived at Greyfriars School, Arthur Augustus' first business was to pick stray aniseed balls out of his beautiful waistcoat, and his second to smooth out the knees of his elegant trousers. But he confided to Blake that they would never be the same again without being "pwsessed." And he was not comforted when Jack Blake took out his handkerchief, and sobbed at this calamitous news.

CHAPTER 6.

Rough on Kildare.

B UZZZZZZZ!

Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Greyfriars School, reached out and picked the receiver off the telephone.

The Head of Greyfriars had lunched, and retired to his study for a happy half-hour with Sophocles, that being Dr. Locke's way of enjoying his leisure half-hours. The buzz of the telephone bell brought him back, with a jump, from ancient Greece to modern England. It was not a pleasant transition, and Dr. Locke very nearly spoke in Greek as he inquired what was wanted.

"Is that Greyfriars School, Kent? I wish to speak to Dr. Locke. It is very important."

"Dr. Locke is speaking."

"Ah, I did not recognise your voice for a moment! How do you do? Dr. Holmes, St. James' School, speaking."

"Indeed! How do you do, sir?" said the Head of Greyfriars cordially. "Eh, what? Certainly! I believe they have lunched—that it to say dined—here. What, what?"

"I am sure you will excuse me for troubling you, Dr. Locke."

"Certainly, certainly."

"Two of the boys must return to this school at once. The matter is very important. Two boys named Cutts and

Gilmore, two boys of the Fifth Form here. They are accompanying the football team. One of them, I think, is a member of it. It is necessary for them to return at once, without a moment's delay."

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke.

"No doubt you will kindly give them instructions—"

"At once, Dr. Holmes."

"Thank you very much. It is too bad to trouble you like this, but the matter being important, I am sure you will excuse—"

"Certainly."

"You will be so good as to tell these boys—Gilmore and Cutts—that I require their presence immediately here. They are not, in any circumstances, to remain at Greyfriars while the football match is played. They are to return to St. Jim's by the next train."

"I trust nothing is wrong, Dr. Holmes?"

"A matter connected with the discipline of the school, my dear sir; but it is strictly necessary for the two boys I have named to return without a moment's delay. I can rely upon you?"

"Most decidedly. I will give instructions at once."

"Thank you very much."

"Not at all, my dear sir."

Dr. Locke put up the receiver, with a puzzled expression. It was certainly very unusual for a headmaster to telephone such a message; but the Head of St. Jim's had to be supposed to know his own business best. Dr. Locke wondered whether the two boys named might have broken detention to accompany the football team to Greyfriars, and whether Dr. Holmes had only discovered it after their departure. That seemed the most probable explanation. But whatever

the explanation was, it was obviously the Greyfriars headmaster's duty to see that Cutts and Gilmore left his school without delay. It did not even occur to the unsuspicious old gentleman that the trunk call had not emanated from Dr. Holmes at St. Jim's at all. Voices are not easily recognisable on long-distance trunk calls, and it was some months since he had met Dr. Holmes or heard his voice. Without a suspicion in his mind, Dr. Locke proceeded to carry out the instructions of the message.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove at Greyfriars, came into the study as Dr. Locke laid down the receiver. The Head, loth to abandon the enthralling volume of Sophocles, passed on his duty to the Remove master.

"Ah! I have just received a message from Dr. Holmes, Mr. Quelch," he remarked. "A rather extraordinary message! Two members of the football party seem to be here without leave—two boys named Cutts and Gilmore."

"The football match has not yet commenced?"

"No. I think it does not begin till half-past two," said Mr. Quelch.

"Dr. Holmes insists that these two boys shall return to their school by the next train. Perhaps you will be kind enough to convey his instructions to them, my dear Quelch. They are not in any circumstances to remain here for the football match. I fear that they may have broken detention."

"I will see to it at once, sir!"

"Thank you."

Dr. Locke sat down with Sophocles again, and was soon deep in Oidipous Turannos, and forgot all about such trifling matters as football matches. Mr. Quelch went in quest of the St. Jim's footballers.

Kildare & Co. had joined the Greyfriars Sixth at dinner after their arrival. Grundy of the Shell had not been asked to the senior table, naturally; but some of the Remove fellows—surprised as they were to see him with the St. Jim's First Eleven—had taken him under their wing. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry of the Remove looked after Grundy hospitably. The Shell fellow was in the quad with them now—in a state of tenterhooks. Grundy of the Shell had laid his scheme with remarkable cunning, not usually a gift of Grundy's. He was not quite sure that it would work, but he was hoping for the best. Kildare was chatting in the quad with Wingate of the Greyfriars Sixth when Mr. Quelch came out of the School House, looking for him. And Grundy watched him almost breathlessly as he came up to Kildare, and edged a little nearer.

"There are two boys in your party named Cutts and Gilmore?" asked Mr. Quelch, and Grundy smiled as he heard the question. Evidently his confederate at Rylcombe had performed his task.

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"Yes, sir!" answered Kildare.
 "Dr. Locke has received a message from your headmaster requiring him to send these two boys back to St. Jim's at once."

Kildare almost jumped.
 "Send them back?" he ejaculated.
 "That is so."
 "But—but I don't understand!" said Kildare, in amazement. "Gilmore is a member of the football eleven. We can't spare him!"

"Such were your headmaster's instructions," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "His reasons I do not know. But Dr. Locke has requested me to see that these instructions are carried out."

"Upon my word!" said Kildare. "You—you see, sir, we've brought only one extra man. If two fellows go, that leaves us a man short for the match."

"It is unfortunate!" agreed Mr. Quelch. "I do not see how it can be helped, however."

"But—I-I suppose they need not leave till after the football match?" said Kildare. "It will be finished about four."

Mr. Quelch shook his head.
 "Dr. Holmes' instructions are peremptory!" he said. "The two boys are to take the next train, and under no circumstances are they to remain here for the football match!"

"I—I can't understand it!"
 "It is a pity," said Mr. Quelch kindly. "But there is nothing else to be done. Possibly the two boys were under detention?"

"I think not, I am sure not!"
 "It's hard lines," said Wingate. "We can lend you a man, of course."

Kildare nodded, but his face was glum. He did not want a Greyfriars' footballer playing in the ranks of St. Jim's. If that was the only resource, it was not an agreeable one.

"It is amazing!" said the St. Jim's captain. "I can't understand Dr. Holmes coming down like this. I—I suppose, sir, that, on my own responsibility, I can delay their going, and answer for it to Dr. Holmes personally?"

"I fear not!" said Mr. Quelch very decidedly. "Dr. Locke is bound to see that Dr. Holmes' instructions are carried out. He has left the matter in my hands, and I have no choice. I am afraid, Kildare, that I must insist upon Cutts and Gilmore leaving immediately. There is a train at Courtfield at two-fifteen, and they have just time to catch it. I will order the trap for them!"

"Very well, sir!" said Kildare quietly.

Mr. Quelch retired, leaving the St. Jim's captain in a state of great dismay. Wingate was sympathetic, but he could not help. Grundy of the Shell smiled, somewhat to the surprise of Harry Wharton of the Remove, who was with him.

"Hard luck on your team, Grundy!" Wharton remarked. "Not at all!" said Grundy.

"They'll be a man short!" said the Greyfriars junior. "No need for that," smiled Grundy.

"Of course, they can take on a Greyfriars man," said Harry. "But your skipper won't like that much."

"No need for that, either," said Grundy. "I'm here!"
 "You?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Little me!" said Grundy, with a cheery smile. "Lucky I'm on the spot, what?"

Wharton blinked at him. He did not know Grundy so well as the St. Jim's fellows did; but he had heard something of the great George Alfred.

"You're going to offer?" he asked.
 "Yes, rather!"

"My only hat!" murmured Wharton.
 "You see," said Grundy, "I'm only a junior—or rather, Middle School—but I'm as good a footballer as any senior at St. Jim's."

"Are you really?" stuttered Wharton.
 "Better, in fact, than most!"

"Oh!"

"In the present circumstances, Kildare can't very well refuse," said Grundy. "In fact, it's a stroke of luck for him, if he only knew it. I can play Gilmore's head off, you know!"

"C-c-can you really?"

"Easily. Even Kildare himself, good as he is, doesn't pass as I do—doesn't kick so accurately," said Grundy.

"There's a certain finish in my play, you know. I don't brag of it. Some fellows are born footballers, and I happen to be one of them. That's all there is about it."

"Oh, my hat!"

Kildare had gone to speak to his followers, and Grundy followed him, leaving Harry Wharton staring after him blankly.

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CHAPTER 7.

St. Jim's at Greyfriars.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
 Bob Cherry of the Remove uttered that greeting in stentorian tones. He rushed to meet Tom Merry & Co. as they came in at the gates of Greyfriars.

"Come over to see the match, what?" asked Bob.
 "Yaas, wathah!"

"Gussy's pater whacked out the car," explained Tom Merry, with a smile. "So we came over. Not started yet, have they?"

