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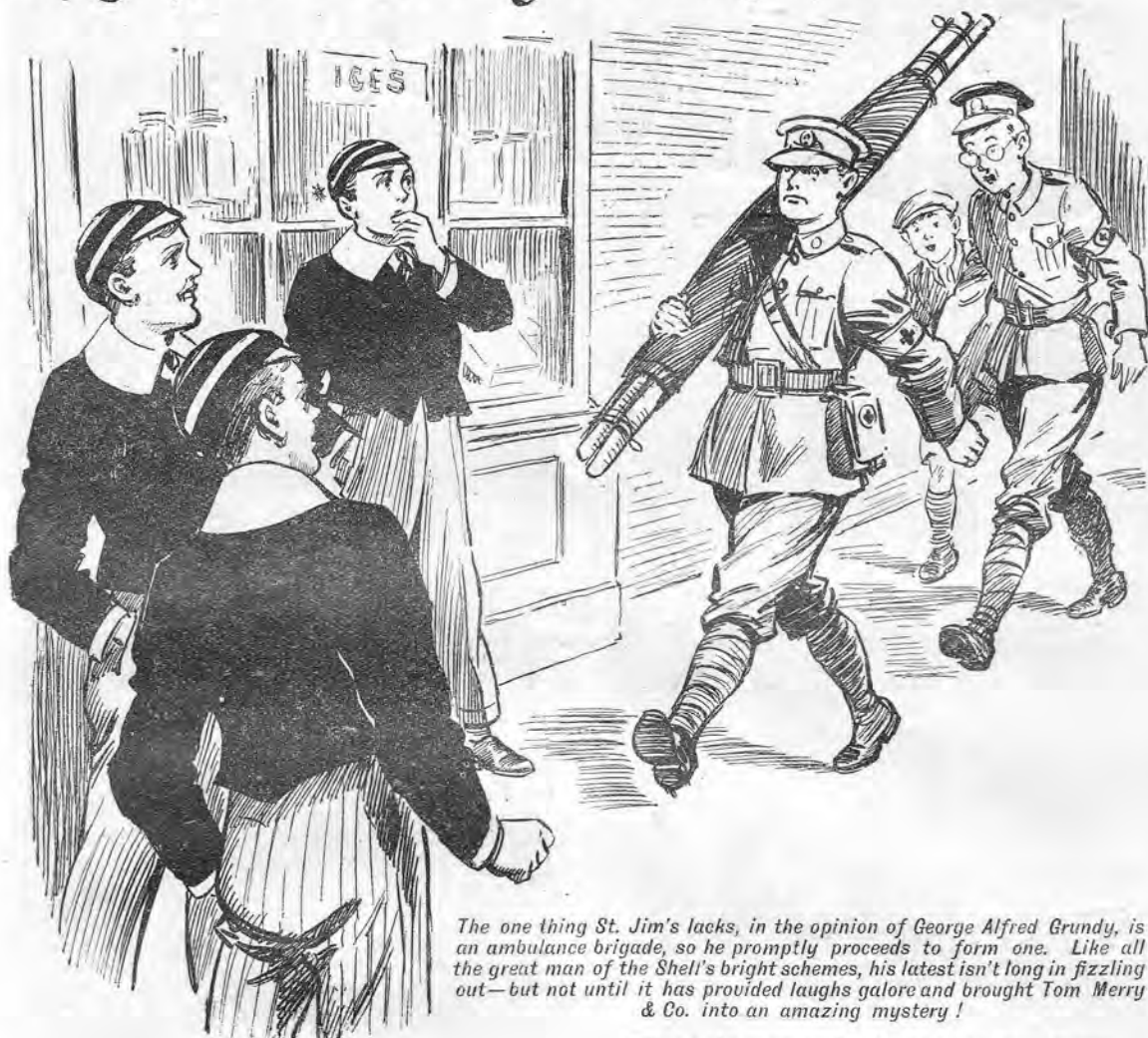
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GRUNDY'S AMBULANCE BRIGADE

THIS WEEK'S FULL-OF-LAUGHS SCHOOL &
ADVENTURE STORY.

Get Started on this Sparkling Long Complete Story of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's.



The one thing St. Jim's lacks, in the opinion of George Alfred Grundy, is an ambulance brigade, so he promptly proceeds to form one. Like all the great man of the Shell's bright schemes, his latest isn't long in fizzling out—but not until it has provided laughs galore and brought Tom Merry & Co. into an amazing mystery!

CHAPTER 1. The Accident!

"MUFFS!"

"Eh?"

"Duds—every thumping one of them! Call that footer?"

George Alfred Grundy, of the Shell at St. Jim's, spoke with withering scorn.

Wilkins and Gunn, his study-mates and chums, smiled. Tom Merry & Co., who were standing just behind Grundy, also smiled.

Fellows usually did smile when Grundy talked footer or criticised players—though they smiled much more when Grundy himself played footer.

The great George Alfred's opinion was really not worth much.

On Big Side a practice match was in progress between the School House and New House Fifth. Having finished a kick-about game rather early on Little Side, Tom Merry & Co. had wandered across to honour Big Side with their presence.

They arrived just at the tail-end of the match. Actually, both sides were playing well, and what the great George Alfred found to be so scornful about was a mystery to all but himself.

"Look at 'em!" snorted Grundy. "Call that footer? Look at that duffer St. Leger!"

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"What's the matter with him?" asked Tom Merry. "Matter with him?" echoed Grundy. "Well, my hat! Didn't you see him, then—chucked away a splendid chance!"

"Chance of what?"

"Scoring, of course!" said Grundy warmly. "You heard me shout to him! I told him to shoot! He ignored me!"

"Monstrous!" said Monty Lowther solemnly. "Fancy ignoring Grundy's orders, you fellows! But perhaps he thought you shouted 'Scot!', Grundy."

"Rot!" said Grundy. "It was the chance of a life-time. The fellow's a fumbler—a muff! He had the goal before him!"

"So he had!" agreed Tom Merry, with a chuckle. "But he also had two backs and the goalie! My dear man, he did the only thing he could do in passing—he hadn't the ghost of a chance of scoring!"

"Rot!" said Grundy excitedly. "I tell you he had the goal before him!"

"Grundy means the other goal!" explained Lowther. "Grundy's idea is that if you can't put the ball through one goal, then turn about and put it through the other—like Grundy himself did last term!"

There was a chorus of chuckles. On one memorable occasion Grundy had distinguished—and almost extinguished—himself by kicking the ball through his own goal.

According to history, it was the only goal Grundy had ever scored!

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GRUNDY'S AMBULANCE BRIGADE!

by Martin Clifford

But Grundy was not proud of it, and he gave Lowther a glare.

"You shut up, Lowther, if you don't want a thick ear!" he said heatedly. "Fat lot you know about footer, come to that. Now look at—"

"Hallo! Lefevre's got it! Oh, good man!"

There was a roar round the field. Lefevre, the captain of the School House Fifth, had the ball at his toes, and was racing along the left wing. The chums of the Shell forgot Grundy.

Philip Lefevre was a very popular fellow, and Tom Merry & Co. roared.

"Go it!"

"Good man, Lefevre!"

Almost up to the corner flag went the Fifth-Former, amid a roar of excitement. The flying figure of a New House half-back tore after him, and Lefevre steadied himself and kicked for goal without having time to see how his men were placed in mid-field.

The wind caught the ball, lifted it a trifle, and the hurtling leather struck the crossbar, making the nets shake.

There was a groan of disappointment, and a snort from Grundy.

"Muff!" he snorted. "Ever see anything like it? Of all the—"

"Oh, dry up!" grunted Wilkins. "The wind got it."

"I should have allowed for the wind," said Grundy. "Ever see me hit the dashed crossbar?"

"Never! You might hit it if you aimed for the moon, old chap!"

"Why, you rotter—"

"Phew! Now for it!" said Tom Merry excitedly. "Look!"

Fortunately for Wilkins, another crisis in the struggle happened just then, and Grundy forgot his wrath at the insult.

The ball had been sent back to mid-field, and after a brief scrimmage Smith major got the ball, and the whole School House front line swung into action, passing the leather with bewildering rapidity.

There was a sudden yell.

"Shoot!"

Smith major had positioned himself well, and he shot.

The ball sped swift and low towards goal, and there was a sudden breathless silence.

But again it was a disappointment for the School House.

The goalie just got his fingers to it, fumbled frantically with the spinning sphere, and dropped it.

What happened next was almost too swift to follow.

Lefevre dashed in from the left wing, while Smith major also followed up his kick with a whirlwind rush at the ball. At the same moment two New House backs converged on the two.

There followed a whirling, desperate scrimmage, a brief vision of leaping, kicking figures, and then the ball was seen to whiz suddenly into the net behind the goalie.

"Goal!"

It was a goal; but even as the roar rang out it was instantly hushed at the sight of Smith major lying flat on his back, while the whistle for the goal was followed instantly by another shrill "pheeep."

The players gathered round the inert figure on the grass.

"Hallo!" gasped Tom Merry, in alarm. "Smithy's hurt!"

The ball remained unheeded in the net, and the players gathered round the injured Smith major.

"I just saw it!" said Lowther. "A kick on the head. I think it was Lefevre did it! An accident, of course!"

There was a buzz round the field. Then the group of players opened out, and Lefevre and two more Fifth-Formers were seen, staggering along with the limp form of Smith major.

Twice they had to lower him to get better hold, and Tom Merry gave a gasp.

"What are the idiots playing at? Come on, chaps—a hurdle!"

Tom's chums followed him in a flash as he tore for the nearest fence. In a matter of seconds they had wrenched a hurdle free, and were rushing back across the ground with it between them.

"Oh! Good for you, kids!" panted Lefevre. "We ought to have thought of that! Lend a hand, you men!"

Gently Smith major was placed on the hurdle; and, with a Fifth-Former at each corner, the injured footballer was carried away towards the school sanatorium, amid a hushed murmur.

That ended the Fifth-Form match—though it wanted only a few seconds to time as it happened.

"Hard lines!" said Tom Merry, as he and his chums followed the gloomy procession towards the school buildings. "Poor old Smithy! Those fumbling asses shouldn't have mucked him about like that, though. If they'd been Scouts—"

"Muffs!" snorted Grundy. "Footling fumlbers! Bumbling duffers! They know as much about first aid as they do about footer! Look at—"

"Hallo! Smithy's sitting up!" exclaimed Manners suddenly. "Oh, good!"

There was more than one sigh of relief as Smith major was seen to half sit up on the hurdle, his hand to his forehead.

"Doesn't look as if he's seriously hurt, then!" said Tom thankfully. "Good! It's a rotten wind-up to the match, anyway!"

"And a rotten match!" said Grundy, with a sniff. "I saw it all. Talk about footer! Not a man of them knows what footer is. Look at St. Leger! That muf! That born idiot! That fumbler! Smoking fags is more in his line than—Ow!"

That was as far as Grundy got in his remarks regarding St. Leger's footer abilities.

Unfortunately for him, St. Leger had been walking behind them, and apparently he took exception to Grundy's remarks.

His footer boot took Grundy in the rear, and Grundy yelped and sprawled forwards on his hands and knees.

"Just to show you I can kick if I can't play footer!" said St. Leger.

And he walked on. A kick was all a lordly Fifth-Former was likely to bestow upon a Shell fellow like Grundy.

"Ow—ow!" gasped Grundy.

He scrambled up, seething with wrath, and seemed about to rush after the supercilious St. Leger.

"Better not!" said Tom Merry.

And on second thoughts, George Alfred Grundy came to the conclusion that he had better not. Even a mighty man of war like Grundy was not of much use against a senior. So St. Leger walked on to the changing-room unthrashed—fortunately for Grundy!

CHAPTER 2.

Grundy's Brain-Wave!

"WHY not?" George Alfred Grundy asked the question—though what the question related to, Wilkins and Gunn were not aware. So Wilkins asked Grundy one.

"Why not what?" he asked, eyeing his leader curiously.

Over tea Grundy had been strangely silent and pre-occupied. He had, apparently, been lost in thought. When Grundy did think at all he usually did it with his features as well as his brain. To think, Grundy found it necessary to frown grimly and screw up his face into a state of terrific tenseness. The fact that during tea and since tea Grundy had been looking like a gargoyle, told his study-mates that he had been thinking.

But they had not known what he had been thinking about and they had wondered what new idiotic craze, or wheeze, his powerful brain was busy upon.

That it was something to do with the happenings of the afternoon, Wilkins and Gunn were sure.

"Thinking about what?" repeated Wilkins, winking at Gunn. "About the state of footer at St. Jim's?"

That was a favourite subject with George Alfred. He had very strong opinions regarding the state of footer at St. Jim's.

Grundy shook his head.

"I'm not bothering about that now," he said, breaking his long silence at last. "The footer's serious enough, goodness knows! But I'm thinking about something a bit more serious!"

"Oh!" said Gunn. "You mean St. Leger kicking you this afternoon, old chap?"

But it wasn't that—serious as that was to Grundy.

"No—I'm letting that pass," he said. "I can lick that rotter, St. Leger, any old time; that can wait. But this matter is more urgent! Now, you fellows, I've been thinking, and I've come to the conclusion that something must be done!"

"Oh, it is about the footer, then?" groaned Wilkins.

"No—don't be an ass, George Wilkins! The fact is I've discovered that St. Jim's lacks a most important thing."

"What's that?" said Gunn pointedly. "A separate establishment for fellows of weak intellect?"

"Oh, don't you start being an ass, too, Gunny!" sniffed Grundy. "Now listen; we've got a fire brigade at St. Jim's, and we've got a dramatic society, and a debating society, and goodness knows what else. But the very thing we ought to have we haven't got! D'you know what that is?"

"Is that a conundrum?"

"An ambulance brigade!" said Grundy impressively, ignoring Wilkins' remark. "We've a fire brigade, but no ambulance brigade!"

"Oh, my hat!"

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"We've got to have one!" said Grundy, who had apparently quite decided that on his own. "Look at what happened this afternoon! Look at the way those Fifth Form fumbler messes about with Smith major! They might have been carrying a sack of coke! Smith major might have died of neglect and careless handling."

"Well, there's something in that!" said Wilkins, nodding. "If we hadn't buzzed along with that hurdle—"

"It was a scandalous state of affairs!" snorted Grundy.

"I'm not blaming those Fifth chaps so much—they lost their heads and they knew no better! They're too high and mighty to be Scouts! They didn't know what to do. Luckily Smithy wasn't as badly hurt as was supposed—the doctor says he'll be out of sanny in a couple of days. But that's neither here nor there. The point is, St. Jim's ought to be prepared for such accidents!"

"H'm! Perhaps you're right!" agreed Gunn. "But what—"

"No perhaps about it! We ought to have an ambulance brigade to attend all matches—like they have at the big league matches!" said Grundy warmly. "Be prepared, you know! An ambulance brigade, trained and ready, and supplied with a stretcher and first-aid outfits! How's that?"

"Not a bad wheeze!" said Wilkins. "Out of the mouths of babes—"

"What!"

Wilkins decided not to finish the quotation.

"It's a good idea enough!" said Gunn. "Only it isn't necessary! After all, most of the chaps in the Lower School are Scouts. Still, Kildare could get one up for the Upper School—chaps who don't play in games, I mean! Better suggest it to him, old man!"

"Why should I suggest it to him?" snorted Grundy.

"What the thump do you take me for, Gunny? Think I'm going to allow Kildare to take the matter out of my hands?"

"Oh! You're after glory, what?" grinned Wilkins.

"You shut up—unless you want a thick ear, Wilky!" said Grundy darkly. "I only want my rights. I've been consistently kept out of the cricket, and footer, and every dashed other thing. Kildare's skipper of the school, and Tom Merry's junior skipper! Out of envy and jealousy they've combined to keep me out. I'm not allowing Kildare or anyone else to usurp my position as ambulance chief! That's going to be my job."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Captain of the St. Jim's Ambulance Brigade!" said Grundy, with some satisfaction. "It's my idea, and it's my job! I've thought it all out! We only need to buy outfits and a stretcher. Our cadet rig-out will do for a uniform! We shall travel with the teams to away matches as well as be in attendance at home matches. We'll also be at hand at all sports and functions."

"I can see Tom Merry allowing that!" grinned Wilky. "As for the beaks—"

"Tom Merry won't stop us, and I'll fix matters up with the beaks," said Grundy, rising briskly to his feet. "Only I shall expect instant obedience from you chaps! Mind that; I may as well mention it once and for all! Iron discipline! That's the programme!"

"It'll be a one man brigade, then!" said Wilkins firmly.

"If you've got the idea that I'm joining—"

"Or me!" said Gunn. "Cut it out if you have!"

"I expected trouble with you fellows!" said Grundy, quite calmly. "We may as well have the matter out here and now. You refuse to join willingly, I take it?"

"Yes, rather!" said Gunn warmly.

"Better get fellows who don't play in matches!" said Wilkins. "I play often, and I'm jolly sure I'm not dropping footer for your footling rot!"

"Then I'm afraid I shall have to persuade you!" said Grundy, turning back his cuffs ominously.

And he made a rush at his study-mates.

"Back up, Gunny!" yelled Wilkins.

Gunny "backed up," and next moment the trio were waltzing about the room, locked in deadly embrace.

It was a case of fighting for their liberty with Wilkins and Gunn. They often had to fight for it in Study No. 3. When Grundy wanted his chums to join him in anything he usually had to adopt press-gang methods—unless it was to join him in a feed! Grundy believed in rough and ready methods of persuasion.

They usually succeeded with Wilkins and Gunn. Grundy was a mighty fighter, and his study-mates did not revel in scraps as he did.

But for once Wilkins and Gunn did not give way so easily. The prospect of trailing behind Grundy everywhere, carrying a stretcher, did not appeal to them in the least. They put up a terrific fight, and naturally the noise of the combat soon attracted notice.

The door opened, revealing startled faces.

"Hallo! Grundy at it again!" remarked Kangaroo,

looking in with a grin. "What's the trouble this time, Wilky?"

Wilkins was very busy indeed, but he managed to yell out:

"Drag him off, you fellows! Yow-ow! Rescue!"

"Lend a hand, you chaps!" gasped Gunn

"Refuse to back your leader up, would you?" Grundy was bellowing. "I'll show you who's boss in this study! Why, I'll—"

"Grundy!"

It was the deep, angry voice of Mr. Railton. There was no need for anyone to lend a hand in subduing the warlike George Alfred. At the sound of the Housemaster's voice Grundy dropped his hands hurriedly, as did Wilkins and Gunn.

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a whirling, desperate scrimmage in the New House goal, and then the ball was seen to whiz suddenly into the net. "Goal!" It was a goal, but even as the roar rang out it was instantly hushed at the sight of Smith major lying flat on his back. (See Chapter 1.)



The three dishevelled juniors scrambled to their feet and faced the Housemaster.

"What does this mean, Grundy?" demanded Mr. Railton. "How dare you cause such a commotion!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Wilkins. "It—it's only a little misunderstanding, sir."

"Just a little argument, sir!" gasped Gunn, struggling with his collar, which had worked round to the back of his neck.

"It's nothing of the kind, sir!" said Grundy, with a snort. "These rotters wouldn't obey me, and I was just showing them who was leader of this study, sir."

"Oh!"

There was a chuckle at that. Mr. Railton smiled grimly. "Then you should adopt less noisy methods, Grundy," he said. "You will each take a hundred lines for causing such a disturbance. This is the most troublesome and unruly study in the House, and I am inclined to think that your quarrelsome nature is responsible, Grundy."

"Oh, I say, sir—that's a bit thick!" said Grundy, who was never a fellow to mince his words. "A man has to show the iron hand sometimes. These chaps refused to join my ambulance brigade, and I had to make 'em see reason somehow."

"Your—your—What did you say, Grundy?" asked the Housemaster faintly.

"My ambulance brigade," explained Grundy. "Though actually it isn't formed yet. I was just going to see you this evening about it, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Bai Jove!"

Mr. Railton gasped, and there was a chorus of subdued chuckles from the doorway.

"The fact is, sir," said Grundy, "Smith major's accident this afternoon was rather a good thing."

"Oh, indeed," exclaimed Mr. Railton tartly. "Whatever do you mean, you absurd boy?"

