

SUPERB COMPLETE SCHOOL & RACING-STABLE STORIES & THRILLING
SERIAL INSIDE!

The GEM 2^d

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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LIBRARY OF
SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES



THE DORMITORY RAID!

Led by Tom Merry, the School House juniors take the New House by storm! (A lively incident from the grand, long complete school story of the chums of St. Jim's, contained in this issue.)



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

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday
"THE MAGNET" Every Monday
"THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday
"JUNGLE JINKS" Every Thursday
THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly

MY dear Chums,—The best and jolliest paper for the holidays! That's the GEM. The famous weekly has a topping programme for next week, and I want to ask my loyal supporters who have stood by the GEM for many a year to tell all the new friends they are making about the yarns. For the GEM is the standby. You cannot beat it for humour and good feeling, and the brightest possible stories of school and adventure. Take next Wednesday's superb list of contents! We lead off with a magnificent yarn of St. Jim's, a regular second-to-none tale.

"D'ARCY'S DISCOVERY!"

By Martin Clifford.

Nothing could be more seasonable than this yarn. Seven of the most famous characters at St. Jim's are out on tramp, and the holiday-making expedition brings in its train some of the most astounding adventures which ever came the way of Tom Merry & Co. Of course, Gussy is there, all there, as energetic and eager for novelty as ever. He thought he would not find enough romance. He should worry! D'Arcy tumbles right into the midst of a gilded mystery, and you cannot be surprised at that, seeing that he insists on sleeping in a strange old castle which the chums come upon in their wanderings. D'Arcy has bad dreams, and when he wakes up he finds that something extraordinary and tremendously real has hooked itself on to his dream. The spirit of mystery hangs over this entrancing story. You will like it. It is the real goods!

A BOATING ISSUE!

I can heartily recommend the new number of the "St. Jim's News." You have got the music of the rowlocks, and a lot about the merry folks who are keen on boating. And they are jolly keen on boating at St. Jim's, as we all know. They have the pull there, so to speak. Some of the best St. Jim's yarns have been about the river, and the amusing characters who let out boats, and whose talk flows on like the river itself, so steadily that the hind legs of a listening cow would tremble in their sockets and fall out. The new supplement carries on in noble fashion with the river spirit we associate with St. Jim's. The coming number is special, so fail not to see it!

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"THE PRICE OF SILENCE!"

By Geoffrey Prout.

Those good chums, Bob Harkley, Denny Burdett, and Sandy Muoro, are found up to their necks in trouble in next week's gripping film-adventure story. There is a lot of underhand business revealed in this fine yarn. The chief actor in a very important picture which is in course of preparation, is faced with a problem which concerns the happiness of others who are dear to him, and it is fortunate for his peace of mind that he is able to rely on the services of the three comrades of the road. They back him up through thick and thin. Be sure you read this great story. It will grip you. Read how a certain secret was guarded for the sake of another, to save that other anguish of mind. The plot is startling. Film-land is a realm where there are many thrilling happenings which do not get filmed.

"THE SECRET OF THE GALLEONS!"

By Roland Spencer.

All thanks to the amazing smartness of Sarky Marline, a frightful disaster is avoided in next week's thrilling instalment of our serial. Tales there have been in plenty about the quest for Spanish gold, but this one can take the palm for cleverness and downright ingenuity. It is all so real that you get that odd, smothered feeling when the diving goes all wrong. We see how the Rat prepares for vengeance, but he does not really get the winning hand. What follows you will see come Wednesday.

THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

We are just on the eve of the publication of this epoch-making book, which is the most cheery and companionable volume ever issued. I hope all Gemites have registered their orders, and I really have not a doubt of it, since my chums will always take a hint. The advice to order the "Holiday Annual" in good time was sound. There will be a record rush, and what is the use of getting left and having to wait for your copy? Never yet has the "Holiday Annual" shown a finer budget of yarns, all of them merry and bright, and full of the spirit of adventure and derring-do. The hobby articles are just it, and in illustrations the book is in the front line. You could not find a more attractive present, not if you went toiling all over the world seeking for a rival. The "Holiday Annual" has no rival.

THE TUCK HAMPER!

Ribticklers are asked for. When a storyette is extra good the sender gets a well filled Tuck Hamper. Half-crowns are offered for second-line yarnlets. I am always glad to get stories, so roll up with yours. The next big chance may come your way.

Your Editor.

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

TUCK FOR MANCHESTER! HIS WAY!

A country yokel, going along a lane, met a friend carrying a ladder. "Why, George, where be you goin'?" he asked. "My woiife has bought a clothes' prop, and Oi be goin' to cut the nick in the top for the loine to fit in," was the reply. "Haw, haw!" laughed the other. "Tha dawn't want a ladder for that. Whoy, man, tha should lean out of the bed-room window, and get the missus to hold the prop while tha cuts the nick!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to Philip Barker, 310, Stockport Road, Levenshulme, Manchester.

THE REASON!

Grandfather: "Johnny, why do you spell bank with a capital B?" Johnny: "Because pa said a bank was no good without a large 'capital.'"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Sydney W. Court, 87, Eton Road, Ilford, Essex.

A HAPPY SUGGESTION!

Young Matron: "I want a piece of meat without bone, fat, or gristle." Butcher: "Well, madam, ye'd better buy an egg!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Sydney Smulowitz 15, Kent Street, Kensington, Johannesburg, South Africa.

A BRIGHT BOY!

Teacher: "What's your name?" Boy: "Smiff." Teacher: "Where do you come from?" Boy: "I dunno." Teacher: "Ever been to school before?" Boy: "Yes." Teacher: "Was it a board school?" Boy: "No; brick!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Thomas Ditchfield, 28, Belcrae Road, Darwin.

EXPECTED TOO MUCH!

"Waitah! Waitah!" wailed the monocolled diner. "Come heah, sir! Beastlay outwage! I distinctly observe two flies fighting in my soup, by Jove!" "Well, sir," replied the waiter, glancing at the plate, "what do you expect for sixpence—a bull fight?"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Wm. Martin 392, Dumbarton Road, Dalmuir, nr Glasgow.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON.

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

Feeling runs high as ever between the School House and the New House, but in the latest feud George Alfred Grundy of the School House makes a rare bungle of things!



GRUNDY GOING STRONG!

A Magnificent, Thrilling Long Complete School Story of G. A. Grundy and Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, By Famous

Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1. Not Grundy!

"COUNT me in!"

"Hem!"

Grundy of the Shell Form at St. Jim's spoke heartily. Tom Merry & Co. looked very dubious.

A council of war was going on by the window in the junior Common-room in the School House. There were seven juniors discussing a plan of campaign in low tones, and, as a matter of fact, they had not observed the burly figure of George Alfred Grundy sprawling in an armchair near at hand.

They became aware of his proximity when he bade them count him in, and then seven faces were turned towards George Alfred Grundy with extremely doubtful expressions on them.

"Hem!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Hum!" remarked Monty Lowther.

"H'm!" said Manners.

"I'm your man," went on Grundy, without even noticing the dubious looks of the seven. George Alfred was not quick on the uptake, so to speak. "Jolly good idea. I think, to give the New House a mopping-up before the school breaks up for the holidays. Give them something to remember us by, what?"

"Yaas, wathah!" assented Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth. "But weally, Gwunday—"

"But—" murmured Blake.

Herries and Digby grinned.

"You see—" said Tom Merry.

"I see," assented Grundy. "It's a raid on the New House after lights out."

"Yes, but—"

"We're going to give Figgins & Co. the kybosh, what?"

"That's it! But—"

Grundy nodded approval.

"I'm the man you want, and I'm ready," he said. "If it comes to scrapping, I could knock out any two New House chaps—perhaps three! Just as easily as I could knock out any two of you fellows."

"Bai Jove!"

"If you could only do it as easily as that, Grundy, perhaps you'd better not take it on," grinned Monty Lowther.

"We'll take our pillows and rush their dormitory and give them jip!" went on Grundy, unheeding. "Better take plenty of chaps. I'll come, and bring Wilkins and Gunn. Better leave D'Arcy out, though!"

"Weally, Gwunday—"

"Much better," said Grundy firmly. "You all know what a silly ass D'Arcy is—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Leave him out," said Grundy in a tone of finality. "And perhaps, Tom Merry, it would be better for you to leave the leadership in my hands."

"Oh, my hat!" said Tom.

"I'm not a fellow to push myself forward in any way, as you know—"

"Oh!"

"But this will be rather a ticklish business, raiding the other House after lights out. Better have a fellow with some brains in the lead. You see that, Merry?"

"I—I see!" gasped Tom.

"Leave it to me, then," said Grundy. "Now that's arranged, I'll settle the details. I sha'n't want you, Manners."

"Won't you?" ejaculated Manners of the Shell.

"No—you're not much good in a scrap. My idea is to take only picked men," explained Grundy. "I shall leave you and D'Arcy out. Digby had better keep clear, too—he's not much good. But there's plenty of chaps to choose from. I'll make up a list."

Grundy of the Shell took pencil and paper and began to jot down names.

Tom Merry & Co. blinked at him.

They had been discussing the plan of campaign for the raid on the rival House at St. Jim's, and their plans had not included George Alfred Grundy in the very least. Grundy was a hefty fighting-man, and he had heaps of pluck, and undoubtedly he was a patriotic upholder of the rights and traditions of the School House. But Grundy was every known kind of an ass, and on that account he was not required to take part in an affair that needed caution.

When Grundy butted in the seven had hesitated to tell him plainly that he was superfluous, and that there was no room for him in the plan of campaign. They didn't want to hurt Grundy's feelings if they could help it.

Grundy evidently had no such scruples. He was prepared to pass over their personal feelings like a ploughshare.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at Grundy, and then they looked at one another. Then they laughed—excepting Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who frowned. Arthur Augustus was indignant.

"You uttah ass, Gwunday!" said Arthur Augustus in measured tones. "I feel bound to mention, Gwunday, that I wegard you as a fwabjous fathead!"

"Shut up, D'Arcy—you're interrupting me!" Grundy looked up. "I shall want you, Merry."

"Thanks!" said Tom, laughing.

"Not at all. It's your duty to back up your House! I'll see that you do it! Lowther, too—only you're not to talk too much, as usual, Lowther. Cut out the chin-wag, you know. I'm not going to have a lot of chatter where I'm in command."

"Why you—" began Lowther.

"Shut up! I'll take you, Blake."

"Will you?" murmured Blake.

"Yes—and Herries. Herries will do, though he's a bit of a fool."

"A bit of a what?" breathed George Herries.

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"Fool! I'll ask Wilkins and Gunn—I can rely on them. And Talbot and Kangaroo and Glyn—"

Grundy was quite busy jotting down names. Evidently it was already settled, to Grundy's satisfaction, that he was taking the lead in that night's raid on Figgins & Co.'s quarters in the New House. Grundy had a way of taking things for granted. Often and often he took too much for granted. Thus it was in the present case.

"Hold on a minute, Grundy!" said Tom Merry gently. "Perhaps I'd better mention—"

"You needn't talk," said Grundy. "That's the worst of you fellows—you talk too much. You should keep an eye on me, you know, and learn to be strong and silent. Now—"

"But I'd better mention—"

"No need to mention anything! I think I'll take Wildrake of the Fourth. He's rather cheeky, but he's good in a scrap. And—"

"I'd better mention," persisted Tom Merry, "that I'm not leaving the lead in your hands, Grundy—"

"Eh?"

"And you're not coming—"

"What?"

"Because you're such a silly owl that you would be sure to muck up the whole bizney," explained Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Grundy stared at Tom Merry & Co. He seemed to be taken by surprise.

"You see," grinned Blake, "we'd take you, but you're such a silly ass, Grundy!"

"Such a thumping idiot, you know!" added Manners.

"Such a burbling duffer!" said Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"So you can go to sleep to-night," said Monty Lowther. "When there's anything on that needs any sense, Grundy, the safest place for you is in bed!"

Grundy put his pencil and paper into his pocket. He realised that he had been a little too previous, as it were. The bumptiousness of Grundy often led to Grundy being sat upon. It had led to it once more. He rose to his feet, frowning darkly.

"So you think you're leaving me out?" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Grundy pushed back his cuffs.

"Which of you wants a hiding first?" he asked. "I'm going to lick the lot of you for your cheek, and I'll start on whichever one you like. Say the word!"

"Isn't that rather a large order?" grinned Tom Merry.

"Not too large for me! I'll begin with you. Come on!"

Seven juniors rose to their feet suddenly, as if moved by

seven springs. Seven pairs of hands were laid on George Alfred Grundy. Grundy of the Shell was always ready for a scrap; it was his chief characteristic that he was incessantly looking for trouble, and generally finding it. But the seven cheery chums of the School House had no intention whatever of having their council of war turned into a dog-fight. There was a shorter way of dealing with the obstreperous George Alfred.

In the gasp of seven pairs of hands, Grundy, hefty fellow as he was, was simply nowhere.

His arms and legs, his ears and his hair and his collar, were captured, and Grundy found himself swept off the floor, and dizzily floating in space, swung there by seven grasping pairs of hands.

"Ow!" he gasped.

Like the celebrated coffin of Mahomet, he floated between the earth and the heavens. But the suspense did not last so long in Grundy's case as in that of the Prophet's coffin—in fact, in Grundy's case, it lasted only a few seconds. Then Grundy smote the well-worn carpet in the junior Common-room.

Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

Bump!

"Wooooohooooop!" roared Grundy.

He struggled wildly.

Still struggling, he was carried out of the room into the passage.

There he smote the floor again.

Bump!

"Oh! Ow! Yow! I'll—Yaroooh!" Grundy sprawled on the floor, gasping and spluttering.

"Now, all jump together," said Tom Merry. "Jump on him! And come down hard!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Grundy of the Shell was not rapid in his movements, as a rule. He was generally slow and rather clumsy. But circumstances alter cases. On this occasion Grundy's movements were remarkably quick. Before a single one of the seven juniors could jump, Grundy had jumped—and he was speeding down the passage like a winner of the hundred yards!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy, apparently, had had enough. And Tom Merry & Co., chuckling, returned to the Common-room and resumed their council of war, uninterrupted further by Grundy of the Shell.

CHAPTER 2.

In the Dead of Night!

KILDARE of the Sixth looked into the junior Common-room at nine-twenty-five that night, and rapped out cheerily:

"Bed!"

Tom Merry & Co. started for their dormitory. Blake & Co., under the eye of Darrell of the Sixth, marched to the Fourth Form dormitory. There was nothing in the manner of the juniors to indicate that anything unusual was planned for that especial night. But, as a matter of fact, that night was to be an eventful one.

Tom Merry & Co. turned in in the Shell dormitory, as usual, and Kildare saw lights out for them. When the prefect had retired, and the Shell fellows were left to darkness and slumber, there was a buzz of voices from bed to bed.

"What time to-night, Tom?" asked Kangaroo.

"Not before eleven," said Tom. "We shall have to wait till the giddy prefects are gone to bed."

"Somebody had better stay awake, then."

"That's all right—I'm staying awake."

"Good!" yawned Kangaroo; and he closed his eyes.

One by one the Shell fellows dropped off to sleep. The raid on the New House had to be timed for a late hour—and, even so, there was a good deal of risk in a crowd of juniors leaving their sleeping quarters. But they were cheerily prepared to take that risk.

Tom Merry remained awake, with some difficulty, to call his comrades when the appointed hour came. Quite unknown to him, another fellow was staying awake in the dormitory. That fellow was George Alfred Grundy.

Tom Merry & Co. supposed that Grundy was done with—indeed, they had almost forgotten his existence. But Grundy was very far from done with. George Alfred was a stickler.

Tom Merry yawned a good many times, and pinched himself to keep awake in the silence of the dormitory. It was not easy for a healthy fellow, who had worked and played hard during the day, to keep awake till eleven o'clock; but it had to be done. For the present opportunity was a rare one, and too good to be lost.

Alarms and excursions between the rival Houses of St. Jim's were frequent enough; but generally they were conducted by daylight. A night attack was generally an impossibility, both Houses being locked up at night. To get into either House from the outside after lock-up was out of the question.

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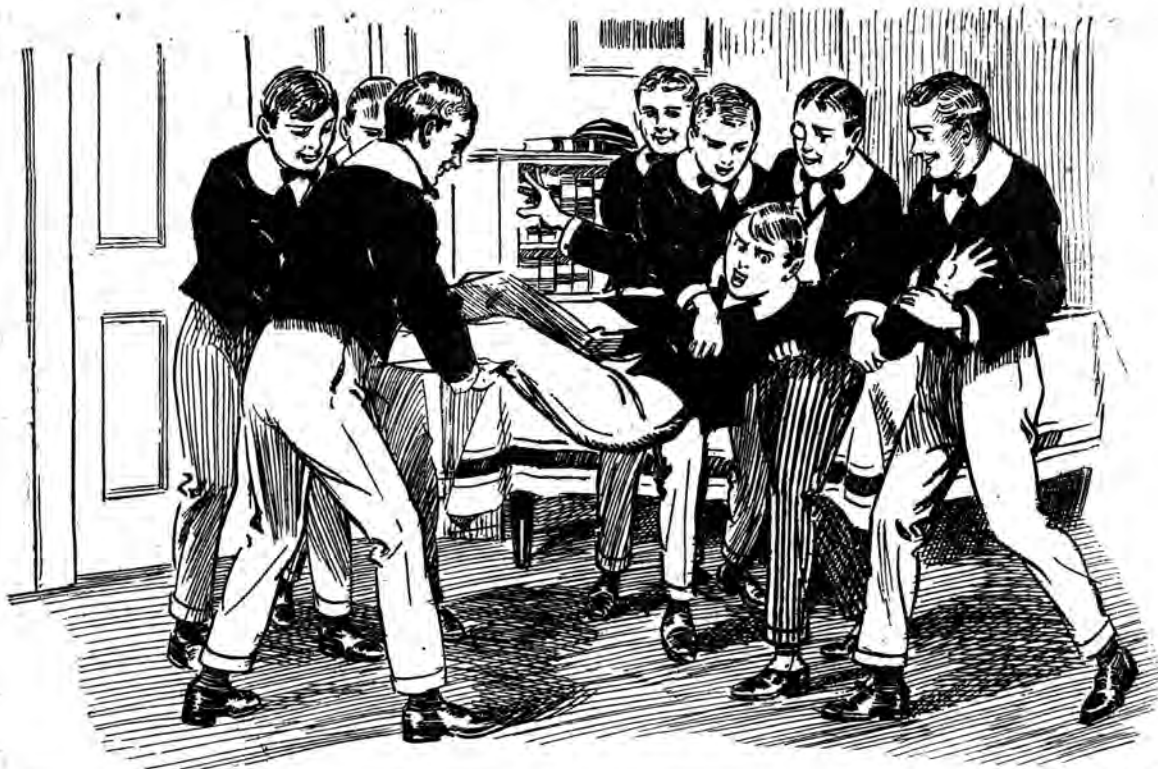
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In the grasp of seven pairs of hands George Alfred Grundy found himself swept off the floor and dizzily floating in space. But the suspense did not last long—in fact, it lasted only a few seconds. Then Grundy smote the well-worn carpet in the junior Common-room with a thud! Bump! "Yaroooh!" he roared. (See page 4.)

But in the irregular mass of buildings that composed St. Jim's there was an old passage that gave access from one House to the other. It was seldom used, and it was barred by a strong oak door that was always kept locked, the key being in the possession of Taggles, the porter. And the discovery had been made that the oaken door had been left unlocked for once.

Old Taggles was, as he declared, a strict teetotaler, and his favourite drink was gin-and-water. Possibly, for once, he had been too liberal with the former ingredient, and too parsimonious with the latter. At all events, having had occasion to enter the old passage, Taggles had for once forgotten to lock the door again.

The door might have remained unsecured for weeks, without anyone being the wiser; but that was where Trimble of the Fourth came in. Even Trimble had his uses.

Baggy Trimble, having bagged a cake from another fellow's study, had judiciously retired to that remote passage to devour his prey at his leisure. And so by chance he had discovered that the door was unlocked, and that nothing barred access to the New House.

Instead of locking the door and taking away the key, Taggles had left it unlocked, and left the key in it! And Trimble, of course, told the fellows at once what he had found out. He did not mention the cake—Reilly of the Fourth was inquiring rather excitedly about a missing cake, and Baggy thought it wiser to leave that out. Trimble had been scouting, so he said, and here was the result.