"Not yet," said Bob. "Kick-off at two-thirty. I fancy something's up with your men, though—I noticed they were all jawing with jolly long faces."

Harry Wharton came up with Nugent, and Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. The Famous Five of Greyfriars were all evidently glad to see their friends from St. Jim's. Hurree Singh told them that the pleasurable was terrific. Tom Merry & Co. had stopped en route for lunch, but they had arrived in good time for the football match.

"Come along," said Wharton. "We'll bag good places—there'll be a crowd on Big Side this afternoon. I suppose the game will begin just the same at two-thirty—"

"Just the same?" repeated Tom Merry. "How's that? What's wrong?"

"Two of Kildare's men are called off," said Harry. "Message from your headmaster, I think."

"My hat!"
 "Bai Jove! That is vewy extwaordinawy."

"Beats me!" said Blake, with a stare. "I don't catch on to this! Hallo, are these the fellows?"

Cutts and Gilmore of the St. Jim's Fifth came down towards the gates, with gloomy faces. Both of them were extremely annoyed and irritated; and they looked it.

Both of them had suggested disregarding the message from St. Jim's; but that was not practicable. Kildare, perhaps, might have decided to take the risk; but Dr. Locke had to be reckoned with. And Mr. Quelch had been deputed to see the two Fifth-Formers safe off the precincts of Greyfriars, and evidently intended to see them off.

There had been a warm and angry discussion among the St. Jim's footballers, but there was "nothing doing." Cutts and Gilmore had to go. About Cutts it did not matter so much, as he was only a reserve, but Gilmore could not be spared. Kildare was left with a team of ten, and the prospect of playing a man short or else borrowing a Greyfriars man—both very unpleasant alternatives.

The trap was waiting to take Cutts and Gilmore to the station, with Mr. Mumble holding the reins. Tom Merry left his comrades and ran towards the two Fifth-Formers.

"You fellows going?" he asked.

Cutts scowled at him, and clambered into the trap without answering. But Gilmore replied:

"Yes—the Head's telephoned for us, blessed if I know why."

"The old donkey!" snarled Cutts.
 "Bai Jove! That is not a respectful way to speak of your headmaster, Cutts!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Shut up, you young fool."
 "Weally, Cutts—"

"It's jolly queer," said Gilmore, evidently perplexed.

"They think here that we've buzzed off without leave; but we haven't! It's awfully queer. I'd stay and risk it, only it can't be done."

"It's a rotten shame," growled Cutts. "The old ass must be off his silly rocker, I think."

"Pewwaps the Head has heard of some of your goin's on, Cutts!" suggested Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "Pewwaps he knows about your backin' horses, and things, and he may have sent for you to be sacked, deah boy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a loud chortle as Gussy made that cheerful suggestion. Cutts, with a look like a villain in a film play, reached down from the trap and crashed his fist on D'Arcy's hat with a terrific crash. There was a wild yell from Arthur Augustus as his handsome topper—no longer handsome—was squashed over his noble ears.

"Yoooop!"

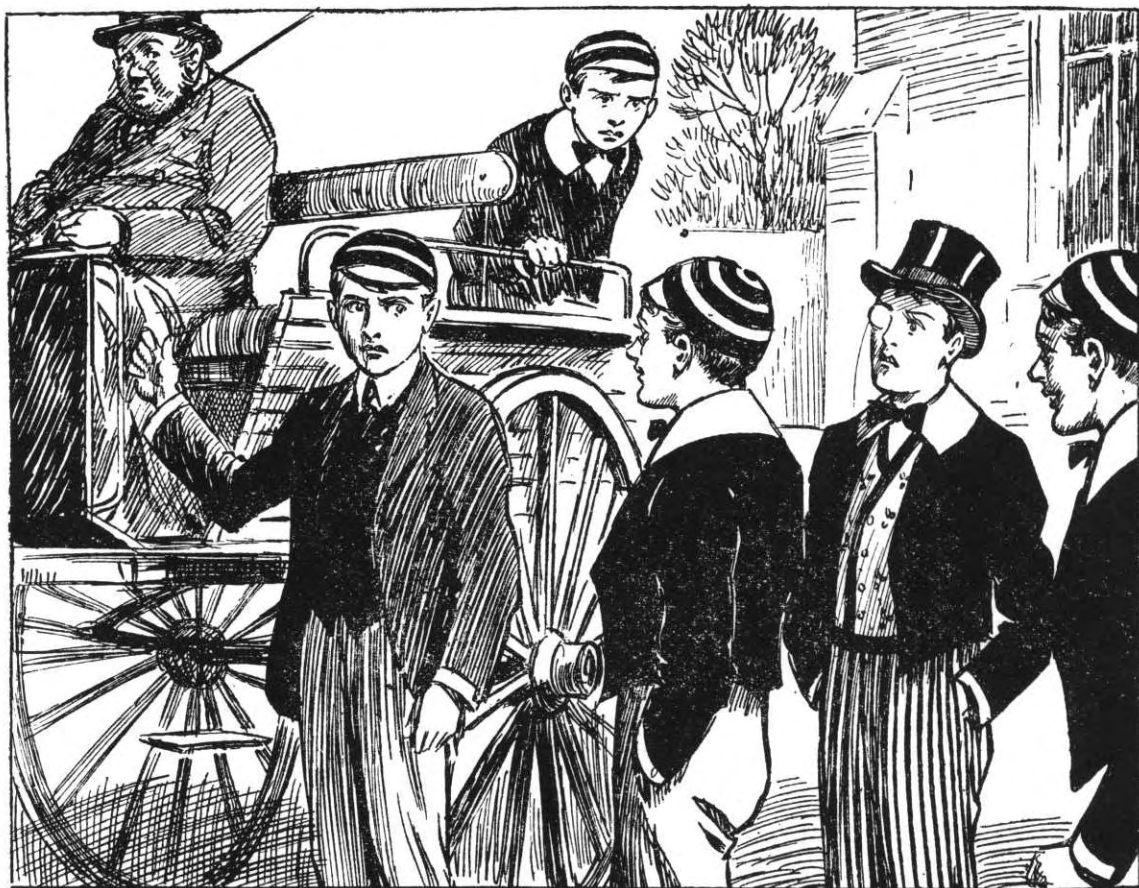
The trap started, and rattled away towards Courtfield. Arthur Augustus grabbed his squashed hat and struggled out of it, amid yells of laughter from his comrades and the Greyfriars juniors.

"Great Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Where is that wottah Cutts? I am goin' to thrash Cutts! I—"

"Gone!" grinned Blake. "You'll have to wait till we get back to St. Jim's before you start thrashing the Fifth. Then I suggest your beginning at one end of the form, and going right through to the other, thrashing the lot of them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"



The trap was waiting to take Cutts and Gilmore to the station when Tom Merry approached the two Fifth-Formers. "You fellows going?" he asked. "Yes—the Head's telephoned for us," said Gilmore. "It's jolly queer. They think here that we've buzzed off without leave. But we haven't!" "The Head's off his silly rocker, I think," growled Cutts. (See page 10.)

"Come on," said Harry Wharton, with a smile. "We don't want to be late for the kick-off."

"Look at my hat!"

"It's a beauty, and no mistake," said Monty Lowther. "Not much good as a topper, after this. Perhaps you can use it as an opera hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you ass—"

"Come on, Gussy!" said Wally of the Third. "Get a move on, slow coach."

"Weally, Wally—"

"You talk too much, old top."

"You uttah young wascal—"

"Why do you fellows bring Gussy out without a muzzle?" demanded Wally. "You ought to know better."

"Bai Jove! I—I—I—" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Come on," said Tom Merry, laughing.

Harry Wharton & Co. and the St. Jim's crowd headed for Big Side, where a considerable crowd was already gathering. A fat youth whose podgy face was adorned by a large pair of spectacles joined them there, and slipped a fat arm through Gussy's.

"Glad to see you, old top!" said Billy Bunter affably.

"You'll come to tea in my study after the match, what?"

"Bai Jove! Buntah—"

"You weren't very hospitable when I came to see you at St. Jim's last time," said Bunter, with a reproachful blink. "But never mind—you'll find my hospitality all right. I want the lot of you to come to a spread in my study, now you're here. By the way," Bunter lowered his voice confidentially. "By the way, D'Arcy, I'm expecting a postal order this afternoon, but it's barely possible it mayn't arrive in time for tea. If you happen to have a pound about you—Yarooooooop!"

Billy Bunter broke off with a wild yell, as a set of knuckles that seemed like iron were inserted into the back of his collar.

"Leggo, Cherry, you beast!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows—Yaroooh—yooop—whoop!"

A swing of Bob Cherry's powerful arm caused Bunter to depart in a great hurry, and he vanished in the crowd. And after that Tom Merry & Co. were deprived of the pleasure of Bunter's company—a loss which they bore with great equanimity.

CHAPTER 8.

Not Grundy's Lucky Day.