"It made me think, sir," went on Grundy, with some excitement. "Accidents like that might happen any time. Provision ought to be made for them. So I decided, subject to your approval, sir, to get up a St. Jim's Ambulance Brigade."

"Oh!" That seemed to be all the astonished Housemaster could find to say at that moment.

"It ought to have been thought of before, sir," said

Grundy. "It should be easily arranged. I'd undertake to get recruits. There's myself and Wilkins and Gunn to begin with. They'll agree sooner or later," he added grimly. "We could use our cadet uniforms, and I'm prepared to buy a stretcher and first-aid outfits."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy from the doorway.

"I've thought every detail out, sir," resumed Grundy cheerfully, before the Housemaster could get his breath back. "The brigade would attend every junior match, and be at hand in case of accidents. We could also go with the teams when they're playing Greyfriars, or Rookwood, or any other school. It would, apart from the usefulness of the scheme, be good training for the members, and keep them out of mischief."

"Oh, my hat!" grinned Lowther. "Did you ever?"

Mr. Railton coughed.

"It certainly would keep you out of mischief, Grundy," he assented dryly. "Considering it, the idea seems quite sound."

"I thought you'd approve of it, sir," said Grundy. "Of course, it's understood that I shall be captain, and I'll undertake to see the thing through. We can't undertake to look after the seniors, though; Kildare must get up a senior brigade himself to attend seniors functions and games."

"Oh, quite," assented Mr. Railton with a sarcasm that was quite lost upon Grundy. "I doubt if the seniors would

care to avail themselves of your services, Grundy. However," he added, with a smile. "I do not see why an ambulance brigade should not prove very useful, as the Junior Fire Brigade has on more than one occasion."

"Then it's a go—I mean the idea has your approval, sir?" asked Grundy eagerly.

"Certainly, my boy," said the Housemaster, after a pause. "The idea is sound and feasible, and can do no harm. But I will think the matter out more fully, and speak to you later, Grundy."

"Oh, good, sir!"

"There is one point I must insist upon, however," said Mr. Railton dryly, with a glance at the damaged features of Wilkins and Gunn. "Forceful methods of obtaining recruits will not do, Grundy. Your recruits must be willing volunteers. What is wanted is a volunteer brigade, not a conscript brigade. You understand?"

"Yes, sir. But—supposing the fellows don't want to join?"

"Then the scheme will have to be abandoned, Grundy!"

And with that the Housemaster left the study.

Grundy frowned at the smiling faces in the doorway. The juniors were all highly entertained at Grundy's "latest."

"Well, my hat!" observed Cardew. "Grundy's had a real idea at last. Who said that dear old George Alfred had only bats in his belfry? Perish the thought!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I don't quite make this out," said Lowther, in a puzzled tone. "Where does Grundy expect to get his recruits from? There's only one fellow eligible at St. Jim's, and that's Grundy himself."

"Eh? What the thump d'you mean, Lowther?" snorted Grundy, staring. "Any fellow's eligible for an ambulance brigade."

"Oh, an ambulance brigade!" said Lowther. "My mistake! I thought it was an imbecile brigade! Sorry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gwreat Scott! Look out—"

The crowd round the doorway scattered and fled as Grundy made a rush at them. Grundy evidently did not appreciate jokes on the subject of his great "wheeze," and his furious face and waving fists looked dangerous.

But when he re-entered Study No. 3 a few seconds later Grundy was looking satisfied, and his wrath had fled. He had obtained the Housemaster's approval of his great scheme, and that was the main thing. He would soon get recruits. With his usual zeal and enthusiasm, Grundy set to work in earnest to make his idea of a St. Jim's Ambulance Brigade a reality.

CHAPTER 3.

Recruiting!

"HALLO! What on earth's this?"

Quite a little crowd were gathered about the doorway of Study No. 3 when the Terrible Three came along a little later to go down to the Common-room. On this occasion, however, it was a notice pinned to the door of the study that seemed to be causing the commotion.

"Grundy again!" commented Tom Merry, with a chuckle. "Let's have a squint!"

They joined the grinning crowd. Apparently, Grundy's intention of starting an ambulance brigade was being taken not quite so seriously as Grundy himself intended.

They understood the grins when they read the notice that was hanging on Grundy's door, however.

It ran as follows, and was written in Grundy's sprawling hand and in Grundy's own original spelling:

"THE ST. JIM'S AMBULLANSE BRIGGADE.

"In view of the resent axcident on the footer field, and in view of the possibility of further axcidents, W. G. Grundy has desidded to form a JUNIOR AMBULLANSE BRIGGADE to attend all junior matches and other sporting funxions and amusements. Juniors of both Houses are invited to join.

"There will be no entrance fee, and W. G. GRUNDY, who is CAPTAIN of the BRIGADE, will be solly responsible for First-aid instruction and for Dissiplin.

"Applicashun to join must be made as soon as possibul to W. G. GRUNDY, Study No. 3, Shell Passage, St. Jim's.

"(Sined) W. G. GRUNDY, CAPTAIN."

That was the announcement. It made the Terrible Three chuckle explosively.

"Bai Jove, you fellows, what is the mattah heah?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with his chums, Blake, Herries, and Digby, came along to see what the excitement was about.

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They chuckled also as they read the notice.

"It is wathah a good ideah, though," said Arthur Augustus reflectively. "I think we ought not to pour wudicule on Gwunday's scheme. In fact, I am wathah inclined to join myself, deah boys!"

"What?" yelled Blake.

"Why not?" said Gussy. "I do not like the ideah of servin' undah Gwunday's leadahship, but we ought to wally wound in a case like this. Gwunday is bound to make a muck of things. But that will not detwact from the usefulness of the scheme. I think it wathah bwright and vewy public-spiwited of Gwunday!"

"You burbling chump—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Let me catch you trying to join Grundy's footling brigade!" snorted Tom Merry, glaring at the swell of the Fourth. "What about the footer, you dummy?"

"Footah? Weally—"

"You can't play footer and muck about with an ambulance at the same time!" snorted Tom. "Aren't you in the team?"

"Bai Jove, I was forgettin' that, deah boy!"

"In any case, I don't see that an ambulance brigade's necessary," said Tom. "We're most of us Scouts with first-aid knowledge. If anything goes wrong we'll soon be on the job. As for serving under a chump like Grundy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The withering scorn in Tom's tone raised a laugh.

"Still, as Railton says, it will keep Grundy out of mischief—" added Tom, with a laugh. "But you're not joining, Gussy! You can put your public spiritedness into the footer and into scouting, my lad!"

"Bai Jove! Vewy well, deah boy! Only nobody seems to be joinin', and I thought it would set a good example to these youngstahs," said Gussy—"start the ball wollin', you know!"

"Ain't he modest?" said Lowther. "The real point is, what is the pay, and when? I think I'll ask Grundy for further information."

And Lowther went in to pull Grundy's easily-pulled leg.

Grundy was seated at the table. Before him was ink, pen, and paper, and apparently he was waiting for recruits.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed, eyeing Lowther's serious face a trifle suspiciously. "You want to join, Lowther?"

"I want some more information first," said Lowther.

"First of all, what's the pay, Grundy?"

"Pay!" yelled Grundy.

"Yes. And is it weekly or monthly? And do you pay by cheque or banker's draft, or in cash?"

"You silly ass!" hooted Grundy. "Do you get paid wages for being in the thumping fire brigade? Don't talk like an idiot, Lowther!"

"Sorry!" said Lowther humbly. "It's being in here with you, I suppose! But is that a fact—there's to be no pay?"

"Of course not! It's a volunteer brigade, you footling ass!" bawled Grundy.

"Then I'm afraid I can't join!" said Lowther regretfully. "Dash it all, a fellow ought to be paid for serving under you, Grundy!"

"Eh? Why, you footling—" Grundy went red as he heard chuckles from the doorway. "Look here," he snorted, "I believe you're trying to pull my leg, Lowther!"

"Go hon! What a brain!" said Lowther, getting ready to bolt. "The fact is, my dear old— Here, wha—"

Swoosh!

Lowther yelled as Grundy jumped up and sent the contents of the ink-well streaming over him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows in the doorway shrieked.

Lowther had been fully prepared for a rush from Grundy, but not, obviously, for that masterly and inky move.

He stood gasping, with ink trickling down his hair and face and over his collar.

"Cheek me, would you?" roared Grundy. "Pull my leg, would you? Out you go, you cheeky owl!"

And, grabbing the gasping humorist by the collar, Grundy rushed him out and planted a hefty kick behind him. The crowd scattered, and Lowther dropped in the passage with a wild yell.

Crash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy—for once—had scored.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Go back and mop him up, Lowther, old man!"

"That's if you feel ink-lined!" said Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lowther felt "ink-lined," but, obviously, not inclined. He scrambled up, and tottered away towards the nearest bath-room. Grundy returned to his chair and waited for recruits, glaring at the laughing crowd. But he was not to wait in vain.

Herbert Skimpole came along the passage, looking rather serious.

"Ah, my dear fellows! Is Grundy in his study?" he

inquired, blinking about him through his big spectacles. "I have heard that he is requiring recruits for his ambulance brigade. I am very desirous of joining."

"Oh, my hat! You want to join, Skimmy?"

"Yes, indeed. I consider Grundy an extremely public-spirited individual," said Skimpole. "And as I am most enthusiastic regarding any scheme for the welfare of humanity, I am willing to give my time and help to such a good cause."

He blinked at the notice.

"Dear me!" he remarked. "Extraordinary! The spelling leaves a great deal to be desired, but— However, I will visit Grundy and enrol at once."

And Herbert Skimpole walked into the study. He had scarcely done so when Mellish came along, followed by Tompkins and Mulvaney of the Fourth.

Mellish glanced over the notice and grinned.

"It's a fact, then," he said, with some satisfaction. "I'm on this like a bird!"

"You're going to join?" gasped Blake.

"Yes, rather!"

"But there's no pay—only work!" said Blake, who knew Percy Mellish. "It isn't in your line, old bean!"

"Oh, yes, it is!" grinned Mellish. "Grundy's no end decent with his free feeds. And there's another thing—if members of the brigade are allowed to accompany the teams wherever they go, then I'm on like a shot! That means they'll get trips to Rookwood and Greyfriars and everywhere the team's playing with expenses paid, and be excused lessons when they've got to catch an early train. My hat, this is too good to miss!"

And Percy Mellish followed Skimpole in to sign on.

"Be jabbers!" said Micky Mulvaney. "Is that a fact? Faith, will we be excused lessons and allowed to go with the giddy players? Then I'm on this, too! Come on, Tompkins darling! We'll be ambulance men, me and you!"

"Blowed if I don't join, too!" grinned Scrope. "Looks like a good thing!"

And Micky Mulvaney led the way in, and the door closed upon them. Tom Merry & Co. strolled away laughing; they did not stop to see if any more fellows were willing to join Grundy's ambulance brigade. But from the fact that the great George Alfred was looking extremely satisfied with himself when he went up to bed that night, it seemed as if Grundy's Ambulance Brigade was going strong.

CHAPTER 4.

The First Case!

"HALLO, there's old Brooke!"

Tom Merry passed the remark the following afternoon.

It was a Wednesday half-holiday, and the Terrible Three and Blake & Co. had spent the afternoon in Wayland, and were just emerging from a teashop when Tom sighted Dick Brooke coming along the High Street.

Dick Brooke was the only day boy at St. Jim's. He lived on the outskirts of Wayland, and walked or cycled to and from his home every day. Dick was a scholarship boy, and was very popular with the fellows—though they, naturally, saw little of him outside school hours.

He was smiling as he came along the street—apparently something was amusing him.

He halted as Tom called to him.

"Cheerio, Brooke!" said Tom cheerfully. "Come and have a ginger-pop, old son!"

"Thanks, no!" grinned Dick. "I've just had tea at home. I say, you fellows, seen Grundy?"

"Many a time!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "And every time was once too often!"

"We spotted him get off the train at Wayland Junction," said Tom Merry, smiling. "He and his giddy ambulance men are here after a stretcher, or something."

"I know," said Brooke, nodding. "I told Grundy there was a second-hand stretcher for sale at Marshall's, in East Street. He's just been after it, and he's bought it. I spotted them with it a few minutes ago. You should just see him swaggering along with— My hat! Here he comes now!"

The juniors had already noticed rather a commotion along the High Street, and the next moment they saw the cause of it—and also of Dick Brooke's amusement.

It was Grundy, right enough. He came swaggering along the street with a rolled-up stretcher, looking very much the worse for wear, balanced on his shoulder. Behind him, walking in two's, were his men—Skimpole, Mellish, Scrope, Tompkins, Mulvaney, and Trimble—the latter having apparently joined the brigade.

All were in their cadet uniforms, and all carried first-aid equipment. They were marching out of step, and they looked anything but smart and efficient ambulance men.

The sight of a swarm of derisive urchins at their heels was not at all surprising in the circumstances.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Jack Blake, staring at the extraordinary procession. "Dud-dud-did you ever?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared.

"Out of the way, you kids!" snorted Grundy, recognising the laughing juniors. "What are you cackling at, you rotters!"

He halted, apparently being anxious to know the reason.

"Go on, Grundy!" hissed Mellish, who, like the rest of Grundy's men, looked flustered and savage. "Never mind those cackling rotters! Get on!"

"Yes, get a move on, Grundy!" muttered Scrope. "I'm fed-up with this!"

"So'm I!" snorted Baggy Trimble. "When the thump are we having tea, Grundy? You promised—"

"Shut up!" bawled Grundy, turning round on his men. "Any more grousing, and I'll punch the lot of you!"

"He wants a few stretcher cases!" said Lowther. "Better look out, Trimble! Don't you admire Grundy's disciplinary methods, you chaps?"

The juniors tried hard not to laugh, but they could not help it.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle about!" sniffed Grundy, glaring at Lowther. "If any of you are hunting for a thick ear—"

"Never mind those rotters, Grundy!" shouted Scrope, who was crimson. "Go on—get a move on! We'll have all Wayland round us soon at this rate!"

"Blow Wayland, and blow you!" hooted Grundy. "Blessed if I ever saw such—"

"But I'm hungry!" shouted Trimble, from the rear. "I'm fed-up with this game! What about tea?"

"Will you dry up?" hooted Grundy. "Another word from you, you fat clam, and I'll smash you!"

With that final warning Grundy whirled round to "eyes-front" again, as it were.

Unfortunately, he did not see that a gentleman was passing at the moment, or he did not realise the length of the stretcher.

As he whirled round the end of the stretcher caught the unfortunate individual a fearful crack on the side of the head.

Crack!

"Whoop!" roared the gentleman.

"What the thump—" began Grundy.

He whirled round again to see what had struck the stretcher, and this time the end caught Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, sending his topper spinning away.

"Yawwoop!"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus sat down hard with a roar. The gentleman—a seedy individual, with rather a red nose—was rubbing his head and using language that the juniors never heard at St. Jim's.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Grundy, you awful idiot!"

"You clumsy ass, Gwunday!" roared Arthur Augustus.

He scrambled to his feet, seething with wrath. His intention, obviously, was to assault Grundy, but the seedy individual got there first.

Before the startled Grundy realised just what had happened the seedy gentleman had planted a hefty, grubby fist full in Grundy's left eye.

Grundy roared, and dropped the stretcher.

"You bloomin' idjut!" roared the seedy gentleman.

"You nearly brained me, you clumsy young lout!"

"Yoooop!" howled Grundy, hugging his eye. "Why, you—you—"

Biff!

This time Grundy got a drive in the chest that sent him staggering backwards, to trip over the stretcher and sit down with a bump.

"Stretcher-bearers forward!" called Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The seedy gentleman glared at Grundy and tramped away; apparently honour was satisfied. Grundy jumped up, obviously with the intention of rushing after him, but Tom Merry and Blake grabbed him and held him.

"Chuck it, Grundy, you silly owl!" gasped Tom Merry, in alarm. "You can't scrap with that merchant in a public street! You'd get sacked!"

"I'm going to smash him!" roared Grundy, struggling furiously. "I'm going to make mincemeat of the hooligan!"

"No, you're not!" said Blake, with a chuckle. "I'd have biffed you like that myself if you'd bowled me over! You'd better call it square now. You stand back, too, Gussy; you can thrash Grundy when we get home."

Arthur Augustus breathed hard, glowering at Grundy.

"The—the feahful idiot!" he spluttered. "I shall insist

upon thwashin' you the moment I get back to St. Jim's, Gwunday! Look at my toppah, you clumsy wuffian!"

"Topper!" gurgled Grundy. "I'll give you topper when I get you back at St. Jim's, D'Arcy! Leggo, you cads! I'm going after that outsider, and I'm going—"

The irate Grundy did not finish explaining what else he intended doing. For at that moment he was interrupted in startling fashion.

There was a sudden startled shout, and down the narrow High Street a small two-seater car came careering at a terrific speed.

In the car were two men, and evidently they were in a great hurry.

Naturally, the crowd had grown round Grundy & Co., but the highly entertained onlookers soon scattered with yells of alarm as the car came rushing down upon them, the driver hooting madly.

"Look out, youngster!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

The warning came too late.

One urchin stumbled on the cobbled street, and went down with a thump. He scrambled up again at once, but the car was almost upon him, having swerved to avoid three more youngsters who had raced across the street.

Tom Merry saw the danger, and sprang forward with a cry. His grasp closed upon the youngster's arm, and he dragged desperately.

His swift action undoubtedly saved the boy from being run over, but it did not save him from injury.

As Tom Merry pulled him away a mudguard caught the boy and flung him full into Tom, sending both crashing over.

"Good heavens!" gasped Grundy.

With all his faults George Alfred Grundy had a heart of gold. Instantly he forgot his wrath and injury, and in a moment he was stooping over the youngster.

The car did not slacken speed. It roared on, and vanished down the High Street.

"The—the rotten hounds!" hissed Grundy. "Hold up, youngster!"

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry scrambled rather unsteadily to his feet, breathing hard. The crowd was gathering round the youngster, who lay limp in Grundy's grasp.

"I don't think he's much hurt!" grunted Grundy. "I saw it; the mudguard just caught him. He'd have been done for if you hadn't got him, Merry!"

Tom Merry did not answer; he was busy examining the boy, who was half-dazed and suffering from shock.

"Nothing broken, I think!" said Tom at last, in relief. "His leg's badly bruised, but no bones are broken. Let's have some of your stuff, Grundy."

Grundy eagerly took off his first-aid outfit, and very soon Tom was binding a nasty cut on the boy's leg. For a wonder Grundy did not attempt to take the job out of Tom's capable hands. Tom had just finished the task when a blue uniform showed through the crowd.

"Here's a bobby!" said Blake, in relief. "We can leave the rest to him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You've made a good job of that!" said the constable, as he examined the bandaged leg. "What happened?"

The juniors told him, and he looked grim as they told how the car had been driven on without even slackening speed.

"We'll see about that!" said the constable. "You got their number? No; well, you can leave this to me now, young gentlemen."

He lifted the sobbing youngster in his arms, and strode away, followed by the scared crowd.

"Well, that's that!" said Tom Merry, his face hard. "I'd like to tell that rotten driver just what I think of him!"

"And I'd like five minutes with the two of 'em!" said Grundy, clenching his big fists. "I'd make hospital cases of them. Anyway, now, you men, get into line, or we'll miss that train!"

"You've missed it already, and so have we!" groaned Tom Merry, glancing at his watch. "It'll be half-way to Rylcombe now."

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Oh, blow it!" snorted Grundy. "I'm not waiting an hour for the next, anyway! Get a move on, you men, and we'll hoof it!"

Trimble almost howled.

"Hoof it!" he yelled. "What about tea, you awful beast! And I'm not jolly well hoofing it all the way back to St. Jim's, Grundy!"

"Aren't you?" said Grundy pleasantly. "We'll see about that! I'm captain of this thumping brigade, and what I say goes!"

"But look here—" began Mellish.

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"March!" roared Grundy.

"I'm not!" hooted Trimble. "I'm hungry, and— Yoooop! Leggo, you beast! I tell you— Yarogogh! All right, I'll go, you beast!"