A visit to the old oak door having proved the accuracy of Baggy's information, the council of war was held, and the night attack decided upon. In the dead of night a war-party of School House fellows was to invade the rival House, falling on the enemy like a bolt from the blue. Figgins & Co. were to be routed out of their dormitory, smitten hip and thigh, and generally compelled to realise what exceedingly small beer they were in comparison with the School House. Then the raiders were to retreat, victorious, locking the door after them, and leaving weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the defeated House.

So rare an opportunity was not to be missed. Tom Merry & Co. were very keen to wind up the term by giving their old rivals the unmistakable "kybosh."

Eleven strokes boomed out from the clock tower at last, and Tom Merry turned out of bed. He was glad to get into motion; a dozen times he had nearly dropped off to sleep.

He shook Manners and Lowther, and his chums yawned and sat up in bed.

"Time to turn out," whispered Tom; and he passed from bed to bed, shaking the Shell fellows who had been picked for the expedition. There was much yawning and rubbing of drowsy eyes in the Shell dormitory. Keenness for the midnight raid had rather "petered" out by that time, and some of the raiders would have preferred to remain in bed. But they all turned dutifully out—the Terrible Three, and Wilkins and Gunn, and Kangaroo and Dane and Bernard Glyn, and George Gore and Talbot. Tom Merry was very careful to avoid waking Grundy. He remained unaware that Grundy was wide awake and watching him gloomily and sardonically in the darkness.

Trousers were donned over pyjamas, and rubber shoes sorted out of a box in the dormitory cupboard. In that light attire the raiders prepared to start. The night was warm—and, besides, it was necessary to be ready to bolt into bed at a moment's notice, in case of alarm.

So it was not a full-dress occasion; it was, as Monty Lowther humorously remarked, a function in which evening-dress was indispensable.

Tom Merry opened the door softly.

All was silent without. Far away, beyond the staircase, there was a pale glimmer of light—all lights were not yet out. Possibly the Head was sitting up in his study, going over the notes for his new edition of "Eachylus," upon which he had been engaged for about twenty years or so.

Possibly Mr. Railton was smoking a last pipe in his study before going to his room. One or two of the Sixth might have been still out of bed. But in the dormitory passage all was dark and silent, and the coast was clear.

"Come on!" murmured Tom Merry.

The Shell fellows moved on cautiously in the darkness, not towards the big staircase. There was a back staircase near the box-rooms that led them down to the passage, where stood the unlocked door. On that staircase they were to meet the Fourth Form contingent—Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy, Julian and Hammond and Wildrake and Kerruish, Cardew, Clive, and Levison. From the gloom came an inquiring voice:

"Is that you, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes, ass," said Tom. "Don't shout."

"I was not awah, Tom Mowwy, that I was shoutin'—"

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"Quiet!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Dry up, Gussy, old man!" murmured Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Is this a raid on the New House," asked Monty Lowther, "or have we turned out of bed to listen to Gussy wagging his chin?"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Oh, get on with it!" said Kangaroo.

Tom Merry turned on the light of an electric torch, and the party went on down the back stairs, treading cautiously. They reached the communicating passage, and trod softly on towards the oaken door that gave access to the New House.

"Turn off the light!" hissed Blake suddenly.

"What——"

"Somebody's up! Quick!"

Tom Merry shut off the light. The raiders halted and listened, their hearts beating. Behind them, in the darkness, came the sound of footfalls!

CHAPTER 3.

Grundy, Too!

"BAI JOVE!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"Quiet!"

"Weally, you know——"

"Hush!" breathed Tom Merry.

Quite distinctly the footfalls sounded in the corridor behind the raiders. Somebody was following them from the School House; that was clear.

The juniors listened, breathing hard. Had a watchful prefect discovered their absence from their dormitories? If so, the raid was destined to come to a sudden end in its very beginning—the raiders to be marched back to their House to take their punishment for breaking dormitory bounds after lights out. That would have been a most inglorious ending to the great raid.

"A—a prefect or a master would carry a light!" whispered Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's one of the fellows following on, I suppose!" muttered Tom Merry. "It—it must be, I think!"

"Pewwaps it's a burglah, deah boy!"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

There was a sudden, almost blinding flash of light in the dense darkness. It came from an electric torch that had been suddenly turned on.

It glared in the startled faces of the School House juniors. Behind it, as it flashed, all was dense darkness, and they could not see who held the light.

For a terrible moment the juniors wondered whether it was their Housemaster, or even the Head himself!

Then a familiar voice was heard:

"So here you are!"

"Grundy!" breathed Tom Merry.

"That ass Grundy!" hissed Lowther.

"That cwass ass Gwunday——"

"You dummy——"

"You chump——"

"Did I frighten you?" asked Grundy, with a grin.

"You startled us, you silly owl!" said Tom Merry hotly.

"What the thump are you doing here, Grundy? I thought you were asleep in bed. I've told you plainly you're not wanted in this raid!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And I'm telling you plainly that I'm not being left out," said Grundy coolly. "If you think you can leave me out, Tom Merry, that's where you make a silly mistake. Besides, you know, or ought to know, that you fellows will muck up the whole bizney if I'm not on hand to take care of things."

"You silly ass!"

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Grundy.

"Weally, Gwunday——"

"Shut up, D'Arcy! I've told you lots of times that you talk too much."

"Bai Jove!"

"Look here, Grundy, get back to the House!" said Manners.

"Rats!"

"You cheeky chump——"

"Oh, dry up! Are we getting on, or are we standing here all night?" asked Grundy sarcastically. "I'm sorry if I frightened you! Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry breathed hard and deep. His inclination was strong to collar Grundy and mop up the dusty corridor with him. But that, evidently, could not be done without giving the alarm in both Houses. Irritating as it was, Grundy had to be given his head. It was useless to argue with Grundy or to reason with him.

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"Well, come on!" said Tom, at last. "But keep quiet, Grundy!"

"Don't you worry!" said Grundy contemptuously. "I shan't give the alarm! You're more likely to do that with your chin-wag! My advice to you is to shut up!"

"Come on!" breathed Tom.

He led the way again towards the New House. The oaken door was opened, and closed again behind the raiders. In the old dusky corridor there was a soft sound of rubber shoes, treading lightly, and a deep echo of a heavy tread—the tread of George Alfred Grundy.

"Will you be quiet, Grundy?" said Tom Merry.

"Who's not quiet?"

"You're clattering your silly boots——"

"Why didn't you put on wubbah shoes, Gwunday, if you were bound to come buttin' in?"

"Oh, rubbish!" said Grundy. "You fellows are nervous. You shouldn't get out at night if you're nervous."

"Bai Jove! I——"

"I suppose we can't wring Grundy's silly neck, and bury him somewhere in this passage?" said Monty Lowther.

"Shut up, Lowther! We're wasting time—besides, you're making a row! Shut up and get on with it!"

Grundy's powerful voice fairly echoed along the hollow corridor.

"Will you shut up, Grundy?" hissed Gore.

"You fellows are doing all the talking, I think. Never came on such a set of babblers. Like a lot of cackling geese!"

"If you must speak, whisper, you dummy!" hissed Blake.

"Oh, rats!"

The yearning to collar Grundy, and to dust the old corridor with him, was almost too strong to be resisted. But the expedition was at stake, and Tom Merry & Co. resisted that deep yearning.

They trod on towards the New House, Grundy's heavy tramp following on behind.

Tom Merry flashed on his light.

"Here's the stairs," he whispered.

The juniors were in the New House now. They had been over the ground before, and knew their way well enough. Silently they crept up a narrow staircase from the passage. Even Grundy seemed to realise the need of caution now, for he trod lightly in his boots. Lightly as he trod, however, he could not be quite silent. In his most cautious moments George Alfred Grundy was somewhat elephantine.

"Here we are!" whispered Tom, as the raiders reached the corridor on which opened the door of the Fourth Form dormitory in the New House. In that dormitory, the New House section of the St. Jim's Fourth were sleeping the sleep of the just. Figgins & Co., wrapped in balmy slumber, may have been dreaming of cricket matches, or of the coming holidays; but certainly they were not dreaming of the School House raiders, now so near at hand.

"Sure you've got it right?" asked Grundy.

"Shut up!"

"Well, we don't want to jump on the Fifth by mistake," said Grundy sarcastically. "Just like you if we did, Tom Merry. Wait till I've had a look round."

"Shut up, and mind your own bizney, Grundy."

"This is my bizney! I'm going to see that this raid is a success," said Grundy coolly.

He turned on his electric torch, and flashed the light to and fro. Tom Merry had ascertained his whereabouts by turning on the merest glimmer of light. But Grundy was heavy-handed in all he did. His electric torch was a powerful one. He flashed it about him freely, and powerful beams of light danced on the walls and the windows in the passage.

"All serene," said Grundy. "This is all right."

"Turn off that light, you idiot!"

"Look here——"

"Turn it off!" hissed Tom.

"Oh, don't be nervous," sneered Grundy. "Old Ratty's fast asleep, and so's everybody in the House. You're as nervy as an old hen, Tom Merry."

"Grundy, old man!" pleaded Wilkins.

"Shut up, Wilkins!"

Grundy turned off the light at last.

"Now then, ready!" said Tom Merry, and he felt for the knob of the dormitory door.

"Hold on a minute," said Grundy.

"What for?"

"Better let me take the lead. You know what a duffer you are."

Grundy pushed Tom Merry aside, and took hold of the door-handle. Tom barely restrained himself from seizing Grundy by the collar and banging his head on the door.

The door flew open. The New House dormitory, dimly lighted by the moonlight that streamed in at the high windows, was open to the raiders.

Figgins of the Fourth sat up in bed.



There was a sudden, almost blinding, flash of light in the dense darkness. It came from an electric torch that had been suddenly turned on. It glared in the startled faces of the School House juniors, who, for a terrible moment, wondered whether it was their Housemaster, or even the Head himself! (See page 6.)

"What's that row?" he asked. "Who's that jabbering? Why—what—My hat! Wake up, you chaps!"

"Go for 'em!" roared Grundy.

He rushed in. He had his pillow under his arm. He slipped it into his hands, and led the attack—ran into a chair in the darkness, stumbled over it, and came with a crash to the floor.

CHAPTER 4. The Dormitory Fight!

"OH, my hat!"
"Oh, you ass!"
"Yawwooh!"

Grundy sprawled headlong, yelling. Tom Merry fell over his sprawling legs, and landed on the floor, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stumbled over Tom and crashed.

Figgins was out of bed in a twinkling.

Dormitory raids and pillow-fights were not uncommon at St. Jim's. Figgy had supposed, for a moment, that this was a raid by the New House Shell, or perhaps the New House Fifth. But the familiar voices revealed the fact that it was the School House enemy he had to deal with—his old rivals from "over the way."

"School House cads!" shouted Figgins. "Go for 'em!"

Fatty Wynn and Kerr and Redfern were out of bed, pillow in hand, in a twinkling. The rest of the New House Fourth followed them fast.

Two or three candle-ends were lighted, and set on wash-stands. Tom Merry picked himself up and led the attack, and his comrades followed on. Pillows and bolsters were brandished in the air, or flew across the dormitory as missiles.

In a few minutes a battle-royal was raging up and down the dormitory and among the beds.

"School House cads!"

"New House rotters!"

"Give 'em beans!"

"Go for the cads!"

"Wush them, deah boys! Wush the wottahs!"

It was a terrific combat. Grundy sorted himself out and rushed into the fray with brandished pillow. His first hefty blow caught Tom Merry on the back of the head—quite by mistake, of course—and hurled the captain of the Shell upon Figgins. His second laid Arthur Augustus breathless on

the floor. His third fairly knocked out Talbot of the Shell.

By that time, however, it had dawned upon Grundy that in the uncertain light he was hitting the wrong heads, and fortunately he turned his attention to the New House enemy.

Tom Merry and Figgins had closed, and rolled on the floor. Tom tore himself loose and jumped up.

The din in the dormitory was terrific.

It was certain to reach the ears of authority sooner or later, and to bring a prefect, or Mr. Ratcliff himself, on the scene. That little risk always had to be taken on the occasion of a pillow-fight.

Up and down the dormitory went the battle, and though the School House raiders had come with the intention of giving the New House the complete "kybosh," Figgins & Co. held their own well. Perhaps the presence of Grundy in the ranks of the raiders helped them. Grundy's swipes were simply terrific, but unluckily they landed on friend as often as on foe. In the excitement of combat, Grundy did not seem to heed where his terrific swipes fell, and he knocked out friend and foe with great impartiality.

Jack Blake reeled as he caught Grundy's swiping pillow with his ear, and he turned on Grundy. Grundy captured Blake's bolster with his nose, and went down on his back.

"Whoop!" roared Grundy.

Gunn of the Shell, who was near the door, gave a sudden call. He caught a light in the passage without.

"Cave!"

"Ware beaks!" panted Wilkins.

The alarm had been given. There were footsteps on the stairs, and the gleam of a light. Monteith of the Sixth, the head prefect of the New House, was hurrying on the scene.

"Retreat!" called out Tom Merry.

"Knock them out!" roared Figgins. "Kick the cads out of our dorm."

"Harrah!"

The School House party gathered and retreated in a body to the door. Figgins & Co. pressed after them, attacking hotly. The raiders backed out, Tom Merry and Blake and Talbot covering the retreat. They retreated into the passage, followed by a derisive yell from the New House Fourth.

"Hook it!" gasped Tom Merry.

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Which side were the victors, and which the vanquished, there was no time to decide. The arrival of a Sixth Form prefect on the scene put a sudden end to hostilities. Tom Merry & Co. scampered away in the darkness, what time Figgins & Co. blew out the candles and tumbled into bed. But the retreat was not quite in time. Monteith, hurrying up the passage, fairly ran into Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and collared him.

"Who—what—" ejaculated Monteith.

"Wescue, deah boys!" howled Arthur Augustus.

Blake and Herries and Digby rushed back. Prefect or no prefect, they were not going to leave their chum in the hands of the enemy.

Monteith had an electric torch in his hand—a whizzing pillow knocked it away, and all was dark.

The chums of the School House Fourth collared him.

"Come on!" shouted Tom Merry.

"We're coming!" shouted Blake. "Keep on!"

"Right-ho!"

Monteith went sprawling on the floor, and Arthur Augustus was released. Blake & Co. rushed after the rest of the party. The delay had been only for a minute, but the main body were well ahead and sprinting along the corridor to the School House by that time. Tom Merry & Co. reached the old oak door, and threw it open and rushed through. Grundy of the Shell stopped at the door.

Grundy prided himself on his presence of mind in an emergency. This was an emergency, and it was time for Grundy to show his presence of mind. He displayed it at once.

He stood by the door till the party had scampered through, and then closed the door and locked it.

That Blake & Co. had been left behind Grundy did not know—and so simple a supposition did not even occur to his powerful brain. All the fellows who were with Grundy had scampered past, and Grundy supposed that the whole party had passed. So he closed and locked the door, to bar any pursuit from the New House.

A minute later Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy arrived at the door. They bumped into it in the dark, and Blake groped for the handle to open it.

It did not open.

Retreat was cut off, and Blake & Co. were locked out of their House.

Blake gave a gasp.

"Oh, my hat! The door's fastened! Some silly idiot has fastened it—"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Hammer on it—they'll hear!" gasped Herries.

Blake thumped on the door.

But Tom Merry & Co. were in the School House by that time, scudding back to their dormitories. Grundy, last of the party, heard the thumping on the door. But he only chuckled, taking it for granted that some New House pursuer was doing the thumping.

Grundy strolled on cheerily, quite bucked by the presence of mind he had shown. And Blake & Co., shut out of their House, waited, with feelings too deep for words, while a light advanced along the passage towards them, and Monteith and Baker and Webb of the New House Sixth arrived. And in the charge of the three prefects, Blake & Co. were marched back to the New House into the presence of Mr. Ratcliff.

CHAPTER 5.

A Surprise for Mr. Railton!

"SCANDALOUS!"

Mr. Horace Ratcliff, Housemaster of the New House, looked into the Fourth Form dormitory in his House, and pronounced that it was scandalous.

Figgins & Co. were in bed again. But undoubtedly the dormitory looked a good deal as if a cyclone had struck it.

Pillows, bolsters, blankets lay about. A washstand had been overturned, a jug had been broken.

"Figgins!" boomed Mr. Ratcliff.

"Yes, sir!" murmured George Figgins.

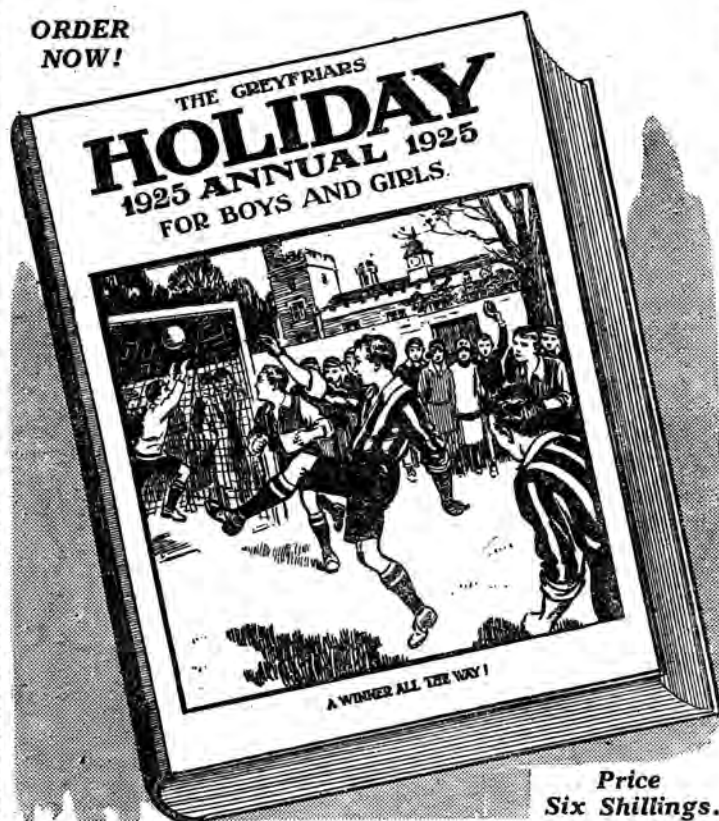
"What has happened here?"

"A—a—I think there's been a pillow-fight, sir," stammered Figgins. Some of the New House juniors grinned under cover of the bedclothes. There really was not much doubt that there had been a pillow-fight.

"So this is how you entertain yourselves at nearly midnight in this dormitory," said Mr. Ratcliff.

Figgins & Co. were silent. Mr. Ratcliff did not know yet that it had been a House raid, and the juniors did not mean to tell him. But the New House master did not mean to let the matter rest at that.

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"Have boys from another dormitory been here, Figgins?"

"Some—some fellows rushed in, sir—"

"Who were they?"

"I—I can't see in the dark, sir," murmured Figgins.

That was undoubtedly the truth, though it was not the whole truth. But at that moment Monteith and Baker and Webb arrived on the scene, escorting four reluctant prisoners. Mr. Ratcliff started as he saw the chums of Study No. 6.

"School House boys!" he exclaimed.

"It's what they call a House raid, I think, sir," said Monteith. "Shall I take these boys back to their House?"

"Blake!"

"Yes, sir," said Blake.

"How did you obtain admittance to this House?"

"Through the passage, sir."

"Then the door was unlocked."

"Must have been, sir," murmured Blake.

"It's locked now, Mr. Ratcliff," said Monteith. "Some of the others seem to have locked it after them and left these kids behind."

"Then there was doubtless a large number of them," said Mr. Ratcliff. "A disorderly invasion of my House—in the dead of night—quite in accordance, no doubt, with Mr. Railton's system. A lawless attack at night on boys of my House—"

"If—if you please, sir, it's all right," stammered Figgins.

"It was only a pillow-fight, sir."

"Silence, Figgins! Take a hundred lines for impertinence!"

"Oh!"

"Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy, follow me. I will take you back to your House!" said Mr. Ratcliff.

"Oh ewumbs!"

Dismally the four followed Mr. Ratcliff down the staircase. With a grim brow the New House master opened the door and let himself out into the quadrangle. Blake & Co., in the lowest spirits, followed him across the quad, in the moonlight, to the School House. They were going to be handed over to their own Housemaster; and what Mr. Railton would say and do was a troubling question. But there was no help for it. They had taken the risk, and now they had to face the music. Only they wanted to know who it was that had locked the oaken door, and to get within hitting distance of that individual. They wanted that very much.

There was a light burning in Mr. Railton's study window in the School House.

Mr. Ratcliff banged at the School House door.

A shadow moved on Mr. Railton's blind; his window opened, and the astonished Housemaster looked out.

"What—"

"Will you let me in, Mr. Railton?" asked the New House master acidly.

"Mr. Ratcliff! What—"

"I have brought back these four boys, who belong to your House, Mr. Railton!"