EIC KILDARE, captain of St. Jim's, wore a glum look. He could not help feeling glum. It was his way to look on the sunny side of things, but just now only the seamy side was visible. The blow had been sudden, and quite unexpected, and it was at the most unfortunate moment. At such a distance from St. Jim's, there was no chance of calling up a new man by wire or telephone; and now that Cutts and Gilmore were gone, Kildare was a man short for the match—the last big football fixture of the season! It was no wonder that Kildare looked and felt glum, and that his looks were reflected on the other faces round him.

There was very free comment among the St. Jim's footballers on the action—or rather, the supposed action—of Dr. Holmes. What the thump the Head meant by it was a mystery. But that, after all, did not matter much—the question was not why Dr. Holmes had acted so, but what was to be done?

It was getting near time for the kick-off now, and whatever was to be done had to be decided upon soon. There did not seem to be much choice in the matter. Playing a man short against a team like Greyfriars was another way of asking for a crushing defeat. Borrowing a man from the other side was a better resource, but certainly not a satisfactory one. Kildare & Co. discussed it with glum and irritated looks. And it was then that George Alfred Grundy,

with a cheery smile on his face, weighed in. He came up to the worried group of senior footballers, nothing doubting.

Kildare glanced at him, and waved him away. He did not want to be worried by any talk from a junior just then. But Grundy came on regardless.

"You're a man short, Kildare," he said.

"Yes; clear off."

"Should I be any use?"

"What?"

"You don't think a Shell chap good enough for your team," said Grundy, with a touch of disdain. "Better than leaving a place vacant, I should think."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Darrell. "It might be worth while, Kildare. If it was anybody but that young ass—"

"What?" exclaimed Grundy.

"The fellow's a fool," said Kildare. The St. Jim's captain was rather too worried just then to measure his words with politeness. "I wish to goodness some kid that knew how to play football had come along instead. I'd be glad of almost anybody but this young ass."

Grundy spluttered.

"Is there a better player in the Lower School?" he demanded.

"You young duffer!"

"Put me anywhere," said Grundy. "If I can't keep goal, for instance, as well as Macgregor, I'll eat my jersey."

"Kick him!" grunted Macgregor of the Sixth.

"In the front line," said Grundy. "I'll try to show you something like pace—something like passing—something like shooting for goal! I'll make you open your eyes."

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Kildare, while some of the footballers grinned. Grundy was adding a little much-needed comic relief to the strained situation.

"You can't play a man short," continued Grundy. "You can't borrow a Greyfriars man when there's a St. Jim's fellow on the ground. You can't do it, Kildare. Play me."

Kildare did not answer, but he reflected.

Any St. Jim's fellow would have been welcome just then to fill the gap in the ranks—or almost any. But Grundy of the Shell was the limit. He really could not play footer. He had a perfect genius for miskicking, for getting in the way of other players, for capturing the ball and driving it in the wrong direction, for passing into touch, or into the enemy's hands, or even sending the leather through his own goal. It was really amazing that any fellow should play footer quite so badly as Grundy did. And he was the only fellow at St. Jim's who did not know it or chortle over it.

Almost any other junior Kildare would have put into the team, simply to fill the place with a St. Jim's fellow—almost any other junior would have done no harm, even if he had done no good.

But George Alfred Grundy could not be depended upon even to the extent of doing no harm.

Kildare reflected, but he shook his head.

Grundy was watching him anxiously. The shake of Kildare's head alarmed and angered him.

"You're playing me?" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"I'm afraid not," said Kildare. "If you were not such a crass ass at footer, I'd try it on. But in the circumstances I—"

"Look here——" bawled Grundy.

"I hardly think it would do," said Monteith of the New House, shaking his head also. "The fellow's a crass fool at all games—at everything else, too, I think."

"Look here, Monteith, you New House rotter——"

"Better chance it," said Baker. "Anything's better than a silly fool getting in the way."

"Look here, Baker——"

"That's so," said Lefevre of the Fifth. "We don't want to carry a silly passenger. That's what I say."

And Kildare nodded.

"I'd better ask Wingate to lend me a man," he said. "It's rotten. But it seems the only resource."

Grundy almost trembled with rage and consternation.

This was the outcome of his deep, deep plotting.

With masterly strategy, as he considered it—or with a dirty trick, as any other fellow could have termed it—Grundy had deprived the St. Jim's captain of a needed man. Not for an instant had he doubted that he would be given the vacant place. As the only St. Jim's fellow on the ground, it fell naturally to him. But now——

Perhaps it was not Grundy's fault that he could not realise how his football was regarded by others. It is said that the looker-on sees most of the game.

He was quite astounded to find that the St. Jim's captain would rather have played ten men than eleven, if Grundy was to be the eleventh!

"You—you—you can't do it, Kildare!" Grundy stuttered. "You can't! You'll be throwing the game away. I tell you, you'll be surprised at the result, if you'll give me a chance. I'll play up to end. Put me where you like, and I tell you I'll do the school credit. Give me a chance."

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Perhaps Kildare wavered for a moment. He was very keen on that match, and on having only St. Jim's fellows in his ranks. Even Grundy—surely even Grundy of the Shell—even Grundy, playing as hard as he could, would be worth something! Grundy, reading the hesitating thought in Kildare's troubled face, watched him eagerly. And at that moment Kildare's glance fell upon a cheery, cheeky face—the face of Walter Adolphus D'Arcy of the Third Form of St. Jim's.

Wally was strolling around, with his hands in his pockets, with his usual cheeky self-possession, like a diminutive monarch of all he surveyed. He bestowed a cheeky grin and a nod on the group of seniors. Kildare's expression changed as he saw him. A Third Form fag from St. Jim's was at Greyfriars that afternoon, and it came into Kildare's mind that there might be others. He called to Wally.

"Come here, young D'Arcy!"

Wally of the Third came up, smiling.

"Hallo, old bean!" he said. "Looking for a really good man for your team? Quite at your service, if you want me."

Kildare laughed.

"How the dickens did you get all this way?" he asked.

"Have you come over to see the match?"

"Right on the wicket!"

"You didn't come alone, surely?"

"I could have come alone if I'd wanted to," said Wally independently. "But, as it happens, I didn't. I came in the car with the other fellows—quite a craun. Luckily Herries had his feet outside."

Kildare breathed sharply.

"Who came with you?" he asked.

"Gussy, Tom Merry, and——"

Kildare interrupted him with almost a shout.

"Tom Merry?"

"Yes, and——"

"Is Tom Merry on the ground here now?" exclaimed Kildare, catching Wally by the shoulder in his excitement.

"Eh? Yes, of course he is!"

"Thank goodness! Cut off and tell Tom Merry to come here at once! Tell him I've lost a man, and that I want him to play. Hook it!"

"My only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally.

And the fag of the Third cut off at top speed. Kildare turned to his comrades with a satisfied smile.

"What a giddy stroke of luck!" he exclaimed. "It never occurred to me that there might be St. Jim's fellows on the scene at this distance. What a thumping stroke of luck! The best junior player in the school. Not up to Gilmore's weight, of course, but the very best in the Lower School! Thank goodness!"

"It's real luck!" said Darrell, with a nod.

There was a howl from Grundy. Grundy was surprised to hear that there were other St. Jim's juniors on the scene—having carefully left behind even his own chums. Grundy had known nothing about Lord Eastwood's car, and Gussy's little party for a motor run. He was surprised, and he was dismayed, and he was enraged.

"Look here, Kildare!" he spluttered. "You're not thinking of leaving me out for that ass Merry——"

"Don't worry, Grundy!"

"Are you playing me?" shrieked Grundy.

"Of course not, you young ass!"

"You're playing that dummy Merry?"

"Yes."

"Well, you ass, you chump, you—you idiot!" spluttered Grundy incoherently. "You—you crass dunny——"

A heavy hand descended on Grundy's collar. He was jerked away, and tossed on the turf at a distance, and there left to recover himself. It was not, after all, George Alfred Grundy's lucky day!

CHAPTER 9.

Tom Merry's Luck.

"TOM MERRY!"
"Hallo, kid! I'm not deaf, you know!" said Tom, with a smile, as Wally of the Third came racing up, panting, and yelling his name.

"Weally, Wally," said Arthur Augustus sternly, "your manna's are very lackin' in wopose."

"Don't you begin, Gus!" said Wally. "Tommy, old top, you're wanted! Kildare says you're to play for St. Jim's."

"What?" shouted Tom Merry.

"Honest Injun!" said Wally, with a chuckle. "Cut off! I offered myself, but Kildare seems to want you—even prefers you to Grundy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry's eyes danced.

"Play for the First Eleven!" he exclaimed. "Oh, my hat! Oh, holy smoke! If you're gammoning, you young sweep——"

"Honest Injun, I tell you! Cut off; Kildare's waiting."

"Oh, good!"

Tom Merry did not waste time. He cut off like an arrow from a bow, leaving his chums in excited discussion.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "This is wathah peculiah, isn't it, you fellows?"

"Don't see it," said Lowther. "Kildare's a man short, and Tom Merry's the best junior player at St. Jim's. Nothing peculiar in asking him to play as there isn't a senior present."

