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THE GEM

2d



CUP-TIE FOOTER, THRILLS, AND FUN COMBINE TO MAKE—

CHAPTER 1:

The Eastwood Cup!

THUD!
The muddy football shot from the toe of Tom Merry's boot, and sailed towards the Grammar School goal. Frank Monk, in goal, made a desperate leap. But the ball shot past him into the net, and there was a crashing cheer from the spectators who thickly lined the edge of the field.

Thanks to Tom, the captain of the Shell, and junior footer skipper of St. Jim's, the Saints were leading their old rivals, the Grammarians, by three goals to two after a long, desperate struggle.

And there were only five more minutes to play.

"Hurrah! Oh, well shot, Tommy!"

"Saints for ever!"

"Pile in, Saints!"

The footballers lined up again. Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, who was refereeing the match, sounded the whistle sharply, and Gordon Gay, the leader of the Grammar School team, tapped the ball to Wootton major, at inside-left. In another moment the game was in progress once more at a hot, desperate pace.

Gordon Gay & Co. were all out to snatch a goal in those last five minutes to save themselves from defeat!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, who was standing on the touchline, adjusted his famous monocle in his noble eye and watched the struggle with eager excitement.

Arthur Augustus was one of the leading lights of the Junior Eleven on most occasions. But he had damaged his ankle in a game against the New House on the previous Wednesday, and had not been quite up to the mark for the Grammar School match, to his intense disappointment. Luckily for St. Jim's, Wootton minor, of the Grammar School, was also laid up, and unable to play, so that their loss was evened up.

"Bai Jove! That was a wippin' goal of Tom Mewwy's!" breathed the swell of St. Jim's. "Eh, patah?"

The tall, handsome, elderly gentleman standing beside Arthur Augustus, who was watching the match with every bit as much keenness as the swell of St. Jim's, nodded.

"A splendid goal, Arthur," said Lord Eastwood enthusiastically. "A great game altogether! These Grammar School youngsters are a fine lot!"

Lord Eastwood, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's father, had come over to St. Jim's that afternoon especially to watch the match. He always followed the fortunes of the St. Jim's Junior Eleven with interest. It had been a disappointment to the kindly old earl to find that his son was not playing that afternoon, but that fact had not lessened his interest in the match.

"I fancy St. Jim's are going to win now," murmured Lord Eastwood, glancing at his watch as he noticed Kildare do the same. "Only three minutes to play—"

Even as he spoke a rush on the part of the St. Jim's forwards was checked valiantly by the visiting half-backs, one of whom flashed the ball to Gordon Gay. The Grammarian captain, with the ball at his toes and a very grim expression on his face, raced away down the field, cleverly dribbling round Ernest Levison, of St. Jim's, who tried to rob him.

"Come on, Grammar School!"

"Up, Grammarians!"

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Tom Merry & Co.

v

Gordon Gay & Co.

In Red Hot Rivalry.



A large number of Grammar School fellows had come over to St. Jim's to watch the match, and they yelled excited encouragement to their leader as Gordon Gay, tricking a half-back who rushed up to tackle him, sped on towards the St. Jim's goal.

Kangaroo, one of the home team's full-backs, barred Gordon Gay's way to the goal, however, and the Shell fellow from "Down Under" was not an easy fellow to pass on the footer field.

But this afternoon Gordon Gay seemed to have a magic touch in his footer boots. He feinted to the right, tapped the ball swiftly to the left, curved round the Australian, and raced on towards a goal that was now defended solely by Fatty Wynn, the famous New House goalkeeper of the St. Jim's Junior Eleven.

"Bai Jove—"

On the touchline Arthur Augustus had jammed his monocle into his eye, and was watching Gordon Gay's brilliant solo run with anxiety as well as excitement in his aristocratic eye.

If the Grammarian captain succeeded in beating Fatty Wynn, victory would be snatched at the last moment from the St. Jim's eleven—the game would end in a draw—for it was so near to the final whistle that there would be no time for the home team to take the lead again except by a miracle.

—THIS ROARING COMPLETE YARN A WINNER ALL THE WAY!



NERVE-TINGLING TUSSE FOR THE EASTWOOD CUP AND ITS—

Won by a Foul!

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

The spectators—Saints and Grammarians—held their breath. Lord Eastwood's eyes were alight with eagerness.

Fatty Wynn, however, was a tower of strength "between the sticks," and the St. Jim's supporters, though anxious, were certainly not despairing.

Talbot, the other St. Jim's full-back, and Kangaroo were both converging upon Gordon Gay, as the latter cut in towards the goal where Fatty Wynn stood poised and alert.

"Shoot!" yelled an excited Grammarian from the touch-line.

And Gordon Gay shot, just as Kangaroo thundered up and sent him spinning into the mud with a clean shoulder-to-shoulder charge.

But already the leather was flying for the Saints' goal.

Fatty Wynn made a desperate leap. His gloved fingers got to the flying football, deflecting its course. It crashed against the left-hand goalpost, and for a moment it looked like a brilliant save. But the spinning ball rebounded off the post inwards and fell into the back of the net despite David Llewellyn Wynn's frantic attempt to intercept it.

"Well done, Gay!"

Kildare's whistle sounded, almost drowned by the jubilant yelling of the Grammarians, who were dancing and leaping and flinging their caps into the air all round Little Side.

"Magnificent!" breathed Lord Eastwood. "I never want to see better football, Arthur, than I have seen this afternoon. A magnificent game!"

"Y-yaas!" grunted Arthur Augustus, to whom the Grammar School goal had come as a blow. "But I am afraid we are not goin' to beat the boundahs, aftah all!"

Even as he spoke a long blast of Kildare's whistle signalled the finish of the match—a match that had been, as Lord Eastwood had said, one of the finest ever seen on Little Side.

The footballers, muddy and breathless, trooped off the field after each side had given hearty cheers for

the other. Tom Merry, Monty Lowther, Manners—who had been playing in place of Arthur Augustus—Reginald Talbot, and Jack Blake, the leader of the Fourth and a studymate of the swell of St. Jim's, turned towards the spot where Lord Eastwood stood awaiting them.

Tom Merry grinned.

"Good game, sir," he said cheerfully. "We're sorry not to have licked 'em, of course, but although it was a draw we can't complain. With the Grammar School chaps in such fine form as they've been this afternoon we're lucky not to have been beaten."

"It was a magnificent tussle," said Lord Eastwood. "I must congratulate both teams on a splendid display."

"Thank you, sir!" grinned Gordon Gay, who had come up with Frank Monk and Wootton major. He had met Lord Eastwood on previous occasions. "It was a great

game. Of course, we ought to have licked these St. Jim's chaps to the wide, only, they were rather specially on form—"

"Rats!" grinned Tom Merry.