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Railton.

He disappeared from the window. A minute later the door of the School House was unlocked, and it opened.

"These boys, and a number of others, penetrated into my House in the dead of night," said Mr. Ratcliff. "There was a disorderly scene. The others seem to have escaped; these boys were caught by my prefects. I trust, Mr. Railton, that you will inquire carefully into the matter, and see that adequate punishment is awarded to every one of the delinquents."

"I shall certainly do so, Mr. Ratcliff," said the School House master, biting his lips. "Boys, come in!"

Study No. 6 sneaked in dismally past their Housemaster. Mr. Ratcliff turned away with a sneering smile, and Mr. Railton closed the door of the School House. He stood looking at the four for some moments.

"Are any other boys out of their House, Blake?" he asked quietly.

"I—I think not."

"You mean, that the others have returned."

"Ye-ee-es, sir."

"Very well. I will take you to your dormitory now, and I shall inquire into this matter further in the morning."

Blake & Co. were taken to their dormitory. They had, of course, been missed by the other Fourth Form fellows, though Tom Merry & Co., in the Shell dormitory, were unaware of what had happened. A busy and rather excited discussion was going on in the Fourth Form dormitory on the subject of the missing four when Mr. Railton arrived with them.

Blake & Co. turned in, and Mr. Railton, after waiting for them to do so, turned out the light and left them. Then there was a volley of eager questions.

"You let them nab you?" exclaimed Julian.

"Weally, Julian—"

"We were wondering where on earth you were," said Levison of the Fourth. "What the thump—"

"Some silly idiot locked the door on us," said Blake, breathing hard. "Which of you dummies locked the door before we got through?"

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Cardew. "Was that it?"

"Yaas, wathah! I am goin' to give the sillay idiot a feafuhl thwashin'!" said Arthur Augustus. "Who was it?"

"I guess it wasn't anybody in the Fourth," chuckled Wildrake. "I never knew the door was locked!"

There was a chuckle from Cardew.

"You'll find him in the Shell," he said. "Ten to one, in quids or doughnuts, that it was jolly old Grundy."

"Bai Jove! Gwunday!"

"Exactly what he would do," grinned Hammond. "You fellows must have dawdled behind—"

"That was no reason for locking us out of the House, fathead!"

"Grundy never wants a reason for doin' anythin'," yawned Cardew. "So we shall all be up before the beaks in the mornin'. What a life!"

"If it was Grundy, we'll jolly well make him sit up for it to-morrow!" said Blake between his teeth.

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the School House Fourth composed themselves to sleep—with rather apprehensive anticipations of the morrow.

CHAPTER 6.

Paying the Piper!

TOM MERRY turned out of bed when the rising-bell clanged in the summer morning, and rubbed his eyes and yawned. Usually the captain of the Shell turned out bright and cheery—but midnight raids were bound to leave results behind. A good many of the Shell yawned drowsily as they turned out. But a dip in cold water brightened up the captain of the Shell. Of the disaster to Blake & Co. Tom as yet knew nothing, and he was feeling satisfied with the result of the raid over-night on the rival House. Whether Figgins & Co. had been given the complete "kybosh" or not would probably remain a disputed point between the two Houses—but at all events it had been a tremendous "lark."

"We've licked the New House," said Grundy, as he towelled his bullet head. "Licked 'em and got clear! I suppose you fellows are thankful now that I came along?"

"You champion chump!" said Kangaroo. "I don't see anything to be thankful for. You jolly nearly mucked up the whole thing!"

Grundy gave a scornful laugh.

"If I hadn't been there, I fancy the lot of you would have been nabbed," he answered.

"How's that?" asked Tom.

"Did you think of locking the passage door after clearing off?"

"No fear!" said Tom. "With so many fellows scudding about in the dark, it would have been a fatheaded thing to do. Some fellow might have dropped behind, and nobody could have seen it. I wouldn't have risked locking a fellow out!"

"Oh, that's rot!" said Grundy.

"All serene," said Tom, with a smile. "The door wasn't locked, so it doesn't matter, anyhow!"

"It was locked," said Grundy calmly.

"What? You locked it?"

"I did!"

"You silly owl!" exclaimed the captain of the Shell.

"That's the thanks I get for clever strategy and presence of mind," said Grundy bitterly. "Somebody was after us—I heard them. If I hadn't locked the door we should have been followed right into the School House, and run down. Nobody else had any presence of mind!"

"And how did you know all the fellows were through, in the dark, before you locked the door?" demanded Manners.

"I waited, of course, till all were through."

"And suppose somebody had fallen behind?" said Lowther. "Did you count the whole party in the dark?"

"Of course I didn't!" snapped Grundy.

"Then how did you know that you hadn't locked some School House chap out of the House?"

Grundy grunted. As a matter of fact, that possibility had not even occurred to his powerful intellect.

"Oh, rot!" he said. "We're all here, anyhow!"

"Some of the Fourth Form kids were a bit behind, I believe," said Talbot. "I'm not sure—but I thought—"

"Utter rot!" said Grundy. "I tell you if I hadn't locked the door, we should have been run down. Why, after I'd locked it, and followed on after you chaps, I heard somebody hammering at the door behind me."

"I hope it wasn't one of the Fourth locked out!" said Talbot.

"Oh, bosh!"

Grundy was completely satisfied with himself and his

strategy. But some of the raiders were rather worried, and they hurried down from the dormitory as soon as they could to see the Fourth, and ascertain whether Grundy's strategy had caused any disaster.

Then they learned what had happened.

Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy were booked for the Housemaster's study before breakfast; and the whole of the School House Fourth were excited and indignant about it. The news that it was Grundy who had locked out the four—with a master-stroke of strategy—was like oil thrown on the flames. Grundy had "buted" into the raid—he had made himself a general worry all along the line—and finally, by taking matters into his own hands, he had caused the capture of four of the raiders. That was not how Grundy looked at it, but it was how the Fourth-Formers looked at it, and Tom Merry & Co. fully concurred. There was great exasperation on all sides, and Grundy of the Shell was the object of it. To judge by the remarks of Study No. 6, the life of George Alfred Grundy was scarcely safe.

"So it's all out!" said Tom Merry dismally. "That dummy Grundy! We'd better all turn up together to see Railton!"

"No need!" growled Blake. "It's lickings for four—no need to make it lickings for a dozen!"

"Wathah not," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Leave it to us, dear boy. We can stand it. Of course, we are goin' to slaughtah Gwunday aftahwards!"

"We're going to lynch him!" growled Herries.

"Lynching's too good for him!" said Digby savagely. "He wants boiling in oil!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'll come!" said Tom Merry decisively. "Anyhow, Railton will want to know how many fellows were in it; he'll know that you four never raided the New House on your lonesome own. Besides, he won't hand out such big lickings to a crowd of us!"

"Something in that," agreed Blake.

"Yaas, wathah," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "It would p'wobably be six for us—but Waiton won't go wound givin' a dozen fellows six each. More likely three or four!"

So it was settled; and at the time appointed for Blake & Co. to present themselves in the Housemaster's study, the whole crowd of raiders turned up there. Mr. Railton looked surprised when his study was invaded by an army of the Fourth and the Shell. But he very quickly understood.

"You were all concerned in the disturbance in the New House last night?" he asked.

"Yes, sir!"

"Then you will all be punished alike. Mr. Ratcliff has complained, very reasonably, of the disturbance in his House. I shall cane you all!" The School House master picked up his cane. "You will also be detained for Saturday afternoon, and given detention tasks."

"Oh!"

"Hold on a minute, sir!" said Grundy of the Shell, speaking up from the crowd of dismayed juniors.

"What?"

"I think it would be fairer, sir, if you let these fellows down lightly," said Grundy.

"Grundy!"

"I was bossing the show, sir—"

"Do you mean that you were the ringleader, Grundy?"

"I was leader, sir. I was in command, though Tom Merry butted in a good deal, and finished by making a muck of it. So I'm willing to take the lion's share of the punishment," said Grundy.

Possibly Grundy expected a murmur of admiration and admiring looks from his comrades as he made that statement. He did not receive anything of the kind. The juniors glared at him.

"You silly ass!" said Blake, forgetful for a moment of the august presence of his Housemaster.

"Silence, please!" said Mr. Railton. "If Grundy was really the leader in this outrageous prank—"

"He wasn't, sir!" said Tom Merry. "I was leader—and Grundy wasn't really in it at all. The silly ass—I-I mean, he butted in!"

"Don't be cheeky, Merry!" said Grundy.

"That will do," said Mr. Railton. "You need say no more, Grundy. You will all be punished alike. I shall begin with you, Merry. Hold out your hand."

It was quite an extensive punishment. Possibly Mr. Railton's arm felt a little tired by the time he had finished. But undoubtedly Tom Merry's prediction was correct. With so many to punish, Mr. Railton contented himself with handing out two to each junior. Then they were dismissed, rubbing their hands ruefully.

In the passage they all glared at Grundy. That youth seemed still in a state of complete self-satisfaction. Two cuts on his hands did not worry the hefty Grundy very much—and he was still convinced that his locking of the door had

been a master-stroke of strategy. If Blake & Co. had been on the wrong side of it when he locked it, that was their look-out. Grundy was convinced that he had acted for the best, but he was quite alone in that conviction.

"Licked, and detained Saturday afternoon!" said Blake. "And all that born idiot's fault!"

"You mean Tom Merry?" asked Grundy. "Well, I agree with—"

"I mean you!" roared Blake.

"Well, you cheeky ass—"

"Collah the uttah duffah and wag him!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Look here—"

Mr. Railton's door opened. Without waiting to collar Grundy the juniors hurriedly departed. Grundy would keep!

That morning Grundy realised with growing indignation that he was decidedly unpopular. How and why his fellow-raiders found fault with him was not clear to Grundy—but evidently they did find fault. In the Shell Form room that morning deadly threats were whispered about what was going to happen after lessons.

Grundy, instead of being admired as a master-strategist, was looked upon as the fellow who had butted into the expedition and "mucked" it up. His offer in Mr. Railton's study to take the lion's share of the punishment was not regarded as a manly owning up to the truth, but as some more of Grundy's silly swank. Really, it seemed that Grundy never would get what he considered justice from the St. Jim's fellows.

But after class he got what the St. Jim's fellows considered justice, which was something quite different.

He was collared and marched into a quiet corner of the quad. There he was made to "bend over" while a dozen were administered with a cricket-stump. Grundy resisted desperately, but his resistance was of no avail. He had to go through with it. And then Grundy's head was ducked in the fountain, and then he had to run the gauntlet—and by the time he escaped from the hands of the indignant juniors George Alfred Grundy was quite used up. And his indignation was really inexpressible in any words in any language.

CHAPTER 7.

Misunderstood!

"IT beats me!" said Grundy.

It was two or three days later when George Alfred of the Shell made that remark in Study No. 3. He made it to Wilkins and Gunn, who had just come in to tea. Grundy seemed to be in a thoughtful and rather perplexed mood. Apparently he had been thinking, and so Wilkins and Gunn were not surprised to see him looking perplexed. Any effort of that kind was, in their opinion, liable to give Grundy a headache.

"It beats me!" he repeated. "I really admit that I can't understand it. Precious few things I can't understand, but I freely admit that this beats me!"

"What does?" asked Wilkins, without much interest, as he proceeded to lay the table for tea, and Gunn set the kettle on the spirit stove. Grundy seldom took a hand in these humble but necessary duties. He was too great a man for that, in his own estimation. In the estimation of his study-mates he was too lazy.

"The fellows seem to think me an ass," said Grundy.

"Does that beat you?" asked Wilkins.

"It does."

"But what should they think of you?" asked Wilkins.

Grundy's brow darkened.

"I don't want any back-chat, Wilkins. I've been thinking over this, and it puzzles me. Of course, I know there's a lot of jealousy about. Lots of fellows hate to see a chap superior to themselves in every way. I'm afraid you two chaps are not quite free of it—though I'm your pal. The remark you made just now, Wilkins, looks like it."

Wilkins opened his mouth to reply, but closed it again. Grundy was standing the tea in Study No. 3, as he generally did, so it was wisest to humour him—till after tea, at all events.

"Tom Merry's jealous of my form at cricket. You know how he keeps me out of the matches," resumed Grundy. "Some of the fellows are, I fear, jealous even of my good looks."

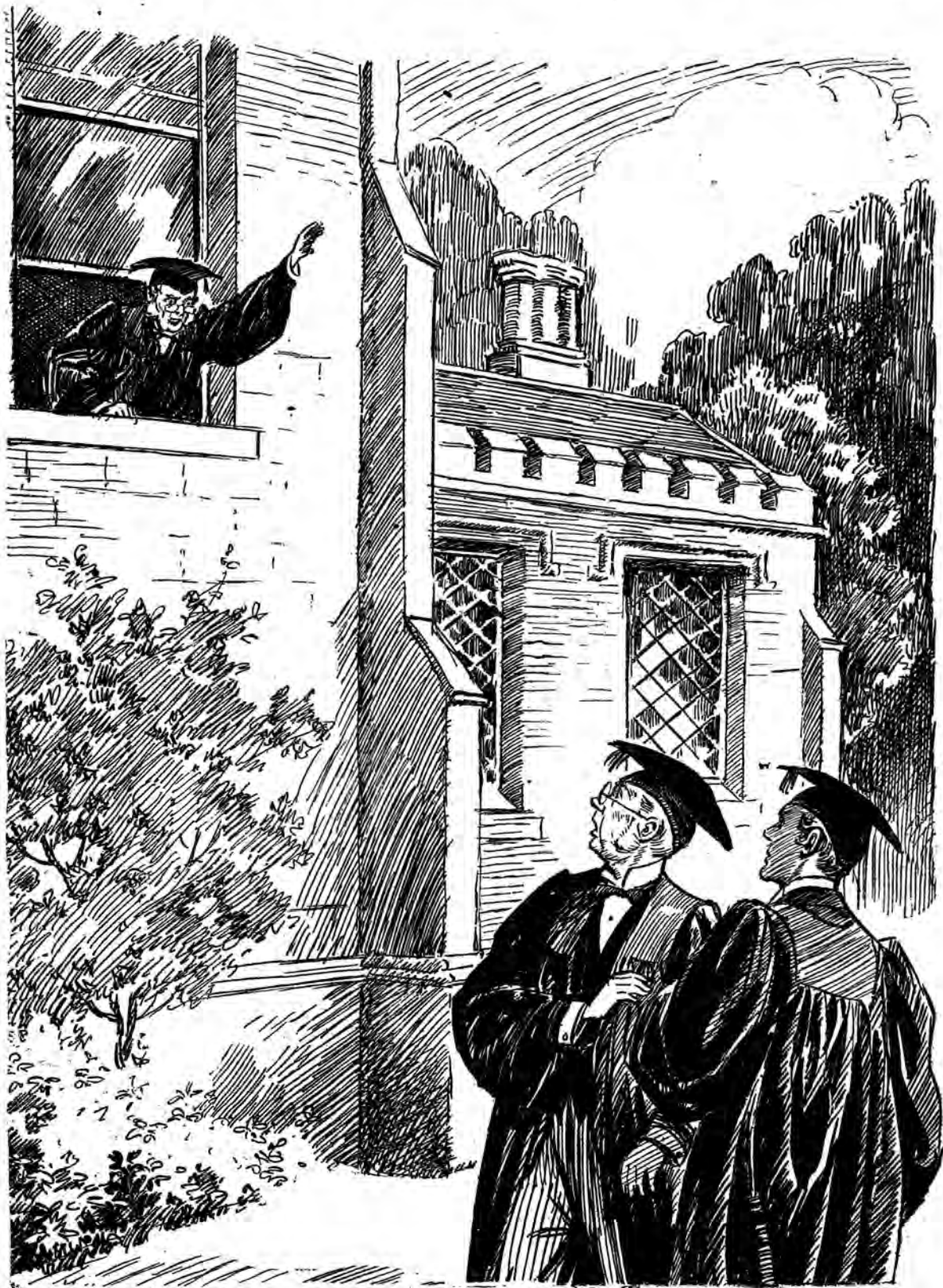
"Your what?" gasped Gunn.

"Good looks."

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Right! Oh, my hat! I—I mean, where's the teapot?" articulated Gunn.

"Not that I think much of good looks myself," said Grundy. "Nothing at all, in fact. But there it is—a fellow happens to be handsome, and plain fellows don't like it."

Wilkins and Gunn wondered whether Grundy ever took the trouble to look in the glass. It seemed not. If he did, this was really a very extraordinary delusion. But it was quite on a par with Grundy's belief that he could play cricket.



"Mr. Linton!" The master of the Shell looked round, surprised to hear his name called, when no one was in sight. A waving hand from a high window caught his eye. "Mr. Linton!" It was the voice of the Head. "I have been locked in this Form-room by a boy of your form—Grundy!" "Good heavens!" said Mr. Linton, while Mr. Lathom's glasses almost fell off in his astonishment and horror. (See page 17.)

"But jealousy doesn't account for it all," went on Grundy. "The plain fact is that fellows don't understand me. It's not sheer humbug on their part. They actually do think me an ass."

"I wonder why?" murmured Wilkins helplessly.

"Ah," said Grundy, "that's the puzzle! A fellow with more brains than the rest of the House put together—and that's not really saying much, either. If I were a duffer like you, Wilkins—"

"What?"

"Or a burbling ass like you, Gunny, old man—"

"Eh?"

"Then it would be natural enough. But happening to be a brainy chap, it's really surprising. As I said, it beats me!" said Grundy thoughtfully. "Do you know, a lot of the fellows actually think that I mucked up that raid on the New House the other night."

"D-d-d-do they?" gasped Wilkins.

"They do! Fatheaded as it is, they do! You fellows know that I was the only chap present that showed any strategy, any gumption," said Grundy. "But there it is—I'm misunderstood. It's rather hard on a chap, being misunderstood like this. Look what a lot of things I could do for the House if the House had confidence in me! But"—Grundy shook his head, more in sorrow than in anger—"they haven't."

"They haven't, that's a cert!" agreed Wilkins.

"I've been tempted," resumed Grundy, "to let the House go—to leave 'em to stew in their own juice, as it were. But perhaps that would be hardly just. They need me."

"Oh!"

"I feel that I ought to remove this misunderstanding—to make the House realise what a leader they've got in me, if they could only see it," said Grundy. "There's a lot of jealousy about, as I've said. Still, most of the fellows would rally round me if this misunderstanding were only cleared away. Don't you think so?"

"Oh! Hem! Exactly! Quite!"

Wilkins and Gunn knew that they had to keep serious. There would be a row if they laughed—and naturally they did not want a row with Grundy, when the study-table was fairly loaded with good things that belonged to Grundy. The loaves and fishes had to be considered. But they felt that he was really putting too severe a strain on their powers of endurance.

"As matters stand," resumed Grundy, "practically only you two fellows realise what I'm really like. You know me well, and, being in the same study, you've learned my quality. You, at least, know that I'm a fellow born to command. I take the lead in this study because I'm the right fellow to take it. You fellows follow my lead—and why?"

Wilkins and Gunn glanced at the good things on the table. But Grundy did not notice that.

"Why!" he repeated. "Why, because you realise that I'm a born leader—an eye like Mars, to threaten and command, you know, as it says in some play or other—Sheridan, I think—"

"Shakespeare!" murmured Wilkins.

"Sheridan!" repeated Grundy. "You don't know much about literary matters, Wilkins."

"Oh, all right! Make it Sheridan!" said Wilkins resignedly.

"What I desire," said Grundy, "is to make the rest of the House understand me as you fellows do, and look up to me as much as you fellows do."

Grundy already had his desire, had he only known it. But he did not know it.

"I—I see!" stuttered Wilkins. "Oh, yes! Right! Fine! Made the tea, Gunny? I'm beginning on the ham and eggs."

"That's my object now," said Grundy. "That's the reason for the campaign that's going to begin."

"The—the what?"

"The campaign. I'm going on the war-path, hot and strong! I'm going to take up this matter of the New House, and before the end of the term put them in their right place for good and all. Tom Merry's never succeeded in doing that. Blake never has—nor Levison—nor any of the fellows who are looked on as leaders. I'm going to do it."

"Off your own bat?" asked Wilkins, with a private wink at Gunn.

"Yes. I may call on you two for help, if I need it, but it's not likely. Still, you two chaps may come in useful," added Grundy encouragingly. "Like the mouse and the lion over again, you know."

"Oh, my hat!"

"But it's my brains that will do the trick. I'm going to give the New House the kybosh, and when I've done that I think all the fellows on this side will admit that I've been misunderstood."