"Yaas, but are you quite suah, Wally, that Kildare asked you to tell Tom Mewwy—?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Did Kildare know that I was on the gwound?"

Wally chuckled.

"Yes; I mentioned it."

"Then it is vewy peculiar indeed," said Arthur Augustus, with a shake of his noble head. "You are quite, quite suah, Wally, that Kildare told you to fetch Tom Mewwy, and not me?"

"Quite, quite sure!" chuckled Wally.

"Then it is vewy remarkable indeed. How do you fellows account for this vewy extwaordinawy choice on Kildare's part?" asked Arthur Augustus, looking round at his comrades.

But the fellows did not try to account for it; they only chortled.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry had arrived breathlessly, and found that Wally's message was well-founded. Kildare was waiting for him.

"You want me, Kildare?" Tom gaped.

"Yes. You know we're a man short," said the St. Jim's captain. "I shall put you in at outside-right, Merry, and for goodness' sake play up and do your level best!"

"Rely on me," said Tom.

"Get changed, then, quick. But you've got no things here," said Kildare. "Some Greyfriars fag will lend you some. It can't be helped about the colours—"

"Grundy had his things with him," broke in Langton. "You remember—"

Kildare burst into a laugh.

"Oh, good! You can wear Grundy's things, Merry?"

"Certainly—quite near enough," said Tom. "Where are they?"

"It won't take long to find them."

Grundy's bag had been dropped when Grundy was jerked away from the scene by his collar, and it had lain unheeded since. It was quickly found, and Tom Merry retired with it to the dressing-room. Grundy's "clobber" was not an exact fit by any means; but that was a trifling matter. It was football rig in the St. Jim's colours, and that was all that was wanted. Why Grundy had brought the things to Greyfriars was a mystery to Tom Merry; but he was glad enough that George Alfred had done so.

Tom was in a state of exuberant delight. Playing for the First Eleven was the chance of a lifetime for a junior. Of course, no junior would ever have had a chance under normal circumstances; but now that Tom was put in to fill a vacant place, he meant to do his very best to prove himself worthy of the exalted honour. And although he was not, of course, up to the weight of the Greyfriars senior players, there was no doubt that he would be extremely useful—nothing like a "passenger" in the team. When Tom Merry came out, in football rig, Kildare gave a nod of satisfaction. His predicament had been a painful one; but Tom's presence at Greyfriars had provided him with a fortunate escape from it.

It was high time for the kick-off now; two-thirty had turned. But the Saints were ready; and Kildare tossed with Wingate, and gave Greyfriars the wind to kick off against.

Tom Merry lined up with the St. Jim's seniors, looking and feeling considerably proud of himself.

From amid the crowd round the ropes, George Alfred Grundy looked on, with feelings that were really too deep for words.

Grundy's plot had been a success; Kildare had lost a player at the last moment! Up to that point the plot had gone swimmingly. But the net outcome was, that Grundy had provided Tom Merry with an opportunity of playing with the St. Jim's First—and even provided him with football rig to play in. It was, in actual fact, a fortunate ending to Grundy's amazing plot; but it did not seem so to George

Alfred. His looks and his thoughts were decidedly pessimistic.

But the other St. Jim's juniors were full of glee and satisfaction, and they roared Tom Merry's name as he lined up with the First. It was glory for all the Lower School for a junior to play in those exalted ranks. Even Arthur Augustus—having recovered from his surprise at the selection of Tom Merry instead of his noble self—waved his eyeglass and shouted encouragement to the hero of the Shell. And Wally & Co. of the Third roared with a vigour that would have made the celebrated Stentor himself sit up and take notice.

"They're off!" said Blake. "Go it, St. Jim's!"

"Play up, Tommy!" bawled Manners and Lowther.

"Play up, Tom Mewwy, deah boy!"

"Hurrah, 'rah, 'rah, 'rah!" roared Wally & Co.

And Tom Merry, at the top of his form and in the best of spirits, was playing the game of his life.

CHAPTER 10.

The Winning Goal!

"GOAL!"

It was first blood to St. Jim's, and the group of St. Jim's juniors yelled with delight. They were few in number, but they made up for that by their vigour, and their yell of "Goal! Goal!" rang and resounded across the Greyfriars ground.

Tom Merry had had a hand in it. He had passed to inside-right just before a charge of the Greyfriars outside-left bowled him over; and inside-right had centred to Kildare, and Kildare had taken the goal in masterly style. And the St. Jim's juniors yelled and shouted.

"Goal! Goal!"

"Bai Jove! That was wathah good," said Arthur Augustus. "Tom Mewwy is playin' up quite well, you know. Pewpaws his passin' is not quite up to Study No. 6 style; but it is vewy good."

"Good old Tommy!" roared Monty Lowther.

"Wait till Wingate gets fairly going!" remarked Bob Cherry, of the Greyfriars Remove. "You'll see things then!"

"There he goes!" said Harry Whar-ton.

"I hardly considah that that wush will materialise in anythin', deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, shaking his head, as the Greyfriars First attacked hotly in the visitors' half.

But the judgment of the great Gussy was a little awry, for once; for the ball went in from Wingate's foot, and the score was equal.

"What price that?" chuckled Bob.

"Wathah a fluke, deah boy, what?"

"Fluke be hauged!" said Bob warmly.

"You're rather an ass, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, Chewwy—"

"Not at all bad," said Blake. "But watch Kildare!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

But the first half closed without further score. Grundy of the Shell came through the crowd and joined the

other St. Jim's fellows. His look was gloomy and not hopeful.

"Licking for us," he remarked—"what? Fancy Kildare playing that ass when I offered—"

"Weally, Gwunday—"

"Luckiest thing that ever happened to us was Gussy's stunt of bagging his pater's car to-day," remarked Blake. "But for that Tom Merry wouldn't have been here."

"Yaas, wathah! It was weally vewy fortunate. Kildare might have been dwiven to playin' that howlin' ass Gwunday—"

"It's simply a rotten shame," said Grundy. "After all the trouble I've taken, there's that fathead playing—in my clobber, too!"

"What on earth did you bring your clobber for?" asked Blake. "You didn't know Kildare was going to lose a man, did you?"

Monty Lowther gave Grundy a very curious and keen look.

"Looks as if Grundy did know something," he said; "and that telephone message from St. Jim's was queer—very queer!"

(Continued on page 19.)

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"FANNY" WALDEN IN ACTION! (Tottenham Hotspur F.C.)



This reproduction gives you only a faint idea of the Splendid Real Photo which will be given FREE with every copy of next Wednesday's GEM. ORDER IT TO-DAY!

The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited By **TOM MERRY.**

Taking the Measure of a Funk.

A CHATTY HEALTH TALK

By the **Sporting Doctor.**

NOW, I'm going to tell you how to take the measure of a funk.

You think you know, perhaps. I can almost hear you say: "Hit him, and see."

That, my boy, is a fool's way. Here is a better and far truer kind of measurement: Take a piece of string and put it round his chest. Don't tie it. Just hold the ends together. Then wait a minute or two.

Mostly—I won't say always, because there are exceptions—if he is a funk, the string will stay quite loose in your hands.

If he is not a funk, it will pull so that the ends you are holding get separated.

What does this mean? It means that cowardly, nervous people very seldom expand their chests when they breathe. Try it on yourself and see.

No; the funks nearly always breathe with their bodies. It is the plucky boys who square their shoulders and open their chests.

And, remember, the chest that is not opened does not get enough air into it. It does not get enough blood into it.

You've heard, I dare say, of the circulation of the blood. You know that your heart pumps the blood all round your body. But do you know that every time your chest opens it sucks in blood, as well as air? That is to say, it helps your heart to do its work.

How do you suppose the blood gets back to your heart from your toes? It is a long way, and it is all "uphill." I'll tell you. The suction of your chest helps to pull it up—just as the suction in a syringe fills its barrel with water.

But suppose your chest isn't opening properly—what then?

Then, of course, your blood will not flow so well as it should. Your poor heart will have to do all the work—double its own work. It will have to send the blood all the way to your toes, and bring it back again. That is like putting one horse between the shafts of a two-horse carriage.

Of course, the one horse would not be able to run very fast with such a load. It would stick on the hills, wouldn't it?

I can assure you that the boy whose chest is not opening properly when he breathes is just like that horse. He can't run; he can't fight. When he tries to do anything he gets pulled and weak in a minute.

His breathing is wrong, and that puts his circulation wrong. His blood doesn't get enough fresh air into it, and so he doesn't feel fit and strong. And that makes a funk of him.

How can you help a boy like that? How can you help yourself if you get into that state?

The answer is, by getting your chest to work properly. Any boy who really means business can manage this. He can do some exercises. He can wear a belt instead of braces.

I'll talk about this next week. But I want to say now that if you have a belt round your waist you have got to breathe with your chest. There is no other way.

Remember that every soldier in the world wears a belt. Most soldiers have fine strong chests, and most of them are brave men.