And Trimble went, and the rest of Grundy's mutinous men followed his example. Three hefty drives from Grundy's ready boot were enough and too much for Trimble. And having no wish to sample any of their leader's special brand of discipline, Mellish and the rest promptly formed into line again, and as Grundy shouldered the stretcher, the little procession began the weary march to St. Jim's, tea-less and rebellious.

"I'm rather glad I didn't join Grundy's ambulance brigade!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "Still, I feel rather tired, and I don't think I'll walk back to St. Jim's."

"You'll wait an hour for the train, you ass?" snorted Tom Merry.

"No fear!" said Lowther. "But Grundy's got a stretcher, and he's fairly itching to make use of it. Come on! Let's catch 'em up!"

And Lowther's chums followed him smilingly as he hurried after the St. Jim's Ambulance Brigade.

CHAPTER 5.

Another Case!

"F ALL in and follow me!"

Thus sang Monty Lowther as he tacked himself on the tail-end of the ambulance brigade.

Tom Merry and the rest of his chums also fell in behind.

Lowther was obviously out to pull Grundy's lofty leg, and they saw no reason why they shouldn't help him. It would pass the time and make the long tramp to St. Jim's more cheerful and interesting.

They were on the outskirts of Wayland now, and as they expected, Grundy took the path that led across Wayland Moor. It was a short cut, and cut off at least a mile of the distance by road.

Grundy looked round and glared as he saw Tom Merry & Co. marching in correct formation behind, smiling and cheerful.

"Look here, what d'you chaps want?" he called. "No larks, mind!"

"No larks, you fellows!" said Lowther severely. "Stop smiling, Gussy! This is a serious procession. Any fellow who doesn't take Grundy seriously must fall out. Stop laughing, Trimble!"

Monty's order was unnecessary in Trimble's case—he looked utterly miserable and unhappy. Grundy had promised his men tea, and now there was going to be no tea by the look of things. And the prospect of tramping all the way across the moor was not an inviting one. Trimble was fairly sizzling with indignant wrath. In fact, all Grundy's followers were indignant and rebellious.

It had been far from the happy afternoon Mellish & Co. had anticipated. In the first place, they had arrived at Wayland late, and Grundy had insisted upon getting the business done before having tea. Now it was too late for tea. Moreover, Grundy's insistence upon their tramping through Wayland in military formation had made things no less pleasant. They had been followed from shop to shop by a crowd of jeering, cackling urchins, and had been made a laughing-stock.

And now they were returning—tea-less!

Like Grundy, they looked round and glared at Tom Merry & Co. with terrific glares.

"Kick them out, Grundy!" grunted Percy Mellish. "They're only trying to be funny."

Grundy frowned and fell behind.

"You rotters clear off!" he snapped. "Cheeky cads! You needn't think I can't see that you're trying to pull our legs!"

"Go hon!" said Lowther. "That black eye of yours is making you see things, Grundy. Why don't you put it in a sling, old chap?"

Grundy snorted. His eye was already becoming a thing of beauty, if not a joy for ever, and the pain alone made him feel in a far from amiable frame of mind.

"You weren't so pretty before, you know," said Lowther, who was evidently out to draw Grundy into a squabble. "But that eye of yours is a beauty, old chap! If I had a face like yours I should wear a mask, Grundy!"

"Look here—"

"Fancy allowing a chap to give you an eye like that and then letting him walk away!" said Lowther. "Talk about funk!"

"What?" roared Grundy.

"Funk," said Lowther. "Disgraced the school in public! First you knock a chap down, and then funk fighting him! Aren't you ashamed to take that black eye back with you?"

"Why, you cheeky cad—" hooted Grundy.

"You're all gas!" said Lowther. "Too much jaw, you

As George Alfred Grundy whirled round, the stretcher on his shoulder caught a gentleman who was passing a fearful crack on the head. "Whooooop!" "What the thump—" began Grundy. He whirled round again, and this time the end of the stretcher caught Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, sending his topper spinning away. "Yawwooh!" (See Chapter 4.)



know, and much too much eye! You're all gas and no grit! Trimble's about your level as far as scrapping's concerned." That was the most deadly insult of all.

Grundy spluttered. "Trimble!" he gasped. "I'm on a level with Trimble! Oh, am I? Funk, am I? All gas and—and— Why, you—you cheeky owl! I—I'll—"

He said no more. Words failed him, and he made a rush at Monty Lowther.

The practical joker of the School House promptly allowed Grundy to charge him over.

Crash!

"Yoooooooop!" It was a terrific howl from Monty Lowther. And as he howled, Lowther rolled over and over, clutching his foot frantically.

Grundy pulled up, glaring down at him.

He was quite startled.

"What the thump—" he gasped. "Lowther, what—"

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!" said Tom Merry, in pretended alarm. "You bully!"

"Wha-at?"

"Hurt, Monty?" said Tom, dropping on his knees by Lowther. "Poor old chap!"

"Bai Jove!" said Gussy. "Lowthah, deah boy—"

"Ow! Ow-ow!" gasped Lowther. "Don't blame Grundy! He didn't do it! Ow-ow! My foot—my ankle! Ow-ow!"

"Let's have a look at it!" said Blake.

"Yow! Don't t-touch it!" wailed Lowther. "Yow! Keep Grundy away—"

"My hat!" said Arthur Augustus, quite innocently. "But if your ankle is spwained, Lowthah—"

"Ow-ow!" gasped Lowther faintly. "It—it's all right! I can bear it! Don't touch! Ow! You fellows go on! Perhaps I can hop home or crawl!"

"You can't hop or crawl all that way, Monty," said Manners solemnly. "Phew! What's to be done, Tommy?"

"I—I'm all right!" said Lowther, truthfully enough. "I—I'll try to hop along. Ow-ow!"

He staggered upon one foot, holding on to Tom Merry.

Grundy blinked at him in growing alarm.

Lowther started to hop, and then he crumpled up and lay down on the grass in a limp heap.

"Get up, Monty!" said Tom Merry. "Be a man, you know! Set your teeth and hop!"

"Or crawl!" suggested Blake. "Dash it all, show a bit of pluck!"

Grundy gasped.

"Look here—" he stammered. "It—it was my fault, I suppose! If Lowther can't walk—"

He paused.

"My dear friends!" exclaimed Skimpole, in some distress. "If Lowther is injured and unable to walk, then may I suggest that we place him on the stretcher and carry him to the school. This is really most distressing."

"Phew! Good wheeze!" said Blake.

"I was going to suggest that, of course," said Grundy, glaring at Skimpole. "You shut up. Skimpole, and leave things like this to me! Lowther—"

"Ow-ow!" gasped Lowther faintly. "It's all right, Grundy—I'm not blaming you! I can get along myself—"

"Yes, play the man, Monty—"

"You shut up. Manners!" snorted Grundy, convinced at last. "Nice sort of pal you are! Leave this to me, you fellows! Now, you men, let's have Lowther on this stretcher!"

"But, look here," began Mellish, eyeing Lowther suspiciously. "I don't believe—"

"Blow what you believe!" snapped Grundy. "You'll do as you're told, or I'll boot you! Now, then, on with him!"

Grundy unrolled the stretcher, and grasped Lowther under the armpits. Skimpole and Tompkins, looking a bit scared, came forward promptly enough.

"Buck up!" bawled Grundy, glaring at Mellish and Mulvaney and Scrope. "Are you asleep, you born idiots? This is your job!"

"But—"

Grundy made as if to drop Lowther and rush at Mellish, and that sulky youth decided to dismiss his suspicions and obey.

Lowther was lifted on to the stretcher. Then the ambulance brigade raised him and started off towards St. Jim's, Lowther refusing to allow anyone to touch his foot.

Trying hard not to smile, Lowther's chums fell in behind.

Grundy was looking quite excited now—almost pleased. It was his first case as captain of the ambulance—though he certainly had lent a willing hand with the boy who had been struck by the car.

Tom Merry smiled as he looked at him.

"Your first case, Grundy!" he said. "Who'd have thought you'd have your chance to distinguish yourself so soon!"

"Jolly lucky!" said Blake, with a soft chuckle. "This means glory for you, Grundy!"

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"Jolly good job we had the stretcher, anyway!" admitted Grundy modestly. "As for that youngster—well, I will admit you didn't do so badly, Tom Merry. You've got the idea all right as regards bandaging."

"Thanks!" smiled Tom. "Praise from you is praise indeed!"

"I should have put more bandages on, I think," said Grundy. "You can't put too many on, you know. Don't spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar! Still, you've got the idea! If you want a few tips, you can join my ambulance classes. I'm starting them to-morrow—first-aid, and all that!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I've got some books on first-aid," said Grundy. "Not that I need much tuition, of course. But I want my men to study them as well as learn from me. The fact is, I realise—Ho! Mind with that stretcher, Skimmy, you born idiot!"

"My dear Grundy," panted Skimpole, perspiration streaming from his bulgy forehead, "I fear I am hardly robust and strong enough for a stretcher-bearer. I am exceedingly fatigued already, and I fear—"

"Oh, take his end, Mellish, you rotten slacker!" snorted Grundy. "Hold on there!"

"Look here—" Mellish was beginning again sulkily, but the look on Grundy's face made him jump to the stretcher.

CHAPTER 6.

The Genuine Article!

STUMBLING and staggering over the rough, stony ground the stretcher-bearers trudged on with their burden. Lowther was no light weight, and Mellish & Co. were soon, like Skimmy, streaming with perspiration. But Grundy would allow no slacking and they had to stick it, though they sulked and grumbled.

Lowther lay back comfortably on the stretcher, a twisted sort of look on his face. It was really difficult to tell whether he was trying not to cry or not to laugh.

The looks Mellish & Co. cast upon him were almost deadly.

But Grundy was happy enough. He was quite looking forward to the procession entering the gates of St. Jim's. His great idea was a success—his ambulance brigade was justifying its existence.

For a mile or so they tramped on, Grundy explaining his future plans to Tom Merry & Co. as they went.

But Mellish struck at last.

"I've had enough of this!" he panted, a mutinous look on his streaming face. "Look here, Grundy, why can't one of Lowther's dashed pals take a turn?"

"But we aren't members of the brigade, Mellish!" said Blake sweetly. "Think of your duty—and the feeds Grundy's going to supply!"

"I'm fed up, too!" groaned Scrope. "I don't believe Lowther's hurt at all. It's all spoof—you know what a spoofer the rotter is."

"Bejabbers, and I think so, too!" gasped Micky Mulvaney. "Faith, and I'm done! I'm not carryin' the spalpeen an inch further!"

And with that Micky Mulvaney released his end of the stretcher.

Scrope did likewise an instant later. As a matter of fact, both had just caught Lowther winking at Blake, and their suspicions had hardened into certainty.

The result was that one end of the stretcher dropped and Lowther went off it with a bump and a howl.

Bump!

"Yarrooooo!" roared Lowther. "Yoop! Oh, my hat!" Grundy was petrified. But his fears for Lowther's safety were soon allayed. Lowther was hurt, and he intended to let Mellish and Scrope know it.

He rolled over, and then he leaped to his feet and went for Mulvaney and Scrope.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther's chums.

Lowther's head had cracked on the hard ground, and he was raging. He grabbed Mulvaney, and then he grabbed Scrope, and then he brought their heads together with a resounding crack.

The two faithless ambulance men howled.

"M-mum-my hat!" gasped Grundy. "Lowther, you rotter, there's nothing the matter with your dashed foot! Why, the cad's dancing on it."

Lowther was dancing—with wrath.

"You silly owls!" he roared. "You've nearly split my napper open! Why, I—I'll—"

"Leggo!" shrieked Scrope. "Make the rotter leggo, Grundy! He's only spoofin'—I caught him winkin' at Blake just now. It's just a game to make us carry him all the way to St. Jim's."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The very fact that Lowther's chums were roaring with laughter was enough for Grundy. George Grundy was

not over bright, but even he realised that Lowther's chums were scarcely likely to laugh if their chum were really injured.

"Well," gasped Grundy, "well, I'm hanged! You—you howling rotter, Lowther!"

The next moment Grundy got definite proof. Lowther had grabbed Mulvaney and sat him down with a bump on the ground. Scrope jumped to escape, and Lowther landed out at him with his foot—the foot that was supposed to be injured.

It was a terrific kick, and it nearly lifted Scrope a yard away.

"That settles it!" gasped Grundy. "You rotten spoofer, Lowther! Why, I'll—I'll—"

"Look at my thumping napper!" roared Lowther.

"There's a lump on it—"

"And I'll put another dashed lump on it!" gasped Grundy.

"Make a fool of me, would you?"

"Look here—hold on—"

But Grundy did not hold on—he went for Lowther. That humorous youth had been carried for more than a mile, but he looked like paying heavily for the luxury.

Lowther dodged and ducked, but Grundy caught him at last, and they went to earth, locked in a deadly embrace, and punching each other with hearty good will.

Grundy had had a lot to put up with that afternoon, and he seemed to be taking it out of Monty Lowther now. For several moments they rolled about the rough ground, and then Lowther succeeded in breaking free.

He scrambled to his feet and fled, with the raging George Alfred at his heels.

"Go it, Lowther!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Mellish & Co. were laughing now; they quite enjoyed seeing Lowther paying the price of his free ride.

Lowther seemed to be making tracks for home, but quite suddenly they saw him pull up, and then they saw Grundy reach him. But instead of closing with Monty he suddenly turned and shouted urgently.

"Hallo! Something wrong!" said Blake. "Come on!"

Both Lowther and Grundy were stooping over something on the ground in the distance, and in some wonderment Tom Merry and the rest set off to investigate.

They arrived on the spot to find Lowther and Grundy stooping over a still form on the ground.

It was the form of a well-dressed man—a sallow-faced man with a slight, dark moustache. He appeared to be unconscious.

"What's wrong?" gasped Tom Merry, in some alarm. He glanced at the man's face and gave a slight start. Somehow the face seemed familiar to him. "Has he fainted?"

"He was dragging himself along when I spotted him," said Lowther, who was looking rather pale. "I think he must be badly hurt. He started to fume when he saw me and then he seemed to collapse."

Tom Merry stooped over the man and started to examine him. His clothes were white with chalk, and he had obviously dragged himself some distance.

"Looks as if he's fallen over the edge of the chalk-pit yonder," said Blake, with a whistle. "My hat! His leg looks—Hallo, he's coming round."

The man's eyes opened. His face was white and haggard, and drawn with acute pain. Yet his eyes glittered as they opened and rested on the scared juniors.

"What's the matter?" asked Tom gently. "Is your leg hurt?"

The man nodded and set his teeth.

"Broken?" he said weakly. "I—I slipped and fell heavily. If—if you can help me to get to the old mill over there, I shall be all right!"

"But if your leg's broken you need attention at once," said Tom. "Look here—"

"A friend—the fellow I was walking with—has gone for help!" panted the man. "If I can reach the mill I shall be all right, I tell you. If—if you can't help me to the mill, you can clear."

Tom Merry looked at Blake quickly. Instinctively he felt that the man was lying—that he did not expect help.

"Look here," he said quickly. "I know how to deal with a broken leg—at least, to make a rough job of it. We'll make it comfortable and take you along to St. Jim's with us. You can't be left in that mill."

The man set his teeth, and again that savage look came over his face.

"I—I tell you I'll be all right!" he panted. "I—I—"

He fell back, gasping.

Tom Merry did not argue the matter or attempt to do so. Obviously something had to be done whether the strange man wished them to do so or not.

After a swift hunt round, a suitable length of wood was found, and very tenderly the leg was held in position and bandaged over the improvised splint.

It was done at last, and by the time they had finished the man had lapsed into unconsciousness again.

"He must have gone through it, dragging himself all this way from the chalk-pit," said Tom grimly. "Now we'll get him on the stretcher and take him to St. Jim's." It seemed the only thing to do in the circumstances. The stranger was lifted carefully on the stretcher, and this time Grundy, Tom, Blake, and Lowther took charge of it. Then the little procession started for St. Jim's.

The man was heavy, but they stuck to it grimly and reached the school at last. Their arrival caused no little excitement, but Mr. Railton was soon on the spot, and under his orders the injured man was taken to the school sanatorium.

"You did quite right, in the circumstances, Grundy," said the Housemaster, eyeing Grundy kindly. "I am very glad that your ambulance class has justified its existence so soon. That poor fellow might have remained out all night and died from exposure and lack of attention."

And with a kindly nod the Housemaster went off to make his report to Dr. Holmes.

Grundy fairly swelled with pride.

"Well, we've made a good beginning, you fellows," he said to his followers. "You heard what Mr. Railton said? We're going to make the beaks praise us more than that before we've finished."

"I'm hungry," grunted Trimble. "Look here, what about tea now, Grundy? You promised us a good tea—you know you did!"

"Well, that's a fact," admitted Grundy, quite affably. "I think we'll have tea in my study. Here's a quid, Tompkins. Get a stack of grub in, and you fellows come along to my study when you've changed."

He looked at Tom Merry & Co. rather loftily.

"You chaps can join us, too!" he said.

"Thanks—we had tea in Wayland!" smiled Tom. "Come on, you fellows."

And Tom Merry walked away smiling, while Grundy's henchmen, happy enough now, hurried indoors to change. Grundy himself felt as if he were walking on air. His ambulance brigade had made a good start—it had been of real use in a serious case, and he and his followers had

(Continued on next page.)



The Oracle will be ninety-seven next week, boys! So don't forget to give him a cheer at least! He has asked me to request that he may be excused if there are any slips in his

column this week, as he has done it rather hurriedly, owing to the fact that he had to rush away from the office to get his whiskers trimmed before going off for the week-end to see his great-grandmother.—EDITOR.

Q. What is Toynbee Hall?

A. An institution in Whitechapel, London, founded in the year 1885 by members of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge as a settlement to the memory of a social reformer, Toynbee by name.

Q. What was the Phoenix?

A. A mythical bird, Robert Small, of Newcastle, that was believed to have lived for five or six centuries in the Arabian desert and finally burnt itself on a funeral pyre. Afterwards, so it was said, it rose again from its own ashes and lived on with renewed youth through a few centuries more. Some bird!

Q. What is a siesta?

A. Yes, Brian Gunn; I am fully conversant with Spanish, as I once shared digs with an onion seller in Soho. The word siesta has crept into our language, however, and it is what our office-boy has every day after his usual lunch of boiled beef and carrots. Lest you should now think a siesta is some new brand of chewing-gum, I must explain further that it is a rest, or "forty winks," taken during the day, a

regular habit in Spain and many other warm countries.

Q. What is the most difficult English bird to shoot?

A. On my submitting this question to the office-boy to see if he knew, this usually ignorant scallywag was able to reply at once, to my astonishment, that it was the oompah bird which flies backwards to keep the dust out of its eyes. Hitherto, a most careful search on my part of the standard natural history books, including Professor Hamphat's "Feathered Freaks," has failed to locate this remarkable specimen, and I must question the O. B. more closely as to the source of his special information. Leaving this aside, the most difficult of English birds to shoot is the snipe, owing to its small size and lightning speed.

Q. What are shaggy caps?

A. A girl reader has sent in this interesting query—at least, so I judged from the nom-de-plume of "Sweetie," the round handwriting and the perfume of lavender on the pale mauve notepaper. Shaggy caps are a species of fungus, and we scientists, who call everything by longer names than other people, refer to 'em as *coprinus comatus*. Probably my girl chum will be interested to learn that there are no less than 5,000 different species of fungi in Great Britain alone, including such well-known ones as the mushroom and toadstool. Many of these are most remarkable in one way or another. A mushroom can be crushed easily between the fingers of a hand, and yet a growing mushroom has been known to have power enough to lift a heavy paving stone. One kind of fungus will only grow in damp caves; another sort selects a heap of cinders; yet another is to be found only on leaden cisterns. One sort will grow on iron even if that iron has been red-hot but a few hours before. That useless excrescence, the office-boy, has interrupted me by a tug on the whiskers to say that I have forgotten to mention face fungus. I mention it now to show what sort of thing I have to put up with—and me hurrying to get off for the week-end, too!

sonnet to a toad-in-the-hole. What has this succulent dinner dainty done to deserve this at your hands? And I warn you, chum, that if you insist on reciting it at your local literary society as you threaten that you will no longer be an Aspirer, but an Expirer!