He turned to Lord Eastwood.

"We'll be jolly glad if you would come and join the footer tea, sir. Gordon Gay and his team are staying—"

"Delighted!" said the earl heartily.

And half an hour later, when the footballers were cleaned and changed, the two rival elevens and their supporters crowded into the junior Common-room in the School House, where two long tables were laid for tea. Lord Eastwood, at Tom Merry's request, took the head of the more important table, at which the two teams and a few of the more favoured supporters were sitting.

It was a cheery meal, and the Common-room echoed with a noisy buzz of talk and laughter, while the good things laid in for the occasion disappeared rapidly—even though

Baggy Trimble, the Falstaff of the Fourth, had been excluded from the feast! Baggy, who had not bothered even to watch the match, had nevertheless expected to share the footballers' tea—an expectation which the juniors had firmly disappointed, much to Baggy's indignation!

At last, when the rattle of teacups had subsided somewhat, Tom Merry, who had been deep in conversation with Lord Eastwood, jumped to his feet, and called for silence.

"Quiet a jiffy, you chaps!" said the captain of the Shell.

"Lord Eastwood, whom we're jolly glad to have here as our guest—"

"Hurrah!"

"What-ho!"

"Lord Eastwood has an announcement to make," went on Tom, with a smile—"an announcement which I'm jolly sure will interest all you chaps a lot!"

As he spoke, he glanced meaningfully at Gordon Gay. Then he sat down. Lord Eastwood rose to his feet at the head of the long table, and there was a breathless silence.

What could the announcement be? There was not a sound to be heard in the Common-room as the juniors waited eagerly for the handsome, soldierly-looking old gentleman to speak.

"I have a suggestion to make," he began, with a smile. "As we all know, the result of the match this afternoon was a draw—three goals each! After such a splendidly close and exciting game I feel that the two teams should undoubtedly meet again at the earliest opportunity to decide the issue, as it were. In the normal course of events, Tom Merry tells me, following the fixture list, the Grammar School will not meet St. Jim's again on the footer field for a considerable time."

"That's so," murmured Gordon Gay. He wondered what was coming.

"However, as I say," went on Lord Eastwood briskly, "The GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,183.

"I feel very strongly that after such a close and thrilling match as this afternoon's, the two teams ought to meet again as soon as possible!"

"Heah, heah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus.

"Thank you, Arthur!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors chuckled. Arthur Augustus went a little pink.

"I therefore suggest," continued Lord Eastwood, "that I am permitted to offer a silver cup, to be competed for on the footer field in a fortnight's time by the Grammar School Junior Eleven, and the Junior Eleven of St. Jim's!"

"Bai Jove, patah—"

"Oh, ripping!"

"Hurrah!" yelled Jack Blake, jumping excitedly to his feet, as Lord Eastwood sat down, smiling. "Three cheers for Lord Eastwood, you chaps!"

The cheers were given with a will! There was no doubt that the earl's generous and sporting offer appealed to both Saints and Grammarians keenly.

Tom Merry jumped up, raising his hand for silence. The excited hubbub died down a trifle.

"I'd like to propose a vote of thanks to Gussy's pater!" he shouted, to make his voice heard above the buzz of talk. "It's a jolly sporting offer, and I know the Grammar School bounders—beg pardon, I mean chaps—will be as keen on it as we are! If Gordon Gay agrees, the match for the Eastwood Cup will take place two weeks from to-day!"

"Good egg!" agreed Gordon Gay, rising, with an excited gleam in his eyes. "I'd like to second the vote of thanks to Lord Eastwood! We'll enjoy winning this cup—"

"Bai Jove!"

"I don't think!" growled Herries of the Fourth.

"Of course, we intend to win it," smiled Tom Merry, "but we won't argue about that now!"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Then the match for the cup is settled, eh?" put in Lord Eastwood briskly. "Splendid! I will have the cup sent down from London early next week, to be kept in the care of Dr. Holmes until it is competed for. In the meantime, I consider that the rival captains should toss up for choice of ground! If you will call to this coin, Gay—"

Lord Eastwood spun a half-crown into the air.

"Heads!" called Gordon Gay.

"It is tails," said Lord Eastwood. He glanced at Tom Merry. "I presume, therefore, that the match will be played on Little Side at St. Jim's?"

Tom Merry nodded. Lord Eastwood looked at his watch. "Time I was going!" he said genially. "I'll look forward to watching this coming match, I can assure you, and to presenting the cup personally to the winning team!"

He left the Common-room, smiling, accompanied by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and the Terrible Three.

A deafening cheer followed him.

There was no doubt that the idea of the Eastwood Cup had caught on—no possible doubt whatever!

CHAPTER 2.

Meeting Derrington I

"TIME we got along to the station, you chaps!"

It was Gordon Gay who spoke.

The leader of the Grammarians was standing in the quad at the Grammar School, together with Frank Monk, the two Woottons, Carboy, and Lane. The first-named four were off to the station that evening—it was Thursday of the week following the St. Jim's match—to meet a new fellow who was arriving at the Grammar School by the six o'clock train.

Gordon Gay & Co. had been discussing the rapidly approaching match against Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's for the Eastwood Cup. They were very optimistic about winning it, though they realised well enough that they had a pretty stiff task before them on Saturday week.

"Yes, you'll miss that train if you don't get along," agreed Carboy. "By the way, Gay, look out for St. Jim's bounders!"

"What do you mean?" queried Gay, staring at him.

"Well, Lane and I were in Mrs. Murphy's tuckshop in the village yesterday, having tea," explained Carboy. "We were talking about this chap Derrington, who's coming here, and then we noticed Blake and Gussy and one or two others sitting at a table on the other side of a screen. They were grinning as they went out. They must have heard about the new chap, and perhaps they're thinking of springing a joke on him!"

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"Oh!" Gordon Gay looked rather uneasy. Then he shrugged. "Well, we can take care of ourselves—and the new chap!" he said confidently. "Come on!"

Together with Frank Monk and the Woottons, Gordon Gay strode out through the gates of the Grammar School into the road, and turned in the direction of Rylcombe Village.

It did not take them long to reach the station, but they had cut it rather fine, for the train came steaming in as they emerged on to the platform.

There were not many passengers on the train, and it was not difficult to see which was Derrington—evidently the tall, dark youngster who had alighted from the last carriage, carrying a suitcase. Gordon Gay & Co. hurried towards him.

"Is your name Derrington?" asked Gordon Gay cheerily.

"It is," nodded the other. "Are you Grammarians?"

He was a well-built fellow, and looked something of an athlete. But though he seemed quite pleasant, as he held out his hand to Gordon Gay, there was something about his smile that struck the leader of the Grammarians as insincere. And a slight shiftiness in the new boy's dark, gleaming eyes did not appeal to Gordon Gay, who liked a chap to look him straight in the face.