(Another chatty article next week.)

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Footer Favourites.

(Compiled by Jack Blake.)

TOM MERRY, the captain of the St. Jim's Junior XI, easily heads the list of highest goal scorers for the past season. He has scored no fewer than 56 goals in 34 matches. He has turned out three times for the Senior XI, and on one occasion has notched the winning goal. His last splendid performance was in the match—St. Jim's First XI. versus Greystones First XI, in which the former won by two goals to one.

David Llewellyn Wynn, undoubtedly the finest goalkeeper of his kind, has turned out for the Junior XI on all occasions except one—when confined to the sunny with flu. He holds the reputation of having had only eleven goals scored against him in actual league matches. Strange to say, four of these goals were scored in one match—against Greystones, on whose ground the game was played. Of course, it was found out afterwards that Fatty had not been himself throughout the match.

George Figgins, the well-known left full-back, is credited with being the finest penalty-kicker in the team. Out of the twenty-one free kicks from the white blob, he has notched no fewer than sixteen goals, quite a creditable performance. One of his shots, a splendid drive for the top left-hand corner of the goal, actually forced its way through the netting and bowled down Ralph Reckness Cardew, who, as a spectator, stood watching the game. The play was held up for a time, whilst Cardew's injuries were attended to and the sagging net repaired. Cardew steers clear of the long-legged Figgins now.

Kerr, Figgy's partner, although a very good player, hardly equals the form of that of the leader of the New House, but the two together constitute a sound defence.

Clive, a splendid half-back, and a real hard worker in his position, has been a source of worry to many an opposing forward. When taking a "throw in" the ball seldom falls short of 25 yds. after leaving Clive's hands.

Noble shines as the pivot of the team, always tries to recover himself when beaten by an opponent, and feeds his forwards with the utmost accuracy.

Lowther, another of the half-back line, shows plenty of bustle. Although one of the cleanest fellows on the field, Monty has received most injuries. The worst one of all was on the occasion of a match with the Grammarians, when Monty, in stopping a rush from Monk, caught that worthy's foot full in the back of the neck. Of course, it was an accident pure and simple. Nevertheless, Lowther lost consciousness for a time. Thank goodness, he rallied round later. I think he would have made a further appearance on the field of play had not the referee's whistle sounded for time just as the plucky Monty left the dressing-room.

Other than Tom Merry, no junior holds a regular position in the forward line.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy is a great favourite, having proved himself a somewhat nippy inside-right. One can hardly forget the time when, with an open goal at his mercy, he stopped to button up his shirt front which had previously come open during a scrimmage with an opposing back. Imagine the feelings of the other members of the team when they tramped off the field vanquished to the tune of one goal to nil. It's Gussy's way, though, after all.

Talbot, who turns out more often than not at outside-left, is somewhat fast and very tricky when in front of goal. His inside partner, Redfern, is also a player of great renown, and the two know each other's tactics to a nicety, and I give you my word they prove a very dangerous wing when both in form.

Levison is an outside-right of splendid ability. Unfortunately, at times will not give of his best. Why this should be so is only known to himself. When Levison is giving of his best there is no holding him; his centres to Tom Merry are most accurate, and leave his captain only to meet the sphere with his head to send it into the net, giving the goalie no chance whatever of clearing.

Good luck to Tom Merry and his merry band of leather chasers; may they prove just as victorious in the season to come! Meantime what about cricket?

Ratcliff's Race.

By **Giacomo Contarini.**

IT was just like my two study-mates, Richard Roylance and Frank Smith, to tumble plump into Ratcliff's good graces; but I will say this for them, they needed the stroke of luck. Ratty had been down on them for ages past. Not that Ratty had any real business to interfere, but he took the Fourth one day when Lathum was queer with the flu. And didn't he make things hum? Not half! With Ratty it is just whoever happens to be at hand. He is always ready to show his nasty, mean-spirited nature. Roylance and his study-mate were down for lines on the day of a cross-country run on which they were keen.

"We'd better chance it," said Roylance. "Ratty can't make a lot of fuss about that ball catching him in the waistcoat."

So they went with the pack; but they are not much of runners, all said and done. The

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hares were sighted about a couple of miles from home, but Roylance and his companion were nowhere near. They never saw the hares. What they did see was the revered Mr. Ratcliff asleep under a tree. It was not such a bad sort of afternoon for a snooze—quite warm. Evidently Ratty had been out walking and been suddenly overcome by the beauty of the scenery. The funny part of it lay in the fact that he was not alone. A particularly seedy-looking tramp was relieving the master of the Fifth of his portable property. The scoundrel even removed Ratty's coat and his boots, leaving his own hopeless footgear and his ragged coat in exchange.

It was the removal of the second boot that roused Mr. Ratcliff from slumber. He sat up dazedly, and saw a stranger slipping into his new overcoat. With a wild whoop, he jumped to his feet and darted after the thief.

Who says Ratty can't run? He can foot it with the best; but, luckily for the tramp, the master was in his stockinged feet. As Roylance and Frank Smith tore up they saw the esteemed gentleman spring a couple of feet into the air, while his right hand grasped his left foot, which had met a thorn.

The tramp was speeding like a gazelle across country. Roylance and his companion took in the situation at a glance. The pursuer cleared a couple of fields, and dived into a wood. He was hotly pursued, but the man had long legs. His pursuers reached the edge of the wood, dashed through a hedge, and found a fairly hefty little stream

at their feet. They took it—the quarry had managed to leap the water—and the stream took them, but they scrambled out in no time, and the chase went on.

Mr. Ratcliff was a very bad third. He was not seen till much later. How he contrived to get back to St. Jim's is a mystery, but he did, and in the boots the tramp had left behind him—a dismal pair, minus heels, and not much upper.

But that transpired afterwards. Roylance and Frank Smith proved their mettle that afternoon. The thief led them a dance, but he had a whole blacksmith's shop of bellows to maul when at last he sank down exhausted by the side of an ancient cart at the side of Farley Wood. The fellow was a tinker by profession, and a thief by inclination, apparently.

He broke down when his captors seized him, and implored them to have pity on him, as he had a sorrowing wife and twenty-six young children, all with their faces pressed against the window-pane at the old home, watching for daddy. (That's what the tinker said, anyhow.) Roylance was much moved. Still, they relieved the man of what did not belong to him, and then bumped him, before starting for home.

You should have seen Ratty's face when the pair marched into his study that evening with his boots, and the new overcoat, which had an astrakhan collar and fuzzy sleeves. He said they were brave lads, and never even mentioned the lincs.

Some folks are born lucky, others get the luck handed out to them in thick slices, well spread with the best butter.

"MY READERS' OWN CORNER."

A Splendid Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck is awarded to the sender of what the Editor considers the most interesting paragraph. Half-a-crown is awarded for each other contribution accepted.

(If your name is not here this week it may be next.)

This Wins Our Tuck Hamper.

A FROG THAT FLIES.

Borneo is the home of some remarkable frogs that are able to fly through the air. They do not fly like a bird or a bat, though, for the simple reason that they have no wings, but they glide in the manner of an aeroplane with its engine shut off, the large webs of skin that connect their fingers and toes acting like the wings of an aeroplane and supporting their bodies as they drop to earth from the branch of a tree. In addition to the webs, the ends of the toes have a small sucker-like pad. This enables the frogs to obtain a secure hold upon the leaves and twigs of the trees amidst which they dwell.

—William E. Ravenscroft, 39, Oldfield Road, Ellesmere Pt., Cheshire.

A PUZZLE.

Try this on your friends. I put £65 in the bank and draw out as follows:

£20—leaving £45.

£30—leaving £15.

£8—leaving £7.

£7—leaving nil.

£65—£67

How is it the two totals differ? The answer is obvious after a little consideration, but perplexing at first. The truth is you are adding your balances up at different periods which is quite the wrong way, and not how banks go to work.—Half-a-crown awarded to W. G. Hill, 161, Newcombe Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.

THE HAMADRYAD.

This is a large species of cobra. It is found in India, Malaya, and the Philippines. It is extremely venomous, and of a fierce, aggressive disposition. Its colour is a yellowish brown with black bands, and it attains a length of 14ft. It feeds largely on other snakes.—Miss Alice E. Rice, 22, Little Square, Braintree, Essex.

VULGAR.

Mrs. Bullion (to the principal of the school attended by Miss Bullion): "Dear Madam,—My daughter informs me that last term she was obliged to study vulgar fractions. Please do not let this happen again. If my child must study fractions, let them be as refined as possible."—A. Beare, Aylesbury Road, Aston Clinton, Bucks.

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THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 742.

THE RALLY-ROUND CLUB.

Every reader should become a member of this club.

Having, as already stated in previous issues of the "Gem," been inundated with letters from my loyal readers, asking me to form some sort of a club to enable them to join in one large circle of friends, I am at last able to accede to their wishes by introducing what will be known as

THE RALLY-ROUND CLUB.