Q. What is um-braculiferous?

A. Oh, shurrup, "Smart Ned!" I want to get away to see my great-grandmother! Besides, who the thump wants to know anyway!

Q. What did King John lose in the Wash?

A. Mind your own bizny, "Tom-Tit." Let's get on with the giddy washing; I've a train to catch when I've finished this column.

Q. Who was Cyclops?

A. A one-eyed being; derived from the Greek mythology. There'll be a Cyclopean look about our office-boy if he doesn't quit flicking paper darts at my ears!

Q. Do seedless oranges have pips?

A. NO! But I've got the pip—and an appointment to be at my great-grandmother's by six this evening! Toodle-oo!

Q. What is impaste?

A. It is an art term, "Third-Form Fag," and means the thick laying on of colour. By the way, your spirited description of how you dropped the toasted kipper into the lap of your prefect, and then told him what you would do to him if he lammed you with a cricket stump, was laying it on a bit thick! What?

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Here's an old bird for you—the Phoenix that lived for six centuries in the Arabian Desert.



There are over 5,000 different kinds of fungi in Great Britain—and here's one specimen called Shaggy Caps!

earned praise from the beaks! They had more than justified their existence, and Grundy was satisfied.

But Tom Merry was looking very thoughtful and puzzled as he accompanied his chums indoors. The sallow features of the injured man had seemed curiously familiar—at least, he felt certain he had seen them before, and very recently.

But where? Strive as he would, he could not place the hard, sallow face of the man. Of one thing, however, Tom was quite assured. That was that there was something queer—something distinctly mysterious about the man. Despite his desperate plight, it had been plain that he did not want their help; he had even seemed furious at sight of them.

It seemed very curious indeed to Tom Merry.

CHAPTER 7.

An Urgent Call!

"Oh, here you are, Grundy!"

Wilkins greeted George Alfred Grundy with that remark as he entered Study No. 3. It was not a cheery, friendly greeting. Both Wilkins and Gunn fairly glowered at the great George Alfred.

Grundy was in too cheery and self-satisfied a mood to notice the icy reception, however.

"Yes, here I am, you fellows!" he assented. "Well, we've had a good afternoon—a ripping afternoon! I'm jolly pleased with the way things are going. I never expected to get going quite so soon as this. My ambulance brigade—"

"Blow your ambulance brigade!" snorted Wilkins. "What about our tea?"

"Eh? What about your tea?" sniffed Grundy. "What the thump have I got to do with your tea, George Wilkins?"

"We've had none. If you haven't had yours, Grundy—" "Well, go and get some," said Grundy. "Why bother me about tea? I've got other and more important things to think about, you footling duffer! Blow you and your tea!"

"But we've had none!" hooted Gunn. "We've been waiting for you, Grundy!"

"Why should you wait for me?" said Grundy, staring. "You could have tea in Hall, couldn't you?"

"Who wants tea in Hall?" demanded Wilkins sulphurously. "And it's too late for that now! And we're stony. I suppose you've blued all your tin on that ambulance rot?"

"No, I haven't!" retorted Grundy warmly. "I had two quid left out of that fiver. Blessed if I know what you're grousing about! Matter of fact, I haven't had tea yet. We've had a rather busy afternoon, you fellows—two cases already. Kid got knocked down in Wayland; we looked after him until a bobby came. Then we found a man with a broken leg on Wayland Moor, and we shoved a temporary splint on, and took him on the stretcher to the sunny. Railton's no end pleased with us over it!"

Wilkins and Gunn looked surprised, but they did not appear to be pleased. They were evidently thinking about their tea.

"That's all very well," said Wilkins. "But what about tea? If you haven't had yours, Grundy—"

"I'm going to have it soon," said Grundy, with an impatient sniff. "Dash it all, can't you wait? I was going to tell you that I've just sent for some grub—a quid's worth!"

"Oh!"

"Ripping! Good man, Grundy!"

The expressions on the faces of Wilkins and Gunn changed with remarkable suddenness. They looked quite affectionately at George Alfred.

"That's all right, then!" said Wilkins, with a sigh of relief. "Oh, good! We'll be laying the cloth, old man! Glad you've had a good afternoon with that rot—I mean, with your ambulance work, old chap. Tell us all about it!"

"You'll hear it soon enough," said Grundy. "All the school will be talking about it, I expect. I say, lay the table for the whole crowd, Wilky. Lemme see, there's us three and six more, counting Trimble, Mulvaney, Skimmey, Mellish, Serope, and Tompkins; that's nine altogether."

"Eh?" ejaculated Wilkins, with a jump.

"Wha-at?" stuttered Gunn. "Nine! You mean you've asked six more fellows to tea?"

"Of course."

"Trimble, and that awful crowd?" yelled Wilkins.

"Of course. They've earned a feed! I promised them one. I hope I'm a man of my word!" said Grundy. "Pretty awful lot, of course. Still—"

"You've asked that scrubby crowd to tea in here?" howled Gunn. "With us—to tea in this study with us?"

"Aren't I telling you so?" snorted Grundy. "Getting deaf? Want everything explained twice over, and spelled out for you, Cuthbert Gunn? Open your dashed ears!"

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"Well, my hat!"

Wilkins and Gunn glowered at their mighty leader.

Both Wilkins and Gunn were well up in the Lower School, and the thought of having tea with fellows like Trimble and Mellish made them writhe.

"Well, you—you awful idiot!" gasped Wilkins. "You—you think we're having tea with that scrubby crowd; we're jolly well not!"

"Not likely," said Gunn.

"Please yourselves!" said Grundy carelessly. "I don't mind. Just finish setting the table and clear out, then!"

Wilkins and Gunn looked at him.

As they looked, Baggy Trimble, followed by Tompkins and Mulvaney minor, came into the study, loaded up with parcels of foodstuffs, which they placed on the table.

Wilkins and Gunn waited until the three had put their loads down. Then they gave each other a glance, and with one accord they collared Trimble and hurled him out into the passage. Next their grasp closed on Clarence York Tompkins, and, despite his alarmed protests, he went hurtling in Trimble's wake.

Wilkins and Gunn were just starting to deal with Mulvaney—a somewhat more difficult task—when Grundy recovered his power of action.

"Why, you—you cheeky cads!" he spluttered. "Of all the cheek! Chuck my guests out, would you? Members of my ambulance brigade! Why, I'll—"

"We're not having that crowd in here, Grundy!" hooted Wilkins. "Out with him, Gunny!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Will you?" roared Grundy, going red. "Ignore me, would you? Who's boss in this study? I'll show you!"

He proceeded to show his chums who was boss in Study No. 3. If Wilkins and Gunn had had any doubts about it—which wasn't very likely—those doubts were soon at rest.

Once again George Alfred Grundy proved the matter by force of arms, so to speak.

A whirling struggle took place for several hectic minutes, and then Gunn went flying out, falling at the feet of Trimble & Co. in the passage.

Wilkins followed him out a minute later, landing on top of Gunn just as that dishevelled youth was scrambling up.

They did not make any attempt to argue the matter further. Grundy had quelled the revolt, as he always did—or nearly always did—and Wilkins and Gunn limped away, gasping and raging.

"Come in, you fellows!" said Grundy to Trimble & Co. "Cheek! I'll teach 'em to try and dictate to me!"

Trimble, Tompkins, and Mulvaney came in, grinning.

Meanwhile, Wilkins and Gunn had met the Terrible Three along the passage, chatting to Bernard Glyn.

"Hallo! Been in the wars?" grinned Tom Merry. "You look as if you need the services of Grundy's brigade."

"We've just had Grundy's services!" groaned Wilkins, hugging his nose. "The—the rotten imbecile! He's just chucked us out—chucked us out to make way for Trimble and those other scrubby bounders!"

"Oh crumbs!" chuckled Lowther.

The Terrible Three and Glyn listened sympathetically.

"Hard lines!" said Lowther, winking solemnly at the ceiling. "Now, lemme see. I think I can arrange matters to your liking, Wilky. I'm an awfully useful chap to know. If you're really hungry—"

"Famished!" groaned Gunn. "We've been waiting for Grundy to come back, and now we've missed tea in Hall. That awful idiot—"

"Well, as Grundy's pal, you are certainly more entitled to the feed than they are, so I'll arrange it!" smiled Lowther. "I'll just run along to the study, tell them the ambulance is wanted urgently. Then, when they rush out, you chaps slip back and collar what grub you want. You can bring it to our study and scoff it there."

"My hat!" George Wilkins' face lit up. "D'you think you could work it, Lowther?"

"Leave it to me!" said the joker of St. Jim's. "I'll tell 'em old Taggles is lying unconscious in his lodge. That should do it."

"Hold on, Monty!" said Tom. "You can't tell a fib like that!"

"It won't be a fib," said Lowther. "A chap's not conscious when he's asleep, is he? Well, I spotted Taggy through the lodge window a few moments ago. He was fast asleep and snoring like billy-ho! You leave it to me!"

And Monty Lowther was about to dash away when Manners grabbed him.

"Ass!" he said, with a chuckle. "It's a good wheeze, but Grundy would smell a rat at once, after what you did this afternoon. Let me do it, or, better still, let Glyn do it."

"Good wheeze!" said Bernard Glyn, with a chuckle. "I'll do it like a shot!"

"Buzz off, then!" said Lowther. "Mind you don't give the game away, though!"

"Trust me!"

Bernard Glyn dashed away. He was almost as keen a practical joker as Lowther—the two had often conspired to work many weird and wonderful japes. The juniors saw Glyn charge into Study No. 3, yelling.

"Better keep out of sight!" chuckled Tom Merry. "If dear old Grundy sees you with us, Wilky—"

"Yes, rather!"

Wilkins and Gunn slipped into Study No. 10. Scarcely had they vanished when Grundy came rushing out of his study, followed by Tompkins, Mulvaney, and Skimpole, with Mellish, Scrope, and Trimble lagging behind.

"Come on, you rotten slackers!" bawled Grundy, pausing to look back. "Never mind that rotten grub! Come on!"

"But—"

Evidently Mellish and Scrope, at least, were suspicious. "I'll soon make you get a move on!" gasped Grundy.

He rushed back and caught Trimble by the scruff of his fat neck. Trimble howled as he was propelled by a hefty boot. Mellish, Mulvaney, and the rest hesitated no longer. They scowled and hurried away, Grundy driving them from the rear.

The ambulance brigade vanished down the stairs, Trimble still protesting loudly.

"All serene!" grinned Tom Merry, looking into Study No. 10. "Fetch what grub you want, and you can scoff it in our study. Better lock the door—you'll find the key in the lock."

"Oh, good!" said Wilkins thankfully. "Thanks, you men. We're awfully hungry!"

And they scudded away for the grub. The Terrible Three and Glyn chuckled and dashed away after Grundy & Co. to see what had happened at the lodge. The Terrible Three, at least, had had a good tea in Wayland, and they wanted none of Grundy's magnificent spread.

They soon reached the lodge, and as they did so sounds of a sudden commotion came from within—they heard the irate bellowing of old Taggles, who was a very cross-grained individual.

The next moment Grundy and his ambulance brigade came charging out of the lodge with startled yells. Behind them came Taggles, a broom in his horny hands.

"Chuck water over a man when he's takin' a bloomin' nap, would you?" he bawled. "Nice goings hon! I'll larn you!"

"Here, hold on!" yelled Grundy. "I'll explain—Yooop!"

The business end of the broom cracked home on Grundy's head, and he decided not to stay to explain, after all. He fled.

Taggles glared after them, and retired to his lodge again, fuming. Apparently the well-meaning Grundy & Co. had attempted to "revive" Taggles with water sprinkled over his face. It was not a proceeding at all likely to please Taggles. The old porter didn't like being disturbed from a snooze, and he hated water, either internally or externally—excepting when the water applied internally was diluted with gin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. roared with laughter.

"You cackling owls!" snorted Grundy, rubbing his singing head ruefully. "The old fool—"

"What's happened, old chap?" asked Lowther innocently.

"You been playing some game in Taggy's lodge?"

"Eh? Of course we haven't!" snorted Grundy. "Think I'm a silly kid, Lowther? Oh, there you are, Glyn, you rotter!" he added, sighting Bernard Glyn. "Look here, Taggy wasn't unconscious at all, you fool! He must have been asleep."

"Go hon!" said Glyn blandly. "Well, a man's unconscious when he's asleep, ain't he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you—you rotter!" spluttered Grundy. "It—it was a rotten spoof, then!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've pulled my leg!" gasped Grundy, as if such a thing was an amazing happening. "Pulled my dashed leg! Why, I'll—I'll smash you!"

He was just about to rush at the laughing Glyn when a stern voice rang out:

"Grundy!"

It was Mr. Railton.

"Grundy!" said the Housemaster, glancing severely at the raging Grundy. "Kindly make less noise."

"Oh—oh, yes, sir!"

"You are wanted in the sanatorium, Grundy," said Mr. Railton. "The gentleman you brought to the sanatorium wishes to thank you for what you did. You may go to him now!"

"Oh, yes, sir! Very well, sir!"

CHAPTER 8.

In the Sanny!

GRUNDY strode away, much of his wrath evaporating at once. Indeed, he almost strutted across the quad. Grundy loved the limelight, and he was getting some of it now.

He arrived at the sanatorium, and Nurse Rivers showed him into a ward where the injured man was lying.

Grundy shook hands with the man and eyed him curiously. Even Grundy had noticed how unfriendly the man had seemed at first. But there was a difference now.

He still looked white and haggard as he lay in bed propped up with pillows, but a smile of greeting was on his sallow face.

"Ah, here you are, my boy!" he said faintly but genially. "So you are the boy who was in charge of the party that so kindly came to my rescue. But for you, my boy, it is quite possible that I should have been exposed all night on the moor."

"That's all right, sir," said Grundy cheerily. "A man has to do his duty in a case like that. It's nothing at all—not to a fellow like me."

"Oh, ah! Yes," said the man. "But I must tell you who I am and all about it. My name is Hunt—Mr. Norman Hunt—and I live over at Abbotsford. I was tramping across the moor, and I stumbled and fell over a projecting stone—a simple accident with rather serious results for me."

"Oh!" exclaimed Grundy. "We—we thought you must have fallen into the chalk-pit near where we found you, sir."

A sudden gleam came into the man's deep-set eyes, but he smiled the next moment.

"Not at all," he said. "I did not even see any chalk-pit! However, I wish to thank you very much indeed, my boy. I am exceedingly grateful for what you have done

(Continued on next page.)

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for me, and also for bringing me here where I am so comfortable and well looked after."

"Feeling much better now—what?" said Grundy.

"Much better! It is a simple fracture, and your school doctor says I shall be all right with care and attention. It means, of course, that I cannot be moved from here for some days, however. None the less, I am very anxious not to be a trouble, and must make arrangements as soon as possible to be moved."

He paused and eyed Grundy sharply.

"You need not mention this—this accident of mine to anyone outside the school, my boy," he said in rather an unsteady voice. "I would much rather my friends did not know of my unfortunate accident until I am quite out of any possible danger."

"But—but won't they miss you, sir?" said Grundy.

"Oh, not at all—I live alone at Abbotsford, you see!"

"Oh, yes. Well, I shan't let it out, of course," said Grundy. "I'm not a chap who talks much—I'm a chap who does things."

"Oh, are you?" said Mr. Hunt, with a gasp. "Well, I'm glad to have seen you, my boy, and possibly you'll come over for a chat again. By the way, I wonder if you'd mind posting this letter for me," he added, drawing a stamped letter from beneath his pillow. "It is very urgent indeed, and must be delivered in Wayland in the morning. I have just written it."

"Certainly, sir."

Grundy took the letter, which was addressed in pencil, and placed it in his pocket. And a moment later Nurse Rivers came in and ended the interview.

"Decent chap," was Grundy's comment as he crossed the quad. "I thought at first he was rather a crusty rotter!"

He nodded quite affably to Tom Merry & Co., who were still in the quadrangle. Tom Merry eyed him curiously.

"How is the chap, Grundy?" he asked.

"Much better—going on well, the doctor says," said Grundy. "Quite a decent chap. Seems jolly grateful to us for bringing him here."

"Didn't look very grateful for us chipping in at the time," said Manners. "What's his name?"

"Hunt—Mr. Norman Hunt! He doesn't want it to get out he's here injured, for his people's sake!" explained Grundy. "So mind you youngsters don't gas! My hat! The post will have gone by this from the pillar-box! Oh, blow! I shall have to cut over to Rylcombe on my bike."

And with a lofty nod to the Terrible Three, Grundy hurried away for the cycle shed. Grundy was a fellow who always put duty before pleasure, and though he was hungry enough he never even thought of tea. Grundy was a fellow above such things as tea—which was rather lucky for Wilkins and Gunn in this case.

While those youths were devouring tuck in No. 10 behind a locked door, and while Trimble & Co. were doing likewise with what Wilkins and Gunn had left them in No. 3, George Alfred Grundy was cycling to Rylcombe. Just outside the village he met Dick Brooke, and he called to him.

"Hallo! What are you doing here, Brooke?" he said. "Look here, if you're going back through Rylcombe you might drop this letter in the post."

Dick Brooke grinned and took the letter.

He gave a slight start as he saw the scribbled address on the envelope, but he said nothing and placed the letter in his pocket.

"I've been for a ride round, and am just going home," he said. "Right-ho! I'll post it!"

Grundy nodded and rode back to St. Jim's. Grundy never thought it necessary to thank people—he took it for granted that it was an honour for anyone to do anything for him.

There was little left in the foodstuff line for Grundy when he arrived back at Study No. 3.

Trimble and the rest of the ambulance brigade eyed him rather uneasily as he came in. They all looked rather jammy and satisfied, but they could not help wondering if Grundy would kick up a fuss about their not waiting for him—and especially at the greatly diminished supply of eatables.

"Oh, here—here you are, old fellow!" said Mellish, ready to bolt if it became necessary. "We—we thought we'd start—expecting you every second, you know! I say, those two cads have been here—Wilkins and Gunn, I mean! They've scoffed most of the grub!"

"Nearly all," said Trimble.

"Never mind."

"What?"

"Let 'em have the stuff if they want it," said Grundy.

"Oh—oh, my hat!"

"Pile in, you fellows!" said Grundy cheerily. "I see there's still some tuck left. Have one of these cheese-cakes, Trimble?"

"Oh—oh, certainly," said Trimble.

He had one, and then some more. Fears fled, and THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,128.

Mellish ceased to keep one eye on the door. Evidently all was well—Grundy was neither offended nor wrathful. He sat at table and joined in the feed with lofty condescension. Grundy was obviously in high feather.

"We've made a good start," said Grundy, addressing the rest of the brigade. "Things are going well. We'll soon have as many fellows joining as we want after this. Buck up with tea, and afterwards we'll have ambulance instruction for an hour."

"Oh, dear!"

The cheery faces round the festive board clouded over.

"I—I say, Grundy, I've got to see Railton at six, old



"Look out, youngster!" As the car raced towards the scattering crowd, one urchin stumbled and went down. He scrambled up again at once, but the car was almost upon him. As Tom Merry saw the danger, he sprang forward, grabbed the youngster's arm and pulled desperately. (See Chapter 4.)

man," said Trimble. "Impot, you know. I—I think I'll get off now."

There was nothing left on the table but bread-and-butter, and Trimble did not want first-aid instruction.

Grundy was determined he should have it, however.

He arose calmly and locked the door, placing the key in his pocket.

The faces of Mellish & Co. fell.

"No slacking!" said Grundy. "I know what you are, Trimble! Clear the table, you fellows. I'll show you just how Tom Merry ought to have used bandages this afternoon."

And the ambulance brigade groaned and cleared the table. After the feast came the reckoning—in this case the reckoning being first-aid instruction from George Alfred Grundy. Still, even Mellish agreed that the feed was worth it, and that things were panning out quite well so far.

CHAPTER 9.

Pulling Grundy's Leg!

"HALLO, hallo! Here comes the giddy brigade! Forward, the stretcher-bearers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a laugh as Monty Lowther made the announcement.

It was immediately after afternoon classes the next day.