But he took the other's outstretched hand warmly. After all, it was probably merely shyness that had made the new Grammarian seem not quite so open and honest-looking as he might have looked. As a new Grammar School chap, Gordon Gay & Co. were all ready to welcome Derrington hospitably.

"My name's Gay," explained that worthy with a cheery grin. He introduced the other three. "Come along! We'll walk to the school, eh? It's not far. Let me carry your bag, Derrington!"

"Thanks!"

He relinquished his suitcase to Gordon Gay without troubling to register a polite protest, the others noticed, as they turned towards the exit and passed out into the station yard.

"Tom Merry & Co. don't seem to be hanging round, anyway," murmured Wootton minor in rather a relieved tone.

"Tom Merry? Who's he?" inquired the new fellow.

Gordon Gay grinned.

"They're asses from a rotten hole called St. Jim's," he explained carelessly. "Not bad chaps, some of 'em, as far as they go; but, of course, St. Jim's isn't a patch on the Grammar School. As a matter of fact, we're rather up against 'em just now. Next week we're playing them for a pot presented by a gent known as Lord Eastwood. Footer, you know. Do you play footer, Derrington?"

"I do!" grinned Derrington. "When I was at school in the North of England, I was captain of the Junior Eleven. My people have come to live in the South now, so I've come down, too. Do you play footer much at Rylcombe Grammar School?"

There was a faint note of superiority in his tone, as though Derrington thought himself rather a superior person, where footer was concerned, at any rate.

Gordon Gay flushed.

"Yes," he said shortly. He brightened suddenly. "I say, if you were footer skipper at your last school, you may be a useful chap to have in the team to meet St. Jim's for the Eastwood Cup!"

"I expect so," nodded Derrington coolly. "Centre-forward is my place."

"Oh, is it?" snapped Frank Monk curtly. "Well, Gay here is skipper at the Grammar School, Derrington. He'll decide your place on the field—if you earn a place in the team, that is!"

If the new fellow imagined he was going to be allowed to give himself airs at the Grammar School because he had been footer captain at some other school, Gordon Gay & Co. were inwardly agreed that he would have to learn a lesson.

But the news that Derrington was a footballer, apparently a good one, was very welcome, despite his faint air of superiority. They needed the very best footballers they could get for the match against Tom Merry & Co. for the Eastwood Cup.

"We'll try you out this Saturday, anyway," said Gordon Gay cheerily. "I—"

He broke off sharply.

The Grammar School party had turned a bend in the lane, to find themselves face to face with seven grinning youngsters in St. Jim's caps, and one in a gleaming toppler. Tom Merry & Co. and Blake & Co.—in full force!

"St. Jim's cads!" ejaculated Frank Monk.

Gordon Gay & Co. came to an abrupt halt. The St. Jim's party raised their headgear with mock courtesy.

"Why, it's dear old Gordon!" chuckled Jack Blake.



Gordon Gay shot—just as Kangaroo sent him spinning. With a desperate leap, Fatty Wynn got his fingers to the ball, but could not prevent it from entering the net.

hurling into him, and Derrington went over with a yell, the other two sprawling on top of him.

"Biff, biff, biff!"
"Oh deah! Yaw-ooooh!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, struggling with Gordon Gay, gave an anguished howl as the latter planted a fist energetically upon his aristocratic nose.

Robert Arthur Digby rushed to his noble chum's assistance, and the leader of the Grammarians was bowled over into the road, with Dig on top of him.

By now the top of the swell of St. Jim's was looking very much the worse for wear! It had been knocked flying into the dust and trodden on and rolled over, and it looked less like a topper than a concertina. But fortunately for Gussy's peace of mind it was an old topper, which he had donned specially for the occasion of the little "rag" upon Gordon Gay & Co. and the new Grammarian, and so Arthur Augustus was not worrying.

"With the new chap—Dewwington!" grinned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, beaming through his eyeglass.

"I guess this is swell luck!" came the cool, transatlantic tones of Cyrus K. Handcock, the American junior who shared Study No. 10 with the Terrible Three.

"We wanted to see you chaps," put in Monty Lowther, with a chuckle, "about the Eastwood Cup. If you fancy the idea, we'll let you chaps stand down, and put up a Spalding Hall Eleven to play for you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Spalding Hall was a girls' school near Wayland. Gordon Gay & Co. went very red.

"Why, you—you cheeky idiots!" gasped Wootton minor.

"You—you grinning hyenas—"

The Grammarians stood glaring at their rivals, breathing hard. The new fellow, Derrington, had already heard enough to realise that there was trouble in the wind. From the grins on the faces of Tom Merry and his companions, it was clear enough that it was no mere accident that had brought about the meeting. Tom Merry and the St. Jim's juniors had come out that evening for a little fun at the expense of their rivals, knowing as they did that Gordon Gay & Co. would be going to the station to meet the new boy.

"Come on!" breathed Gordon Gay. "We've got to get through somehow. Rush 'em!"

"What-ho!"

"Grammar School for ever!"

The Grammarians surged forward. The St. Jim's juniors closed in, and the next moment a wild struggle was in progress in Rylcombe Lane.

"Come on, Grammar School—"

"St. Jim's for evah, deah boys!"

"Oh! Yarooooough!"

"Whoooops! Yow!"

Gasps and yells rent the air.

Derrington alone had not plunged into the fray. He stood surveying the scene with rather startled eyes. But he was not left out of it for long. The struggling figures of Wootton minor and Harry Manners of St. Jim's went

"Go it, St. Jim's!"

"Huwah!"

The odds were against the Grammarians, and it was not long before odds told. Gordon Gay & Co. and Derrington found themselves lying on their backs in the lane, with the triumphant St. Jim's juniors seated on their chests and legs. They glared up at their victorious rivals helplessly.

"You—you bounders!" panted Wootton major breathlessly.

"Same to you, and many of 'em, old chap!" chuckled Herries, who was sitting on the elder Wootton with a cheery grin on his face. You know, you make a jolly comfy seat, old hoss! Nice and soft. But then, everybody knows that the Grammar School chaps are frightfully soft—"

"Why, you—you— Oh! Grooooooff! Gug-gug-ggggah!"

Wootton major's strange ejaculations were caused by the fact that Herries had cheerfully scooped up a little dust from the road and poured it into his victim's mouth. Wootton major choked and spluttered, and struggled desperately to rise. But Monty Lowther had gone to Herries' assistance, and between them it was easy enough to hold down the writhing Grammarian.

"You hounds!" panted Derrington.

Tom Merry was seated astride the new Grammarian, holding him down fairly easily, despite Derrington's athletic build and his fierce struggles. The new fellow's face was white with rage.