"When!" murmured Wilkins.

"What did you say, Wilkins?"

"Hem! I said—said—splendid, old chap!" said Wilkins.

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"It will mean no end of kudos for this study. Quite put Tom Merry's nose out of joint—I don't think!" he added under his breath.

"And you fellows will come in for a little reflected glory, you know," said Grundy condescendingly.

Wilkins and Gunn grinned. Perhaps they grinned with pleasant anticipation of the reflected glory. Perhaps not! Anyhow, it was an excellent spread in Study No. 3, and they felt that it would be only fair to let Grundy run on while they disposed of it.

Grundy ran on; and the spread was disposed of. Then both Wilkins and Gunn remembered an engagement, and left hastily. Grundy was left to ponder on his new campaign which was to show the School House fellows what a born leader he really was. It needed thinking out, and Wilkins and Gunn were more than willing to leave him to think—only hoping that it would not give him a pain.

CHAPTER 8.

Not According to Plan!

TOM MERRY & Co. smiled when they came on Grundy the next day. So did Figgins & Co. of the New House.

Wilkins and Gunn had talked about Grundy's new campaign. Perhaps they told the fellows in order to prepare them for tremendous events to come. Perhaps they told them as a merry jest. Anyhow, they told them, so all parties knew what to expect.

Figgins & Co. were really put on their guard—if there was anything to guard against. Grundy himself made no secret of his intentions. Meeting George Figgins in the quad, he told him to look out, and to mind his eye—plainly intimating that the New House was on its last legs now that it had a serious opponent to deal with. Whereat Figgy, instead of being alarmed, only chuckled explosively. He repeated Grundy's warning to Kerr and Wynn in the study; and the Co. chuckled also. Nowhere in the New House, in fact, did there seem any realisation of the peril that was impending.

Grundy realised that he was not taken seriously. He was really a very serious fellow; but the other fellows persisted, somehow, in thinking that there was something of a comic nature about him, and about everything he said and did. Even Wilkins and Gunn shared this view, though, for the sake of a quiet life, they refrained from telling Grundy so.

The impending campaign was slow to begin.

As a matter of fact, Grundy found it easier to make up his lofty mind to give Figgins & Co. the "kybosh," than to come down to actual facts and administer the said kybosh.

His first attempts on the New House did not result gloriously. His powerful brain, after long labour, evolved the scheme of screwing up Figgins & Co. in their study.

He was caught in the act—not by Figgins & Co., but by Mr. Ratcliff. An interview with Mr. Ratcliff followed, and after that interview Grundy of the Shell gave up planning campaigns for a time, and expended his energy in rubbing his aching hands.

But one swallow did not make a summer, as he told Wilkins and Gunn. He was going to jape Figgins & Co. till they were fairly tired of life. When it came to japing the rival House, it was going to be seen that Grundy was the man to do it. Tom Merry & Co., in comparison, were to be shown up as mere "also rans"—if even that!

"I'm off!" said Grundy suddenly one afternoon after classes, as he was walking in the quad with Wilkins and Gunn.

Figgins of the Fourth had just wheeled his bike out of gates, and Grundy's eagle eye had been upon him. Wilkins and Gunn had not noticed Figgy, and Grundy's unexpected remark surprised them.

"You are!" assented Wilkins unthinkingly. "Blest if I ever expected you to see it, though!"

"Right off!" agreed Gunn.

"Eh? What do you mean?" asked Grundy, puzzled.

"Still, a fellow can't help being a bit off his chump if he's born like that!" went on Wilkins. "Don't let it worry you!"

"You silly ass!" roared Grundy. "If I had time, I'd jolly well lick you, Wilkins! But I'm off after Figgins!"

"Oh, I see! After Figgins!" said Wilkins. "I—I thought that—"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Wilkins! Figgins has just gone out for a bike spin. I'm after him on my jigger! I'm going to make an example of him!" Grundy chuckled. "I say, it will be a bit funny when Figgins comes in!"

"Eh—why?" Wilkins did not see it.

"I'm going to bag his bike and wheel it home, and leave him to walk—see? I'm going to follow him a good distance—and give him a jolly good walk. No end of a jest, what?"

"Oh, is that your idea of a jest?" asked Wilkins, in surprise.

"Look here—" bawled Grundy.

"I—I mean, ripping, old top! Get after him at once!" exclaimed Wilkins heartily.



When George Alfred Grundy came into the School House, and tramped up to the Shell passage, he found a crowd of grinning school fellows to meet him. Grundy looked as if he had been through hard times. His nose was like a beetroot and one of his eyes was almost black. "Had a good time?" asked Tom Merry affably. Grundy did not answer, but tramped moodily on. (See this page.)

It occurred to Wilkins that if Grundy set out in chase of Figgins, he would be missing for some time; and life at St. Jim's was always a more agreeable proposition when Grundy was missing.

Grundy wasted no more time in words. He rushed round to the bike-shed for his jigger. A couple of minutes later Wilkins and Gunn saw him start, at a good speed, following on the track of George Figgins of the New House.

Wilkins and Gunn wondered what would happen. Grundy's plan was simple. He was going to bag Figgy's bike, at a distance from the school—if Figgy objected, as doubtless he would, Grundy was going to thrash him, and thus drastically overcome his objections. Then he would wheel home the captured bike in triumph, leaving Figgins, like the weary ploughman, homeward to plod his way. It was all very simple—yet Wilkins and Gunn had their doubts.

Their doubts were justified. About two hours later they happened to be loafing about the gates, when they observed a cyclist coming up the road, wheeling an extra bike at his side.

"My hat! Is that Grundy, and has he done it?" exclaimed Gunn.

Wilkins chuckled.

"It's Figgins!"

"Figgins! Oh, my hat!"

George Figgins rode up cheerily. He looked rather as if he had been in the wars—his nose was a little swollen, and there was a dark shade under one of his eyes. But he was quite cheery.

"Hallo!" he said, as he jumped down. "You can take charge of this jigger, as you're Grundy's pals. It's Grundy's!"

"Where's Grundy?"

"Goodness knows!" said Figgins. "Somewhere between here and Abbotsford, I believe. I left him about seven miles off, bathing his eye in a pond."

Figgins wheeled in his own machine, leaving Grundy's jigger in charge of Wilkins and Gunn. They exchanged looks.

"Poor old Grundy!" murmured Wilkins.

"Another miss in baulk!" sighed Gunn.

They put up Grundy's machine for him. It was close on lock-up when George Alfred Grundy of the Shell arrived at St. Jim's. Somehow the story of his trailing of Figgins had spread, and when he came into the School House, and tramped up to the Shell passage, he found a crowd of grinning fellows to greet him. Grundy looked tired. He looked also as if he had been through hard times. His nose, not naturally small, was now larger than ever, and had a look like a beetroot. One of his eyes was almost black, and the other had a peculiar restless blink in it. And he was dusty from head to foot.

"Had a good time, old man?" asked Tom Merry affably.

"Nice walk—what?" asked Blake.

"Bai Jove! Where did you collect that nose, Grundy, dear boy?"

Grundy did not answer. He tramped moodily into his study, and slammed the door, leaving the juniors chortling.

Wilkins and Gunn were there, and they smiled at one another as Grundy sank wearily into the armchair.

"Your bike's all right, Grundy," remarked Wilkins.

"My—my bike?"

"Yes. Figgins brought it in all right."

"Oh!" said Grundy.

(Continued on page 16.)

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EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

IT must be confessed that St. Jim's cannot claim to be in the front rank of schools with regard to swimming as a sport.

It is true that more than half of the fellows, senior and junior, are able to swim, but that is about all that can be said for the position.

The principal cause is undoubtedly the lack of a covered swimming-bath, such as they have at Greyfriars; and as the river bathing-place is not suitable for use all the year round—although certain hardy and enthusiastic spirits avail themselves of it even in the depth of winter—we are severely handicapped by limited opportunities for practice.

The bathing pools are on the Rhyl, about a quarter of a mile below the boathouse, where the river has been partly concreted to afford a safe and pleasant footing for non-swimmers. This part of the stream is fenced off, as a precaution against the possibility of learners incautiously venturing beyond their depth, and steps are provided against the river-bank, which is also concreted for about ten yards or so at this point.

A row of dressing-boxes face the learners' pool. Diving-boards, which may only be used by swimmers, are just past the concreted part of the bank, where the stream is deeper. Fifty yards farther on is Miller's Pool, which is anything up to fourteen feet in depth. There is another deep pool a short distance away known as the Porridge Pot, which may only be used by the Fifth and Sixth.

There are all sorts of regulations regarding the use of the bathing-place, but in general it may be said that only the Sixth are allowed to bathe at practically any hour in the day according to their own desire. The rest of the school have to bathe between certain stated hours, which vary according to the Forms and Houses. The Shell and Fourth may be granted permits, under certain conditions, entitling them to use the bathing places with almost as much freedom as the Fifth and Sixth, but no privileges of this kind are extended to Forms below the Fourth.

There are three official tests for swimmers, varying from a twenty-five yards' struggle across the learners' pool to a two hundred yards' swim, using two different strokes, within a time limit; and only those who have passed the third test are allowed to use the Miller's Pool.

Tom Merry

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HOUSE RIVALRY in the RHYL!

By Reginald Talbot.

THE annual school swimming sports took place last Thursday in a stretch of the Rhyl, immediately opposite the boathouses and landing-stage.

The most exciting and keenly-contested races were, undoubtedly, the inter-House events, and House feeling ran high among the spectators on the banks while these races were in progress.

The House team race was particularly exciting, because right up to the last few moments it was impossible to judge which House was going to pull it off.

Tom Merry, Blake, Monty Lowther, and I represented the School House, and the New House team was composed of Figgins, Kerr, Redfern, and Lawrence.

Tom Merry beat Lawrence, and gave Blake five yards start of Kerr. The Scot pulled the lead down to one of inches, and I started off a split second before Figgins.

The New House chief has a pair of long legs, and he has developed an adaptation of the side-stroke which enables him to make the best use of them.

I was hard put to it to hold my own, and, as a matter of fact, Piggy managed to release Redfern a couple of seconds before my touch on the raft gave Monty Lowther the right to dive in.

Redfern started off in a fashion that caused more than a little dismay among the School House partisans. He was using a crawl stroke, which took him through the water at a rattling pace. If he could have kept it up all the way he would have beaten Lowther handsomely, but actually it had been an error of judgment on Redfern's part to adopt that particular stroke, which is more than commonly exhausting.

Within the first hundred yards he began to exhibit signs of distress. His leg stroke became feeble, and twice he lost direction and had to correct himself, thus putting yards on his distance.

In the meantime Monty was coming along finely. With forty yards to cover, Redfern changed to a trudgeon, and then it became a matter of whether he could maintain his lead. In every yard he was palpably losing it, and ten yards away from the raft Monty drew level amid the yells of School House, who had the satisfaction and delight of seeing him finish nearly two yards ahead of Redfern.

School House won the diving competition and the rescue race, while New House scored a narrow victory in the chariot race—with planks for "chariots," and a team of three swimmers for "horses," a fag riding the plank.

Tom Merry won the three hundred yards' junior championship, with Figgins, Monty Lowther, and Kerr at his heels, in that order.

LEARNING TO SWIM!

By Monty Lowther.

THERE is one very simple and effective method of teaching a fellow to swim. I have never known it to fail whenever it has been properly employed.

It consists of throwing the non-swimmer out into deep water, as far from the bank as possible, and giving him every encouragement, in the form of cheerful words of exhortation, to reach the side. If he succeeds, you throw him in again and let him have another try.

When he has reached the bank the third time he knows quite a lot about swimming, and is no doubt very properly grateful to you for all the trouble you have taken in teaching him. He realises that it is quite possible some day he will owe his life to your kind efforts on his behalf.

Of course there is a remote possibility that he never does reach the bank, not even for the first time.

In that case, he will probably have lost all desire to learn, and so he has cause for being just as well satisfied as if he had succeeded. It is almost certain that he is one of those fellows who have no kind of gift or instinct for swimming—there are such people, you know—and, in any case, could never have learnt. That being so, there was every chance that he would have been drowned sooner or later, and by assisting him to get the affair settled out of hand you have saved him all the immense amount of worry that would have been caused by his wondering exactly when it was going to happen.

If you are unfortunate enough to have no kind friends to help you in this way, you can learn a lot by watching frogs. I knew a fellow who taught himself entirely by adopting this method.

He obtained some tadpoles, kept them until they turned into frogs, and then got up early in the mornings to watch the young frogs taking their swimming lessons. During this time he lived entirely on ants' eggs and breadcrumbs, with the result that one day when he got up he found it impossible to get into his bags. His two hind legs were merging into one and blossoming into a tail.

However, a surgeon soon put that right for him, though he naturally had to modify his system of training a little afterwards.

The great advantage about swimming, from a point of view of physical culture, is that while most sports and athletic pursuits exercise a limited number of muscles and develop these to the neglect of others, swimming exercises many muscles which we do not possess, and it is therefore ideal for keeping a fellow fit.

There are many good swimmers at St. Jim's, Tom Merry coming out about best, with George Figgins a near second. Of course, there are some who never will learn the art—Trimble, for instance; but then he never did care for water!



POOR OLD ADOLPHUS!

By Ralph Reckness Cardew

WHY is it that in this very imperfect world some people never seem to get the job for which they are fitted, while others are pitchforked into jobs for which they have no qualifications whatever?

I am moved to the query in view of the fact that for a long time I have had a conviction that Tom Merry is by no means a suitable Editor for the "St. Jim's News." Recent events have only served to strengthen my convictions.

Not that I want the job! Heavens preserve me, no! My opinion is in no measure due to any jealous promptings. It's simply that I really believe Tom Merry is a rotten Editor! There, I've said it.

And I stand by the statement! I glory in it!

Here is my justification. This very story which I have at last succeeded in forcing myself to sit down and perpetrate.

Strictly speaking, it isn't a swimming story at all. And I contend that it has no right to be in this issue. And the fact that it is going to appear therein—if I ever manage to complete it, which at the moment I doubt that I shall—is due entirely to Tom Merry. That's why I say that he's a rotten Editor.

If you don't like the story, or don't consider it appropriate to the issue, please don't revile me. I can assure you that I am not in the least to blame. I didn't suggest writing the blessed thing. I certainly didn't offer to write it. I didn't agree to write it. In fact, I have the liveliest objections to writing it—or anything else—at all. Please understand that I write it under protest. Tom Merry is responsible for it.

I told dear old Tommy at the very outset that I wasn't capable of turning out anything for this issue. With my hand on my heart, I assured him of that. Any other issue, of course, I would be more than willing to assist with, but this particular issue provided no scope for my peculiar abilities.

He pointed out with brutal frankness that I had made the same excuse with regard to every issue to which I had been asked to contribute, and, instead of being properly impressed by this proof of my commendable consistency, he made it clear that he expected me to turn out the copy he had requested.

It was in vain that I explained to him that I knew rather less than nothing about the subject. It is true that I am something of a swimmer, but when it comes to writing out an article about swimming, I am in grave danger of finding myself very much out of my depth.

Tom Merry reminded me of a certain incident which occurred a short time ago. I replied that it had very little to do with swimming.

Now, any editor who knew his business would have agreed with me, and gone away to look for somebody who could supply him with what he really wanted, leaving me in peace.

Instead of doing that, however, Tom Merry retorted that he didn't care a brass button whether I thought the story to which he referred was suitable for the issue or not. He wanted it, anyway, and would I please get on with it, because the copy was due at the printer's?

That is why I say he's a rotten Editor. I have decided, however, that it will be much less fog to write the article than to think out another excuse for not doing so, especially as I am doubtful whether Tommy would accept it even if I did.

The story, for what it is worth—and if you don't think it's worth much you can't say that I didn't warn you—has at least the merit of being funny.

Naturally, it concerns Gussy.

Now, Gussy is a very fine swimmer.

It must be explained that this is not a very well-known fact. Indeed, I don't think

anybody is aware of it, with the exception, of course, of Gussy himself; but he's so sure of it that I suppose it must be so, though I must confess that I haven't noticed it up to now.

Last week the Annual Swimming Sports took place, and there was some very keen rivalry in connection with the inter-House events. I believe Talbot is giving an account of the affair in this very issue, so there's no need for me to enter into details; but, for the purpose of my yarn, I refer to it in order to explain how it affected Gussy.

You see, dear old Adolphus had a pet dream of being the hope of his side on this occasion.

When he closed his eyes he had roseate visions of the banks lined with eager and enthusiastic spectators, cheering him on to well-earned victory—or victories, for preference.

The New House were to be nowhere, and Gussy was to be everywhere—with bells on. And very nice, too!

It was certainly a delightful dream, and there was only one consideration—quite a slight handicap—that was likely to prevent it being realised. You see, Gussy doesn't happen to be able to swim.

And, of course, it is rather an advantage to a fellow to be a swimmer when he's entering for a swimming contest.

Mind, when I say that Gussy can't swim, I don't mean that he hasn't any ability at all in that direction, because he can put up quite a respectable performance in the learners' pool, and is able to struggle along for about a hundred yards or so—enough to pass his second test and qualify him for the boats. But his skill is limited to the mastery of the breast and back strokes, which are not particularly useful in a race against fellows who can rip through the water with a powerful trudgeon or Australian crawl. So when it comes to a consideration of Gussy's abilities as a speed merchant, you might really say right out that he simply wasn't in it.

His hopes of being known as Gussy the Goldfish as a tribute to his swimming prowess seemed to be rather less than more.

But it takes more than that to daunt Adolphus. You see, he only gets one idea in about every ten years or so, and he can't afford to pass it by when it does arrive.

There was obviously only one thing to do. He must practise—in secret, of course. The problem was to find any place in which he could disport himself sub-rosa.

It wasn't easy to find such a place. The river was impossible, partly because bathing anywhere other than at the proper bathing-place is strictly prohibited, and also in consequence of the fact that, in view of the boats that are constantly skimming up and down the Rhyl during the summer months, he wasn't likely to get much opportunity for unobserved practice even if he defied the prohibition.

The only alternative was a pond. The fact that Gussy adopted the alternative was surely sufficient proof of his earnestness.

For—oh, my sainted aunt—you ought to have seen that pond! Sheltered by trees, in the corner of a field, fed by ditches, and with green scum about half an inch thick covering most of its surface—Eugh!

Gussy slipped out one Saturday afternoon when there was no cricket on, and made his way to the pond. Undressing quickly—

I suppose because he'd screwed his courage up to the point that would enable him to plunge into the awful stuff—he emerged from the shelter of the hedge in his bathing-costume, and picked his way to the hoof-pitted edge of the pond. A couple of cows, who stood there apparently debating whether the worse of two evils was to drink the water or die of thirst, sheered off clumsily as he came up, and stood about twenty yards off watching him. They were good judges. He was worth watching.

Gussy crossed the few yards of grass like a cat on hot bricks, giving a little leap and a yowl every time he trod on a thistle—which was about every other step—and climbed out on to the overhanging branch of a tree.

Splash!

I don't know whether he dived, leaped, or simply overbalanced and fell in, but he made enough noise about it. The cows turned and lumbered off.

When Gussy came to the surface, gasping and spluttering, he looked more like a resurrected Early Briton than anything I've ever seen before. You know, the old johnnies who used to paint themselves with soil and woad, whatever that is. The pond was only about a foot deep in water, but quite three in mud, and between the mud and the blanket of green slime—well, he simply had to be seen to be believed. It would be impossible to describe what he looked like.

Gussy crawled out of the pond, with the mud still clinging to him and the green blanket of slime trailing after him, and stood on the bank in a splendid impersonation of the demon king in a pantomime. He spent a moment or so picking a few stray tadpoles out of his hair, and then went behind the hedge to dress. Gussy had had more than enough of that pond.



The strange manner in which D'Arco took the water made the cows turn and lumber off.

But his troubles were not over even yet. Behind the hedge he found his towel and his topper. I don't know whether he'd taken the topper to bail out the pond, in case he found it too deep, but it was the only article of apparel left to him. The rest of his togs had been mysteriously spirited away.

Three hours or so later, when evening shadows veiled the landscape, Gussy wended his way homewards, more or less blithely, tastefully arrayed in a topper, a bath-towel, and that portion of the mud and slime which nothing but a hot bath would possibly remove. His progress to the School House, escorted by a joyous throng who met him at the gates of the quad, was in the nature of a jamboree.

And the first thing he saw, upon entering Study No. 6 after an hour or so in a bath-room, was—a neat bundle containing his missing duds!

How did they get there? Well, they weren't likely to have walked there, were they? So I suppose somebody must have taken them. And how do I know so much about the affair?