Tom Merry had arranged a friendly match with Rylcombe Grammar School, and Tom Merry and his men were just starting out.

Happening to look round, Lowther had caught sight of Grundy and his ambulance brigade corps crossing towards the gates.

They were in uniform, and Grundy and Tompkins were carrying the stretcher between them. They came tramping across the quad in marching order, and the sight of them brought grins and laughs from every side.

Despite the fact that Mr. Railton and the Head had approved, semi-officially, of Grundy's new scheme, and despite the fact that the ambulance brigade had already proved itself of use, the fellows at St. Jim's simply refused to take it seriously. They, like Monty Lowther, persisted upon looking on the St. Jim's Ambulance Brigade as a huge joke.

But Grundy did not. He and Clarence York Tompkins, and Herbert Skimpole took their duties very seriously. Possibly the rest did not—Mellish, Mulvaney and Scrope and Trimble did not enjoy the grins and laughter, but they felt that the feeds at Grundy's expense, and the privileges attached to their jobs as members of the brigade made it worth their while.

There was some dissension in the ranks as they crossed the quad. Trimble's voice was heard in pleading tones.



"Just one, Grundy?" he was saying. "Just one tart and a ginger-beer before we go!"

"Not one!" said Grundy firmly, glaring round at the fat youth. "Get a move on, you fat gorger, or you'll feel my boot!"

"Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The St. Jim's Ambulance Brigade moved out through the gates. Tom Merry & Co. followed on behind, all of them grinning. Whether they were useful or not, Grundy and his men were certainly entertaining.

Tom Merry and the rest of the footballers took the short cut through the woods to Rylcombe, but Grundy & Co. did not. Grundy was proud of his position, and he liked to be seen by all at the head of his men. He went round by road, and Tom Merry & Co. had changed by the time the ambulance brigade turned up on the field.

Gordon Gay, who was chatting with Tom Merry, almost fell down as he sighted the brigade.

"What the thump!" he began, in amazement.

"Only our ambulance brigade!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Did you think it was an invasion? If you'd like to make Grundy a friend for life, just arrange a few accidents during the match."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay and his chums roared as the juniors ex-

plained Grundy's ambitious enterprise. They were still laughing when they trotted on the field a few moments later.

"Cackling rotters!" snorted Grundy, who had not failed to note the general merriment his brigade was causing. "They won't laugh if an accident happens and we show just what we can do, though. It's that rotter, Lowther, who's—Hullo, what's the matter now?"

Grundy & Co. had settled down near the touchline with his stretcher-bearers, in the approved fashion he had seen at big matches. That they were the centre of attraction round the ground did not worry Grundy at all. The more attention he received the better George Alfred liked it.

But he sprang to his feet now.

Something was obviously wrong—or so it seemed.

Even as Grundy looked out to midfield, where the teams were just about to line up for the kick-off, he saw Gordon Gay suddenly crumple up and fall prostrate, kicking his legs as he did so.

"Oh, great Scott!" gasped Grundy.

There was a yell, and then Carboy of the Grammar School came rushing across the field.

"Ambulance! Quick!" he bawled. "Fetch a stretcher! Anybody know—Oh, there you are, Grundy! Look lively!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Grundy. He gave another glance at the group round Gay in midfield, and then he gave a yell. "Look lively, you men! Come on! We're wanted!"

Grundy & Co. were not suspicious. In fact, so abruptly had the call come that even the crowd round the touchline was startled.

Next moment the brigade was going across the field at the double, Grundy leading and carrying the rolled-up stretcher over his shoulder.

They reached the spot, to find Gay still kicking, his face twisted and working.

"What's the matter?" gasped Grundy, dropping the stretcher.

"A fit!" said Frank Monk, adding under his breath: "A fit of laughter!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Grundy, not hearing that last. "Put him on the stretcher, chaps!"

It was all Grundy could think of doing. He had not studied how to deal with fits yet. But even as he knelt down by the side of the unfortunate Gordon Gay there came another yell, followed instantly by a chorus of yells.

Grundy looked round swiftly—just in time to see the Grammarian team going down one by one, like ninepins.

They lay where they had fallen, kicking as Gay was kicking.

"G-good lor'!" gasped Grundy.

For the moment Grundy quite lost his head in his agitation. He first ran to Frank Monk, the nearest victim of this strange epidemic of fits, then on to the next, and then back again to Gordon Gay, hardly knowing if he was on his head or his heels.

But a sudden howl of laughter from round the field pulled him up short—a howl that brought the crimson to Grundy's rugged face.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 10.

Grundy Goes!

"O H!" gasped Grundy.

Suspicion came to him swiftly enough then—it came swifter still when Gordon Gay, followed by Frank Monk, got to their feet, calmly and smilingly.

"Only just to test the smartness and efficiency of your ambulance brigade, old fellow!" explained Gordon Gay blandly.

"You—you were pulling our legs!" stuttered Grundy, with a gasp.

"Just that!" assented Gay. "You see, your lofty leg is such a temptation to a fellow to pull! Now, will you clear off the field and let us get on with the game, old chap! The entertainment is over."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you—you—"

Grundy spluttered, and then he made a ferocious rush at the Grammarian joker.

Either Gay or Grundy would undoubtedly have suffered serious damage, and possibly first aid would have been required quickly enough, had not Hake, the Grammarian referee, interfered just then.

Hake was a senior; but, in addition to being a fellow who took an interest in games, he was, unfortunately, a great bully. He was also without a sense of humour, and the delay had exasperated him.

"Stop that!" he snapped. "What the thunder are you

playing at, Gay? Think I'm here to watch your fool tricks? Send that born idiot off the field and get on with the dashed game!"

As he spoke, Hake grabbed the raging Grundy by the collar of his tunic and sent him staggering away. Grundy sprawled on the grass, and then he jumped up furiously. But, for once, Grundy thought better of his first impulse, which had been to rush at Hake and punch him. Hake had a reputation that had reached St. Jim's, and Grundy realised, fortunately, that it would take two fellows of his age to thrash the burly Fifth-Former.

He stooped and rolled his stretcher up, and hoisted it across his shoulder. Then he shook a fist at Gordon Gay.

"All right!" he bawled. "I'll make you sit up for this some other time, you cackling rotter! I'll teach you to try to pull my leg! I'll make mincemeat of—Yooooop!"

Grundy yelled as a hefty boot clumped behind him—Hake was obviously getting impatient.

"You cheeky rotter!" hooted Grundy, wheeling round furiously. "Why, I'll—"

Crack!

"Yaroooooogh!"

This time it was Hake who yelled—and he yelled fiendishly. Once again Grundy, as on the previous afternoon, had forgotten the stretcher over his shoulder.

As he whirled round, the end caught Hake at the side of his head with a terrific crack, and a force that sent the luckless senior spinning away.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The spectators evidently saw humour in that also.

But obviously Hake did not. He held his head for a moment, and then he staggered to his feet and went for Grundy like a raging lion.

"Run for it, Grundy!" shouted Tom Merry, who was nearly helpless with laughter. "Run, you idiot!"

And Grundy—for the first time in history, possibly—took good advice. Indeed, Hake was looking so ferocious that a far stouter heart than Grundy's might have quailed.

He gave a startled gasp, and then he bolted, with the raving Fifth-Former tearing after him. Hake was undoubtedly hurt, and more angry than hurt.

Followed by cheers and laughter, the two tore across the footer-field and vanished round by the pavilion.

With crimson faces the rest of the St. Jim's Ambulance Brigade gathered up the stretcher Grundy had dropped and trailed sheepishly off the field.

Without waiting for Hake the game started, for time was precious if it was to be finished before darkness.

Meanwhile, Grundy was still running—and so was Hake. That terrific jolt from the end of the stretcher must have given the Fifth-Former a terrific headache, if nothing worse, and Grundy knew he could expect no mercy from him.

He ran as he had rarely run before.

But Hake ran harder and faster.

Grundy fairly tumbled over the stile that gave admittance to Rylcombe Lane, but before he could recover himself Hake had vaulted the stile and grabbed him.

The two crashed to earth, struggling desperately. But Grundy was panting and exhausted. Hake twirled him over and rammed his face in the grass at the side of the lane.

"Now, you little sweep!" he snarled, panting heavily. "You've nearly brained me, and I'm going to take it out of your dashed hide, you little beast! I'll teach you—"

Hake suddenly paused. There came the swift whirring of cycle-wheels, and before the Grammarian could look round he heard the sound of a falling bike, and then somebody leaped at him and bowled him over.

"Run for it, Grundy!" gasped a voice.

It was Dick Brooke, the St. Jim's day-boy. As Hake

rolled over with a startled yell, Dick grabbed Grundy and hauled him to his feet.

"Run, you ass!"

Grundy did run—he didn't want any more of Hake's rough handling. Dick Brooke leaped on to his machine again and drove at the pedals as Hake scrambled up.

By that time Grundy was well away; and, looking back, Dick Brooke saw that the Fifth-Former was not following. Possibly Hake did not feel equal to a scrap with two juniors like Grundy and Brooke.

He shook his fist after them, and climbed back over the stile and disappeared.

Dick Brooke caught up Grundy, and jumped off.

"What was the trouble?" he asked. "Just as well I came along then. I'd stopped for tea with Dick Julian and was just going home."

Grundy growled and told him, mopping his streaming brow as he did so. Dick Brooke's face, which had been curiously white and haggard, broke into a faint smile as he listened.

"Hard lines, Grundy!" he said at last. "That fellow Hake is a brute, I know! You going back to the field again?"

"I've a thumping good mind to!" panted Grundy. "I'll show some of those rotters that I mean business!"

"I shouldn't!" said Dick Brooke. "Let 'em rip! That chap Hake isn't to be played with!" He paused and eyed the burly Shell fellow almost fiercely. "How's that man, Grundy—the fellow in the sanatorium?" he said intently.

Grundy looked at him, surprised at the strange tone of Dick Brooke's voice.

"He's going on well, so the doctor says," he replied. "I wanted to see his leg, but the doctor was cheeky—wouldn't allow me to. Professional jealousy, I suppose. The fellow's quite a decent chap, really."

"I heard he'd given his name as Hunt," said Dick. "What's he like to look at, Grundy?"

"Tall chap, with sallow cheeks and a bit of a moustache, though he'd shaved it off when I saw him this morning," said Grundy. "You seem jolly interested in the chap, Brooke!"

Dick Brooke's eyes gleamed. And then, quite suddenly, he gave a jump.

"Phew! I'd forgotten all about that dashed letter, Grundy!" he gasped, shoving his hand swiftly into his inside pocket. "I say, I'm awfully sorry, old man! Was it important?"

Grundy glowered as he took the letter and glanced at it.

"Well, you footling owl!" he snorted. "Yes, it was jolly urgent, so Mr. Hunt said. You—you careless ass!"

"Mr. Hunt!" repeated Dick Brooke, a gleam coming into his eyes again. "Was it from that man?"

"Yes. He asked me to post it for him!" snorted Grundy. "Well, you ass!"

"Look here," said Dick Brooke, "give it to me again and I'll deliver it personally. It won't make much difference then. I know the address—"

"Think I'll trust your dashed memory again?" growled Grundy. "No fear! Look here, just you give me a lift on your back step, and I'll catch the five-fifteen. Just about do it!"

"Why not—"

"Because I jolly well won't!" snapped Grundy witheringly. "Nice memory you've got, and I promised the chap I'd post it without fail! I was an ass to trust it to you, you born idiot!"

"Oh, all right!" said Dick Brooke. "I'm sorry, but the fact is, we've got trouble at home. I forgot it going home, and something happened that quite sent it out of my mind."

"Somebody ill?" said Grundy, his rugged face softening. "In that case—"

"No; but it's very worrying. I can't explain," said Dick

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Brooke, colouring. "Anyway, if you mean to go, jump on, or you'll miss that train!"

"Right!" Grundy pocketed the letter, and a moment later he was riding on Dick Brooke's back step towards the station. It was only a few minutes' run, and Grundy just caught the train. In the carriage he examined the address.

"Phew! Rather a shady address, that!" he muttered, with a whistle. "Queer! Mr. Hunt doesn't seem the sort of chap—Not my business, though, and he seems decent enough."

With that Grundy put the letter into his pocket again. At Wayland he jumped from the local and hurried through the town towards the outskirts in the opposite direction to St. Jim's. Within ten minutes he had reached a fringe of dingy-looking, small houses on one side of the road, and he soon found the one he wanted.

"No. 15, Abbottsford Road," said Grundy, looking again at the address on the envelope. "That's the house! Phew! Looks as if it's empty. No, by James, there's smoke!"

The house was by itself at the end of the long row, and it was well shaded by dusty, scraggy hawthorns. Grundy passed along through the broken gate to the shabby front door at the end of the weed-grown pathway.

He was puzzled and curious. Mr. Hunt had seemed a well-spoken man, and his clothes were good. It seemed curious that he should have friends living at a house like this—dirty, ill-kempt, and desolate.

But somebody lived there—dingy curtains hung at the windows, and smoke came from the chimney. Grundy hesitated a moment, and then he knocked. No answer came, and he knocked again and again. Grundy was a stickler, and he went on knocking—chiefly, however, because he had spotted a face peering out at him from an upstairs window.

CHAPTER 11. A Prisoner!

THAT was enough for George Alfred Grundy. He wasn't going to have his journey for nothing. He went on knocking.

His patience was rewarded at last.

A bolt was drawn back and the door opened, revealing a stumpy man, with a dark, sullen face and lowering brows.

"Well, what the thunder do you want?" he snapped. "I've got a letter here—for a man named Salter!" said Grundy, with a grunt. "It's urgent, and— M-mum-my hat!"

The junior broke off abruptly. Something about the man's face struck Grundy as being familiar. Quite suddenly he realised where he had seen the face before. And in almost the same instant he realised where he had seen the man in the sanatorium before.

Like Tom Merry, Grundy had a feeling that he had seen Mr. Hunt before somewhere, though, he, too, could not for the life of him think where.

Now he knew! It was in the car that had knocked down the boy in Wayland High Street!

Grundy had caught but a bare glimpse of the man who was driving the car—his glance had rested on the man seated next to him. And the face of that man was that of the shabbily-dressed man before him.

He was sure of it. And the certainty made him feel sure in regard to the face of the driver also, though the recollection was vague. Yet it could scarcely be a coincidence, and Grundy gasped at the thought of the friendly and grateful Mr. Hunt being the heartless driver of the car.

"The—the rotter!" gasped Grundy. "And I thought him a decent chap! Why—" He broke off to glare at the man before him, who had snatched the letter from his hand. "And you're a howling rotter, too!" he snorted. "Knocking down that kid and leaving him lying there like you did, you cowardly sweep!"

The man started back, his face suddenly livid. "What—what did you say?" he hissed. "You—you—"

He broke off, and Grundy eyed him with withering contempt. Grundy always prided himself on being a fellow who spoke what he thought, and he did not hesitate now. He thought of the youngster lying in the dusty street, and of the cowardly motorists racing away, and his indignation swelled and swelled.

"I called you a cowardly sweep, and I mean what I say!" he snorted. "I'm a plain chap, and I always speak my mind! And that other chap—that fellow in our sanatorium—is as bad as you—worse, in fact!"

The man glanced quickly about him. Grundy never spoke in a whisper when a yell would do, and the fellow's face showed sudden fear and fury.

"Come inside!" he said, keeping his voice steady with an obvious effort. "Come inside, young sir! I don't quite understand."

"No, I won't come inside!" snorted Grundy. "There's the letter. I promised that fellow Hunt that I'd see it posted last night, but the fellow I gave it to forgot to post it—so I brought it myself."

"So that's it!" said Salter, gritting his teeth and eyeing Grundy almost wolfishly. "And—and you said something about me knocking down a kid, didn't you? Come inside, and—"

"No fear!" said Grundy. "There's the letter, and think yourself lucky I don't— Here, what—" Grundy's words ended with a startled gasp.

Another swift glance round the man gave, but no houses were on the opposite side of the road, and it was impossible for them to have been seen from the other houses in the row.

Grundy was utterly unprepared for what happened next. Salter's hand shot out, closing on Grundy's arm, and with all his force the man pulled. Almost before he was aware of it, the burly Shell fellow found himself in the house and crashing across the living-room beyond.

He fell heavily against the opposite wall, and next second the door slammed.

Then, with the leap of a panther, Salter was upon him. "So you spotted us, did you, you young whelp?" he snarled savagely. "Well, I'll see as you keep quiet about it!"

"Leggo!" roared Grundy. "Why, you—you—" Grundy said no more—he needed all his breath for the fierce struggle that followed. It dawned suddenly on Grundy's rather dense mind that he was in a tight corner, and that the fellow was in deadly earnest.

Sudden fear clutched at the junior's heart, and he fought and struggled desperately.

But the man was stockily built and powerful to a degree. Grundy, strong as he was for a junior, was almost powerless in his savage grasp.

Over and over they rolled on the dirty living-room floor of the hovel, Grundy gasping and panting heavily. In his amazement and fear, the junior did not even think of shouting for aid—indeed, he had no time to think.

At last, by sheer chance, Grundy managed to get to his knees, but the move proved his undoing.

Salter was on him again in a flash, and his fist took the

(Continued on next page.)



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junior on the temple with sickening force. Grundy went over with a crash, his head striking the wall of the room.

He slid down and remained still, more than half stunned. In a flash the man had twisted him roughly over and clapped his wrists together. Grundy not even trying to resist. Then, with one knee pinning the junior down, Salter dragged some strong string from his pocket and swiftly tied the junior's wrists together.

Grundy's last chance of liberty was gone then. In a few moments his feet were also bound, and then the man rose to his feet.

"So you spotted us in that blamed car, did you?" panted Salter. "Well, you'll be sorry as you did before we've finished! Have you told anybody as you spotted us?"

Grundy opened his eyes; the man's words reached him dizzily.

"No, I haven't, you rotter!" he panted, his brain reeling. "I only recognised you just now, of course, and then I knew where I'd seen that rotter Hunt before! Let me go, you ruffian! You'll suffer for this!"

"Yes; I'm likely to let you go!" said Salter, with a savage sneer. "I didn't think as anyone had seen our faces, or I shouldn't be 'ere now, I might tell you! Still, as you ain't told no one, and I can see as you're speaking the truth—"

"No, I haven't!" said Grundy angrily. "But I jolly well will when I get out of this, you brute! And I'll show that other rotter up, too—the cowardly sweep! A chap who'd knock down a kid, and then run away, ought to be shown up!"

"What!"

"Broken leg or no broken leg," said Grundy, "the fellow's a rotter! Goodness knows how he got his leg broken and what he was doing on the moor! But he deserves to be shown up!"

Salter was staring at the junior with a curious expression on his face. It seemed as if Grundy's words had lifted a load from his mind.

"So you're slangin' me just because we knocked down that durned kid—eh?" he said thickly.

"Of course! What the thump else should I slang you for?"

"Never you mind that!" said the man, showing deep relief. "You're here now, and here you'll stay for a bit! No good tryin' to howl, as nobody can hear you from here."

He tore open the letter, and gave a savage imprecation as he read it. Then, throwing down the letter, he quickly found Grundy's handkerchief and gagged him with it. That done, he lifted the junior in his arms with hardly an effort and carried him up the uncarpeted stairs.

In an empty room at the back of the house he dropped the junior down, and went out without a word. Two minutes later Grundy heard the front door slam, and he knew he was alone in the house.

Bound, gagged and a prisoner, Grundy gritted his teeth with rage at his helplessness. What did it all mean? That the fellow had made him a prisoner simply because he knew they were the motorists who had knocked down the boy in Wayland was absurd on the face of it.

It was all beyond George Alfred Grundy. There was no prospect of rescue, so far as he could see, and he gave a groan of despair. If he had remembered Dick Brooke, however, it is probable that the outlook would not have seemed so black!

CHAPTER 12.

Missing!

"GRUNDY!"

Mr. Railton, who was taking call-over in Big Hall at St. Jim's, frowned and waited.

There was no answer.

The fellows smiled and chuckled.

The events on the Grammar School ground had caused no little hilarity at St. Jim's. George Alfred Grundy had set out to "bag" glory and distinction with his Ambulance Brigade. Certainly Grundy's motives were not all selfish by any means. He really believed an ambulance brigade was a necessity, and for the general good he was willing to spend his valuable time and—to him—less valuable money for the good cause.