Gordon Gay, lying near, held down by Dig and Arthur Augustus, was taking things in a more sporting spirit. He grinned up at his captors, though it was rather a rueful grin.

"Right-ho, you bounders!" he said breathlessly. "We give you best!"

"Now, that's weatly sensible of you, deah boy!" chuckled Arthur Augustus blandly, beaming down through his eyeglass at Gordon Gay's dishevelled countenance.

"I guess they're not so green as they look, these Grammar School guys," grinned Cyrus K. Handcock, who was seated comfortably astride the gasping figure of Frank Monk.

"You're sure you give us best?" queried Blake.

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"Yes!" roared Wootton minor.

"And you'd like us to let you get along home to the Grammar School?"

"Yes!" said Gordon Gay eagerly. "I say, that's jolly sporting of you!"

"Right-ho!" chuckled Tom Merry. "We'll let 'em go along to the Grammar School, eh?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

There was something in the grinning faces of the St. Jim's party that caused the sudden hope to die from the faces of Gordon Gay & Co.

It was evident that they were not going to be allowed to go their way quite so peacefully as they had begun to imagine!

The fate in store for them was soon clear!

The St. Jim's juniors were plentifully supplied with cord, and the Grammarians' arms were lashed behind them, despite their desperate struggles; but Derrington, unlike the other four, had his wrists tied in front of him. Monty Lowther, Manners, Handcock, and Herries hurried a few yards down the lane to an open gate, and vanished into the field beyond—to reappear, grinning broadly, dragging an ancient trap into the road.

"We feel that it isn't right to let a new chap arrive at the Grammar School without a bit of style about things," explained Tom Merry gravely to the dismayed Grammarians. "You can't let him walk there—looks bad! Of course, you can't expect Grammar School chaps to know the right thing, so we thought we'd see to it for you that Derrington has a really stylish arrival!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Exactly!" chuckled Blake.

"That's the ideal, dear boys!" nodded Arthur Augustus blandly. "I'm surprised at you, Gay, dear boy, thinkin' of lettin' Dewwington awwive on foot at the Gwammah School!"

"Look here," gasped Gordon Gay desperately, "don't be rotters—"

"Unfasten my hands!" hissed Derrington, his face livid.

"I guess not!" drawled Handcock cheerily. "Why, we're gonna give you a real swell arrival at that Grammar School outfit."

Gordon Gay, Frank Monk, and the two Woottons were yanked to their feet.

There were four sets of donkey harness in the trap, which the St. Jim's juniors had evidently procured for the occasion. The four furious Grammarians were fastened roughly into them and harnessed to the ancient vehicle, complete with collars and blinkers. Derrington was hoisted into the seat, struggling violently, and roped there. The reins attached to his unwilling steeds' bridles were tied to his hands.

"Looks a regular Jehu, doesn't he?" chortled Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A large placard that had been lying in the trap was hung on Derrington's back. It bore the words in big letters:

"I'M THE NEW GRAMMAR SCHOOL ASS!"

Cyrus K. Handcock picked up the ruins of Gussy's topper from the road and climbed up on to the trap, jamming it on to the head of the raging new Grammarian.

"Guess he looks swell now!" chuckled Handcock.

"You rotters!" hooted Gordon Gay, wriggling helplessly in his harness.

"Whip up those giddy donkeys, somebody!" sang out Tom Merry, stepping back to survey their now completed handiwork with a broad grin. "Oh, my hat! Isn't it a stylish turn-out?"

With the new Grammarian seated—very much against his will—in the driving-seat, the reins in his hands, and the battered topper tilted over one eye, and Gordon Gay & Co. harnessed between the shafts, wriggling and twisting helplessly, the ancient vehicle made a sight for the gods—in the opinion of the St. Jim's juniors.

"Oh lor!" groaned Frank Monk. "I—I say, be sports! Lemme go! We can't possibly turn up at the Grammar School like this!"

"Your mistake—you can!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"You—you hounds!" panted Derrington.

"Tut, tut!" grinned Digby. "Naughty, naughty!"

"Move along there!" ordered Manners, with a chuckle.

"We won't!" howled Wootton major. "We jolly well won't go to the school like this, you bouncers! I tell you—Oh! Yooooooops!"

Herries had taken a long, pliant stick from the hedge, and he gave Wootton major a gentle cut across the legs with it. Wootton major leapt into the air with a yell. Monty Lowther had also armed himself with a ready-made

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whip, and he and Herries began to urge the unhappy Grammarians forward.

"Giddup, you mustangs!" urged Cyrus K. Handcock.

"Gee up, there!"

And Gordon Gay & Co., realising that discretion was the better part of valour, began to stagger miserably forward, dragging the ancient trap to which they were harnessed, with many a protesting squeak and groan from the rusted axle.

They did not like doing it, but they did it!

On the seat, Derrington, the big placard hung on his back, gave Tom Merry & Co. a look that, if looks could kill, would have laid the grinning Saints lifeless in the dust!

"Ta-ta, Dewwington, deah boy!" chuckled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Hope you enjoy your awwival at the Gwammah School!"

"This is awful!" moaned Frank Monk, as he stumbled along.

"Half a jiff!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "We forgot the other placard!"

From the back of the trap he took a second large placard, and hung it round the neck of the foremost of the unwilling "steeds"—which was Gordon Gay. It announced in glaring letters:

"ST. JIM'S IS TOP DOG!"

"We'll pay you bouncers out for this!" groaned Gordon Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now trot along, gee-gees!" sang out Blake.

"Giddup!"

With crimson countenances, the raging Grammarians stumbled on again up the road, in the direction of the Grammar School.

"Come on, you chaps!" gasped Gordon Gay. "The sooner we get to the school and get it over, the better!"

"Oh lor!"

Creaking and groaning, the aged trap went rolling up the road. The St. Jim's juniors shrieked.

"Come on, deah boys—let's follow 'em!"

"Rather!"

Tom Merry & Co. strolled along in the rear, still shrieking with hilarity. In their opinion, they had not seen anything quite so funny for a long time. But they did not expect the Grammarians to agree with them!

The gates of the Grammar School came into sight before long. To his horror, Gordon Gay saw that the quad was fairly crowded. Half the junior school seemed to be there to witness the amazing arrival of Derrington!

Derrington's arrival at Rylcombe Grammar School seemed likely to make a stir!

"What the thump—"

"What the merry dickens—"

"My hat! Look!"

In the quad of Rylcombe Grammar School, Carboy and Lane, Mason and Croft and Pearson and several other Fourth-Formers were gathered in a little group, staring towards the gates as if they could not believe their eyes.

All round the quad other Grammarians—both seniors and juniors—were also staring at the gates in blank amazement. Derrington had arrived!