The title of the club speaks for itself. Every member of the club rallies round the "Gem" Library, and does his or her best to introduce it to new readers. Members are asked to write and criticise the various features in the paper, and any helpful suggestions will be published in the Chat page, together with the name and address of the reader. Any member sending a letter which, in my opinion, contains anything of interest to other members of the club, will be awarded a special money prize.

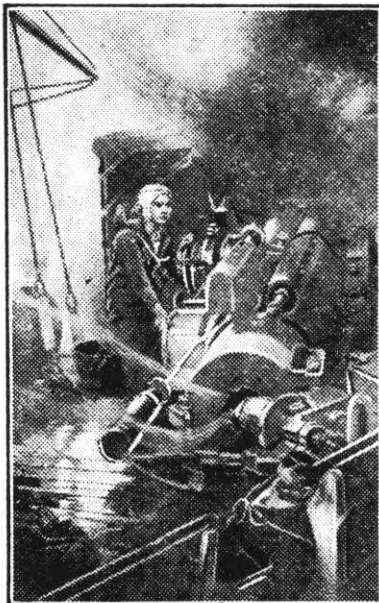
I want you to be with me in helping to form one of the largest clubs ever yet known.

All one has to do to become a member is to cut out the coupons from two issues of the "Gem" Library—the one from this week's issue and one from next week will answer the purpose—pin them together, and post them to "The President, The Rally-Round Club, The 'Gem' Offices, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4."

Every reader joining the Club is specially requested to obtain a NEW reader for the "Gem" Library, and get him or her to join the Club.

To each member joining I am going to forward, FREE, a Splendid Art Portrait of Jack Cornwell, V.C., the hero of heroes, who, in the Battle of Jutland, stood by his gun till the last. This splendid picture is well worth framing, and would make a splendid addition to anyone's den.

Get to work right now, introduce your new reader, send in your coupons as advised, and you will shortly afterwards become the happy recipient of one of these Splendid Free Gifts. Don't delay! Act right now!



(This is a small reproduction of the original.)

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April 29, 1922

This Wonderful Story is Pleasing Everybody!



Our Magnificent Story of Daring and Adventure.

READ THIS FIRST.

Donald Gordon and his brother Val leave St. Christopher's School, in company with Tommy Binks and Septimus Todd, a junior master, commonly known as "Scat," to join their uncle, who is on a big plantation in the Solomon Islands.

Captain Targe, in charge of the schooner Wittywake, learns of the party's quest. He plans to abandon the boat and leave them to their fate, with the intention of overthrowing the wealthy plantation owner and obtaining hold of his land. Targa, the black cabin-boy, hears of this, and warns the party. Unknown to the villainous captain, he places the boys in one of the ship's boats, and they are about to make their escape when Anna, the captain's daughter, taking the opportunity of getting away from the harsh treatment of her father, joins them.

Not long after the party has started on their perilous journey a severe storm breaks out. The party are thrown from their boat, but, luckily, get washed up on the "Island of Pleasure."

Cast on the island, they prepare their new home, living on the products the island offers. Later, the party launch their canoe, and leave the camp for a picnic round the island. On the journey, Targa and Don attack and capture a weird-looking animal, which Scat calls a dugong. This strange beast is beached, and Tommy is detailed to keep watch over it whilst the remainder of the party go in search of sago. They are in the act of felling a sago-palm, when they hear cries for help. Rushing back to where they had left Tommy, they find the stout youngster defending himself against two fierce-looking eagles, which they drive away. The party are later returning to their camp, when Don sees in the distance fast-approaching heavy clouds. Suddenly the sea rises, and the wind howls. "We get big storm presently, Don," says Targa.

(Now read on.)

The Storm

DON was looking southward, and he saw now that sweeping towards them was a great blackness, which was engulfing the stars as it came—a blackness, from whence there shot out flash after flash of vivid lightning.

Then, above the howling of the gale, came another sound—the tremendous hoarse voice of the sea on the reef.

With a crash, as though a thousand heavy guns had given tongue, the storm broke, and a great sheet of rain came pouring down on them, as the raincloud burst over their heads.

Don caught at Scat, and, swinging round, darted back for the house as hard as he could pelt, while the rain, falling in a solid sheet, blotted out the scene, so that he blundered onward in the darkness.

The sheer weight of water made Don and Scat double up as they made their way back to the cliff. Though it was only some thirty or forty yards to cover, they felt they had almost reached the end of their strength.

Again and again the loud, vibrating peals of thunder crashed overhead, and, through the torrential rain, the jagged, forked lightning smote down on them.

Once Scat missed his step, and went sprawling on his face on the ground, and it took Don all his time to wrench the lanky tutor to his feet again.

They hung together for a moment, and Scat's voice came thin and faint to Don's ears.

"It's awful—awful! Just as though we were standing under a giant shower-bath!" the tutor gasped.

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 742.

A final rush saw them reach the house, and here the wind ceased to buffet them, although the rain poured down like a torrent.

Don felt along the wooden wall of the house until his gripping hands came in contact with the door.

As he fumbled for the rude catch, someone swung the door open, and shouted:

"Who's there?"

"All right, Tommy!" Don said.

In another moment he and his drenched companion had struggled into the hut. Tommy had closed the door behind them, and slipped the heavy wooden bar into its place.

The whole hut was creaking and groaning under the drive of the rain, and every light had been extinguished.

"That you, Don?" Val's voice asked. "It's dreadful!"

Groping his way towards his brother, Val joined the group, and they stood in the centre of their shelter, listening to the buffeting of the rain on the layer of broad leaves which formed the roof.

Now and again one of the timbers would creak and groan, and once, as a gust of raging wind struck it, the whole structure creaked and strained.

"I—I don't think this shelter will stand much of this, Don," Tommy said. "What is it—a hurricane?"

"That's about it," Don said. "There's no good of getting scared, Tommy! I don't suppose it will last very long, and, in any case, we've just got to see it through."

"I—I am worried about Anna," Val said presently. "I hope she's safe up there under the cliff. I hate to think of anything happening to her!"

Another deafening crash of thunder sounded, following after a quick, vivid flash of lightning, which illuminated the dark interior of the hut, revealing the white, tense faces of its inmates.

Another long moment passed, then Scat, who was close to the door, heard a new sound, an immense, seething roar, and some vast force thudded against the front of the hut.

The tutor felt an icy-cold lash of water as it was forced through the cracks of the wooden wall.

"In the name of goodness, what was that?" Tommy gasped.

Scat raised his hand to his wet shoulder, then placed his fingers on his lips.

A cold, shivering fear ran through the lanky, youthful tutor, for the water was salt.

"It was a breaker—a breaker!" he cried. "The sea is coming in on us!"

At the Mercy of the Waves.

AT the taste of the salt on his lips Scat's blood ran cold for a moment.

He realised at once what it meant, and, groping his way through the darkness, the lanky tutor reached the door and leaned there for a moment.

He could hear the timber of the hut creaking and groaning under the lash of the rain; then once again came to his ears that immense, seething sound—a sound which the breaker made as it came rolling over the broken ground.

Thud!

This time there was no mistake in the impact.

A solid wall of sea-water lashed against the hut, and the force of it made several of the roof-timbers creak.

"What is it, Scat—what is it?"

Don's voice arose through the darkness, and the tutor, with his back against the door, made reply.

"It's the sea, old chap," he said. "Targa was right. This place is—doomed!"

Through the interstices of the logs which formed the wall the sea-water had poured in in a solid cascade, and now the interior of the hut was flooded to the depth of seven or eight inches.

"We'll have to clear out in quick time," Scat gasped. "There will be another wave coming soon. Come on, you chaps! Make a move!"

He reached for the heavy bolt of the door, and removed it.

The door swung inward, forcing Scat aside, and the rain came beating into the water-logged interior.

"Are you there, Val? Are you there, Tommy?"

"Yes."

"Yes."

Their strained, anxious voices replied to Don in the darkness, and the leader of the little group began to wade towards the doorway, followed by his chums.

But as he gained the threshold an immense, seething, angry snarl began again, and through the misty darkness Don saw a solid mass of white foam roaring up the beach towards him.

He turned to shout, but before the sound could emerge from his lips the wall of water smote him on the shoulders, and, rolling on with relentless fury, crashed into the hut.

Already the structure had withstood two tremendous attacks, and this in itself was a proof of the solid way in which the youngsters had erected it.

But against the mighty combined force of wind and waves it gave way at last.

There was a rending crash, and the walls of the hut collapsed into a mass of wreckage.

Don found himself in a smother of foam, half-choked and blinded by sheer weight of water.

Something heavy hit him over the head, and, as he was swept away, he clutched at the object.

It was one of the cross-pieces of the roof, and, holding on to it like grim death, Don Gordon was carried clean off his feet into the fast retreating waves.

He must have been swept some fifteen or twenty yards before he found himself lying flat on the wet sand, where the receding wave had left him.

For a moment he lay still, half-dazed and gasping for breath, then memory came to him again. He knew that another wave would return, and, unless he could escape from it, it would engulf him once more and carry him out into the bay.