Well, that would be telling, wouldn't it? But you can take my word that it all happened exactly as I've said.

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"GRUNDY GOING STRONG!"

(Continued from page 13.)

"How did it work?" asked Gunn blandly. "I understood that you were going to bag Figgy's bike and leave him to walk."

"So I was," said Grundy. "I collared the New House cad near Abbotsford. He had the cheek to put up a fight."

"What a neck!" murmured Wilkins.

"So I licked him, of course—"

"Licked him?"

"Yes; thoroughly."

"And after licking him, you let him bag your bike and leave you to walk? Why?"

"Well, I had to bathe my eye," said Grundy. "I've no doubt that Figgins thinks he licked me. Conceited young ass, you know. We were at it for at least fifteen minutes, and I had a rather hard knock—I couldn't get up for a few minutes—and he bagged my bike, and cleared. If he'd stayed on I should have got up and slaughtered him. But he didn't."

"Inconsiderate of him!" murmured Gunn.

"Still, it's a consolation to have licked him," said Grundy.

"The jape didn't work out quite as I intended. But it's a consolation to have licked him thoroughly. Something in that."

"Oh, my hat! I—I mean—yes—quite! I wonder if the New House fellows will own up that you licked Figgins?" gasped Wilkins.

Grundy sniffed.

"Depend on it, they won't," he said.

Grundy was right. They didn't! To add to his annoyance, neither did the School House fellows take the view that he had licked Figgins. It really seemed Grundy's fate to continue to be misunderstood.

CHAPTER 9.

Strategic!

"YOU cheeky ass!" roared Figgins.

"After him!" shouted Fatty Wynn.

"Collar him!" exclaimed Kerr.

It was Wednesday, and a half-holiday. Figgins & Co. of the New House were walking down to the cricket-ground, in cheery mood, thinking of anything and anybody but George Alfred Grundy. There was a senior House match on that afternoon, and Figgins & Co. intended to turn up and loyally cheer Monteith and his merry men, in their tussle with Kildare's School House team.

Then Grundy happened.

He came along the path, suddenly grabbed off Figgins' cap, and started to run with it.

Figgins was really surprised, as well as annoyed. Fags of the Third played such tricks on one another; but really he had not expected to see a Shell fellow descend to such a "kid's trick." But Figgy's cap was not to be grabbed with impunity. He started at a run after Grundy, and Fatty Wynn and Kerr followed on.

"Grundy's going it!" grinned Tom Merry, as he sighted the chase in the quadrangle.

"Bai Jove! What a wotten, silly twick!" said Arthur Augustus. "Gwunday weally is a howlin' ass, you know."

Heedless of Gussy and his lofty opinion, Grundy sprinted on, round the school buildings, to the Sixth Form green. Heedless also of the fact that juniors were supposed never to set a foot within the sacred precincts of that enclosed space, Grundy sprinted right across the Sixth Form green, jumping the spiked chains that surrounded it. Figgins & Co. followed fast.

Grundy arrived under the high windows of the Sixth Form room in the School House. One window was open. Into that open window Grundy tossed Figgy's cap.

Then he turned on his pursuers.

"You silly owl!" roared Figgins.

Grundy chuckled.

"Do you call that a joke?" demanded Figgins hotly.

"Oh, you can fetch your old cap, you know," grinned Grundy, and he dodged away and departed.

"Collar him and rag him, the silly ass!" growled Fatty Wynn. "You can't go into the School House and get your cap, Figgy. Monteith's batting first, and we don't want to miss him."

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Figgins breathed hard. Grundy had darted in at a doorway and disappeared, and the New House trio did not care to follow him into the enemy's quarters. But Figgy could not allow his cap to remain in possession of the enemy.

"I've got to get it," he said. "Grundy will be bragging up and down the school that he bagged my cap and dared me to get it back. I'll cut in, and—"

"And run into a giddy ambush, very likely," said Kerr, catching his chum by the arm. "Chuck it!"

"Look here! He's not keeping my cap!" howled Figgins excitedly.

"What about the window?"

"We can't climb into a window that height, ass! Grundy knew that when he chucked the cap in."

"I know that, fathead! But there's a ladder in the wood-shed—"

"And suppose a prefect spots us getting into the Sixth Form window with a ladder, you ass!"

"Everybody's on Big Side now," said Kerr cheerfully. "Nobody about here. Safe as houses."

Figgins glanced round. Kerr was right. The Sixth Form green was quite deserted, and it was out of sight of the playing-fields, where nearly all St. Jim's had gathered.

"Quick, then!" he said.

Figgins & Co. acted quickly enough. They rushed the ladder across from the wood-shed, and Kerr whipped into the open window, dropped lightly and noiselessly into the Sixth Form room, and recovered the cap. In less than a minute he was out again, and the ladder was rushed back to the wood-shed. Figgins, with his recaptured cap on his head, walked away to Big Side with his chums—the three of them grinning. They guessed that Grundy had not simply played a fag's trick of snatching a fellow's cap; he had some ulterior motive for his extraordinary action. There was some sort of an ambush in the School House, into which the fatuous George Alfred expected Figgins to run. It was quite entertaining to think of Grundy waiting in ambush while Figgins & Co. were watching the cricket match on Big Side.

Grundy, in the meantime, was in great feather.

He was, as the New House juniors guessed, in ambush. But they did not guess the nature of the ambush.

Grundy had gone at once to the corridor on which the Sixth Form room opened. On a half-holiday, with a cricket match in progress, there was naturally no one about.

Grundy jerked the key from the door of the Sixth Form room. Key in hand, he darted across the corridor, into a class-room on the other side. He closed the door of the class-room, and stood listening.

Grundy knew that Figgins couldn't climb into the high window of the Sixth Form room after his cap. He was convinced that the New House leader would never leave his cap as a trophy in the possession of a School House fellow. It followed, therefore, that Figgins would come after his cap, and as soon as Grundy heard him enter the Sixth Form room, Grundy was going to whip out and lock the door on him.

Figgins would be locked in the Sixth Form room for the afternoon. It really was a masterly stroke of strategy, from Grundy's point of view. After this, certainly the fellows would not be able to say that George Alfred Grundy could not plan a jape, and carry it out successfully.

Grundy chuckled softly as he waited.

For some time there was no sound.

He wondered whether Figgins suspected an ambush, or whether he was merely hesitating to enter the enemy's House.

But after about a quarter of an hour there was a sound of footsteps in the passage.

Grundy started, and listened.

The footsteps came along the corridor, straight for the Sixth Form room.

Grundy hardly breathed.

The footsteps reached the Sixth Form room, and entered it. Grundy heard the Sixth Form door open; he heard the footsteps pass into the room.

Silently, cautiously, Grundy opened the class-room door, and stepped into the corridor.

In a second he was across the corridor, had caught the handle of the Sixth Form door, and dragged it shut.

Another second, and the key was jammed into the lock and turned.

Grundy pulled out the key again, and slipped it into his pocket.

Then he stooped to the keyhole.

"Caught you, you silly ass!" he roared. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Then, in cheery spirits, George Alfred Grundy walked away, strolled out of the School House, and sauntered down to the gates. Grundy was going for a ramble, leaving his prisoner to enjoy his half-holiday in the locked Form-room.

CHAPTER 10.

Something Like a Capture!

DR. HOLMES was surprised. That is really putting it too mildly—he was astounded! Also he was angry.

Such an occurrence had never occurred before, in all his long career as a schoolmaster.

Even now he could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses. It was too amazing.

The Head of St. Jim's had gone to his study after lunch, to spend a few happy hours with Æschylus. Then he had remembered that he had left Æschylus in the Sixth Form room—having been engaged that morning in explaining some of the beauties of the great Greek to the St. Jim's Sixth. So the Head walked away from his study to the Sixth Form room to fetch the volume.

And then—

It was incredible—unbelievable—really unnerving! He was picking up Æschylus from his desk in the Sixth Form room when the door suddenly slammed, and the key turned on the outside, and a voice shouted through the keyhole, "Caught you, you silly ass!"

Dr. Holmes stood rooted to the Sixth Form floor.

For some moments his breath was quite taken away. Never in the course of his career had he been addressed as a silly ass before. If any of the St. Jim's fellows regarded him in that light, certainly they had never ventured to tell him so.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head faintly, at last.

Æschylus lay unheeded on the desk now. The Head had forgotten even Æschylus.

He knew that he was locked in the room. But he crossed to the door, and tried it. It remained fast.

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head.

Some mutinous fellow had been watching for him, it appeared, and had actually locked him in the room. The unbelievable had happened! Not only had the temerarious fellow locked his headmaster in a Form-room, but he had called him a silly ass!

The recklessness of it surprised the Head. For he had recognised the voice that shouted through the keyhole.

Grundy's voice had its own characteristics—according to some of the School House fellows, it resembled the voice of the celebrated Bull of Bashan. Others compared it to a steamer's siren. Some thought it more like the roar of a train in a tunnel. But nobody would ever have mistaken it for anybody else's voice. It was Grundy of the Shell who locked the Head in—and the Head knew that it was Grundy.

Dr. Holmes tapped on the door.

"Grundy!" he called out.

The boy would surely never dare to keep him locked in! He would never dare to pass unheeded a command from his headmaster! That was unthinkable! So the Head called out, in tones that quivered with suppressed wrath:

"Grundy, open this door at once!"

There was no reply.

The Head realised that Grundy was gone. Evidently the Shell fellow had cleared off directly after he had locked the door.

Dr. Holmes breathed hard and deep. Never had he been so surprised, and never had he been so angry.

He knocked more loudly on the door. He hoped to attract attention and obtain release.

But the House was deserted. For five or six minutes the headmaster of St. Jim's knocked, but there was no answer to his knocking.

He desisted at last, and walked across to the window. Generally, in leisure hours, some senior was to be observed on the Sixth Form green. Some of the Sixth did their work out on the green in deck-chairs in fine weather. But the green was deserted now.

The Head remembered that there was a senior match going on that afternoon. Nearly all the Sixth were playing for one House or the other—and a good many of the Fifth. Not a fellow was in sight from the Sixth Form windows; only in the far distance the Head sighted a fag of the Third, sitting under a tree and eating toffee.

His voice would scarcely have carried so far—even if his great dignity had permitted him to shout uproariously to a fag of the Third Form. And his dignity certainly did not.

Dr. Holmes sat down to think it out.

He could have banged on the door with a book—Æschylus, for instance—and attracted attention in the long run. But he shrank from that idea.

To be found in such a ridiculous position by a Lower boy, or perhaps a servant—his cheeks crimsoned at the thought. If by tapping on the door he could draw the attention of a master or a Sixth Form fellow; but he couldn't! Only by a terrific uproar would he get help—he realised that! The headmaster of St. Jim's could scarcely descend to the expedient of kicking up a terrific uproar.

He sat down to wait.

Æschylus was at hand to comfort him. But the Head was too angry and disturbed to think even of Æschylus. The great Greek lay unheeded on the desk, while Dr. Holmes waited, his anger growing and growing, till it reached a white heat.

He crossed to the window again at last. He had been twenty minutes or more in the locked room, and he was nearly at boiling-point now.

He breathed with relief as he caught sight of Mr. Linton and Mr. Lathom, the masters of the Shell and the Fourth, strolling on the Sixth Form green. He had had a desperate idea of trying to drop from the high window—a risky business for a boy, and quite impossible for a gentleman of Dr. Holmes' years. The sight of the two Form masters relieved him.

"Mr. Linton!"

The master of the Shell glanced round, surprised to hear his name called when no one was in sight.

A waving hand from a high window caught his eye.

"Mr. Linton!"

"Dear me! Yes, sir," said the master of the Shell, coming towards the window.

"I have been locked in this Form-room," said the Head, in a trembling voice.

Mr. Linton jumped.

"Locked in!" he repeated faintly.

"Yes, by a boy of your Form."

"A—a boy of my—my Form!" babbled Mr. Linton.

"Yes; the boy Grundy."

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Linton, while Mr. Lathom's glasses almost fell off, in his astonishment and horror.

"I came to this room for a book, and the boy must have been watching for me," said the Head. "It seems incredible, but it has happened. I am locked in. I have been locked in for nearly half an hour. The boy, Grundy, shouted an opprobrious epithet through the keyhole after locking me in."

"He must be mad!" exclaimed Mr. Linton, aghast.

"I can scarcely believe that he is in his right senses," said the Head. "Mr. Linton, please enter the House and release me as quickly as possible."

"Certainly, sir!" gasped the master of the Shell.

Mr. Linton fairly ran into the House. He arrived almost breathless at the door of the Sixth Form room.

"There is no key here, sir!" he exclaimed.

"No—no key!" repeated the Head.

"None."

Dr. Holmes set his teeth.

"Then Grundy has taken the key away with him!"

"It—it appears so, sir."

"Kindly have him found at once!" breathed the Head.

"I will not lose a moment, sir."

Mr. Linton did not lose a moment. He hurried away, and began to inquire up and down and round about for Grundy of the Shell. Mr. Lathom joined in his efforts, Mr. Railton was called in, a couple of prefects who were not at cricket were called on for help, some of the Fifth joined up, and the search for Grundy went on breathlessly. But Grundy was not found.

Tom Merry & Co. were on Big Side, watching the senior House match, when the inquiry reached that quarter. They fairly gasped as they heard what had happened.

"All you boys search for Grundy!" said Mr. Railton.

"Grundy must be found at once!"

"Oh, certainly, sir!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Blake. "Grundy's done it now. What the thump is he playing tricks on the Head for?"

"Must be off his wockah, deah boy."

"It's the sack for him," said Levison of the Fourth, in wonder. "He must be pottier than we ever supposed."

Tom Merry & Co. joined energetically in the search for Grundy of the Shell. But he had vanished. It became clear at last that he had gone out of gates. Indeed, some of the fellows wondered whether he had run away from school, for fear of the consequences of his astounding act.

Mr. Linton returned to the Sixth Form room to inform the Head, through the keyhole, that Grundy could not be found.

"Shall I request Taggles to bring his tools and force the lock, sir?" murmured Mr. Linton.

The Head breathed deep.

"There is nothing else to be done as that wretched boy cannot be found. Let there be as little commotion as possible, Mr. Linton."

That was all very well, but the commotion was tremendous already. Already fags, highly excited, were gathering round the Sixth Form green, to stare at the windows of the room in which their headmaster was a prisoner. Already the corridor was swarming with a buzzing crowd of fellows. When Taggles arrived with his tools, and started on the difficult task of forcing the lock, the excitement was feverish. The match on Big Side was deserted. Kildare of the Sixth made mighty

(Continued on page 27.)

Sid Morris, the new stable-boy at Ashdown House, finds himself in a very difficult position indeed, and but for his "straight" action matters would have been really serious!



A RECORD RACE!

by Cecil Fanshaw

A Thrilling Story
of Life in a Racing
Stable.

CHAPTER 1.

A Rascally Scheme!

"METEOR'S some looker, b'gosh! But he's got a mouth like iron, ain't he?"

Sid Morris, the new stable-boy at Ashdown House Stables, laughed. Then, with one hand on the neck of the big bay he was about to saddle, he turned to the fair-haired lad who had just stuck his round face over the low loose-box door.

"You're right, Jim," he grinned, as his eyes fell on the only pal he had—or wanted—in the Ashdown outfit. "Meteor's a real dandy name for this horse. Once he gets going he pulls like a non-stop fire-engine. Ought to ha' been in the Wembley Rodeo! Oh, I guess he'll spread 'em out in the Ebor Handicap!"

"If the boss ain't backed something else!" chimed in young Jim in an angry whisper.

"Hang the boss!" gritted Sid. "Our boss may be Meteor's trainer, but Major Grindlay's his owner. An' I bet the major's out to win!"

Jim nodded.

"The major's O.K.," he said. "He's about the only square fellow we trains for. But old Hall will try to fake things, if it suits his book."

"Let him!" Sid breathed fiercely. "I'm to ride Meteor in the big race, and I don't care a row of beans for any game o' Sam Hall's. I ain't goin' to double-cross the major—"

"Hi, you boys!" broke in a sudden, bull-like roar. "Cut the cackle, and get to work!"

Promptly Jim faded away, as a burly, red-faced man, got up in riding kit, came striding heavily across the paved stable-yard. Sid made haste to slap a light saddle on to Meteor's back, then reached up for a bridle hanging on a peg.

The newcomer was the trainer, Sam Hall, himself—Sid's and Jim's boss. He looked a keen hand at a bargain and a bad man to cross.

But no outsider guessed that Hall was also a crook of the deepest dye! Yet, saving the lads Sid and Jim, all the employees at Ashdown House—Hall's stables—were as crooked as corkscrews.

Young Sid had been some months with Hall, having badgered his father to let him become a jockey. His wish granted, the lad found to his dismay that he had landed in a stable of crooks!

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But Sid did not write home about that. He quickly resolved to hold his tongue and his job, and ride straight in spite of his boss.

So as Hall approached, young Sid worked like lightning. He wanted to show he could handle Meteor easily. For Major Grindlay had promised him the mount on the horse in the Ebor Handicap.

"Take Meteor across the downs by himself, Sid," growled Hall, suddenly bulking in the doorway and glaring down at the lad. "You'd best take the road through the cutting, and get right away to westward. I don't want him to mix up with the other horses. He's too hot-headed, and might bolt and get hurt. We don't want him damaged now. Major Grindlay reckons to see you pull off the handicap up at York on that horse. So keep your eyes skinned out exercising, my lad."

"Very good, sir," replied Sid briskly.

The lad led the rangy bay out into the yard, swung himself into the saddle, and gathered up his reins.

The stables were set in the midst of green, rolling downs. So directly Sid had clattered out of the yard his mount's feet were drumming on sound turf.

As he bucked and plunged, feeling full of beans in the keen morning air, Meteor made a splendid picture. For he was a grand, upstanding, thoroughbred, with a lean head, big, luminous eyes, and red, widespread nostrils, and his broad chest and deep girth told of mighty lungs and great endurance.

Half a dozen wild bucks, and then Meteor laid hold of his bit, gripping it with his great strong teeth. An instant later he shot away as though fired from a gun, his black mane and tail streaming out in the wind.

"Steady, boy!" gasped Sid, as Meteor's hoofs thundered a rolling tattoo. "We ain't racing to-day. Just calm down a piece."

But it took all Sid's strength and skill to calm Meteor down and then send him forward at a steady canter.

As he thudded onwards, making towards a cutting where the white, dusty road ran between two gorse-clad hills, Sid's mind went back to his boss' last words.

"I guess there won't be any funny business this time," the lad told himself. "Hall seems as set on winning the handicap as the major himself. Thank Mike for that! For I had a rare job with Amethyst—the filly Major Grindlay wanted to win at Goodwood and Sam Hall didn't! I'm not aching for another spree like that one! So pull as much as you like, Meteor," ended Sid. "You're going to run straight and win!"

True, at the moment, it suited Hall quite well that Meteor should win. But unexpected events, which developed quite rapidly, made the unscrupulous trainer change his mind. Incidentally, they made a heap of trouble for Sid.

Not foreseeing trouble, Sid was feeling quite happy as he slowed down to a walk, and quitted the downland for the road. He had just reached the deep cutting through which Hall had told him to go. Beyond lay a green plateau, where he would be far away from other horses.

Sid had hardly entered the defile when there came a deafening racket from the further end. A high-powered blue car had just swept round a bend, and was bearing down on young Sid at about forty miles an hour.

"Road-hog!" gasped Sid, as Meteor slid to a stop and pricked up his ears. "But he's got plenty of room. I'll signal him to slow down."

Reining his snorting mount to one side, Sid snatched off his cap and waved and shouted.

But, with a billowing dust-cloud in its wake, the great car tore on, coming closer and closer. Its brass lamps a-glitter in the sunlight, it looked to the frightened horse like a devouring monster.

"Hi! Slow down, can't you?" bawled Sid, standing up in his stirrups. "Your joy wagon'll be the death o' my horse!"

Suddenly, to Sid's relief, the driver seemed to spot him, and, with a mighty grinding of brakes, the blue car slackened speed. It was still fifty yards up the artificial ravine, and Sid shouted his thanks.

But the next instant Sid's delighted hail became a yell of anger, for the driver acted like a maniac.

There came a wild blast from a strident horn, the brakes were released, and the blue car leapt forward again, making straight at Sid's horse!

Meteor plunged forward, then reared up, thrashing the air with his forelegs. It was all young Sid could do to keep his seat.

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But in a twinkling the lad realised the uselessness of swinging round and heading back. His one chance was to dash forward and try to slip past. If he turned tail the homicidal driver could run him down as he liked.