But whether he was out for the good of humanity, or simply to bag glory and distinction, he certainly was providing plenty of entertainment. St. Jim's insisted upon looking upon his enthusiastic ambulance work in a humorous light.

They smiled now as the Housemaster waited for Grundy to answer his name.

He waited in vain.

Wilkins and Gunn were looking rather uneasy. It really was strange that Grundy had not turned up yet—especially as he had arranged for another first-aid class that evening.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,123.

Even now there was still the notice on the notice-board inviting all and sundry—juniors and seniors—to attend the class.

The notice had caused no little amusement—but that was mainly because Monty Lowther had crossed out the word "Ambulance" at the head of the notice and had inserted the word "Imbecile" in its place.

"Grundy," called Mr. Railton again. "Does anyone know if Grundy is out of gates?"

He looked towards Wilkins and Gunn.

"I—I don't think Grundy has come in yet, sir," said Wilkins.

"Very well," said the Housemaster, making a note of Grundy's name grimly. And he went on with the roll-call.

"It's queer," said Wilkins, frowning. "Old Grundy should have been back. I can't see the awful ass missing his ambulance class, anyway. It's not his own fault he's late."

"Just what I think," whispered Gunn.

Nothing could be done, however, and Grundy's chums—who were really fond of their leader, despite his somewhat high-handed treatment of them—went up to their study, still hoping that they would find him there.

But there was no sign of him.

Prep time came and he did not return. Wilkins and Gunn went along to Tom Merry and reported this.

"I think you'd better tell Railton," said Tom. "It isn't like Grundy at all. Last I saw of him he was being chased off the landscape by that brute Hake."

Wilkins and Gunn took the junior skipper's advice and made their way to Mr. Railton's study.

"Doubtless the foolish boy has gone to Rylcombe or Wayland," said Mr. Railton. "He is an extraordinary fellow in many ways. But he must be punished severely for this breach of rules. Send him to me the moment he returns, Wilkins."

"Oh, yes, sir," said Wilkins.

Apparently Mr. Railton was not at all alarmed. But he was looking very worried when Wilkins again visited the Housemaster, just before bed-time.

"This is very serious," he said. "You are quite sure Grundy did not mention any foolish and lawless intention?"

"No, sir," said Wilkins rather dimly. "He's not the sort to break rules like this. He—he's rather an ass, sir, but he's awfully particular about sticking to rules."

"Very well! You boys may leave this to me," said the Housemaster, frowning. "It is very strange. I will make inquiries on the phone, and also ask some of the seniors to go to Rylcombe in search of him."

Looking rather pale, Wilkins went off to bed, while Mr. Railton hurriedly got together Kildare and several of the prefects to form a search-party. It was dark now, and the gates were locked for the night.

The Shell and the Fourth retired to bed in a buzz of excited conjecture. Nobody smiled now at the mention of the events of the afternoon. Grundy was not staying out on his own account—that much was clear. What had happened to him?

"Any news?" asked Wilkins, rather hopelessly, when Knox came in to see lights out.

Knox shook his head.

"None," he said briefly. "You kids get off to sleep, and don't worry your footling heads about the young fool. He'll turn up sooner or later, and when he does he's for it."

Apparently Knox had no sympathy to waste upon Grundy, or Grundy's friends.

What happened after that the fellows in the Shell dormitory got no chance of finding out. They stayed awake much later than usual, expecting every moment to see the door open and Grundy hauled in by a prefect. But nothing of the kind happened, and even the worried and anxious Wilkins and Gunn dropped off at last.

When rising-bell went the next morning, their first thought was of the missing junior.

"Any news?"

Kildare shook his head as he looked into the dorm and was met by a score of questions on every side.

"None," he said quietly. "The kid's vanished! And he's not gone home—the Head's been through on the phone to his people. It's dashed queer."

"Oh, my hat!"

The juniors went downstairs curiously subdued and silent that morning. Wilkins and Gunn were plainly distressed and apprehensive. Tom Merry & Co. joined them after breakfast.

"I'm going to the Head, you fellows," said Tom Merry briefly. "I think we ought to take a hand in this. Something's happened to poor old Grundy. I vote we ask the Head to allow the Scouts to join in the search this morning."

"Good egg!"

Wilkins and Gunn accompanied Tom and his chums to the



"You little sweep!" snarled Hake, ramming Grundy's face in the grass. "I'll teach you—!" Hake suddenly paused as he heard the swift whirring of cycle-wheels, and before the Grammarian could look round, somebody leaped at him and bowled him over. "Run for it, Grundy!" gasped a voice. It was Dick Brooke! (See Chapter 10.)

Head's study. They waited outside and Tom nodded when he came out some minutes later.

"All serene," he said. "The Head agreed at once. Get the various patrols together, chaps. Lowther, cut off to the New House and tell Figgins. The Head's sending word to Ratty, I think. Get a move on."

Tom Merry soon had all the patrol leaders on the go, and in a very short time all the Scouts had changed into uniform. The rest of the fellows who were not Scouts were decidedly envious when they heard the news. Apart from the excitement of hunting for Grundy, the open air was far preferable to work in the Form-room.

Before nine o'clock all were lined up in the quad, and soon afterwards Tom Merry gave the order to march. Figgins and his men from the New House were to search Wayland Moor—a far stiffer task.

As they marched out into Rylcombe Lane they met Dick Brooke cycling towards the gates. He dismounted and stared blankly at the various patrols of Scouts.

"Hallo, what's the matter, Tom Merry?" he called out to the junior skipper. "What the thump—"

Tom hurried across to him. It was barely possible that the day-boy had seen something of Grundy the evening before.

"Grundy is missing," said Tom briefly. "Have you seen anything of him, Brooke?"

Dick Brooke started violently. Into his mind at once leaped the memory of the letter.

His pale face flushed with sudden excitement.

"When was he last seen, Tom?" he asked.

"On the Grammar School ground last evening," said Tom, eyeing Brooke curiously. "Hake chased him off, and since then he seems to have completely vanished. Hake says he was in Rylcombe Lane when he saw him last—so he told Dr. Monk from the Grammar School."

"Well, I saw him after that," said Dick Brooke.

"You did?"

"For a few minutes—yes," said Brooke. "I took him on my back step to the station. He was going to deliver a letter for that fellow in the sanny—to an address in Wayland. I don't like the look of this, Tom Merry!"

His eyes were glittering as he spoke.

"Look here," said Tom, eyeing him curiously. "You're in trouble yourself, Brooke. What's wrong? I meant to ask you yesterday."

"There's trouble at home," said Dick, flushing. "It's worrying me, but I can't explain just now. But about Grundy. He took a letter from that man in the sanny, Tom. I—I'm rather suspicious about that fellow—I can't explain why. And Grundy's disappearance makes me more suspicious still. The address he went to with the letter is in the worst part of Wayland. If Mr. Hunt—if that's his name—has friends there, then, well—he can't amount to much. The whole affair seems rather queer to me."

Tom started. He remembered his own curious feelings where Mr. Hunt was concerned. He did not like the man, and he wished he could remember where he had seen the face before.

"Look here," he said abruptly. "We'll cut off at once to that address, Brooke. Do you remember it?"

"Yes. I know the house."

Tom turned to Blake.

"Take charge of the fellows, Blake," he snapped. "I'm going to Wayland with Brooke."

"But—" began Blake, staring.

"No time to explain now, Blake," said Tom crisply. "I'll come along and join you on the moor later. Cheerio."

Dick Brooke turned his machine, mounted, and as he drove at the pedals Tom jumped up on his back step. The rest of the Scouts stared blankly as they vanished along Rylcombe Lane.

It did not take Brooke long to reach Wayland even with Tom's weight on the machine. They made straight for the address Dick had seen on the letter, and leaving the bike against the rickety fence, they marched up to the door. Tom thumped loudly upon it.

There was no answer. Again and again Tom knocked and thumped on the door.

"Nobody at home," said Tom. "It doesn't look—"

"What's that?" said Dick Brooke, his eyes gleaming.

It was a sound, obviously from within the house—the sound of a resounding crash, and it was followed by the sound of tinkling glass in the yard at the back of the house.

The juniors stared at each other.

What did it mean? It almost seemed as if somebody was within the house, and had smashed something through a back window to attract attention.

Tom Merry rushed round to the yard. Sure enough, splinters of dirty, broken window-pane were scattered about the yard. He looked upwards, but could see no movement at the window above, which was set high in the wall. Dick Brooke joined him.

"We can get in at the kitchen-window at the side," he whispered. "I think we're justified in the circumstances."

Tom nodded and went across to the small window. Dick Brooke had already opened it, and it was a very easy matter to scramble through into the dirty kitchen beyond. On the grimy table were the remains of a meal.

The juniors scarcely glanced at that, however, for from above their heads they could now hear a strange thumping sound.

Tom shouted:

"Anyone in the house?"

He called again, but the only answer was the strange thudding.

Tom did not call again. He nodded to Dick Brooke, and they hurried up the narrow, uncarpeted stairs. They soon reached the back room. The door was only latched, and the juniors darted in.

They saw the hapless Grundy at once.

He was lying on the floor, bound hand and foot, and his face showed crimson with exertion behind the gag.

He had evidently been struggling with his bonds, but as Tom Merry and Dick Brooke burst into the room he lay still, his eyes gleaming with joy.

In a matter of seconds Tom had cut his bonds and snatched the gag out of his mouth.

"Grundy—"

"G-gug-grooogh!" gasped the hapless Grundy.

Tom Merry rubbed and chafed his stiff and cramped limbs.

"So Brooke's suspicions were not unfounded, Grundy!" said Tom, his voice trembling with the excitement that gripped him. "What in the world does this mean, Grundy?"

Grundy got his voice back at last, and amid gasps and gurgles he explained.

"I thought I should have died!" he groaned. "That beastly gag was the worst of all!" he added, with a shudder.

"But what on earth does it all mean?" said Tom. "That man never did this because you recognised him as one of the men in that car! Phew! I knew I'd seen that man Hunt somewhere, though I scarcely saw the other rotter who's imprisoned you here! Can you suggest what it means, Brooke?"

"It's queer!" said Dick Brooke, his eyes gleaming strangely. "I don't understand it, though, quite!"

He said no more, and again Tom Merry eyed him queerly. That Dick Brooke knew something he did not wish to tell was clear to him now. What secret did Dick hold, and why was he afraid to tell it? And what had he, the St. Jim's scholarship and day-boy, got to do with the cowardly motorists?

"It's a queer business, and there's more behind it than appears on the surface," said Tom. "Anyway, we'd better get back now. Come on, Grundy! The beaks will be jolly glad to see you, and so will everybody!"

"I'd like to wait until that brute comes in," said Grundy, clenching his fists. "I'd like to put him through it like he's put me. He fed me all right, and didn't touch me. But that gag and those beastly cords—G-r-r-rrr!"

They left the house—Tom Merry having overruled Grundy's desire to stop and settle matters with Salter—and started back, Dick Brooke wheeling his machine. In a few minutes they were on Wayland Moor, keeping a sharper look out for the Scouts. Now that Grundy was found it was necessary to call off the search.

Tom had wondered whether he ought to report to the police first, but Dick Brooke had been against the suggestion, curiously enough.

"Not yet," he said, colouring. "We'll get to the bottom of this first! Look here, Tom, you said you found that chap Hunt crawling about near the chalk-pit, didn't you?"

"Yes, that's so!"

"Well, I'd like to have a squint at the chalk-pit first," said Dick Brooke. "I may tell you why later on."

Tom hesitated, and looked at Brooke. Then he nodded.

"Right!" he said. "Come on!"

CHAPTER 13.

The Secret of the Pool!

THE St. Jim's Scouts lost no time in getting to work on the task of searching the moor.

It was possible that Grundy had gone to Wayland the previous evening to purchase more first-aid equipment, and had missed his train back. If he had he

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would undoubtedly take the short cut homewards across the lonely moor. And it was possible that, in the darkness, he had come to grief or lost his way.

Jack Blake shared the theory also—indeed, it was the only one likely to account for the disappearance of the junior.

For an hour the Scouts worked away, spreading out across the rough ground and searching every gully and gorse-filled hollow.

It was Jack Blake who made a surprising discovery, and a call brought his chums running to him.

"Found any sign?"

"No, worse luck!" said Blake, who was looking puzzled. "But look at that! It's queer to find the track of motor-tyres on this rough ground!"

And he pointed to where the faint tracks were visible here and there in the soft ground.

"Bai Jove!"

"Who the thump would want to drive across the moor?" ejaculated Herries. "They'd find it jolly rocky, I should think!"

"Why should they do it at all?" said Blake. "If they were taking a short cut to or from Wayland they'd have kept to the path. It's queer!"

"Yaas, wathah! Why not follow the twail, deah boys!"

"We're going to," said Blake.

They started off at once. Instead of leading in the direction of the path crossing the moor, it went direct across the rough ground, apparently going nowhere in particular.

"Looks to me as if the beggars were lost, whoever they were!" commented Blake. He paused a second, looking ahead. "I say, the track seems to lead towards the chalk-pit!"

"Bai Jove!"

It was an alarming thought. If the motorists had been lost and travelling in the darkness they were more than likely to come to grief on the moor, which was full of pitfalls for the unwary.

At the thought the juniors hurried their pace. Blake paused at last, and when he did the faces of all were a trifle white.

Before them, just beyond a slight rise ahead, dropped the chalk-pit, in which was a fairly deep, silent pool of water.

And the motor-track led alongside this for a few yards, and then seemed to vanish abruptly on the edge of the pit.

It was certainly alarming.

Blake hardly dared to follow up the significant trail. But he went forwards at last. There was no doubting it. The double tracks ended abruptly at the edge of the pit.

"You can see what happened!" breathed Blake, in a scared voice. "Look! They came alongside the pit for a bit, and I expect it was daylight. Then the wheel struck that stone, and—well, you can guess the rest!"

"The wheel was wrenched out of the driver's hand, you mean?" said Digby quietly.

"Yes, it doesn't need scouting knowledge to work that out. The trail's plain enough. The car must have pitched clean over the edge!"

"Bai Jove!"

Blake stepped to the edge of the chalk-pit, dreading to have his theory proved by what he should see below.

But what he did see was far from what he expected.

The old chalk-pit had been flooded for long years, the white cliffs overgrown in patches with scrub and grass. Below lay the silent pool, clear enough, but forbidding in its stillness and gloom. At the far end, where the white cliffs shelved down to level ground, was a small, wooden staging, where a boat was usually moored.

Now the boat was not at the staging. It was almost immediately below where Blake peered over, close to the few yards of boulder-strewn shore that separated water from the miniature cliff of chalk.

In the boat was a man—a short, stockily-built individual, clean-shaven, with heavy, lowering brows.

He appeared to be fishing; at least, that was Blake's first impression. Then the junior noticed that what he had was a long boathook, and with this he appeared to be trying to reach something far below in the pool.

Grundy would have known him at once had he seen him.

It was Salter, the companion of the driver of the car that had knocked down the urchin in Wayland High Street.

"What the dickens is the fellow up to?" breathed Blake. "He won't catch pike with a boathook! He's fishing for something else, by the look of things!"

Blake's chums had joined him now, and Blake motioned for silence. The man had not seen them yet; he was leaning over the side of the boat, his arm deep in the clean water.

What was the man after?

Why he motioned for silence Blake scarcely knew, yet he felt instinctively that they had stumbled upon a mystery.

In an attempt to see deeper into the still water below, however, Blake moved incautiously, and a dislodged stone rolled over the edge and fell with a rattle on to the stones below.

The man jerked his head swiftly round and saw them.

They heard his muttered oath.

"Bai Jove!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "He looks wathah waxy, deah boys!"

"And he's coming after us!" grinned Digby. "Shall we wait and wish him good-morning, or shall we wish him good-bye-e-e? He looks a rough handful!"

"I'm not shifting!" said Blake. "We've as much right here as he! This pool's rented for pike-fishing by Farmer Thake from old Colonel Bland! That shifty-looking merchant's got no right here, I bet!"

"Wathah not! Still, we don't want to hunt for unnecessary twouble, deah boys!"

"We're not shifting!" said Blake doggedly.

His chums grinned, and they waited as the man drew up the long boathook and pulled the boat ashore.

As it grounded he looked and shouted to them.

"Clear out of this!" he shouted angrily. "You hear?"

"Yes, we hear," assented Blake cheerfully.

"Then clear—sharp!"

"Rats!"

"D'you want me to come up to you?" said the man savagely, his eyes glinting up at them. "If I do, I'll lay this here boathook about you, blame you!"

"And if you do we'll lay our staves about you, my friend!" said Blake coolly.

"We've as much right here as you—possibly more right!"

"You won't go, you little rats?"

"No, old bean!"

"Durn you! I'll lick the hide off you! I'm coming up."

"Bow-wow!"

He came scrambling up the steep chalk sides of the pit, stones and rubble rattling away from his clumsy feet as he climbed. He soon reached the top, and had they wished Blake and Co. could easily have sent rolling down again.

"Let's clear!" said Digby, with a grin. "No need to ask for trouble!"

"Rats!"

Blake could be stubborn when he liked. He felt convinced that the stranger was up to no good, and he was determined not to shift at his order.

They soon realised that Digby had been right in considering the man a handful.

Blake had anticipated a heated argument, but he was quite unprepared for what came.

The man scrambled to the grassy top, steadied himself, and then came at them with a rush and a savage imprecation.

"Look out!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Back up!" yelled Blake. "Staves!"

As the man charged at him, fury in his face, Blake jabbed at him with his staff to keep him off.

"Here, stand back!" he yelled. "If you—"

The man swept aside the staff, and his grasp closed savagely upon the Scout.

But there were eight of them—Blake & Co. and Levison, Clive, Glyn, and Dick Julian—and they leaped to the rescue at once.

A savage struggle followed, for the man was in a fierce rage. It was only too clear that, whether his work in the pool was lawful or not, he was furious at their appearance there.

"Hold on!" yelled Blake, as the ruffian began to kick and hit out with all his force. "Stop that, or we'll use our staves!"

"Yaas, wathah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.



Again and again Tom Merry dived down to the submerged car in the chalk-pit pool in an effort to recover the precious bag, his chums following his movements breathlessly. At last he was successful, and he made a frantic clutch at the gunwale of the boat. (See Chapter 14.)

The man went down under the swarm of determined juniors, but he was up again in a flash, his heavy fists and boots bringing howls and yells from the Scouts. But they stuck it grimly, though the nearness of the chalk-pit made them realise the danger.

They staggered about desperately, blows raining down on them from the raging rascal.

It almost began to look as if the eight of them had more than their hands full, but suddenly thudding feet sounded on the turf, and a cheery voice sounded.

"Stick it, chaps! On the ball!"

CHAPTER 14.

Dick Brooke Explains!

IT was Tom Merry, and with him was Dick Brooke, of the Fourth, and George Alfred Grundy.

Blake almost yelled as he glimpsed the latter.

"Grundy!"

"Grundy."

"Bai Jove! Gwunday!"

"Oh, good!"

In their sheer amazement at sight of the missing Shell fellow the juniors relaxed their efforts, and with a powerful wrench Salter dragged his arms free and hit out again.

Blake went spinning away, his head ringing from a blow that would have felled anyone. Arthur Augustus went down under a pile-driver under the chin that sent him crashing to the ground, half-dazed.

Then the man made a desperate rush to escape.

He had seen George Alfred Grundy, and that was enough for him.

"Stop him!" bawled Grundy. "Stop the rotter! That's the brute that collared me! Leave him to me!"

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Tom Merry leaped in the path of the fleeing rascal, but Grundy was there first. He dodged a vicious drive, and his own fist landed fair and square on Salter's jaw as he jumped to get past.

It had all Grundy's weight—and Grundy's wrath—behind it, and the man reeled and staggered. And as he did so Tom Merry leaped upon him.

The two crashed down and rolled over, struggling madly.

"Leave him to me!" yelled Grundy. "Don't you chip in, Tom Merry! I've got a few scores to settle with that rotter!"