Scrambling to his feet, the plucky youngster ran blindly forward in the darkness through the pelting rain.

He stumbled over a boulder, picked himself up, and ran on again; then fell forward over another jagged edge.

As he lay there, he heard once again the dread, seething sound from behind him, and he realised that another of the great breakers was advancing on its task of destruction.

His half-numbed fingers reached out, and came in contact with the rough edge of another rock.

Don tightened his grip, and, drawing a deep breath, steadied himself for the shock.

It came suddenly and swiftly, and the wall of water beat down on his shoulders as though it meant to crush him to pulp.

The roar of the sea was in his ears, and he felt buffeted and beaten and sore as he hung like a limpet to the wet rocks.

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Again came that grim suction of the wave as it retired, and his tough young arms tightened on the rock to resist the pull.

He felt as though his arms were being drawn out of their sockets; but he hung on grimly, and the waters rolled back at last, leaving him spent and gasping.

Again the youngster scrambled to his feet, and made another headlong rush forward.

He was moving blindly, but he knew from the slope of the ground that he was heading for the safety of the higher ground which lay behind the beach.

A tall boulder was reached and sealed just as another wave broke into the cave.

This time the water gurgled and snarled round Don's resting-place, but it was only the cold spray which licked at his face and body as the wave broke against the boulder.

When the mighty breaker retired, the half-dazed youngster swung onward again, and finally he found himself creeping on his hands and knees up the ridge of soil beyond the clump of boulders.

Here he was in the full blast of the gale, and so powerful was the wind that he had to claw his way forward inch by inch until he gained the shelter of the trees.

He could hear the wind humming and howling through the feathery tops of the cocoanut-palms, and, gripping at one of the slender trunks, Don drew himself to his feet.

He was aching in every limb, and it was with difficulty he stood, even holding as he was to the willowy trunk of the cocoanut-palm.

The trunk was shivering as though it were a mere reed, and he knew from the buck and sway of it that the wind was almost wrenching it from its roots.

Appalled by the majestic splendour of the terrible storm, Don stood there, one arm wrapped round the trunk, peering into the misty, rain-swept darkness.

For the first time since he had taken over command in this new life Don Gordon's heart failed him.

The frightful suddenness of the disaster, and the fear in his heart that he was the only one who had survived the dread ordeal, made the youngster groan.

Once or twice he tried to shout, but the howling of the wind and the booming of the breakers on the beach below drowned his voice.

All he could do was to stand there and listen to the furious voice of the tempest.

Now and again, from very far off, there came rending crashes, indicating that the hurricane was cutting a track through the jungle far to the right.

Once a wet, winged shape came driving on to Don's head and shoulders, and he felt the feeble flutter of the sodden wings as the frightened sea-bird fell away from him.

It seemed as though all Nature was being cowed and beaten by this terrific outburst of unbridled fury.

How long that first fierce rage of the storm lasted Don was never able to say; but at long last the sound of the wind began to slacken, and the rain ceased, although in the trees the heavy drops, pattering on the broad leaves of the palms, made an incessant sound.

The sea was still booming angrily over the reef, to surge on and thrash against the foot of the cliff. The measured beat of the breakers indicated that their strength was still at full force.

The night was as black as pitch, and Don, moving at last from his shelter, began to work his way up along the fringe of trees.

His body was numb and chilled, and at first he swayed and reeled as he walked.

A voice sounded from ahead—a high-pitched, clear cry, which arose above the beating of the sea.

"Where are you fellas? Any fellas down there?"

There was a note of strained anxiety in Taga's tone, and Don gulped down the half-groan which came to his lips before replying to the faithful native.

"Right, Taga, I'm here! Where are you?"

From the wet ground the slender shape of Taga arose, and he came forward through the darkness, to grip at Don, and hold him for a moment in silence.

"I thought you all down there!" the native boy gasped. "I sorry, Master Don! I no time to get you all, only—only Miss Anna!"

Don's heart leapt into his mouth.

"What! You managed to save her?"

Don swung round and caught at Taga's wet shoulders.

"I bring her along first, Master Don,"

Taga explained. "I hear sea, and know what was going to happen. I jest lower myself down the cliff with rope, and collar Miss Anna. But I no—no have time to get rest."

"Where is Anna?"

As Don voiced the question, a reply came from behind him.

"Oh, Don—Don, I'm here! But—but what's happened to the others? Where are they?"

Anna's strained, anxious voice sounded, and in another moment she had reached the native and Don, and was holding on to the young leader's arm.

Don could feel that the slender girl was trembling from head to foot, and he tried to soothe her.

"All right, Anna! It may not be so bad as we think," he returned, as calmly as he could. "It all happened so suddenly. We didn't have a chance to do anything. But I—managed to get through, and we'll hope the others were—were as successful."

The girl broke down and cried, and the young leader, putting his arm round her, did his best to comfort her.

"No, I am sure they have not been. I am sure they have not been so lucky as to escape!" Anna said, wringing her hands together. "I wanted to go and warn you, but Taga would not let me."

"That's true," said Taga. "Miss Anna wanted to go across to hut, but I no let her. There no time to come for you other fellas in hut."

It was from Anna that Don got the story—how Taga had lowered himself down the face of the cliff, and dropped into Anna's little bower, finding her sitting up, terrified at the storm.

How the young native had managed to carry Anna up the cliff on that swaying, tossing rope was a problem which only Taga himself could solve; but he had managed it, and they gained the wind-swept level just as the final booming crash sounded from below, heralding the complete destruction of the hut.

"Can't we do anything—anything?" Anna went on, turning to Don.

As though to reply to her, there came

another reverberating shock against the foot of the cliff, and they heard the seething foam spray down again.

Taga grunted.

"No one able to go down there yet, Miss Anna," he said. "Bi'm'bi, in morning, we go look!"

It was hard for Don to agree to this, and yet his common-sense told him that Taga was right.

It would have been unfair to allow them to risk their lives in descending into that dread maelstrom in the darkness, and he knew that neither Anna nor Taga would allow him to go alone.

And so a long, long night passed.

Taga, Don, and Anna had slipped back into the shelter of the trees to await the coming of the dawn.

Don had seated himself with his back to the trunk of a cocoanut-palm, and Anna, tired out at last, was resting against the youngster's shoulder, her wet head leaning on his arm.

Taga had curled himself in a ball at Don's feet. But Don, the sleepless, sat on, keeping watch until daybreak.

With a quiet movement Don arose, and, laying Anna gently on the soft earth beside the trunk, he stepped over Taga's sleeping form, and strode out through the trees, to halt for a moment on the level of the cliffs.

The sky was still overcast with racing clouds, and seaward was a great expanse of water broken by white horses.

Where the reef ran was a smother of silvery foam, which rose and fell to the regular beat of the sea.

Again the reef was acting as a check to the force of the sea, and the water inside it was comparatively calm.

Turning to his right, Don saw the sweep of the jungle, which ran downward from the slope to the verge of Turtle Bay, and a gasp broke from his lips.

(There will be another grand long instalment of this magnificent serial in next week's bumper and FREE GIFT number of the "GEM." Make sure of your copy by ordering early.)



With a crash as though a thousand heavy guns had suddenly given tongue, the storm broke, and a great sheet of water came pouring down on Don and Scat. The sheer weight of water made them double up as they made their way back to the cliff.

EDITORIAL CHAT.

The Editor is always glad to hear from his reader chums. Address all your letters to: The Editor, The "Gem Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

My Dear Chums.—

There is one thing I want to urge on you all. Make sure of next week's number in advance. Be sure you get it. Tell your newsgent there must not be any mistake. I very specially don't want you to be disappointed, and there is a chance of this happening unless you take time by the forelock, and make certain of the old paper for May 6th.

The rush next week will be phenomenal. That is the plain fact. Why is this? There is one tremendous reason. Next week the GEM starts its record gallery of superb photo plates of footballers.

MOST STUPENDOUS OFFER EVER MADE!

This is an opportunity which will be jumped at by thousands. The magnificent pictures will, without the least shadow of a doubt, delight the hearts of all lovers of the great winter game, and we are pretty well all of us members of that crowd.

The photographs will be given away with the GEM week by week, and you will say they are prime. There is no mistake about that, for they are real photographs, exquisitely produced pictures, showing the players in the field, and they would do credit to any album, or collection of portraits.

The first photo will show "Fanny" Walden, the ever-popular outside-right of the Tottenham Hotspur Football Club. I have put a reproduction of the portrait in this number so that you may see the kind of photograph I am giving. Walden is a player who has, perhaps, as many enthusiastic admirers as anybody, and with just cause. He is a stylist, and his splendid success has been built up

by the hardest work imaginable. I know you will be no end proud to possess the vivid and lifelike portrait of the champion which you will find in next week's GEM.

So don't let there be any slip. It would be a real pity, for I am not able to fill blanks afterwards. I know some of my chums will make a point of collecting the portraits, and if they miss one—well, it is odds that there will be no chance of filling the vacant place in the book.

FURTHER SPLENDID OFFERS!