Squeaking protestingly, the ancient vehicle lumbered into the quad, drawn by the harnessed, helpless figures of Gordon Gay, the two Woottons, and Frank Monk, and "driven" by a scarlet-faced individual who was a stranger to the fellows in the quad, but whose identity they could guess readily enough when they saw the placard on his back:

"I'M THE NEW GRAMMAR SCHOOL ASS!"

"M-my giddy aunt!" panted Carboy faintly.

"It's Gordon Gay & Co.!" gasped Pearson.

Gordon Gay, the placard round his neck proclaiming boldly "St. Jim's is Top Dog!" to the eyes of the startled Grammarians, came to a gasping standstill. He glared round at his goggling friends, with a furious snort.

"Don't stand staring like a lot of stuffed fish!" groaned Gordon Gay. "Let us loose, blow you!"

From outside the gates a yell of laughter came to the ears of the Grammarians. Eight St. Jim's juniors were watching the scene from a safe distance.

"Tom Merry & Co.!" panted Lane. "Oh, m-my hat!"

"That must be Derrington!" yelled Carboy. "The Saints have been ragging the new chap!"

"Untie me, for goodness' sake!" cried Derrington.

But the Grammarians, now that they realised the situation, were too intent upon avenging the humiliation inflicted upon the Grammar School to heed Derrington, or

Gordon Gay and the three others between the shafts of the trap, if it came to that. Led by Carboy and Lane, they raced across towards the gates, on vengeance bent!

But by the time they raced out into the road Tom Merry & Co. had made themselves scarce. Raging, they turned back into the quad.

"You silly footlers!" roared Frank Monk. "Lemme loose!"

"Get me out of this!" snorted Gordon Gay, wriggling furiously in his harness.

Their friends got to work, and the unhappy quartet were released at last. Derrington was untied, too, and the new

Grammar School is Top Dog!" cried Gordon Gay excitedly. "That's what we've got to do; it's what we jolly well will do, too!" he finished, with grim conviction.

"Good!" said Derrington. "I want to be in that team, Gay!"

The others stared at Derrington in surprise. Gordon Gay nodded.

"Derrington was footer skipper at his last school, you chaps," he said quietly. "We'll try him out on Saturday, and I'm jolly sure that he's going to be a useful man to have in the eleven against St. Jim's! A chap isn't made footer captain of any school for nothing."

As Grundy turned towards his bed, the rope became entangled in his legs, and he went sprawling with a crash!



Grammarian climbed down from his seat with gleaming eyes.

"Those St. Jim's cads did this!" he cried chokingly.

"Think we don't know that?" snorted Carboy. "My hat, this is a score for Tom Merry & Co.! What on earth did you asses want to let them do it for?"

"Why, you—you—you—"

Words failed Gordon Gay. To be reproached by Carboy for his humiliation was adding insult to injury with a vengeance. The leader of the Grammarians hit out, and Carboy sat down with a roar as Gay's fist landed on his nose.

"Yaroooooh!"

"You silly ass!" hooted Gordon Gay excitedly. "Do you think we did it for the fun of the thing? There were eight of 'em!"

Carboy scrambled up and clenched his fist. His nose was turning the colour of an over-ripe tomato. But Wootton major pushed himself between the pair.

"Chuck it, you asses!" he snapped. "We don't want to scrap among ourselves—it's those Saints we've got to think about! We've got to get our own back for this—"

"We will, too!" cut in Gordon Gay grimly. "And I'll tell you the best way to do it!"

He glared round at the glum faces of the Grammarians with gleaming eyes.

"Listen!" he snapped. "Tom Merry & Co. have set their heart on winning the Eastwood Cup—we know that!" He picked up the fallen placard that bore the words "St. Jim's is Top Dog!" "We've got to win the Eastwood Cup, chaps—prove that the Grammar School is really top dog! That'll be the finest revenge we could possibly have!"

"My hat, yes!" breathed Monk.

"Win the Eastwood Cup, and march it home to the Grammar School with a whacking great placard, 'The

"Don't worry," said Derrington boastfully. "I dare say I shall be the star of the Grammar School team."

Gordon Gay flushed. Whatever his prowess on the footer field, Derrington's manner did not appeal very much to the leader of the Grammarians! But he said nothing to him.

As long as Derrington helped them to win the Eastwood Cup his manner did not matter.

CHAPTER 3.

The Great Match!

"HERE they come!"

"Yeah! It's Gordon Gay and his outfit, I guess!"

The four chums of Study No. 10—Tom Merry, Manners and Monty Lowther, and Cyrus K. Handcock, of New York City—were standing by the foot of the School House steps, looking across the quad towards the gates.

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther were in footer kit, and wearing coats. It was the afternoon of the big match, and Monty Lowther was a member of Tom's well-chosen eleven.

A group of similarly clad fellows had appeared at the gates, cycling into the quad.

Gordon Gay and his team had arrived.

"Good egg!" grinned Tom Merry.

Tom and his three chums crossed towards the arriving footballers. Gordon Gay gave them a cheery nod as he jumped from his machine.

"Hallo, Tommy!" he sang out. "Here we are—all alive and kicking!"

"All ready to lick you into fits for the Eastwood Cup!" observed Frank Monk cheerfully.

Tom Merry laughed. "Rats!" he rejoined good-humouredly. "You'll find us a hard nut to crack, anyway!"

"We're going to lift that giddy cup, all the same!" chuckled Gordon Gay. "We're going to prove that the Grammar School is top dog—not St. Jim's! See? You had the laugh over us the other day, I'll admit. But he laughs best who laughs last, old scout, as the giddy proverb says, and it's the Grammar School that's going to chortle this afternoon!"

Tom smiled. He was not surprised to find that Gordon Gay evidently bore no malice for the ragging he had been subjected to recently. In the feud between the neighbouring schools, japes were very frequent on either side, and the victims, whichever school they came from, took their defeats in the same sporting spirit that they hailed their victories.

At any rate, the majority of the fellows did. But there was one member of the visiting eleven whose face seemed to show that bitterness over the recent jape still rankled within him.

Derrington, the new Grammarian, was eyeing Tom Merry & Co. in a very unfriendly fashion. Tom Merry caught sight of him and gave a murmur of surprise.

"Hallo! New chap in the team, Gay?"

"Rather!" grinned Gordon Gay confidentially. "A giddy wonder, too! You wait!"

Derrington had been tried out in a practice match and proved a great success—hence Gordon Gay's optimism.

There was a step in the School House doorway. The tall figure of Lord Eastwood appeared, accompanied by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Blake, Herries, and Dig. Blake and the swell of St. Jim's were in tooter kit, being members of the Junior Eleven.

Lord Eastwood came down the steps, and the Grammarians raised their caps. He greeted Gordon Gay with a smile.