Apparently the great George Alfred still felt equal to tackling the ruffian on his own.

As Salter staggered up again, with Tom clinging desperately to him, Grundy leaped in and got home with another pile-driving punch.

Crack!

Once again his fist met bristly chin, and this time Salter was knocked down as clean as a whistle.

"Good man, Grundy!"

"The ruffian lay there, a stream of savage imprecations coming from him.

"Stop that!" panted Tom Merry. "That sort of language won't help you, you rascal! So this is the man who kidnapped you, Grundy?"

"That's the rotter!" gasped Grundy, glaring down at the raging ruffian. "If he'll only get up again I'll show him what I think about him!"

"It's the brute who was in that car!" exclaimed Blake, eyeing Salter keenly. "Great pip!"

"Yes, it is," said Tom grimly. "And that man in the sanny who calls himself Hunt is the driver of the car. I knew I'd seen him somewhere recently, the cowardly brute."

"But what's it all mean?" demanded Monty Lowther. "Why should the fellow kidnap Grundy—if Grundy was kidnapped?"

"Because he knew I knew he was the rotter who was in that car!" snorted Grundy. "He was afraid I'd show him up, though I'm blowed if I know why he should go to such lengths just on account of that. I took a letter to him at a low-down show just outside Wayland, and because I told him what I thought of him the rotter collared me—tied me up and gagged me!"

"But this beats the band," stuttered Blake. "Who was the letter from, Grundy?"

"From that merchant in the sanny," said Dick Brooke quietly. "Grundy gave me the letter to post last night. I forgot to post it, and only remembered it when Grundy met me in Rylcombe Lane last night. I helped him to bowl over Hake from the Grammar School. Then Grundy left me and went off with the letter to deliver it personally."

"And this brute was there and collared him?"

"Yes."

"Bai Jove!"

"There's more in this than meets the eye," said Tom Merry, with a glance at Dick Brooke.

"There is," said Dick Brooke. "I fancy I shall be able soon to explain something I happen to know about the affair," he added, his eyes fixed fiercely on Salter. "I think you'd better tie this ruffian up. The police should have him if only for kidnapping Grundy."

In a matter of seconds Salter was bound hand and foot, a helpless, raging prisoner.

"How did you fellows come up against him?" said Dick Brooke quietly, when the job was done.

Blake grinned.

"We was up to something in the pool there," he said. "We found car tracks on the moor, and followed them up, wondering where they led to. They led to the brink here. We were alarmed, and when we looked over we spotted this merchant in the boat. He had a boathook, and was fishing for something."

Dick Brooke gave a gasp. His eyes lit up, and he stepped eagerly to the brink of the chalk-pit, and peered downwards.

"So the car tracks ended on the brink here," he added excitedly, glancing down at the grass. "Phew! I see them. That means—"

"The sign tells the story clearly enough," said Blake. "A car was driven over the moor, and was skirting the chalk-pit when a wheel struck a boulder. The wheel was twisted out of the driver's hand, and the car went over the brink."

"Bai Jove! Then if that man in the sanny was one of the men—"

"He was driving the car," said Tom Merry. "It's simple enough now, though goodness knows what's behind it. This chap escaped, but Hunt—if his name really is Hunt—went over. As he wasn't wet through he couldn't have gone in with the car. Both were flung out, I fancy, and while Salter escaped, Hunt broke his leg—fell on the shore below, I should think."

"That's it, I bet," said Lowther.

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"But——" Tom Merry was still perplexed.

Dick Brooke smiled grimly.

"The mystery will be solved when you find what this man was after in the pool," he said quietly. "It's no mystery to me! I'm going down to investigate."

Salter gave vent to a stream of lurid language. But they ignored him, and, leaving Dick Julian on guard, the rest of the juniors followed Dick Brooke down to the little stretch of beach below. Brooke pointed downwards into the water. Though slightly whitish-coloured, the water was almost clear, and now they could see something resting on the bed of the pool.

It was a big, long oblong object—of a familiar shape.

"The car!" said Tom Merry, nodding. "You were right, Blake. That's a two-seater car. But——"

Dick Brooke grabbed the boathook which Salter had dropped and motioned to Tom Merry, who followed him into the small boat. Dick pushed off, and they moved directly over the car.

Handing Tom the boathook, Dick leaned over the side of the boat and gazed steadily downwards. He gave a satisfied grunt at last. The car had fallen right side up, and was deep in the mud.

"That's what the rascal was after!" he snapped, pointing. "On the seat of the car there!"

"Phew! A bag!" breathed Tom. "So that's what he was fishing for?"

"Just that," said Dick Brooke, his eyes dancing. "I'm going to have that up somehow!"

He grabbed the boathook and started to try to reach the handle of the bag, which they could just make out. But the boathook was several inches too short, and he gave it up at last.

"No go!" said Tom. "You'll never reach it with that, Brooke! I'll see to it!"

As he spoke, Tom divested himself of his clothing and took a swift header over the side of the boat.

He went under with scarcely a splash, and his chums followed his movements breathlessly. He came up again, empty-handed, gasping, and ruddy-faced.

"No go!" said Dick Brooke, who had watched him anxiously. "You'll do it next time, Tom!"

But only after half a dozen dives did Tom succeed. He brought up the bag at last, and made a frantic clutch at the gunwale, almost upsetting the boat.

"Phew!" he spluttered, gasping and panting. "The blessed old thing's heavy. Take it, Dick!"

Dick Brooke grabbed at the bag, and as he felt the weight of it he could hardly control his excitement.

"Good man, Tommy!" he breathed.

He dropped the bag on the seat, and helped Tom into the boat.

"Here, take my Scout's shirt to dry yourself with, Tom!" called Manners.

Manners had already peeled it off, and donned his overcoat again. He flung it to Tom, who hurriedly and vigorously rubbed himself down, and as swiftly dressed again.

The boat touched the bank, and Tom jumped out, taking the bag from Dick Brooke, who then jumped out after him.

"A bag!" said Blake, staring. "Is that what the merchant was after?"

"Yes," said Dick Brooke, with a faint grin. "I fancy I can explain this affair now!"

"Can you open the bag?" said Lowther.

"It's locked!" said Dick Brooke. "But it isn't necessary to open it! There's something like eight-hundred quid in it in notes and silver. It belongs to a firm in Wayland—Mason, Curtis, & Co., engineers. My brother's cashier for them, as some of you fellows know!"

"Phew!" said Tom. He was beginning to get an inkling of the truth now.

"It isn't such a mystery, after all!" said Dick Brooke. His face flushed with mingled relief and joy. "The bag was snatched from my brother in the street just outside the Wayland and County Bank, on Wednesday. You fellows may have seen that I've been upset and worried since Wednesday."

"I did!" said Tom Merry. "I asked you what the matter was, Brooke. But now——"

"I could not bring myself to tell anyone, though it looked as if you'd have to hear the news sooner or later. My brother was under suspicion of being in league with the thieves. That's why I kept silent. You can imagine my state of mind. I was afraid—afraid that anything might happen! It might have meant disgrace for us and imprisonment for my brother!"

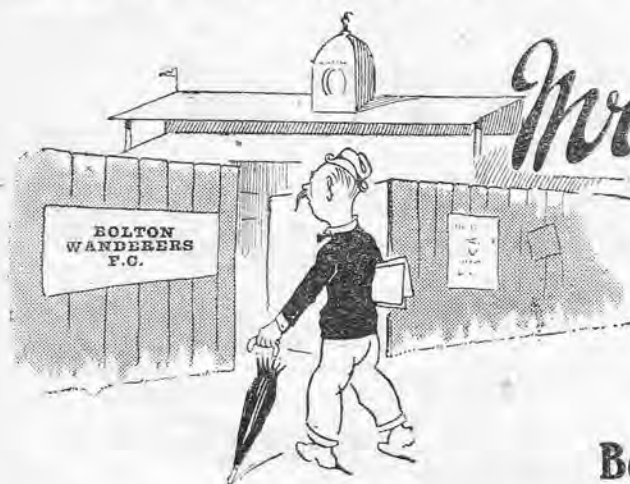
"Phew!"

"But for the boulder that caused that car to swerve and pitch over this chalk-pit, my brother would have lost his job at the very least," said Dick Brooke thickly. "Luckily for us the accident happened."

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!"

(Continued on page 23.)

Being the first of a unique series of articles giving first-hand and inside information of famous football clubs!



Mr. Parker POPS IN

TO SEE
Bolton Wanderers.

GOLD MEDALS!

THERE are plenty of places into which it is easy to get. Two places I have found difficult, though. One is the Bank of England, and the other is the dressing-room of the Bolton Wanderers football club at Burnden Park. On the whole, I think I prefer trying to get into the Bank of England.

However, the Editor (who never recognises a difficulty anywhere) said to me: "Pop in to see Bolton Wanderers," and so I popped. Well, not popped so much as dodged. I made myself up to resemble a bottle of liniment, and got in. There was nobody about—the lads were all out on the training ground—and for a moment I thought that I had really got into the Bank of England by mistake. I rubbed the liniment out of my eyes, and there was gold everywhere—gold hanging all over the place.

I sneaked up to one of the pieces of gold, and then the whole solemn truth flashed in upon me. Bolton Wanderers have won the Cup three times in the last seven seasons, and five of their players have three Cup-winners medals. Some of the others have two. And those medals; don't they shine as they hang from the watch-chains.

A WONDERFUL PERFORMANCE!

I AM going to ask you right here and now to keep a special eye open when you have a chance to see Bolton Wanderers play. I want you to notice—and send me a post-card about it—whether the whole team isn't inclined to go "bandy-legged." After all, you can't carry three Cup-winner's medals about on your watch-chain without feeling the weight somewhere; without bending under it, as one might say. And as something has to give, well—but draw the veil here. I don't want to imagine the Trotters' players giving away goals because none of the men can put their legs sufficiently close together to prevent the ball going through.

Still, joking apart, it is no mean feat for a team in these days to win the Cup three times in seven seasons, and Jimmy Seddon, the captain, thinks it ought to

be theirs for keeps. I don't agree. I told him that I thought even Bolton Wanderers ought to be nice and let other clubs see the Cup occasionally.

THAT LUCKY TIE!

A WONDERFUL team, these Wanderers, but just as I was on the point of pinching a medal or two—a few would scarcely be missed—in walked George Eccles. You know him, of course. He's the trainer. You can tell him because he walks about with a towel under his arm. George has done much for these Trotters, but most of all he has found a lucky tie. He wasn't wearing it when he quietly asked me how I had managed to get past the sleuth-hounds on the door, but it wasn't necessary then, as the Wanderers hadn't a match on. But George has a lucky tie for match-days. Sometimes he goes out in another tie, but if things aren't going well at half-time, he changes it, and the match immediately takes a turn for the better.

The other players began to troop in hereabouts, and then I realised what a soft job George Eccles, the trainer, has. The lads just love getting fit and keeping fit. You may or may not believe it, but George told me that one morning in the middle of June—during the close season—he turned up at the ground to find three of his players practising in the gymnasium.

They have had to make the door a bit higher for Jimmy Seddon to get into the dressing-room, but the other players are just normal in size. One of them though—no names by request—has to have his boots specially made, and when they are ordered a note always comes back from the makers asking if a mistake has not been made over the size.

BURGLAR BILL!

I HAD a few words with Dick Pym, who is the goalkeeper, or at least I should say that I spoke a few words to him. Dick isn't a man of words. Action is more in his line, and apropos of that, here's a true story. He and Harry Greenhalgh shared the same room one night. Now Harry loves a bed-time cigarette, but Dick is a non-smoker. When Harry lit his cigarette before finally turning in Dick kept throwing things at him. So Harry had to give up the effort to have a quiet smoke. Alas, Harry couldn't sleep, so after Dick had gone off to slumber-land, Harry got up, lit a cigarette very quietly, and so as

not to wake Dick with the smell of smoke, puffed up the chimney. Suddenly Dick woke up, saw a man near the chimney and went for him. The rest of the story may be imagined. A man who can punch out "blinders" from opposing forwards is apt to leave a mark on a fellow's jaw when he thinks that fellow is a burglar!

A BORN FOOTBALLER! MANAGER M Charile Foweraker

at Bolton is mainly responsible for building the team which goes on winning the Cup. He ought to have had three medals, because he has just the sort of chest which would show them off to perfection. He tells me that last season he had the best half-back line in the world, and that the same remark applies to this season. Freddie Kean, well named, plays on the right of Seddon, and Harry Nuttall plays on the left. Of course it goes without saying that all these lads have played for England, but caps are little things compared with Cup medals. Harry Nuttall knows every blade of grass which grows on the ground, and even knows where to look for the blades which have not grown. You see he was born on the ground—or at least in a house within Burnden Park.

The forwards at Bolton are a strange mixture—all sorts of shapes and sizes. Outside-right Butler is just ordinary—in stature. His partner McClelland is a giant, and that's why Butler lets him carry an additional medal or two. Blackmore came from Exeter, Gibson is a Scot, and so is Cook. At least I gathered that Cook was Scotch by his accent, but there isn't enough of him to decide definitely.

Some people are a bit worried at Bolton just now because the Trotters have signed on many new players for this season. But there is no necessity to worry—they'll find 'em all right. Ted Vizard told me so. Ted, of course, played for the Wanderers for years and years, and was one of the best ever. They have a way of remembering good service down Burnden Park way, and now that Ted is just a bit too old to play, they have given him a dual job—of finding good young players, and showing them how things should be done.

As Ted in his time has been closely associated with headache cures, he can be guaranteed to keep these youngsters in his charge from suffering from a very bad falling—swelled head!

"NOSEY" LEAVES HURRIEDLY!

BY this time all the players had donned their Sunday things, and looked more like prosperous bookmakers than footballers. So, not being very well up in history, I said: "Let me see, when was it you won the First Division championship?" I had to fly out quicker than I came. All sorts of things were thrown at me, but I didn't notice any medals. You see, Bolton Wanderers have never won the championship. They will, though—sooner or later—if they don't get too bandy carrying those medals about.

"NOSEY."

The Worst Form at Codrington!

By
David
Goodwin



Mild and benevolent, Mr. Wollaston Lambe, M.A., certainly does not seem the right kind of man to take charge of the worst Form at Codrington. But appearances are sometimes deceptive, and the "Woolly Lambe" reveals an unexpected quality which gives the rebels of the Remove the shock of their lives!

Paying the Piper!

JELlicoe picked himself up slowly. "That was rude," he muttered, brushing himself— "both rude and rough. I am sure my aunt would not approve of— But I forgot. I am not to mention my aunt. I wonder why? Where can Wynne have gone? I feel quite lost without Wynne. What a noble boy he is!"

Jellicoe wandered helplessly through two or three corridors, and then went downstairs, remembering what Taffy had said. He lost his way in the vast, rambling old building, and presently arrived in a wide stone passage, with dull leaden-paned windows on one side, and class-room doors on the other. From one of them came the sound of a fair-sized riot, muffled only by the heavy door.

"No. 5," said Jellicoe, pausing in front of it. "Did not I hear somebody say that the Remove studied in a room called No. 5? No doubt Wynne and his friends are here at their studies."

He knocked gently upon the door, but such a noise was going on inside that he was not likely to be heard. He knocked louder, and louder still, and finally he opened the door and walked straight in.

Eight or ten of the Remove were there already—they had arrived by wagonette some ten minutes before, and were celebrating the occasion. The noise stopped, and they stared in surprise at the pallid and meagre-looking Jellicoe, with the pile of books under his arm.

"Hallo!" said a disgusted voice. "Who's responsible for that? Where did it spring from?"

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"Get out of here, you object! Who are you?" cried several others, moving towards the new boy.

"I—I beg your pardon!" gasped Jellicoe, retreating. "I thought this was the Remove class-room. I belong to the Remove, and my name is Jellicoe. I will not tell you my Christian name, because it's bad form. But I came here to study."

Jellicoe would certainly have been thrown out even quicker than from the bath-room, but for the shock his speech gave the gentlemen of the Remove. They were quite taken aback, and were inquiring feebly of each other what species the newcomer could belong to, when the dark De Quincey entered.

"Ah, here is the natural history specimen," he said; "he seems to perplex you, my young friends. Yes, he belongs to the Remove. He is under the protection of our only Wynne, who, I suppose, must have left the cage door open."

"But what is it, Quincey? Where did it come from?" cried several protesting voices, as the new boy stood and gasped in a scared way.

"By the look of it," said De Quincey, eyeing Jellicoe curiously, "I should say it was just hatched out of its shell by the sun. Doubtless the Head will put it in the school museum."

They all stared at Jellicoe in dead silence, but quite failed to disconcert him. He was searching in his Latin Commentary, and walked up to De Quincey with a studious air.

"Would you be so very kind as to indicate the lesson for to-morrow?" he said. "I—er—I wish to make myself worthy of the Form to which I have the honour to belong."

My aunt— Dear me, I nearly forgot myself then! I should like to begin my studies at once."

Even the calm De Quincey was rather staggered at this. However, he took the book and opened it at the back.

"Willingly, good worm!" he said suavely. "I commend your zeal for knowledge. Our lesson to-morrow is the index. We are required to know the index by heart, with the correct numbers of all the pages, reduced to decimal fractions and elegiacs. You had better start learning the index at once from A to Z."

Jellicoe's pale brow wrinkled somewhat, and he sat down at a desk apart, placing his other books in a neat pile beside him. He began the task which the facetious De Quincey had set him. The rest of the Form were still at a loss to know what to make of it. The new boy read a few lines of the index and looked up.

"I—er—confess I cannot see the object of our master in setting us this task," he said meekly. "Can you, Mr.—er—de Quincey?"

Before the jester could make any reply Kent-Williams entered the room—a tall youth, with dark, reddish hair. His eye caught the studious Jellicoe, and he stopped and glared.

"What's this?" he said. "What d'you mean by swotting, you little beast?"

He strode across to Jellicoe's desk, snatched the Latin Commentary from him, gave him three powerful thumps on the head with it, and threw the volume away. Jellicoe gave an agonised yelp at each thump, and shrank away, blubbing.

"Of all the cheek I ever saw, this beats the lot!" cried Kent-Williams. "Who let this thing come in here? He doesn't belong to the Form!"

"You err, my comrade," said De Quincey; "he is in the Remove, and he's under the lordly protection of Wynne."

"Is he, though? Wynne be hanged!" exclaimed Kent-Williams, snatching up another book and slapping Jellicoe across the face with it. "Get up, you dirty little beggar, when your betters speak to you! Swotting under my very nose, by gum!"

He dealt the pile of volumes a blow that sent them flying across the room, and just then Taffy himself, who had heard the last few sentences, came striding into the room.

"Hallo!" he said, flushing. "You've got to work already, have you, Kent-Williams? I didn't know you wanted any more handin' from me. Take that as a sample, an' that to go on with, an' that for dessert!"

He descended upon Kent-Williams like a whirlwind, and the latter, who had turned to face him with a sulky and scared countenance, was sent spinning by three rapid drives from the shoulder, only one of which he managed to guard. Kent-Williams turned to fly, but Taffy grabbed him by the nape of the neck, and, twisting him round with surprising strength, sat down suddenly on a form, and took the captive's head between his knees.

"Come here, kid!" said Taffy to Jellicoe. "Get the biggest of those books and lay on a round dozen upon his quarterdeck! We'll show who's top-dog in the Remove!"

Kent-Williams yelled furiously, but he was kneeling in a very exposed position, and Wynne's knees held his head in a vice-like grip.

"Help! Fergy! Kempe! Rescue!" he howled.

The boys roared with laughter, for few of Kent-Williams' followers were there. Jellicoe alone stood still, and looked frightened out of his wits. Taffy's violent attack, the heaviness of the blows, and the complete abasement of Kent-Williams had scared him almost as much as the enemy's treatment of him did. It seemed very brutal to Jellicoe.

"Go ahead, kid! Lay it on and warm him!" said Taffy.

"I—I don't like to, Wynne!" stammered the new boy, his eyes nearly starting out of his head. "I don't like to hit him when—when he's like that!"

"Don't you?" said Taffy. "We're not so particular here. He's bearded me, an' he must die the death. One of you—"

"I'll be proxy for the kid," said Birne, grinning. "Book me as substitute." He held out his hand to the new boy. "Put it there, Jellyface!"