I want to remind you also that the "Magnet," and the "Boys' Friend" will be giving away free photos next week as well as the GEM. See the "Magnet" for TWO Real Photos of your favourite footballers. The "Boys' Friend" is issuing a perfectly wonderful series of photographs of boxers—the men who are on the way to world-wide fame.

Now, this number of the GEM, dated May 6th, will make a fresh chapter, I fancy, in the marvellous history of the old paper.

There is the most brilliant story Mr. Martin Clifford has ever written, and there is the portrait of famous "Fanny" Walden, a prince of footballers.

The GEM next week will contain these magnificent features—so once more look out for Number 1 Photograph, and don't miss a line of a gripping tale.

Of course, I have other reminders for you—a regular jostling crowd of them. There is the Tuck Hamper Competition, and there is the Rally-Round Club, to say nothing of other features. One need be a regular City Remembrancer to remember them all.

But I do not require any help to remember the positive treat Mr. Martin Clifford has prepared for the special number.

MYSTERY UPON MYSTERY!

Mr. Martin Clifford is good at surprises. He is for ever beating his best. He has certainly managed this well-nigh superhuman task this time.

The grand yarn of St. Jim's in next week's GEM is a real startler. It relates the disappearance of Tom Merry. No more astounding event can be found in the varied chronicles of St. Jim's. Tom Merry vanishes—just that, and though search-parties scour the whole countryside, not a trace of the missing lad can be discovered.

And, to make matters worse, Kildare disappears also. Kildare was leading one of the rescue-parties, and he simply vanishes as well into thin air.

Thus, mystery is piled on mystery. It is a great yarn. Read it, and let me know whether your opinion does not coincide with mine.

Among my week's letters is a jolly one from "Australia." That is the only address, and the good-hearted writer asks me to write back at once! Just

that! I should have been glad enough, only you can imagine a postman giving a queer look on being asked to deliver the reply. Thanks all the same to "Moir." She says in her family they all read the GEM, "even the matronly Bridget," and she wants to know who does all the washing and ironing at St. Jim's. I shall ask Mr. Martin Clifford about this. He may know. Anyhow, the work is done, and done well. Look at Gussy's cuffs and collars, if you doubt it.

But queries of this sort show genuine interest. I have never heard of the washerwoman at St. Jim's, but I have not a doubt she is a dear old soul, as modest as she is clever with the starch. Probably her name is Brown—Mary Brown—and I expect she lives in one of those old-fashioned cottages on the hill, not far from the little grocery shop and post-office at Rylcombe. If ever the old party is wanted for something else besides laundry-work—I mean, if it falls out that she could be really useful in one of the stories, she will certainly be called in and given something to do.

SEASONABLE STORIES!

I was asked the other day whether we are going to have any special country tales this season. The answer is, we are. We are! The summer would hardly be the summer unless the doughty champions of St. Jim's sallied forth and fifth, and saw the sights, and listened to the sounds of the country, risked their lives by facing infuriated bulls, and met interesting specimens of the tramp species on the roads. Cardew can always be relied on to come off best in any wordy encounter with a rough; it need not be only words, either.

Of course, Mr. Martin Clifford is not going over the old ground, though it is pretty safe to say that Gussy will be found shedding fresh distinction on his noble name and personality. D'Arcy somehow manages to do that, and he certainly cut an excellent figure on his tramp last year.

A GOOD NOTION IF—

I have received a regular galvanic battery of a letter from an old supporter at the School of Mines, Adelaide. He wants Gemites to have a badge. He says a working jeweller in his city can produce a really decent affair for half-a-crown. It is not a bad notion—GEM Badges all over the world, adding a dash of colour to the scene, but half-dollars are not as plentiful as they ought to be. It will have to wait.

Another friend of mine, writing from Collie, Western Australia—which he dubs the Cinderella State—says he thinks "The St. Jim's Tourists" was the best GEM yarn he ever read. There is only one thing for it—we must have another tour.

Now, as a final reminder, be sure and visit your newsgent early and ask him to reserve you a copy of next week's Bumper and FREE GIFT number of the GEM.

YOUR EDITOR.

THE COMPANION PAPERS. NEXT WEEK'S GRAND FREE GIFTS!

Monday. In the "Magnet" Library will be presented TWO REAL PHOTOS of the Cupite captains.

"In the "Boys' Friend" you will find a GRAND FREE REAL PHOTO of GEORGE COOK, the world-famous boxer. First of a wonderful series of "Rising Boxing Stars."

Tuesday. In the "Popular" there will be given FREE a MAGNIFICENT COLOURED ENGINE PLATE.

Wednesday. In the "Gem" Library will be given away a FREE REAL PHOTO of famous "FANNY" WALDEN, of the Tottenham Hotspurs, in action on the field of play.

MOST IMPORTANT!

If you have not already done so, place an order with your newsgent for copies of above-mentioned papers to be saved for you, and participate in THE COMPANION PAPERS' GRAND FREE GIFTS!

The Hero of the Shell.

(Continued from page 13.)

Can't imagine why the Head should play the ox like that. If there's been trickery—"

"Bai Jove! Twickery!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Well, it looks fishy all round," said Lowther. "Why did Grundy bring his football things—why did he come at all, in fact?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There they go again!" exclaimed Bob Cherry; and attention was turned from Grundy at once as the second half of the great match started.

The second half was hard and fast, and the game was gruelling. There were narrow escapes on both sides, but still no goal was scored. Tom Merry, on the wing, was playing up like a youthful International, carefully dodging charges from heavier opponents, and displaying a turn of speed and an accuracy in passing that made some of the Greyfriars seniors stare. It was evident that the Shell fellow lacked only size and weight to make him equal to any player on the field. The game went on, fast and hard; but minute followed minute, and there was no score.

It was almost on time, and Kildare's merry men were making a supreme effort. The Greyfriars goal was besieged, and Wingate & Co. had to fall back and defend. The leather went in from Kildare's foot, and the whole crowd held their breath for a second. But it came out from the ready fist of the Greyfriars goalkeeper. And then—

The St. Jim's juniors shouted almost deliriously at what happened next. The ball whizzed out, and a lithe figure leaped to meet it. The leather came on a ready head, and shot back into goal, beating the custodian all the way.

"Goal!"

"Tom Merry! Tom Merry! Tom Merry!"

"Bravo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Well done, St. Jim's!"

"Goal! Goal! Goal!"

It was the winning goal; and Tom Merry had taken it. As the referee blew his whistle there was a rush of Tom Merry's chums on the field. The junior forward was collared and hoisted into the air. Shoulder-high he was carried off the field by his enthusiastic comrades. Kildare thumped him on the back. Lowther punched him ecstatically in the ribs. Tom Merry gasped, and swayed on his giddy height.

"Chuck it, you asses!"

"Hurrah!"

Tom was set down breathless in the dressing-room. And it was a joyous party of juniors that crowded into the big car after tea, to take their homeward way to St. Jim's.

At St. Jim's that evening there was much discussion and speculation on the subject of the mysterious telephone message that had been received at Greyfriars. For, on the return of the footballers, it was found out at once that the message had not come from Dr. Holmes. Cutts and Gilmore had found it out earlier, and they were raging. Kildare and the other prefects made a keen inquiry into the matter, but they could only come to the conclusion that some person or persons unknown had played a rotten practical joke on the team—fortunately without bad results, as it had turned out.

But Tom Merry & Co. learned more than the prefects. They put two and two together, as it were—the spoof message, and Grundy's presence with his football-rig, and many mysterious remarks that Grundy had made, remarks no longer mysterious. Grundy had done it. And Grundy, who was not a fellow to tell untruths, owned up when he was accused, and justified himself. He had done it for the sake of the side—not being able to foresee, of course, that Kildare would be crass ass enough to play a dud like Tom Merry when he might have filled the vacant place with a masterly footballer like George Alfred Grundy. That was how Grundy put it, and he appeared to regard his justification as complete.

In that matter the St. Jim's juniors did not see eye to eye with George Alfred.

The matter did not come to the knowledge of the prefects. But Tom Merry & Co. dealt with it effectually. The rigging to which George Alfred Grundy was subjected was thoroughgoing, scientific, and unsparring—it was such a ragging as Tom Merry hoped might knock a little common-sense even into Grundy's head, though that was generally regarded as impervious to such things. Whether it had that effect or not, certainly it was very improbable that Grundy would ever again take such steps to get his worthy self included in the St. Jim's First—even for the sake of the school!

THE END.

(Next week's grand long story will be entitled: "THE MYSTERY OF TOM MERRY!" By Martin Clifford. Make sure you order your GEM early.)

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Mr. LEONARD ROE, Quorn, Leicestershire, writes: "I have mended my watch from the instructions given in 'The Amateur Mechanic,' though it has not been going for twelve months. Now I am going to restore the colour of a pair of Brown Boots. Your Articles on 'Miniature Electric Lighting' are very interesting to me. I have already fitted up my cycle with electric light from the directions given in these Articles."

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