"Ready for a hard tussle?" smiled Lord Eastwood.

"You bet, sir!" grinned Gordon Gay.

"Splendid!"

Lord Eastwood strolled away towards Little Side, with Arthur Augustus, while Blake, Herries, and Dig joined Tom Merry & Co. The Grammarians put away their cycles, and the St. Jim's juniors accompanied them across the quad to the playing-fields.

Most of the other members of the St. Jim's team were punting a footer about by one of the goals when they arrived on Little Side. Already the touchline was crowded with spectators, many of them being Grammar School enthusiasts. North of the Sixth, who was going to referee the big match, was chatting with Lord Eastwood. Soon afterwards the dignified figure of the Head appeared, accompanied by Mr. Railton, and the juniors greeted them with a cheer as the two gowned figures joined Lord Eastwood.

It was not often that Dr. Holmes came to watch a game on Little Side. The fact that he had come was proof of the tremendous interest that the match for the Eastwood Cup had aroused throughout the school.

Five minutes later North's whistle summoned the rival teams for the line-up. Tom Merry and Gordon Gay had already tossed for ends, and Gordon Gay had won the toss, choosing to play with the breeze.

Phceeeep!

North's whistle sounded again. The great game had commenced!

"Goal!"

A deafening yell rang out on Little Side.

The game had been in progress a quarter of an hour—a grim, desperate struggle from the opening minute, with both teams keyed up to the last ounce of effort. Twice within that time Fatty Wynn of St. Jim's had had work to do—once in stopping a hot one from Gordon Gay, and once in saving a long shot from the foot of Derrington, who was playing inside-right. But now at last a goal had actually been scored—by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, for St. Jim's!

A brilliant attack by the home forwards had brought the ball well into the enemy's area; and a pass from George Figgins, the lanky New House inside-left, right across to Arthur Augustus at outside-right, had taken the Grammar School backs utterly by surprise, and enabled Gussy to plant the ball in the net with a stinging shot.

"Oh, good man, Gussy!" yelled Herries excitedly, who stood, with Digby, Manners, and Handcock, behind the Grammar School goal; optimistically choosing that position in the expectation of seeing most of the play in the visitors' half. "Well shot, old boss! Gussy, you old bounder, I'll never clean my boots on your fancy waistcoat again!"

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"Gee, that was a peach of a goal, buddies!" murmured Cyrus K. Handcock, his eyes gleaming excitedly through horn-rimmed glasses. "I guess footer can't hold a candle to baseball; but it's a great game, I'll tell the world!"

"Baseball!" snorted Manners. "Why, you ass—"

He broke off. The ball had been kicked off again, Gordon Gay tapping it across to Derrington, who had flashed it out to the wing. The Grammar School forward line raced away up the field towards the St. Jim's goal.

"Come on, Grammar School!" yelled a score of their supporters lustily.

Gussy's goal had been rather a shock to the visitors, but they were by no means disheartened. The game had a long way to go yet!

"Up, the Grammar School—"

"Pile in, Saints!"

The rival yells rose to a deafening roar as the visiting team swept down upon the St. Jim's goal, to be broken by the full backs—Talbot and Kangaroo—before it became really dangerous. Talbot sent the ball sailing back to mid-field, where Tom Merry trapped it, flashed it across to Monty Lowther, and led his forwards into the enemy's half again.

"The boys seem to be playing a very energetic game, Eastwood!" murmured the Head, his scholarly countenance keen with interest. "This cup of yours has fired their efforts to a remarkable degree, I have no doubt. I understand that the rivalry between the juniors of the two schools is very intense—"

"Very!" smiled Lord Eastwood. "According to my own boy, Holmes, the Grammar School youngsters are—hem!—a lot of cheeky bounders who need putting in their place!"

He laughed. The Head jumped.

"Bless my soul! Is—is that actually the feeling extant?"

"I've no doubt the Grammar School boys feel the same about your pupils," chuckled his lordship. "I—Hallo! That was a good pass, by gad!"

It was Wootton major who had made the pass that had caused Lord Eastwood's exclamation. He had flashed the ball to Derrington, clean between two of the St. Jim's half-backs—Redfern, of the New House, and Jack Blake. The tall figure of Derrington was now racing away towards the St. Jim's goal with the ball at his toes.

Reginald Talbot rushed up to tackle him. But Derrington eluded the tackle, and sped on. Kangaroo was cutting across towards him, but Derrington, scarcely pausing in his stride, took his shot before the Australian junior could take a hand in things. Swift and straight, the ball flew for the top left-hand corner of the net.

Fatty Wynn flung himself full length in a valiant effort to save. But the ball shot past his finger-tips, and crashed into the net.

A deafening yell arose from the Grammarians round the touchline. Caps sailed into the air jubilantly, and Derrington turned, with a slight smile, to walk back to the centre of the field, while Fatty Wynn fished the ball out of the back of the net, with a glum countenance.

Gordon Gay & Co. had equalised!

"Good old Derrington!" panted Wootton major. "Well shot!"

The new Grammarian was certainly proving himself a wonderful asset to his team. His name was being yelled all round Little Side now.

"Play up, you chaps!" murmured Tom Merry to his men, as the teams lined up again. "We've got to collar that cup!"

"Wathah!" breathed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy grimly.

The whistle sounded a curt blast, and Tom passed the ball briskly to George Figgins. Once more the desperate struggle was in progress between the rival elevens!

Whichever team carried off the Eastwood Cup that afternoon would do so only after a terrific struggle.

But once won the coveted trophy would carry with it the admitted right of the winners to call themselves and their school top dog!

CHAPTER 4.

"Foul!"

"ROTTER!"

Wally D'Arcy of the Third gave a disgusted grunt.

D'Arcy minor was standing with his chums, Reggie Manners, Frankie Levison, and Curly Gibson, of the fag fraternity, not far from where his father was watching the game with the Head and Mr. Railton, close by the table on which the gleaming silver cup that the teams were battling for stood.

Fatty Wynn was stooping to take the ball out of the

back of the St. Jim's goal for the second time that afternoon.

It was only a few minutes after the opening of the second half, and Gordon Gay had just scored from a pass by Derrington, to give the Grammar School a two-one lead!

"Putrid!" agreed Frankie Levison gloomily.
"Looks as if the Grammar School will walk off with your pater's blessed cup, young Wally," sniffed Curly.

"Oh, rats!"
The excited yells of the Grammarians were still ringing out on all sides.

"These blessed Grammar School asses make too much noise," said Wally darkly. "Bad form, if you ask me."

"Rotten bad form," growled Reggie Manners.
The four fags watched with grim countenances as the ball was kicked-off again. There was a breathless mid-field tussle for some minutes, then Tom Merry got away with the leather at his toes.