The new boy put his hand in Birne's, trembling. Birne shook it slowly and gravely five times and let it go.

"With this lily hand," said Birne, holding up his own, "which has been in mesmeric communication with Jellyface, I shall now do the deed. That's thought-transference, you know, or giddy mental telegraphy—all the same as if the little beast did it himself! Give me that Cicero, an' count the strokes!"

The volume of Cicero was wielded twelve separate times with resounding bangs upon the most exposed part of Kent-Williams' person. When it was over he was allowed to rise, purple-faced and with one end of his collar burst loose. He made for the door, and, turning, glared back at Taffy.

"You beast, Wynne! Wait till I get back with my little lot, and we'll slay you! Just wait, you an' that chalk-faced kid, too!"

He rushed down the corridor, calling loudly the names of Ferguson and Kempe and many others. A commotion was heard in the passages, but the next moment the bell clanged loudly for call-over, and the whole household had to make for the big school-room. The sounds of strife were quelled.

"Dear me!" bleated Jellicoe in a breathless voice, as he followed the three chums out of the class-room, keeping very close to them. "I—I never thought Codrington would be like this!"

"Didn't you, kid?" said Taffy dryly. "You've a lot to learn yet!"

The Headmaster's Council!

CANON WYNDHAM'S library was an awe-inspiring place at the best of times, even when the birching-block—not very often used, and only for the most evil crimes—was stowed away in its place in the far corner.

The tall, old stained-glass windows, with the arms of Codrington's knightly founder, Sir Roger Culmstock, shed a mellow light on the old oak panelling and the endless shelves of books. Perhaps it was the Head himself who inspired most awe, however.

On this particular occasion even a Remove boy ought to have been awed—though there is no certainty about that—if he were present. If one headmaster is terrible, how much more so with an assembly of seven others, in caps and gowns, to back him! For every Housemaster and Form master—with one exception—was there, from the lowest to the highest.

The Forms at Codrington were: First, Second, Third, Remove, Shell, Fifth, and Sixth, and only the master of the Remove was missing.

They were awaiting the coming of the Head.

Canon Wyndham entered the library with a brisk, commanding tread. He had a splendid presence, a fine nature, and was just the man for a school like Codrington.

He shook hands with those of the masters whom he had not already greeted, and took his place at the head of the writing-table, the other masters being seated around.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, "we are at the beginning of the third term, and I hope it will be as satisfactory as the last. There is one matter uppermost in my mind, which we met and discussed shortly before breaking-up. I refer to the Remove and the difficulty of finding a master willing and really able to control it."

He paused so long that Mr. Seaforth Perkes, who had been waiting for this opportunity, rose to his feet.

"I think, Canon Wyndham," he said, "that the right man could do it. Far be it from me"—he smiled sarcastically—"to claim superior merits for anyone else; but I have given

special attention to the reforming of unruly boys, and if you wish it I am willing to undertake the Remove. I mentioned this before, and you agreed to consider it."

The Head looked at him rather coldly.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Perkes, that you misunderstand me," he said. "Your—ah—your services are so well rendered in their present application that I cannot spare you for the Remove—at any rate, at present."

Mr. Perkes sat down sulkily. The refusal looked like a compliment, and some of his colleagues thought it so. But Mr. Perkes did not; he knew it was a snub.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,128.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

Talbot Delaval Wynne—better known as "Taffy"—and Richard Dereker, his chum, are amused to see in a newspaper, while waiting for the train that is to convey them to Codrington College for a new term, an advertisement for a new master of the Remove. This Form, of which Taffy and Dereker are members, prides itself in being unique in unruliness. No Form master has yet been capable of handling them, and those that had tried, had retired after one term—physical wrecks. Just before the train enters the station, Taffy befriends a pale and nervous new boy—Cecil Jellicoe—when he is bullied by a porter, and resolves to "stand by" him at Codrington. On the train, which is packed with Codringtonians, Taffy and Dereker renew acquaintance with Birne, their other chum, amid terrific hubbub and din, caused by the unruly Removites. On arrival at the station where they alight for Codrington, Taffy & Co. find that the conveyances that are to take the Codrington fellows the six-mile journey to the school have failed to turn up. However, when the coach which is to take the seniors to the school arrives, Taffy seizes it and, with a crowd of Removites packed on the coach, drives to the school. There, Jellicoe, despite a warning from Taffy, soon gets into hot water, for when he uses the prefect's bath-room he is roughly thrown out by an angry senior.

(Now read on.)

"The berth is, in fact, filled," continued the Head. "I have secured a gentleman who, I am convinced, is qualified for it in every way, and I think we shall see a change in the annals of the Remove."

There was a stir of surprise.

"Besides his abilities—which I believe in—to take charge of a troublesome Form, he is of some distinction as a scholar—an M.A. of Oxford, took a second in Moderations, and first in Greats, is an LL.D., and has distinguished himself in many ways. He was a junior master at Wellington for three terms, several years ago, but for a long time has been—er—cut off from scholastic work, his energies running in—ah—other directions; but he now returns to it. His name is Mr. Wollaston Lambe. And, if I am not mistaken, there he is!"

A knock was heard at the door, and the manservant ushered in a tall, well-dressed man of about forty, with an eyeglass dangling at his waistcoat, and an amiable, rather sleepy-looking face, and slightly inclined to stoutness.

He blinked mildly at the assembled company as he looked about him.

The Head came forward, and, shaking him cordially by the hand, presented him to most of the masters with a few well-chosen words.

Mr. Wollaston Lambe blinked at them all and greeted them civilly. He had easy, pleasant manners, and most of them were inclined to be friendly.

Not so Mr. Perkes, however, who kept out of his way and looked at him with obvious jealousy.

"That fellow handle the Remove!" he whispered scornfully to Mr. Fawley, aside. "Why, he looks as if he were wool-gathering, and more than half a fool himself."

Mr. Wollaston Lambe at that moment was at the other end of the library, and that he overheard the whisper seemed impossible. Yet the sleepy look suddenly left his eyes, a hard, keen glance took its place, and putting the eyeglass into his eye, he stared coolly across at Mr. Perkes, as if instinctively recognising an enemy.

Their glances met, and the mathematics master looked rather foolish and still sulkier. Mr. Lambe's face twitched, the eyeglass fell back at the end of its ribbon, and he resumed his conversation with the Head, who had taken him apart.

"Well," said Mr. Fawley, "I don't know; but the Remove will soon see what he's made of."

"I don't like the fellow's looks," growled Mr. Perkes. "I wouldn't trust him."

The meeting became a meeting no longer, but just an informal gathering of the masters, now that the introduction was made, and they chatted among themselves over the affairs of the school and the prospects of the house elevens.

The Head kept Mr. Lambe in his own company, however, and after the assembly broke up, Canon Wyndham and the new Remove master were left in consultation. It was late when the Head ushered his guest out.

"Well, good-night!" he said. "I wish you every success with the Form. The one thing I must repeat again is, that our Form masters are expected to maintain order without calling upon me and my authority—and birch-rods to back them up. Only in the most heinous cases do I interfere."

"I will not trouble you," said the new master, with a smile.

"You have a free hand, Mr. Lambe. I leave everything to your discretion. But the Remove—well, it's the Remove, you know. You will not see your charges till first lesson to-morrow. Good-night!"

The Head stood for a long time, thinking deeply, after the new master had retired. Then, with a puckered brow, he gave vent to a long, perplexed whistle—it would have surprised his many charges had they heard it—and went to bed.

"Poor fellow," murmured the Head, "he's in for it!"

"I say," exclaimed Johnson II., bursting into No. 6 dormitory next morning, where Taffy and his cronies were dressing, "the new master's come! You never saw such a holy-lookin' terror in your life!"

"What's he like?" said Taffy, as the dormitory began to buzz with excitement. "What sort of terror?"

"He's a big, rather stoutish chap; he looks as simple as a chaw-bacon, and more than three-parts asleep."

"Does he?" said Taffy, knotting his tie. "Well, I've heard of the Remove wakin' people up!"

"Know anything else about him?" asked Birnes, hurrying into his coat.

"Only that his name's Wollaston Lambe, with a string of letters after it—about half the alphabet."

"Ah!" said Dereker, with a fiendish smile. "Lambe is he! We'll lead him to the slaughter! We'll attend to the

Lambe—we'll joint him, an' roast him, an' serve him hot, with sauce! We'll lard him, and hash him, and curry him! He'll wish he'd never left the giddy fold!"

Taffy, Birne, and Dereker hastily finished dressing, and went down to call-over, for they were only just in time.

Jellicoe hovered in their wake, as usual. There was no early "prep" on the first morning of the term, and breakfast followed in due course; but nothing was seen of the new master.

Before chapel, however, the three chums were passing through the upper corridor, when Johnson, standing near the glass door that shut off the passage leading to the masters' studies, beckoned to them softly.

"Here," he said, "this is the chap! D'you want to have a look at him?"

The chums stepped to the glass door.

"Where's the prodigy?" said Dereker. "Where's the Lambe that's going to bite the tiger? What—that!"

Mr. Wollaston Lambe came down the passage towards them with a long, large stride, blinking benevolently. He was bound to turn off before reaching the door, which was partly curtained, and thus the boys had a glimpse of him unseen.

It had its effect, too. Taffy looked at the new master, started, and stared in blank unbelief. He could not believe his eyes.

The others made muffled exclamations, with the exception of Johnson, who had departed.

"Great Jupiter!" said Taffy. "It's the fellow we saw hidin' under the bush by the river yesterday!"

Mr. Wollaston Lambe, all unconscious of being watched, turned round a corner and disappeared.

The three boys and Jellicoe were left staring at each other in perplexity.

"It is, by gum!" cried Dereker. "I'd know him in a thousand! It's the chap who dodged that policeman an' the plain-clothes officer so cleverly! Don't you remember his crouchin' among the willows?"

"An' Taffy leading the police off on a wrong scent?" added Birne, with a whistle.

There could be no doubt about it whatever. It was the same man. The clothes under his half-open college gown were even the same. The rather fleshy face and amiable, sleepy expression, and the eyeglass, hanging from a narrow black ribbon instead of a cord!

"This beats cock-fighting!" exclaimed Dereker. "He's wanted by the police, that's dead sure, an' he's given 'em the slip! What a rag!"

"Don't tell the other rotters about it; let's keep it to ourselves," said Taffy.

And the three, bursting with the knowledge they had just acquired, hurried down to chapel.

Little could be seen of Mr. Wollaston Lambe during the twenty minutes' service, for he was in the darkest part of the chapel, under a filled-in window that was being repaired. But when the new master stood up Taffy saw several of the Remove looking at him; and De Quincey, who was just opposite, stared intently.

After the service, Taffy and his companions hurried to the box-room to unpack some books, and were some time about it.

"Remember, not a word of this!" said Taffy, as they made for No. 5 class-room. "We'll soon be in touch with the beggar now!"

"Right. Unless De Quincey and some of the others have spotted him, too. We weren't the only ones who saw him, you know."

"They wouldn't be such asses as to blab!"

Taffy was wrong, however. When they reached the class-room they found it in a ferment. Everybody was talking at once, and the amazing news was in the possession of the whole Form.

"Here's Wynne! Wynne saw him first. It's the same man, isn't it, Taffy?" cried several voices.

"What a go!" exclaimed Kent-Williams. "He's a criminal! The police want him! He's in our giddy hands!"

"P'raps they've caught him and let him out on bail."

"More likely he gave them the slip altogether," said De Quincey. "That's how it looked to me. Maybe he's taken this job on for a blind. There will be a little pleasant excitement for us, my dear young friends."

"Are you sure it's the same man, though?"

"Sure!" echoed De Quincey scornfully. "I'd know him anywhere! I had a good look at him yesterday, and again to-day, and I never forget a face."

"It's the man, right enough," said Taffy.

"What'll be the end of it?"

De Quincey smiled a fiendish smile, and, picking up a piece of chalk, walked to the blackboard.

"This'll be about it," he said.

De Quincey was not only of poetic leaning, but he was much more talented as a sketcher. Silence fell on the class, and like lightning there grew under his chalk an amazingly clever portrait of Mr. Wollaston Lambe, with short-cropped hair, dressed in convict's clothes, with fine, broad-arrow markings, and wielding a quarrier's pickaxe.

The face was the face of the new master, admirably drawn in a few bold lines. It was unmistakable, and to

finish it off De Quincey added the eyeglass fixed in the convict's eye, and with its black ribbon attached. Then, with a few more strokes, he sketched into the corner a warder standing over the convict with a rifle.

At that moment the door opened quickly and quietly, and on the threshold stood Mr. Wollaston Lambe himself, eyeglass in eye, and looking astonishingly like the portrait, all but clothes.

A gasp of consternation went round the room. Mr. Wollaston Lambe, standing stock still, looked long and silently at the portrait on the blackboard, and then turned his sleepy gaze on De Quincey, who stood, chalk in hand, as if petrified.

Mr. Wollaston Lambe Takes the Remove!

THERE was such a dead silence as was seldom

experienced in No. 5 class-room. It was reported that the Remove had never been startled before, but they certainly seemed a little startled now. The insult on the blackboard, staring the new master in the face, was flagrant.

The whole Form felt that he understood the drawing; indeed, he must have been rather dense if he did not. His own features and form, clothed in the glaring convict dress, were recognisable by anybody. Would he seize upon the artist and flog the life out of him? De Quincey stood rooted to the spot, the chalk in his hand, and his eyebrows slightly raised. He took it coolly enough. So did the new master. The Form held its breath.

Mr. Wollaston Lambe blinked sleepily round the class, and blinked at De Quincey again. Then he walked leisurely up to the blackboard, and inspected the portrait with great care.

"Ah!" he said suavely. "What a blessing is the artistic sense! Is this your work?"

"Yes, sir," said De Quincey.

"What is your honoured name?"

The artist told him.

"And so, my gilded youth, you have been drawing a fancy portrait? I do not"—Mr. Lambe peered round at the assembled boys—"I do not see the original anywhere in the class."

"He's in the room, sir," spoke up Walsh, out of pure cheek.

Mr. Wollaston Lambe blinked at him for several seconds. "Come here," he said smoothly.

Walsh came and stood before the master in the middle of the floor. Mr. Lambe did not move a muscle, and Walsh, in spite of himself, began to quake. There was something about the new master, when you were close to him, that made you very apprehensive, without quite knowing why.

"Stand there for the present," said Mr. Lambe; and then he turned to De Quincey again, who was wishing himself well out of it, though he kept a bold front.

"My good De Quincey, this imaginative sketch of yours shows great merit. Let us hope the fate of this person in his Majesty's uniform may never be yours."

De Quincey dropped the chalk.

"At the same time, these artistic efforts must be reserved till after school hours. The blackboard you have decorated so charmingly is required for other purposes. This work of art must be rubbed out."

Mr. Lambe stretched out a long arm and quietly grasped De Quincey by the front of his waistcoat. The artist-poet shrank a little at the touch, and there was plenty of slack

To the amazement of the Remove, Mr. Lambe lifted De Quincey off the ground with one hand, as if he were a feather, and calmly proceeded to wipe the blackboard with him. Four brisk sweeps, and the insulting picture was wiped out.

(See this page.)



to give the master a grip. To the amazement of the Remove, Mr. Lambe lifted De Quincey off the ground with one hand as if he had been a feather and calmly proceeded to wipe the blackboard with him.

Finally, the master placed him down again, while the class sniggered.

"The blackboard is now clean," observed Mr. Lambe, bending his gaze on De Quincey.

"Yes, sir!" gasped the artist, staggering, for the motion had made him feel unwell.

"We will employ your talents a little farther," said the master, and, looking sleepily at the class again, he beckoned to Derek.

"Go to the bathroom and get the two small mirrors which I observed hanging on the wall," said Mr. Lambe. "Bring them here."

Derek departed at once on this errand. He was quite keen to see what the new master meant to do. He soon returned with the mirrors, and found the class remarkably quiet. Mr. Lambe took the looking-glasses and arranged them near the blackboard.

"Now," he said, "my excellent De Quincey, by looking into this mirror, you will see your own side-face clearly in the other. Be good enough to draw it on the board."

De Quincey stared gloomily at the looking-glass, while a broad grin adorned the rest of the class.

"You do not seem pleased with your reflection, De Quincey," said the master suavely. "It is not much to be proud of, certainly, but do not be downcast. We cannot help our looks. Draw, I am waiting."

(By all appearances the Remove Form at Codrington have found more than their match in Mr. Wollaston Lambe, the new master. Look out, then, for some startling developments in next week's ripping instalment. You'll enjoy every line of it!)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,128.

"GRUNDY'S AMBULANCE BRIGADE!"

(Continued from page 22.)

"I heard about it when I got home on Wednesday," went on Dick. "I remembered then what you had said about a motorist knocking down a kid in Wayland. I was sure that was the car, and that was why they did not stop! At the time nobody was about, and there was no car or cycle handy to follow."

"Dick Brooke paused and looked at Grundy, who was listening open-mouthed.

"Then I heard about the man in the sanny!" said Dick. "Why I suspected him I do not know—I cannot explain! But I suspected him still more when I heard that he'd asked Grundy not to gas about him or his accident! And—well, I need not say more. The thing's clear enough. Hunt and Salter were the rascals who knocked down my brother and stole the bag of money. They were racing away when they knocked down that youngster in the High Street, and they went across the moor here to throw any possible pursuers off the scent. Then the accident happened."

"Bai Jove. And this chap, Salter—"

"I fancy I can guess the rest," said Tom grimly. "Salter got the wind up when he saw his pal couldn't get away, and he left him to it, the cowardly sweep! But he wasn't going to lose the bag of money. He came here to get it, intending to double-cross his pal and bolt with the plunder."

"That's it!"

"That letter from Hunt was most likely a desperate appeal or warning to Salter not to double-cross him," said Dick Brooke. "You can bet on that. Anyway, the sooner we hand this merchant and the bag over to the police the better."

"And the sooner we let the Head know Grundy's found, the better, too!" grinned Blake. "We mustn't let Piggy & Co. go hunting for Grundy when he's found, or Grundy's for it."

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

And congratulating Dick Brooke heartily, the juniors escorted him and his bag up to the top of the chalk-pit, where Salter greeted them with a stream of imprecations—

until George Alfred Grundy brought his boot into play and then the stream ceased abruptly.

The mystery was solved.

Messengers were sent to the Head with the news, and the search for Grundy was soon brought to an end. Grundy was really quite surprised and pleased to discover what a commotion his absence had caused. If he had never been an important member of St. Jim's before he certainly was now.

Tom Merry, Dick Brooke, and several other fellows took the bag to the police station in Wayland, leaving Salter to be called for by the men in blue.

It was discovered later that Dick Brooke had guessed rightly in regard to the latter. At the trial Salter confessed all, and the letter from Hunt proved not only to be a warning against treachery, but an appeal to that rascal to get a conveyance to take him away from the school to the lonely house on the outskirts of Wayland.

That evening a conveyance did arrive at St. Jim's for the injured Hunt. It was an ambulance, and with it came Inspector Grimes and two constables. They took charge of Grundy's late friend, and Mr. Hunt left St. Jim's for good. And George Alfred Grundy was the last person to regret his going. He had lost his respect and liking for that smooth-tongued gentleman. A man who would knock down a youngster and leave him lying injured in the roadway was not a fellow the generous-hearted George Alfred could respect or like.

Mr. Hunt proved to be Grundy's first and last genuine success in his first-aid and ambulance work. As with everything else, Grundy soon tired of his ambulance brigade—and his men tired sooner than did Grundy, who was a hard task-master. They left the brigade one by one without troubling to resign, and not wishing to be a one-man brigade, Grundy dropped it in disgust; the stretcher and first-aid outfits were handed over to the Scouts, and the St. Jim's Ambulance Brigade came to the end of its brief but very exciting career.

THE END.

(A rattling fine story this, chums! The best you've read for a long time, what? But just you wait until you've sampled next week's grand yarn of Tom Merry & Co., entitled: "THE MAN FROM AUSTRALIA!" Without a doubt this is one of Martin Clifford's greatest. See that you order it early!)

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