But there was not an instant to lose. The big car, swinging from side to side, was rushing down like a ramming battle-ship.

The horn screeched and roared, the engine whirled like a gigantic dynamo, and spurts of sharp flints volleyed up from the whizzing wheels. The din was infernal.

Plainly it was the driver's intention to crowd Sid into the left-hand bank, smashing Meteor's legs, and ending his career as a racehorse.

Down dropped the panic-stricken horse, fighting for a chance to whirl round and stampee for safety. But Sid's mind was made up. When the vile machine was yet some yards away, Sid clapped home his heels and cut clean across its face.

In two gigantic bounds Meteor was across the road. Sid, crouching, clenched his teeth, and shot forward at a hand gallop. He was gambling on sweeping past on the right of the car before the driver spotted his game and changed direction.

There came a raucous yell from inside the car, and the steering-wheel was spun round violently. But Meteor, now going all out, stormed through the narrowing gap between the car and the right-hand bank.

Things happened at racing speed. On his near side, Sid caught a fleeting glimpse of the driver's face, dark and lean, with lips drawn back in a ferocious snarl, and black eyes literally sparking. The fellow was bending over his tightly-gripped wheel and shouting at Sid at the top of his voice.

Even as Sid glimpsed the driver, he saw the left wing of the blue car skid almost under his own boot, to miss Meteor's hocks by the thickness of a knife-blade.

Then came a ripping, rending sound from the tyres. Simultaneously Sid felt a jarring pain in his right toes as his boot stubbed against the chalk bank of the deep cutting.

A second later Sid was through, and was galloping headlong down the road. Meteor's eyes bulged in his head as he thundered down the white road in a frenzy of fear.

Sid had the job of his life to turn Meteor off the road on to the green plateau beyond the cutting. Then he had a wild, hectic gallop before he could pull the big, sweat-lathered animal down to a steady canter.

By that time the blue car had streaked away over the swelling downs, a swirling pillar of dust marking its mad career.

"It was no accident, Meteor!" growled Sid, stroking his trembling mount's streaming neck. "That bull-headed lunatic was out to run us down. Of course, he'd swear I hazed him by cutting right across like I did. But if I hadn't we'd ha' been smashed to a jelly. Phew! Who was he? An' what the deuce was he playin' at?"

But the puzzle was too much for Sid. So he gave it up, reining Meteor in, and proceeding at a swinging walk.

Meanwhile, without a halt, the blue car raced on. It finally drew up at the front door of Hall's house. Had Sid known this the lad would have sensed trouble.

Out jumped the driver of the car, revealing himself as a tall, lean fellow, clad in a light dust-coat.

He bounded up the steps, tugging an

iron chain that sent a bell jangling somewhere in the back premises. A few minutes later he was shown into Hall's library, where the burly trainer soon joined him.

"Hallo, Renton!" exclaimed Hall, striding into the room and slamming the door behind him. "I'm glad you've run over. I haven't seen you since—"

"Since that f-frame-up we p-pulled off at Newmarket," spluttered Renton, who stammered fearfully, but was obviously not given to mincing matters.

Hall scowled at his visitor. But he waved him to a seat, at the same time plumping himself down in a leather arm-chair.

Renton seemed to be labouring under intense excitement, for his words came boiling and tumbling from his lips.

"S-see here, Hall," he stammered, "we know each other, d-don't we? Well, I've g-got a plan to sug-suggest that'll do us both a lot of good. You know my R-Red Lancer?"

"Yes," snapped Hall, studying the other through narrowed eyes. "What about him? He's in for the Great Ebor Handicap, isn't he?"

"Y-you're right, as usual," spluttered Renton. "And he's got to win! He's b-being trained up at Kirkwood's up in the M-Midlands, as you jolly well know. Well, I've backed Red Lancer to win me a p-packet. I got the money on months ago—before I knew you were running Meteor."

Renton broke off. It was hardly necessary for him to say any more. Hall laughed harshly.

"So that's the way the wind blows?" commented the red-faced trainer, after a slight pause. "Spit it out, man! You want Meteor queered, I reckon. Well, what's it worth? Barring Meteor, your Red Lancer has no serious rival that I know of."

"Ex-exactly!" frothed the cadaverous Renton. "Meteor b-beat Red Lancer by two lengths last time they met, an' they've both got the same weights in the Ebor H-Handicap. It's a rotten shame! Now, I stand to win t-ten thousand if Red Lancer gets home. Can you g-guarantee to have Meteor pulled?"

"Hardly," replied Hall, without relaxing a muscle of his face, though he rubbed his blue-black chin doubtfully. "For I don't trust the kid who's to ride

him to obey orders to pull. He's a new lad, called Sid Morris. He can ride all right. But if I tell him to pull he might pretend to agree, and then sell me a pup!"

"Put up another jockey!" expostulated Renton frantically.

"I can't," Hall answered calmly. "Meteor belongs to Major Grindlay, and the major insists on that kid riding for him, just because the boy got home in the Goodwood Cup on the major's Amethyst."

"Pshaw!" - grunted Renton angrily, adding quickly. "C-can't Meteor have an accident—fixed up at home?"

"No, he can't!" growled Hall. "The major's one of my best clients. If Meteor had an accident, as you call it, the major would take all his horses away."

"Well, he j-jolly nearly had an accident this morning," stammered Renton, forgetting caution in his growing anxiety. "I met the horse on my way here, over in the cutting, and I n-nearly ran him d-down. That would have—"

"What!" bellowed Hall, heaving himself up from the depths of his chair. "You nearly ran Meteor down! Don't you dare to try any tricks like that! Whatever Meteor does in the Ebor Handicap, he's got to win a race he's in for a fortnight later!"

"It was an accident," lied Renton sulkily. "I w-was op t-top of the horse before I recognised—er—spotted him. Anyway, don't let's get rattled. What about an accident to the boy? If that boy's outed you could put up another who will pull?"



There came a wild blast from a strident horn, and the big car leapt forward again, making straight for Sid's horse. Meteor plunged forward, then reared up, thrashing the air with his forelegs. It was all the lad could do to keep his seat.

Hall considered for a few moments, then said slowly:

"If you like to fix up an accident for the boy I won't interfere. But all the responsibility's yours. After that I can guarantee to put up a lad who'll obey my orders. But what do I get for my share? I've got to stand by while you have my boy Sid knocked out. And then I've got to find another lad who's clever enough to pull Meteor without being spotted."

"It'll be worth it to me to pay well," bubbled Renton excitedly. "What did you say the boy's name is? Sid Morris? Right! I'll get this Sid laid on the shelf for a b-bit, and pay you five hundred pounds for lying low an' for putting a 'reliable' boy up on Meteor in the Ebor Handicap. Then," went on Renton, making a rapid mental calculation, "I'll p-put another five hundred pounds for you on Red Lancer to win—at six to one. You'll stand to win three thousand. Is it a d-d-deal?"

"It is!" declared Hall, after another pause, at the same time heaving himself to his feet. "But see the boy Sid isn't crooked for more than about ten days."

"Leave it to me," spluttered the leaner of the two rascals, preparing to take his departure. "I've got the right idea. Your boy won't know what or who hit him! And now, g-good-morning!"

Renton hustled away, hugging himself with delight. A few minutes later his big blue car was tearing away from Ashdown House, heading for Renton's own place some twenty miles away across the downs.

Sid, making for home by a different route, spotted the swirling dustcloud from a distance.

"There goes that rip-snorting road-hog again!" gritted the lad. "An' it looks as though he's been up to our stables, by golly! I hope 'tain't another o' the boss' clever pals! Sure thing, I'll keep my eyes skinned in case they get monkeyin' with Meteor!"

But the reckless road-hog, Renton, now had no designs on Meteor—young Sid was to be the victim. And even if Sid did keep his eyes skinned, he would have to be mighty smart to dodge the trap Renton planned for him.

CHAPTER 2.

A Scheme That Went Wrong!

DUSK was falling as Sid's pal, Jim, slid noiselessly into the saddle-room. His eyes round, the boy seemed bursting with important information.

"There's a cove lookin' for you, Sid," he whispered. "He says—"

"What's that?" asked Sid, whirling round with a freshly cleaned stirrup-leather in his hand. "Some one wants me! I hope my dad ain't discovered what a rum place this is an' is goin' to hook me out of it!"

"No," replied Jim. "'Tain't no one from your dad. This here johnny says he's come from Major Grindlay. He's hanging about the yard entrance. He looks quite a toff, too."

"Oh, does he?" Sid snorted suspiciously. "If he's from the major, why don't he walk in? Gammon, Jim! The major wouldn't send anybody to me! Let him stop there. I ain't going out. Got enough to do cleaning up this saddlery."

Sid slipped a shining stirrup-iron on to the leather, and prepared to fasten both to the saddle. But Jim persisted.

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"Don't act like a boiled owl, Sid!" he hissed, coming closer. "Mebbe the major's got wind o' some trick to be worked on Meteor an' wants to warn you. P'raps he's tumbled to old Hall's larks at last. Anyway, Sid, you'd best see the chap. He looks harmless. I don't expect he bites!"

Sid aimed a round-arm buffet at Jim's head. But the younger lad ducked nimbly out of the way. So Sid, reckoning pursuit a waste of time, went out of the saddle-room, the stirrup-iron and leather still swinging in his hand.

The yard was empty, all the other lads being busy cleaning down horses. Hall was up at his house, while Foster, the "head lad"—a surly man past his prime—was probably downing a strong brew of tea in his quarters. He was usually thus engaged when his boss was absent.

So Sid met no one until he reached the yard entrance. Then his eyes fell on a sandy, strongly built youth who was standing in the shadows, tugging at his toothbrush moustache impatiently.

"What d'you want?" queried Sid.

"Are you Sid Morris?" asked the young man, coming forward. Then, as Sid nodded, he added hastily: "I've got a note here for you from Major Grindlay. You probably know his writing. Read it."

"I ain't never seen the major's writing," Sid jerked out, as he took the proffered note and tore it open. "But this is addressed to me all right. Hallo!" he went on. "This don't say much. It only says that you're to be trusted and can tell me something about Meteor. Well; cough it up! I've got a sight o' work on hand."

"It's a bit public here," exclaimed the sandy youth. "Come along down the road a bit. The news I've got for you is urgent and private."

Sid hesitated. Then he reflected that the bearer of the note certainly looked a smart chap—he might have come from the major. Also the note itself had been signed by Major Grindlay, so it seemed.

After a moment's pause Sid decided to go with the fellow.

Together they walked rapidly away for about thirty yards, the sandy youth a good head and shoulders taller than Sid. In the failing light Sid couldn't see that his companion was smiling. But when they turned the angle of the wall and were at the back of the stables, Sid pulled up.

"This is far enough—" began the lad.

But Sid got no further. Even as the words left his lips the sandy youth whipped a hand to his right pocket. Then his arm was flung up in a rigid curve, his right hand gripping a short, but heavily weighted, bludgeon.

Down swept the bludgeon, its wielder giving vent to a savage grunt as he aimed a terrific swipe at Sid's head. Had the blow fallen square Sid would have been knocked out of time.

But, quick as the movement was, Sid was even quicker.

"You rotten cheat!" he gasped, and jumped back, hearing the weighted weapon sizz past his ear. But Sid was also armed. And his weapon, though unusual, was most effective.

With a lightning swing Sid whirled up his stirrup-leather, to which was attached the gleaming iron. And he brought it whizzing down with all the force of which he was capable.

Sid's attacker flung up his left arm in defence. But the leather curled round his elbow like a snake, and the stirrup-iron whipped round, dealing his shoulder a numbing blow.

There came a gasp of anger from the sandy youth, and he aimed another stunning crack at Sid with his pocket bludgeon. But Sid ducked, released his leather, and ran into a clinch.

Sid fought furiously. It was no occasion for observing rules; and he tried to smash his head into his powerful assailant's jaw.

Fight as he might, things would have gone hard with Sid had assistance not been at hand. But from the yard entrance Jim had been watching, fearful of his pal landing into trouble. And, despite the gathering gloom, Jim could see that a fight was on. Yelling like an Apache Indian, he came charging down to join in the fray.

Then the dust flew up in clouds, as the two small stable-boys set about Sid's assailant together. The trio reeled this way and that, the sounds of gasps and blows coming out of a cloud of stirred-up dust. In a couple of seconds all three were on the ground, rolling over and over, and landing punches at every opportunity.

But Sid's wild yells had attracted the other lads. And half a dozen youngsters in shirtsleeves came racing down the road. In three minutes the sandy youth was hog-tied with four pairs of braces.

"What's to be done with him?" panted Sid, scrambling to his feet. "I guess we'd better lock him up. The boss'll send for the police."

Thus said Sid, little dreaming that his slippery boss was a party to the outrageous attack! Hall, however, drawn by the noise, was quickly on the scene.

"What's all this about?" he boomed, in feigned wrath.

Eight shrill voices made answer at once, each apparently telling a different version.

"Shut up!" roared Hall. "I can't hear you all at once! It don't matter, anyway. Carry this fellow up to the empty loose-box and lock him in. I'll see to him later."

Eight pairs of willing hands gripped the bound prisoner, hoisted him from the ground, and rushed him up to the stables.

Then cords were substituted for the braces, and the unlucky sandy one was pitched into an empty box and locked in.

Sid and Jim went back to the saddle-room. Both were mighty puzzled as to the reason for the attack, and neither could imagine who had sent the bearer of the note. Though, obviously, the note had been a forgery.

The other lads drifted back to their work amongst the horses. Being all as crooked as their boss, they had little in common with Sid or Jim, and didn't bother much about the incident. But, all the same, they weren't going to look on while a stranger pounded two of the lads of their stable.

So they had joined in the scrap. But what was to be done with the prisoner now was none of their business.

Twilight gradually gave place to darkness. The lads went off to their quarters; and then Hall, after making a final round of the horses with his head lad—who had been ruthlessly torn from his eternal tea—made towards the prisoner's box by himself.

Entering the dark loose-box, Hall soundlessly closed the door after him. There came the splutter of a match, and then the burly trainer kindled a hurricane lantern.

"Who is it?" gasped the prisoner, as the yellow beams fell on his face. "Oh, I guess you're Hall, aren't you? I wish you'd loosen these cords, anyway; they're fairly eating into my flesh."

Hall said nothing. But he bent down and quickly sliced through the captive's bonds.

"That's better," observed the prisoner, sitting up and rubbing his numbed limbs. "And I reckon you've come to let me go—eh? My name's Gavin. I was acting for Renton—"

"I guessed so!" growled Hall. "And a nice mess you made of your job! Couldn't you handle one boy without making all that stir and getting landed yourself? By the way, how did you entice the lad down the road?"

Gavin thought hard. He still had the note, with Major Grindlay's forged name on it, in his pocket. But he judged it better to say nothing about it. Sandy Gavin didn't want it to be known that he was an adept at forging people's names. So he replied airily:

"Oh, I just told him I'd got some news for him from his people, and that I didn't want to be seen hanging round the stables. The kid rose at the bait all right. But, say, those two lads didn't half land me one or two! I'd like another chance at that Sid Morris—just to square things up and earn my cash from Renton at the same time."

"You'll have a chance, all right," answered Hall grimly, "and don't bungle this one! Listen! I'll tell young Sid to bring you some food. Since I've cut your bonds, if you can't surprise the boy and lay him out, you're not worth much to your employer. After that, clear out quick. And, mind, don't you break any bones. I want young Sid able to ride again after the Ebor Handicap."

"I get you!" replied Sandy Gavin, with cheerful insolence, and Hall went out as silently as he had come in.

Gavin remained crouching in the darkness like a beast of prey. That he was doing a despicable job was nothing to the polished ruffian.

He was a fellow who, but two or three years ago, had had a lot of money. But riotous living and bad companionship had dragged him down to the lowest depths. Now he was quite willing to act as a bookmaker's tout, or even a hired assassin, as he was doing at the moment.

But suddenly Gavin sat up and pricked his ears. He had just heard the booming voice of Sam Hall shouting for Sid Morris.

Sid, in his quarters above one of the rows of loose-boxes, and overlooking the stable-yard, also heard the trainer's voice, and came running down.

"Go up to my house, Sid," ordered Hall, as the boy, struggling into a coat, dashed out into the dim yard, "and get along round to the kitchen. The cook'll give you some food for the prisoner. Take it in to him, and then look up the box again. Here's the key."

Sid deftly caught the key, and departed forthwith on his errand. He was a little puzzled. For the job seemed more suitable for a house-servant than a stable-boy. But Sid was not so stupid as to argue.

Hall's house, built of grey granite, adjoined the stables. So Sid was not long in collecting some plates of food and starting back with his burden.

"Gee! I ought to be a keeper at the Zoo," the lad grinned to himself as he pattered across the yard. "Lions and tigers fed at four o'clock—monkeys after dark. The public are warned not to tease the animals—"

Sid ceased his nonsense, placed his tray on the ground, and inserted the key in the prisoner's loose-box. The lock clicked, and the door swung inward.

"Here you are!" chuckled Sid, scooping up his tray and stepping into the

dark box. "Sorry there ain't no champagne or beer! But, half a mo', I'd best cut your cords—"

A dull thud cut off Sid's remarks. The lad saw a myriad multi-coloured stars, dropped his tray with a resounding crash, and reeled backwards, to drop in a huddled heap.

Out through the open loose-box door sprang the powerful figure of Sandy Gavin. He had dealt the unsuspecting lad a treacherous knock-out blow before he had a chance to defend himself.



"Here you are!" chuckled Sid, scooping up his tray and stepping into the dark box. "I'd better loose your cords—" A dull thud cut off his speech as the powerful figure of Sandy Gavin sprang through the loose-box door and dealt him a treacherous knock-out blow.

"Made a good job of it this time," grunted Gavin, bending over the prostrate Sid. "He must ha' fair cracked his nut on the paving-stones when he dropped. Hallo! What the—"

Gavin broke off, glancing up. A white face had just appeared at a window above him. It was Jim. He had heard the crash, and wondered what had happened to Sid. One glance told him. "Prisoner's escapin'!" yelled Jim.

A split second later the plucky boy was pounding and clattering down the spiral iron staircase, burning to get at the ruffian who had laid out his pal.

Luckily for Jim, Gavin didn't wait. He had done his job, and didn't know how many lads were making at him; but knew well enough that he'd get no help from Hall if he was caught again.

So the furious Jim, shooting into the yard as if he'd been blown from a gun,

only heard the fast-fading footsteps of Gavin as the ruffian beat a rapid retreat down the road.

Whirling round, Jim dashed over to Sid, who was lying amidst the wreckage of half a dozen plates and steaming chunks of food.

Jim's shouts quickly brought other lads on the scene, and the unconscious Sid was carried upstairs and laid on his bed.

"I'm still puzzling how that thug got loose, Jim. He jumped at me from the dark as soon as I shoved my nose in the box. I'd reckoned he was triced up properly."

Sid, wearing a white bandage round his head, emerged from Meteor's box as he spoke.

It was only a week since the cowardly attack on the lad. But Sid had been riding Meteor at exercise for the last two days. Thanks to a remarkably tough skull, he had got off with very slight concussion.

"Mebbe," observed Jim thoughtfully, "he wasn't tied up too well. Or p'raps

he gnawed through the cords. Or I wonder if he's got a pal in this outfit who helped him?"

"Ah! That's what I'm wondering, too!" exclaimed Sid.

And, still wondering, he made towards the saddle-room with his saddle and bridle on his arm.

But Sid and Jim were not the only people wondering.

Away in his house across the downs, Renton was wondering how Gavin could have been such a fool as to bungle with a job he had been well paid to do. For Renton had learnt from Hall of Sid's quick recovery.

"H-hang it all!" he spluttered. "G-Gavin isn't fit to tackle a baby in arms! B-but there's still a chance to stop Meteor from winning, and it's the b-brightest notion that ever was! I'll

hold of G-Gavin again. And don't be smart if he fails this time!"

CHAPTER 3.

The Broken Rein :

A BURNING August sun, shining in a cloudless sky, poured down on the packed stands and enclosures of the York racecourse.

A confused babel of sounds filled the air. Not only were the stands full. Quite a considerable number of people had crowded on to the tops of the glittering lines of motor-cars and carriages.

The restless, shouting throng, made a brilliant picture—a kaleidoscope of shifting colours. And above the din rose the raucous voices of the bookmakers bawling the odds.

Two races had been run. The Great Ebor Handicap was the third event, and Sid, carrying his saddle and weight-cloth, dived into the weighing-room.

His weight correct, the lad very quickly emerged, and started towards the line of loose-boxes.

Close to the box where Meteor was waiting to be saddled Sid could see the burly figure of Sam Hall. But Sid also glimpsed someone else, and nearly dropped his saddle.