"Go it, Tom Merry!" gasped Reggie Manners wildly.
Tom flashed the ball across to Ernest Levison on the wing. Levison was unlucky, however, slipping on a patch of mud as he was tackled by a Grammarian, and losing the ball. Wally sniffed.

"A pity your major can't play footer, young Frankie!"
Frank Levison went crimson.

"Why, you silly ass!" he panted hotly. "My major plays a darned sight better game than your major, so there—"

"My major's scored a goal!" crowed Wally.
"Yes—by a rotten fluke!"
"I'll punch your nose, young Levison, if you say my major's goal was a fluke," said Wally fiercely.

Monty Lowther had got the ball again. He slipped it across to Tom Merry, and Tom ran in towards goal.

"Shoot!" yelled Reggie Manners. "Go on——"

And Tom Merry shot.
The ball hurtled under the cross-bar, utterly beating the goalkeeper, and sank into the back of the net to the accompaniment of North's whistle and a deafening yell from the St. Jim's supporters; a yell that scared the rooks out of the old elm even in the quad!

"Done it!" gasped Reggie. "Oh ripping! Good old Tom Merry!" He turned a beaming face to the others. "I told him to shoot, and he did! Must have heard me, you know——"

Wally, Frankie, and Curly all nodded solemnly. It was, they felt, entirely to the credit of the Third that Tom Merry had succeeded in scoring and bringing the home team on level terms with the visitors.

From the other end of the field, Harry Manners, Reggie's major, was grinning delightedly.

He and Cyrus K. Handcock, Herries and Dig had not bothered to change their position when the teams had changed ends at half-time, and so they were now in a group by the St. Jim's goal. Manners had just slipped back to the School House to fetch one of his beloved cameras, to take some snapshots of the game, and had returned just in time to see Tom Merry equalise for St. Jim's.

"All square!" he ejaculated. "And twenty minutes to play! My bet—it's a good game!"

"Sure—it's a swell game!" nodded Cyrus K. Handcock. Excitement was so intense as the ball was again kicked off that not a sound could be heard round Little Side.

All square—and twenty minutes to play!

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"I've said it!" glared Levison minor.

"You daren't say it again!"

"Yes, I dare——"

"No, you daren't——"

"Oh, for goodness' sake chuck rowing, you asses!" growled Curly Gibson. "Watch the game!"

Wally and Frankie grunted and glared at one another, and returned their attentions to the match.

The play was in the St. Jim's half again, after another raid by Tom Merry's team into enemy territory had been beaten back.

Gordon Gay had possession of the ball. He swerved past Kerr of the New House, who was playing left-half for St. Jim's, and passed across to Wootton minor. Blake tackled Wootton, and sent the latter over into the mud with a hefty charge.

"Good old Blake!" breathed Herries, from the edge of the field.

Blake got possession of the ball a moment before Derrington of the Grammar School had time to get it, and passed to Redfern who flashed the ball forward to Monty Lowther. Lowther raced away with it across the half-way line.

"Come on, St. Jim's!"

Lowther was tackled, but got rid of the ball to Tom Merry before being bowled over on to the grass. Tom carried on, dribbling skilfully round a Grammarian who tried to rob him, and passed to Figgins.

The St. Jim's forwards were swooping down on the opposing halves by now; and the Grammar School halves took a lot of getting by! But Figgins was a first-rate forward—second only to Tom Merry. He fooled the half-back who tackled him, passed back to Tom, and the forward line kept on with the ball, flashing it from one to another in magnificent style.

The Grammarian full-backs were ready, however, and they succeeded in stemming the rush. But only for a few moments. Before the half-backs had time to drop back,

"The Eastwood Cup still hangs in the balance!" smiled Mr. Raitton to Lord Eastwood.

"You're right, bedad!" ejaculated his lordship, with gleaming eyes. "By Jove—it's a magnificent tussle!"

"We'll show these Grammar School asses how to play footer!" affirmed Wally jubilantly, not far away.

"What-ho!" agreed Curly Gibson.

But as the minutes dragged by without further score on either side, fellows began to glance anxiously at the clock over the gateway leading to the quad. Fifteen minutes more—ten minutes! It was beginning to look as though the result would be a two-all draw.

"Buck up, Saints!" yelled Digby.

"Go it, Grammar School," came an answering, defiant Grammarian yell. "Grammar School for ever!"

"Br-r!" said Digby. "Come on, St. Jim's——"

"Look!" breathed Manners.

Derrington, the new Grammar School junior, had robbed Redfern of the ball, and was speeding towards the St. Jim's goal. The faces of the St. Jim's juniors had gone suddenly uneasy. Derrington had already scored once, and it had been off a pass of his that Gordon Gay had bagged their other goal. It was a dangerous man! The sight of him speeding towards the home citadel with the ball dancing beautifully at his toes made the supporters or the home team feel very uneasy indeed!

"A pity we didn't slaughter that chap the other day, when we ragged him!" said Manners, with wry humour. "Oh, my hat!"

Derrington had sent Jack Blake over on the grass, and was racing on.

Kangaroo was in his path, however, and the Australian junior was a fine full-back. He tackled Derrington boldly.

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and for a moment or two the pair had a tussle for possession. But it was Derrington who won the desperate duel for the leather, and came cutting in towards the St. Jim's goal.

The excited cheers of the Grammarians on the touchline died away in a breathless hush.

Fatty Wynn alone stood between the Grammarian and the scoring of what would most likely prove to be a winning goal if it were scored—for there were very few minutes left now.

If Fatty Wynn realised the terrible responsibility that rested upon his plump shoulders, he did not show it in his face or his actions. He appeared quite cool as he waited between the goalposts for Derrington to shoot.

The shot came, swift and low.

Fatty Wynn made a desperate spring, gathering the ball against his chest. There was a yelling cheer from the Saints' supporters. The fat New House junior rushed out to send the ball far up the field with one of his tremendous kicks. But Derrington leapt at him like a panther, and the next moment Fatty Wynn had gone sprawling in the mud.

The ball flew from his grasp.

Talbot had come racing across, and made a desperate dive towards the ball, to kick it clear. But Derrington's foot shot out lithely, driving the gently rolling leather across the goal-line into the net.

North's whistle shrilled.

"Goal!" panted Wally D'Arcy, in blank dismay.

And then, as Derrington turned away, and Fatty Wynn scrambled up, there was a breathless shout from George Herries.

"My hat!" he gasped fiercely. "Foul!"

Manners, straightening himself swiftly after picking up his camera, which he had let fall in the excitement, gave a startled ejaculation.

"What?" he cried.

"Foul!" panted Herries. "I saw it! That cad Derrington tripped Fatty up deliberately! It was a foul!"

CHAPTER 5.

An Amazing Discovery!

"GREAT Bohunkus!"