"There's that sandy cove who cracked my napper!" gasped the boy, his eyes bulging in his head. "Or am I seeing visions? No, I ain't! There he goes—talking to that swell in the top-hat an' spats!"

Sid, eager to see who his recent assailant was talking to, manoeuvred closer. Then, to his unbounded astonishment, he recognised the "swell."

"The road-hog!" breathed Sid, flushing angrily. "The fellow in the blue car who tried to run down Meteor! This beats the band! I wonder if the boss knows—or is the boss mixed up with 'em? Crumbs! I wish the major was about!"

But there was no sign of Major Grindlay. He was away on some other part of the course. So Sid made rapid tracks towards Hall.

"I say, sir," began Sid breathlessly, "I've just seen—"

"I don't care what you've seen, boy!" snapped Hall, suddenly aware of the lad at his side. "I've been wondering what you were doing. Get saddled quickly. All the other horses are down in the paddock."

Sid sprang towards Meteor, mighty surprised not to see Jim, who had come to help.

But just then Jim came running up, to seize Meteor by the bridle, which was already on the horse. Later, Sid learnt that Hall had despatched Jim on a wild-goose errand while he—Sid—was in the weighing-room.

It was only the work of a minute to saddle Meteor. Then the big bay was taken into the paddock, where the other candidates for the handicap were already being led round and round.

Hall gave Sid a leg-up. And just as the lad swung into the saddle he saw Meteor's tall owner, Major Grindlay, come into the paddock.

"That's the horse we've got to look out for," said the major, coming up to Hall and nodding towards a big-striding chestnut, "Mr. Renton's Red Lancer. D'you know the owner?"

"No, major," replied Hall, lying unblushingly. "But I reckon you're right. Whatever beats Red Lancer'll win the handicap. The bookies have made him favourite."

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"They have," agreed Major Grindlay. "But I think my Meteor'll run Red Lancer very close. I wonder," he added, looking around, "what Mr. Renton thinks about it. I thought I saw him just now. He's gone off again, anyway. Well, good luck, Sid!"

"Thanks, sir!" replied Sid, gathering up his reins.

And then he swung out on to the course.

Sid had already been warned to watch Red Lancer. But, naturally, the lad didn't connect Red Lancer's owner with the driver of the blue car.

One by one the horses cantered down to the post, Meteor fretting and snatching at the reins. But Sid, stroking his muscular neck, kept him calm. A few minutes later they were lining up to face the starting-gate.

While the horses were circling about down at the gate, two men in the grandstand were talking in hurried whispers.

"Are you q-quite sure you m-managed it, Gavin?" spluttered one, a swell in a tall hat, spats, and other smart raiment.

"Quite!" hissed his sandy-haired companion. "While that boy-jockey, Sid, was getting weighed, I caught Hall's eye. He sent the other kid away, and then turned his back while I sid up to Meteor. It's the near rein I cut, close to the bit an' on the inside. Yes, quite a small cut. But a rank puller like that Meteor'll bust it before they've gone half-way! Hallo!" Gavin broke off, chuckling. "It looks as though the starter's got a job!"

Indeed, the starter had got a job, and was fast getting impatient. For each time the line of a dozen horses came up, some horse whipped round and upset the others.

"Turn round on Firefly!" he shouted. "Come up, you in the scarlet jacket! Hold back, there, on Red Lancer! Are you trying to break the tapes? Now, steady, that boy on Meteor! Right—at last!"

The tapes shot skywards, and forward leapt the eager horses. After fifteen minutes' playing-up they had got away to a good start.

A roar went up from the crowd:

"They're off!"

Then followed a tense silence, ten thousand eyes glued on the straining horses.

But all that could yet be seen from the stands was a bunched-up, bobbing mass; a big brown blot scurrying along the

green turf of the course. No particular horse could be singled out before they reached the bend.

Sid, on Meteor, was lying well up with the leaders, listening to the drumming hoofbeats around and behind him. The wind fanned his cheeks and whistled in his ears. The landscape seemed to shoot past like an endless sheet.

On they tore, the pounding tattoo deepening to a steady roar. Sid could feel the galvanic play of Meteor's mighty muscles, and his confidence rose, though the big bay fought and pulled. He would bolt if he got half a chance.

Thudding and drumming they neared the bend. Red Lancer was leading now, Firefly, a speedy grey, lying at his girth. Sid took a steadying pull at Meteor.

The lad didn't want to swing wide at the turn. He wanted to get on the rails, then streak up the straight like a rocket.

"You're pulling my aris off, Meteor!" he gasped. "Hold hard! Great Caesar's ghost!"

As Sid gave vent to his cry of dismay, his heart gaped into his throat. For Meteor had shaken his head, snatched at his bridle, and broken his rein on the near side.

The great horse hurtled forward, head held high, froth flying from his open jaws. His useless, broken rein whipped the air. He hurtled past Red Lancer and Firefly, then headed right away off the course. The crowd at the bend scattered in panic.

"Meteor's bolted!"

The shout was one of anger as well as alarm. For not half the shouters could see that the luckless Sid had got no reins.

But Sid was not beaten. After the first gasp of horror he set to work to get Meteor straight with his whip. It was a marvellous display of horsemanship.

Laying hold of the mane, Sid gave his mount a couple of stinging cuts on his near side. Then, reaching out, he gave him a light slap on his face with his open hand.

Meteor swung round. He had never before felt the whip in his life. But Sid was desperate. He had to get his bolting horse straight at any price, even with whip and spur.

Sweeping round in a wide circle, Meteor lost lengths. But he did come round, heading up the straight.

Sid crouched low and leaned far forward, setting out to catch the flying field. And Meteor, once his skilful jockey had got him straight, started to eat up the intervening distance, his powerful legs working like pistons.

Up in front Red Lancer was fighting a ding-dong battle with Firefly. No other horse was within two lengths of the leaders.

But none of the jockeys noticed a big bay that, with his head free and his bit dangling from his mouth, was sweeping up on the outside. He came thudding up, unnoticed, until it was too late.

But the crowd could see. And they roared for Meteor to come on. Meteor came on, Sid keeping him straight with smacks of his hand and light taps with his whip.

Suddenly Firefly's jockey, glancing round, saw his peril. He got out his whip, striving to get the last ounce out of his mount. But Meteor bore down on Firefly like a hawk chasing a sparrow, shot past, and rushed up to challenge Red Lancer.

Now the bay and the chestnut were running neck and neck. Red Lancer had every advantage, for Sid was unable to hold his mount together. Yet, inch by

(Continued on page 27.)

GRAND FOOTBALL COMPETITION



FOR 10 RESULTS ANSWERS

At the mercy of the rascally Morveno, Brian Carr and Dan Derrick are determined to divulge nothing!



THE SECRET OF THE GALLEONS!

By ROLAND SPENCER.

(Author of our Recent Success: "Tom of the Ajax.")



CHARACTERS IN THE STORY.

DON ALONZO GUADIANA DE LA MANCHA, a Spaniard and fancier of the expedition aboard the salvage boat Result.

SARKY MARLINE, a trustworthy, bow-legged old seaman in command of the Result.

DAN DERRICK, a cheery youth, and son of Captain Derrick—known as "Dare-Devil" Derrick—a rugged sea captain of some sixty-five years.

BRIAN CARR, a chum of Dan's, and son of "Amphibious" Carr, inventor of a patent diving-dress which Brian in his research work had perfected.

Their unscrupulous rival, **MORVENO**, known as the "Rat," a round-shouldered, beady-eyed Mexican half-breed.

Steered by the trusty hands of Sarky Marline, the salvage boat Result sets out on its great voyage in quest of sunken Spanish treasure. Reaching Thirlbeach, Brian Carr and Dan Derrick, garbed in their patent diving-dresses, take the first plunge into the depths of the mighty ocean, where they locate the Maria de Castellon, an old Spanish galleon, in whose lazaret hold lies hidden fabulous wealth. The chums find themselves up against great odds, for there are rivals in the quest, a rascally set of rogues under the leadership of Morveno, commonly known as the Rat. Brian gets captured, but, thanks to the hard hitting of Sarky Marline, he is able to gain his freedom. Further grueling fights on the sea bottom follow, but the cool courage displayed by the chums is rewarded with the first fruits of victory. Morveno is determined to lay hands on the second of the galleons, and by a cunning ruse the Golden Gain is able to make a rapid get-away for Islay. The Result is soon at hand, however, but the weather is against all operations being carried out. Dan and Brian go ashore, where they learn that a man named Gurdley is financing the Golden Gain. In an attempt to get on his track they fall into the hands of Morveno. Bound and gagged, and determined not to divulge their secrets come what may, the two chums bravely await their fate.

(Now read on.)

Morveno's Methods!

THE Rat's sneering, thin-lipped mouth opened as the chums started back on seeing their enemy, and he gave vent to his croaking laugh, his horrible yellow fang hanging from his sunken gums.

"Bind them in the chairs, you!" he ordered his accomplices; and the chums were forced into two wooden arm-chairs. The bonds of their arms were thrown adrift, then used to bind their forearms down to the arms of the chairs.

"Go!" now ordered the Rat, waving his skinny brown hand towards the door. "You understands? You leaves me in peace and undisturbed!"

The men grunted out an acknowledgment of their orders, then left the room, closing the baize doors silently behind them. The Rat's mouth had now gone back to its twisted, sneering line. His thin long nose was wrinkled and his black eyes glittered fendishly.

"So I have you both!" he said, rising and advancing towards Brian and Dan. "I wanted that there Castilian, too, curse him! But I mustn't grumble, for you might not have fallen into my trap at all. Ye can't speak with them

there gags on your mouth, so I'll remove 'em, an' soon you'll speak—ay, soon you'll speak!"

The half-breed rose slowly, his thin lips parted in the laugh again—that terrible laugh that seemed to freeze the blood in the veins of the hearer. He advanced towards Brian and Dan, hooked his talon-like fingers into the gag of each, and jerked downwards savagely, snarling like a wolf as he did so.

Dan felt his head jerk forward. The Rat had given a scientific twist as he jerked, and a feeling of excruciating pain shot across Dan's neck. The youngster, quite unprepared for the cowardly jerk, gasped and cried out as the gag was wrenched from his mouth. Brian, too, had suffered under the painful jerk. He uttered a startled "Oh!"

The Rat laughed at that. Then he stepped back a pace and regarded the chums with a leer of mingled triumph and hatred.

"You'll tell me the bearin's of them galleons—the one at Islay an' the one at Rathlin," he said. "I know how to make ye speak. Jest as well to blab it out now; but I shouldn't like me bit of pleasure took away. However, it'll be safest for me if ye speak wi'out trouble. Where's that—"

"We'll tell you nothing—nothing, you cur!" cried Brian, his face flushed with rage.

"You'll get nothing in the way of information from us. Do your worst, you brute!" shouted Dan, with such vehemence that Brian turned his head and looked at his chum. Dan's face was white, and his lips were set in a straight line. The boy's jaw was stuck out and his brows were drawn together in a frown.

The Rat looked at Dan, too, and fell back a pace. A shadow of what looked very like fear passed over his evil features. But it was only a passing shadow. It surprised both Brian and Dan, but the chums did not show their surprise. Had they but known it, that look of Dan's was an echo of the look of his father in one of his most dangerous moments. It was a look which had often made wrongdoers tremble. Once that look of Captain Derrick's had made Morveno cringe in fear.

Morveno had not forgotten that. He remembered it now, and he lowered his head with such a demoniacal frown that Brian and Dan felt their hearts flutter, then thump heavily against their ribs. What manner of man was this? What terrors were in store for them now that they were in this fiend's power—bound and helpless, with secrets locked up in their hearts?

Morveno's frown changed to a look of triumph, and the long, wrinkled hands stretched out to a table near by. The bony fingers closed on the handle of a small black bag, and the Rat, not taking his terrible eyes off the boys' faces for one instant, drew the bag towards him and slapped it with his free hand.

"You'll speak!" repeated the half-breed, the sounds rasping out of the lower corner of his mouth. "Ay, you'll speak! I hev 'em all here!"

"Attempt to harm us at your peril!" shouted Brian. "This is England. We have friends, You are playing with fire, you cur, and you'll burn your fingers!"

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The half-breed's eyes narrowed, and he advanced his face towards Brian.

"Different sounds you will make in a minute, you cub of a thieving, murderous human devil-fish!"

Morveno got no farther. Brian, incensed at the insult hurled at the memory of his father, lifted his foot and sent the sole of his boot crashing full in the evil face of the half-breed. Morveno staggered back, with his hands to his eyes, groaning and gasping. He hit the wall behind him, the back of his head thumping dully on the distempered surface. Then the man crumpled up and lay still on the floor.

Brian was panting and tugging at his bonds. But he could not undo the lines which held his forearms so cruelly and so securely to the chair. The young diver strove to rise, but found that the chair was fixed to the floor. Dan was in the same case, and all the chums could do was glare at the form before them.

Playing Against Time!

It took the friends some seconds to realise just what had happened. Then Brian looked quickly at Dan. "I hope I've killed him—I hope I've killed him!" cried the young diver wildly. But Dan was more calm. "He's not badly hurt, you may be sure," said the lad. "He'll come round in a minute. I suppose he has some instruments in the bag. Brian, what shall we do? Oh, I'm not afraid of your courage or my courage, but how can we say that that fiend will not make us speak—roar out our information, as poor young Tony so gently put it?"

Brian was calmed on the instant.

"You're right, Dan. He'll come round in a minute. Can you reach my face with your foot? Yes, you can, and I can reach you. Dan, whichever of us he starts on, the other must kick out and administer a knock-out. It's awful, I know, and risky, but it'll be best. Kick hard!"

"If we can't get in another at Morveno, that is."

"He'll watch it!"

"Yes; and when he comes round he'll lash our legs down, so your scheme won't do. Besides, say you knocked me out like that, you'd still have to go through it yourself."

"It would halve the risk, anyway, Dan. But you're right. He'll lash our legs down after this. Can you hook your foot into the handle of that bag?"

Dan stretched out his foot, and, after a deal of puffing and stretching, managed to draw the bag across the floor towards him. Brian was now chuckling.

"Morveno's safe for a bit, anyway," he said, looking across at the still senseless form of the half-breed. "Now then, Dan, such a penalty kick as you've never before given. Don't miff it, or we're done. Through that opening up there. It's either a ventilator or a listening-in hole in this palace of torture."

Dan was breathing hard as he measured the distance carefully with his eyes, then drew back his foot for a mighty kick at the bag. The opening in the wall above was of good size—probably to enable some secret listener to get through and lie concealed in a cubby-hole between the double walls of the room. What this evil building had seen could well be imagined. Family secrets, perhaps, wrested from some person, with a person who desired to remain unseen listening-in behind that opening.

The chums thought of all this in a flash. But they had no time to do much in the way of reconstructing the gruesome happenings of that house. Let it suffice that with the black bag out of the way for the time they could gain a respite, and any minute rescue might be at hand. The Don had the address. Morveno knew it. Fifteen minutes lost in the recovery of the bag from the listening-hole might be the means of their salvation.

Dan took a deep breath, then his foot shot out. The bag soared on high, and, holding their breaths now, the chums saw it streak towards the opening. It entered, and fell on the floor below with a dull thud and a slight metallic clinking.

"Bravo, Dan!" cried Brian. "I couldn't have done that! This is splendid—Hullo, the Rat's waking from his beauty sleep!"

Somehow, now the bag was out of sight, the chums became much more chirpy and cheerful.

Morveno staggered to his feet, his hand to his forehead. He glared round for a few seconds, then recollection flooded back to his evil mind. Dan and Brian had never before thought it possible for such a look of ferocity to be pictured in a human being's face. Morveno was beside himself with rage at what Brian had done. He searched round for his bag, to take who knows what dreadful reprisals on Brian for his attempt to defend himself. To the Rat's amazement, the bag was not to be seen.

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"Someone, not holding with your torturing methods," said Brian, taking a long shot, "saw you knocked out, and got the bag out of the room."

The Rat gave one scream of rage, jumping to the conclusion that someone from below had been up. He rushed to the green baize doors, tore them open savagely one after the other, and the chums heard him rating and raging downstairs. There was a considerable rumpus below, coming to the ears of the chums through the sound-proof doorway, since the doors had been left open by the Rat. Angry shouts were at last heard. The hoarse voice of one of the ruffians was raised in indignation.

"Think I'll be badgered by a weasel like you!" he roared. "We dunno where your bag is! Hold off, or I'll break yer skinny neck!"

Dan and Brian chuckled. But the row did not go on for long. Soon the Rat returned with some of his minions and a search of the room was commenced.

"Wot they've done is kick the bag through the listenin'-ole," said one of the ruffians. At that Morveno squealed and leapt for the hole. The agility displayed by the evil-looking hump-backed half-breed was amazing. He got through the hole like a monkey and soon a shout of triumph told all that he had found the bag.

Back came the Rat, his eyes glittering with excitement and sinister purpose.

"Go!" he roared to his ruffians. "Leave me! I will brook no more delay in idle words. Time is now short, so keep more careful watch. I will be down in a quarter of an hour, so have the car ready."

The men vanished, closing the doors, then Morveno turned towards Brian and Dan, blazing with anger. He struck the chums' cheeks with the back of his claw-like hand, knowing that that insult would do more towards making young Englishmen blaze up with anger than anything else. Then his trembling fingers opened the bag, and his hand clawed in amongst the terrible instruments Dan and Brian surmised were there.

The friends were too furious to fear. They tugged and strained at their bonds, lashed out with their feet, and gasped out their defiance. But Morveno only laughed. He took care to stand clear of their boots, this time. He circled round behind the chums, something in his hand, and approached the chairs from the rear.

Dan and Brian were almost frantic. What if they should roar out Guadiana's secrets under the terrible pressure Morveno was doubtless about to apply? How could they ensure that they would not talk? They had never experienced the like of this sort of treatment before. Starvation, threats, or blows, they could stand. But what fiend's device was Morveno about to apply?

The Rat drew close to Dan. The boy twisted his head round in fury as he felt the half-breed's hot breath on his cheek. A red mist seemed to swim across Dan's eyes as he saw the evil face, contorted now with a horrible sort of madness, not six inches from his own.

"Ha, son of Daredevil Derrick, my reckonin' is near!"

The Gain Takes the Lead!

DAN struggled and heaved, as Morveno's fingers closed on the nape of his neck. Then, suddenly, the green baize doors were thrown open and two of the roughs broke in excitedly.

"A raid!" gasped the men; and one blurted out jerkily: "Police and plain-clothes men! They're rushing up the street. The back—our only way of escape!"

The Rat snarled with mingled fear and baffled rage. He drew a knife and cut the bonds of Dan and Brian, who now felt limp and played out.

"Hands on them!" roared Morveno. "Mustn't be found bound here. Heavily punishable crime! Throw them into the cellar. Then we go, not before!"

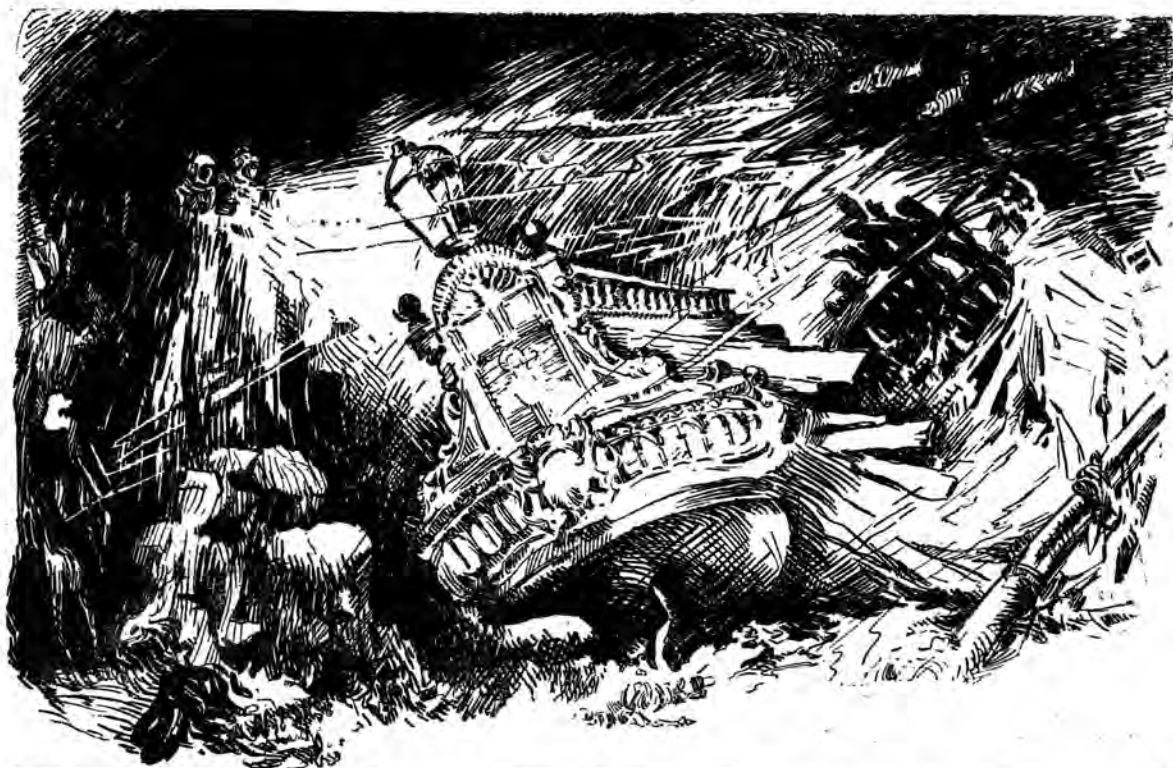
"What about the boy Tony Rayne?" gasped one of the ruffians, as he dragged Dan, who was struggling weakly, towards the stairs. "We take him?"

"No," shrieked the Rat. "Leave them all. Rayne's cub is a nuisance."

"But he has threatened to tell the police."

"Leave him, I say! Guadiana will have no police case made out. He will silence young Rayne. Curse Rayne and his milk-and-water methods and his milk-and-water son! Do as I say!"

Brian and Dan were hurled into the vile cell once more, and Tony, sobbing out his joy at having them with him once more, tugged at their collars, to loosen them; for the chums were gasping for breath. They had been roughly handled and were panting, unable to speak. The heavy doors banged to and the bolts were shot.



Brian and Dan clawed their way up the broken column and looked over, Brian holding his light on high. "Great Scott!" the chums gasped, for there, lying on her side, was an old-time galleon!

The footsteps of their enemies died away. Then all was as still as the grave. Brian was the first to stagger to his feet. He lurched towards the heavy door, and began shaking and hammering on it, in hopes of making those friends apparently just entering the house aware of their presence and whereabouts. But nothing happened, for, it seemed to the boys, an eternity.

At last all three, exhausted and knuckles bleeding from their attacks on the door, heard the belts drawn, and they lurched out, right into the arms of Guadiana, beside whom were a few men, two in police uniform.

"Boys, are you all right?" cried Guadiana. "Was the Rat here? Where has he gone? I suppose that wire in code to Gurdley was a fake—a decoy for us?"

"Didn't you hear us hammering?" gasped Dan.

"The fiendish cunning of the Rat has defeated us," replied Guadiana. "As soon as we entered the house we heard crockery falling and smashing right at the top. We rushed up to a top room and had to break down a stout door. We found a shelf jumping and quivering inside this room. There was nothing else but this shelf, with a few cheap articles of crockery on it. The jerking of the shelf was making the vases and things fall one after another. We investigated and found that some electrical arrangement was making the shelf jump. We couldn't trace the wires, though we could see they led away from the room and into a solid wall.

"We have wasted a good half-hour searching about. Then we got word from one of the men downstairs that there was a thumping in the cellar. Fearing some trap, after our experience of the jumping shelf, obviously arranged to delay us and keep us upstairs, we went carefully. However, here you are, and safe. Thank Heaven for it, boys! And who is this?"

"Tony Rayne."

"Tony Rayne! Good heavens!"

Guadiana looked hard at Tony, who, the chums could now see, was pale and pinched-looking. The boy must have had a bad time.

"About this door, sir," said one of the detectives, examining the jamb of the cell door. "It's loose. When you shake it, it forms a contact with two little brass buttons. See; as I tug and jerk at the bolts, there's a constant making and breaking of contact. It was these young men hammering at this door which made that shelf on top jump. See the idea? They imprison people here, knowing they'll rattle at the door. Then they put over a contact switch to make the electrical arrangement work if they have to

make a sudden getaway. The raiders, like us, would hear the crocks smashing on top. They'd rush up, as we did, and waste time investigating. This cellar's sound-proof, or near enough. It takes time to discover it and release the prisoners. By then they've got clean away, as they have this time, unless Carder and Grayson have got on their track. It looks to me like a den of Rex Dalby, the most cunning crook in creation!"

All marvelled at the cunning of the villains. Dan and Brian and Guadiana began to wonder if the Rat was connected in some way with a band of crooks. Or perhaps he had merely hired one of their retreats for his own fell purposes. It was impossible to say, and there was no time to think about it, for Guadiana had that morning received a wire from Sarky Marline.

The wire read:

"Sea now quiet. Under way for Rathlin. Following Gain."

So Rayne, in the Golden Gain, was taking the lead! He doubtless meant to lay-to near Rathlin, wait for the Rat to communicate the bearing of the galleon there, and so make sure of that treasure, at least.

Sarky Marline was a splendid seaman, but Guadiana and the chums doubted if his wits would work quickly enough to get two of the divers trained for Brian's diving-suits, work out a scheme to fool the Golden Gain, and get the divers down to the galleon to be first in the field.

The only way out of the trouble was to get swiftly back to the Result. But how? Guadiana had wired to Benson to work out a scheme with a route for getting to Rathlin in the shortest possible space of time. He had done this just before rushing off with the police to 12, Comyn's Terrace, Camden Town.

There was no help for it now. The police were in on the business at last, and the chums could reckon on being called for statements, attending courts of inquiry, and what not. The Don himself would be wanted immediately, as soon as any one of the Rat's party was laid by the heels. But, for the moment, no one had been caught.

The Don protested that he did not want to make any charge against anybody. The police became suspicious. They said that it looked as if they might get on the track of a band of crooks they had been after for a long while through this Comyn's Terrace business. So Guadiana was compelled to make a long, detailed statement of the whole business. Then

he was allowed to depart, with the warning that he might be wanted at any time.

Straight off to Benson's office rushed Guadiana and the chums by taxicab. Tony implored them to keep him with them, and he was suffered to remain. Guadiana had frowned as he gave his grudging consent, for the Castilian had at first said that Tony was to be left in Benson's care.

Benson ran out to the taxi to meet them as soon as they drew up to the kerb.

"Go to Croydon, senior," said the lawyer. "I've hired a big passenger aeroplane there. Terrible expensive, but worth it, for you may arrive before the Golden Gain gets down to diving operations—"

"The Rat got nothing out of us," cut in Dan; "so the Gain can't start salving till we give the lead."

Benson looked eager.

"Then we can save this expense," he said, his business mind working quickly. "I can cancel the aeroplane. You can go by train and boat—"

"Rot!" broke in Guadiana. "I won't have you quibbling over expense, Benson. You count the cost too often, thinking too much about the amount of your share of the total profits. Speed is as essential now as it would be if Rayne had the bearings and knew exactly where to drop anchor first shot. The police are mixed up in the business now. Benson, I rely on you to go through legal matters without me whenever possible. This time, for instance, you could have settled with that fool who contested our rights."

Benson frowned.

"All right!" he said. "But good-bye galleon gold if you are called by the police and Morveno's party is allowed to be free for a week or two longer!"

Guadiana merely grunted, and told the taxi-driver to make for Croydon with all possible speed.

Seventy Fathoms Deep!

THE machine which Benson had ordered to convey Guadiana and the chums to Rathlin Island was all ready and waiting by the time they arrived at the Croydon public aerodrome. It was a big biplane, with a closed passenger-car and adjustable seats, so that the backs could be dropped down flat to act as sleeping cots.

Dan and Brian were lively enough when they arrived, but Tony was dog tired. Once in the machine the boy was fed carefully, while Dan and Brian wolfed all the food they could lay hands on.

Then Tony's seat was collapsed, and the boy lay down to rest, protesting all the time that he wanted to "look out of the window." Despite the novelty of an aeroplane journey, however, Tony was asleep before the machine had left London behind.

Dan and Brian fully realised that they ought to sleep, too. But it was the first aeroplane trip they had had, and the ever-changing picture of the country below, stretching out like a huge ordnance survey plan, made sleep seem quite out of the question.

The Vale of Trent, Pottery District, the mouth of the Mersey, and many other important features passed under the adventurers as they peered out from the comfort, safety, and warmth of their position in the closed car of the beautiful passenger aeroplane.

The machine landed near Blackpool for overhaul and refill. A telegram ahead of them had announced their coming, and all was ready—mechanics, tools, oil, and petrol fountain vacant—as their wheels gently bounced on the ground. They were off again inside a quarter of an hour, and now headed out across the shimmering sea with its numerous little ships, like toy boats on a model lake. The Isle of Man stretched out below them like a map.

The weather was perfect. The skies were clear, and when the machine planed down to a low altitude to miss a head-wind in a certain stratum, the chums could see that the sea was fairly calm.

The speed of their passage made them gasp. It seemed as if they had not been up for more than an hour or so when the reserve pilot at the head of the car turned and told them that Rathlin Island was in view.

The aeroplane descended gently. At last Dan cried out excitedly that he could see the Golden Gain and the Result. There, sure enough, were the salvage ships, lying-to and rolling beam on to the swell.

Sarky Marline had evidently not yet given away the exact

position where the divers would go down. Men on both ships were making soundings.

The aeroplane came to earth, by previous arrangement, on a wild piece of ground near Bengore Head, the Giant's Causeway on the left, and Rathlin Island half-right, out in the glistening-sea.

The Result had steamed in towards Bengore Head on seeing the aeroplane land. A boat splashed overside, and came creeping towards the shore. Guadiana, Dan, Brian, and Tony—the latter full of indignation that he had been allowed to sleep—made their way down to the rocks that fringed the sea. They had to wait there for some time, but at last were in the boat, and were being rowed swiftly out to the Result by brawny salvage-men's arms.

The grip of the hand from Sarky Marline on the deck of the Result made the chums feel that they were home again once more. Sarky immediately asked the Don for orders, and Guadiana told him to have the divers rested, to hold off the land, and lay-to for the night; then make in in the morning, when they could take their bearings and start diving.

Dan and Brian immediately went below to the Don's cabin for a good sleep, and Tony was accommodated with a berth in the cabin as well. But he was told he would have to rough it with the rest as soon as he had filled out a bit.

The next day, the Golden Gain hanging close, the Result steamed over till Guadiana had the bearings, then soundings were made. The lead registered fifty fathoms of water! Obviously, the tug could not be anchored there. Nor could any diving but that by Dan and Brian be carried out. It was a tremendous depth for diving operations—impossible where the old type of diving gear only was available for use.

However, Dan and Brian, with one of the dan-buoys and a huge coil of fine, hempen rope, seized together, went over with every confidence. The dan-buoy was weighted, so that it and the hempen coil would sink, and it was with mixed feelings that Dan and Brian braved these great depths with who knows what horrors below, the tremendous pressure of water, the unknown nature of the bottom—for the lead would bring up no samples of gravel, mud, or shells—the pitchy blackness pierced only by their own diving-lamps.

Rolling and swaying, the group of humanity and salvaging-gear sank down and down and down. Soon it was as dark as pitch, and Brian switched on his light. They were all sinking at about the same rate, but they were attached to each other by ropes. The dan-buoy at first tended to drag, but as the pressure of water became greater, the weights seemed about even.

At last, great, black towering things were seen on either side by the light of Brian's lamp. Then the chums and the dan-buoy struck bottom. It was hard rock.

Dan and Brian looked round eagerly. They were comfortable enough. They could feel the tremendous pressure on their hands and wrists, but not on other parts of their body, since the material of their dresses were reinforced with tough fibres of steel, laid arch fashion to withstand the pressure.

"Breathing all right, Dan?" asked Brian, through the telephone.

"Yes," replied Dan. "Funny bottom, isn't it?"

"You're right, and we've drifted nearly a mile out of place, I should think, on the flood tide. We'll have to make our way north-eastward. We've a tough nut to crack."

"Gosh, isn't it wonderful?" said Dan, peering round.

"What's the rock formation here, Brian?"

"Basalt, like the Giant's Causeway and Fingal's Cave."

The chums stared round them with awe. Bright-coloured fish, fat, and with films over the eyes, swam here and there. There were many shrimps darting about in the rays of light. But while the shrimps were a large kind of their species, the fish were small. There were gaudy bream and gurnards, or, rather, an evolution of the bream and gurnard to withstand the pressure and blackness of that great depth.

There was no weed growth. Sea anemones were conspicuous by their absence. But the great pillars of basalt were encrusted by some shell deposit grafted on to the rock, like Portuguese oysters.

The chums might have been standing in the ruins of a mighty ancient city. But they knew that the towering columns on either hand were of natural growth. And a passage along that uneven bottom, cumbered up with a big dan-buoy, as they were, seemed hopeless. However, they slightly lightened the weight on the dan-buoy, and set off, towing the cumbersome metal cone and staff behind them.

They searched for five hours, pushing north-eastward all the time. They came to pockets of ooze here and there, but mostly they were clambering from basalt column to column, occasionally boldly leaping over the side of a chasm.

(Continued on page 28.)

"GRUNDY GOING STRONG!"

(Continued from page 17.)

hits without a single spectator. Even some of the waiting batsmen scudded off to see what was going on in the School House.

The House fairly buzzed as Taggles clanged at the lock of the Sixth Form room.

The door was open at last.

The Head, crimson, with glinting eyes, striving still to assume a manner of lofty dignity, but not quite successfully, strode out.

He strode on, looking neither to the right nor the left, with a hundred staring eyes fairly glued on him.

He was glad to reach the shelter of his own study.

"Well, this beats it!" said Tom Merry, as the juniors, buzzing with excitement, streamed out of the House again.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's the finish for Grundy hefe," said Wilkins to Gunn. "I'm rather sorry. He had his good points."

"He had!" agreed Gunn. "He was a born idiot and a howling ass, and a burbling dummy, but I'm sorry in a way."

Already Grundy's chums were speaking of him in the past tense.

But there was no doubt in any School House fellow's mind that this was the end of it for Grundy. The Head only awaited his return to expel him from the school. It was "Grundy for the long jump," and really it had to be admitted that he had asked for it.

CHAPTER 11. Poor Old Grundy!

"HERE he is!"
"Heah's Gwunday!"
"Here's the howling ass!"
"Oh, you chump!"

Grundy was rather surprised. He had walked home to St. Jim's quite cheerfully after his ramble. He came brightly into the School House, pleased with himself, pleased with his jape on Figgins of the New House, pleased with things generally. He was surprised by his reception.

"Hallo, what's the matter?" he asked.

"Bai Jove! He's askin' what's the mattah!"

"Grundy, you asa!" said Tom Merry. "Was it you locked the door of the Sixth Form room?"

"Certainly!" grinned Grundy.

"And took away the key?"

"Yes; it's in my pocket now."

"Oh, my hat! You own up, then?" gasped Wilkins.

"Own up?" repeated Grundy. "Of course! Jolly good jape, I think. I'll go and let the silly ass out now, though. He's had enough, and it's teatime."

"You awful ass!" said Gunn. "He's out already."

"You don't mean to say he jumped from the window?" exclaimed Grundy, rather startled. "I say, that was risky."

"Catch him jumping from the window!" grinned Blake.

"A RECORD RACE!"

(Continued from page 22.)

inch, the bay's nose crept past the chestnut's.

The din of the roaring throng was deafening. Now all could see Sid's plight. Hats sailed skyward, and a forest of sticks was waved in the air. Usually staid racegoers were roaring and stamping with the best.

As the excitement reached its height Meteor gave a last spurt. Sid had touched him with his spurs.

Then he drew away from Red Lancer, to win easily—winning a race run for half its length without reins.

Nor did Meteor stop near the winning-post. He ran on round for another mile

before Sid could coax him to stop and bring him back.

The reception was terrific. But Sid didn't lose his head. He rode into the paddock, whipped off his saddle and cloth, and made straight for the weighing-room.

When Sid returned to the paddock, he found Major Grindlay and Sam Hall examining Meteor's bridle.

"Cut!" the major was hissing through clenched teeth. "Look at that, Hall! That rein was cut! It's a darned outrage!"

Hall looked as angry as the major, but for a very different reason. He had seen Red Lancer beaten, and gone was the five hundred pounds that Renton had put on for him at six to one. Sid's wonderful riding had lost the rascally trainer three thousand pounds.

So Hall didn't have to stimulate wrath as he echoed Major Grindlay's sentiments in furious tones. But he

doubted they'd ever catch the ruffianly rein-cutter.

But the major broke off on seeing Sid, swinging round to congratulate the boy jockey.

"Sid rode a record race!" exclaimed the major to Hall.

"He did!" declared Hall, adding under his breath: "Confound him!"

And "Confound him!" was what Renton said to Gavin, ending in a spluttering stream of profanity as they shot away from the racecourse in a high-powered blue car.

THE END.

(There will be another rattling yarn of Sid Morris soon. Meanwhile, all "Gemites" should make certain of reading: "THE PRICE OF SILENCE!"—another magnificent story of Bob Harkley & Co., in next week's bumper GEM.)

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"No, you dummy; the lock was forced an hour ago. Taggles did it."

Grundy staggered.

"What! Mean to say that Taggles forced the lock to let Figgins out? Gammon!"

"Figgins!"

"Yes."

A light broke on Tom Merry.

"Did you think it was Figgins you'd locked in the Form-room?"

"Eh? Yes; it was Figgins."

"You born burler! It was the Head!"

Grundy stared.

"The—the Head!"

"Yes."

"Oh, my only Aunt Jane! Oh crumbs!" gasped Grundy.

Grundy turned quite pale. Even Grundy realised that he had "done it" now. Just then Mr. Railton spotted him, and came up, and, with an iron grasp on his shoulder, Grundy was marched away to the Head's study.

"Well," said Tom Merry helplessly, "I thought I knew every kind of idiot Grundy was, but—"

"He thought it was Figgins," said Monty Lowther dazedly. "How the merry thump— But, of course, that's Grundy all over."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"One of his jolly old mistakes," said Cardew. "He may get off the sack if the Head believes him. But— Poor old Grundy!"

Fortunately, the Head did believe Grundy.

He understood that Grundy had not intended to lock him in the Form-room. He had done it, but he had not intended it. Grundy's gasping horror, when he learned what he had done, was proof enough of that. So Grundy was not "bunked" from St. Jim's.

But the flogging Grundy received was a record.

Most of the fellows thought he had escaped cheaply, as indeed he had. Grundy did not see it. He took his flogging, and he took it as one more of the grievances that a misunderstood fellow had to put up with.

But it had its effect on Grundy.

For a whole day afterwards Grundy was generally seen standing; the most comfortable armchair could scarcely tempt him to sit down. In Study No. 3 he was morose.

"I'm fed-up!" he told Wilkins and Gunn. "I've come to the conclusion that it's no use to try to make the fellows see sense. I've been flogged for a little mistake that any fellow might have made. The whole House is laughing at me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Even in my own study!" roared Grundy.

"Hem!"

"I'm fed-up! I shall refuse to give the New House the kybosh now! I wash my hands of the whole bizney! I'm simply fed-up!"

And Grundy kept to that, which was rather a disappointment to the St. Jim's fellows. They had looked for some more entertainment with Grundy Going Strong!

THE END.

(Another topping yarn of the famous chums of St. Jim's next week: "D'ARCY'S DISCOVERY!" Don't miss this grand story, as it is undoubtedly one of Martin Clifford's best.)

"THE SECRET OF THE GALLEONS!"

(Continued from page 26.)

"This is hopeless, Dan!" said Brian. "We'll have to give it up. We don't know whether the galleon sank on the flood or the ebb tide. She may have drifted miles before she struck bottom. Looking for a needle in a haystack would be simple compared to this."

"I feel you're right, Brian," replied Dan. "But we must carry through this first operation. Rayne will be down somewhere now. Say the galleon sank on the flood, like we did, we must be pretty close to where she is lying, and at this depth she'll be in a splendid state of preservation. Tomorrow we must sink on the ebb, if we draw a blank to-day."

"Right-ho! Let's get round that jutting-out bit across there—"

The chums set off again, slowly and ponderously breasting their way through the water. They reached the pillared columns that made a sort of amphitheatre at that part, and, leaving the dan-buoy on a shelf, Brian gave his companion a hand up to the flat, hexagonal column that had evidently been broken off.

The chums clawed their way up and looked over, Brian holding his light on high.

"Great Scott!"

"Whew, what a sight!"

The chums gasped, for there, lying on her side, crusted with shell growth, masts broken off short and resting on the rock hard by, was an old-time galleon!

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