Cyrus K. Handcock was staring at Herries in the same startled way as Manners and Digby.

"Foul!" panted Herries again, his voice choking with anger. "Derrington—"

Derrington had heard the accusation, despite the terrific cheer that was echoing out round Little Side from the joyful Grammarians. A peculiar expression came into his face. He halted, staring across towards the group by the goal with glittering eyes.

Fatty Wynn, on his feet again, was glaring at Derrington with blazing eyes.

"You hound!" he breathed. "You tripped me up—"

"It's a lie!" snarled Derrington.

"You jolly well know you did!" shouted Herries from the touchline. "I saw it!"

"It's a lie!" repeated Derrington, with curling lips. "What price the ref? He's looking after the game—not you!"

He turned quickly, striding back to his position as the teams began to line up. Fatty Wynn choked.

That he had been fouled—deliberately fouled, too—he knew. Herries, also, had seen it. North, unfortunately, evidently had not! Neither, it was clear, had any of the Grammarians. Gordon Gay & Co. were all thorough sportsmen, and any one of them would have been the first to denounce Derrington for foul play, had any of them seen it. As it was, Gordon Gay and Wootton major were both thumping the new Grammarian on the back jubilantly.

It was quite evident that they did not even dream of what had occurred by the St. Jim's goalmouth.

"G-great Scott!" stuttered Herries. "They can't get away with that! That wasn't a goal at all, with that foul—"

But already Tom Merry was tapping the ball to Monty Lowther for the resumption of play—though there were only two minutes left before the finish.

Fatty Wynn was looking almost dazed.

Deliberate fouls were rare indeed on Little Side! He felt utterly at a loss.

But already the game had been resumed! He realised, with a feeling of helpless fury, that Derrington had "got away with it!" Since North, the referee, had failed to notice the foul, and had allowed the goal, a goal it was! However unfair, nothing could be done to rectify the glaring injustice.

And a couple of minutes later a long blast on the whistle brought the match to a finish, to a thunderous cheer from the Grammar School's supporters.

They surged on to the field and seized Derrington, and hoisted him high on their shoulders. Gordon Gay was seized and chaired as well, despite his protests, and marched in frenzied triumph from the field alongside the hero of the hour.

Herries rushed up to where Fatty Wynn was standing as if stupefied, and seized his arm.

"What are we going to do?" he panted. "They can't be allowed to bag the cup! They've no right to it!"

"I saw it!" The big tones of Reginald Talbot cut in. The big Shell fellow had come hurrying up. "Derrington tripped Wynn up deliberately, if you ask me!"

"For the love of Mike!" ejaculated Cyrus K. Handcock. "What are we gonna do?"

"What can we do?" growled Fatty Wynn between his teeth. "The rotter! The ref didn't see it, so we can't do anything!"

"If only Kildare had been referee instead of North!" groaned Manners. "Kildare never misses anything!"

Herries raced across to where Tom Merry was standing, watching, rather glumly, as Derrington and Gordon Gay were chaired off the field towards where Lord Eastwood was standing by their yelling supporters.

"What on earth's up?" ejaculated Tom, staring at Herries' excited face.

Herries told him. Tom's face went incredibly startled.

"My giddy aunt! Are you sure?"

"I saw it!" hooted Herries. "So did Talbot! And Fatty says he was tripped!"

Several others of the St. Jim's team had come up, and were listening with blank amazement on their faces. Fatty Wynn and Talbot, Manners and Handcock, and Digby joined them.

"Is this true, Fatty?" breathed Tom Merry.

"Yes!" snapped David Llewellyn Wynn.

"Gweat pip!" panted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

(Continued on page 12.)

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Our whiskery wonder's on the target again this week. His weekly wage has yet to be reduced. What about it, chums? Knock a bob off his "screw" with a stiff 'un!

THAT dog I told you about, chums, has been causing no end of a disturbance in the old sanctum, believe me. The Ed. said there'd have to be an end to the dog, but when he went after it he found there were two ends, and one end wagged and the other didn't. The Editor got into a furious temper, and after a few minutes he got into the cupboard, where Adolphus keeps his cricket-togs and his white mice and so on. Of course, the poor old Ed. didn't know what was in the cupboard—until he felt the mice running all over him, then he came out again and tried to catch the dog with the wastepaper-basket. After the dog had eaten the wastepaper-basket and a couple of the Editor's cigars, it got quiet.

"This has got to stop!" roared the Ed.

"That's what Adolphus says," I told him. "Only this morning he said to me, 'Sir, this dog's got to stop.'"

"You hairy image!" spluttered the Ed., and rushed to his desk. "Look at this! That dog's chewed up all the copy for this week's GEM. Just get a paste-pot, my lad, and stick all these bits of paper together again!"

Well, chums, I stuck all those pieces of paper together, and took them back, and when the old Ed. looked at the result I really thought my last day had arrived with a sickening crash.

"Look what you've done, you old fooler! You've stuck bits of the serial on to the readers' queries, and mixed 'em up with all kinds of other things! Read it, you ape!"

I picked up the sheets of paper and started to read as follows:

"Dear Editor,—Can your whiskery wonder tell me how to keep flies off turnips because Arthur Augustus D'Arcy burst into Lowther's study: 'Bai Jove!' said Gus, there are flies all over our turnips at home and I've tried to get rid of them with free passages to Ontario don't miss next week's bumper issue of the last week's exciting instalment looking at Lowther and Tom Merry with his accustomed linseed-oil and paraffin, also I've tried painting the turnips green, but can you catch him napping?"

When I saw what I'd done, chums, my whiskers curled up, believe me, and so did the dog.

"Sit down!" roared the Ed. "Answer these queries, and make it snappy!"

"It's quite snappy enough, sir," I said, meaning the dog.

"Don't answer back, my lad; I won't have it. Tell me how fountain-pens are made. Bill Hemmings wants to know."

"Made to what, sir? Made to write?"

replied, trembling violently, "is a very elaborate process, believe me. It comprises two hundred distinct and separate operations. To begin with—"

"That's all right. You can go and tell him all about it yourself. I haven't time to hear two hundred operations this morning. What are they made of, anyway?"

"The barrel of a fountain-pen is made of vulcanised rubber, usually, but sometimes of coloured compounds known as radite, pyroxilin, and permanite. The nib, sir," I added, putting my false teeth back, "is made of gold and tipped with iridium, a very costly metal, and very hard."

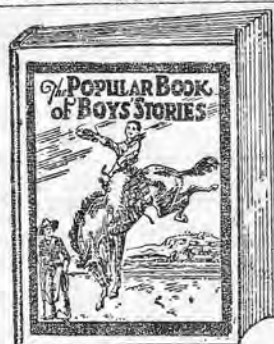
"Sam Barnes wants us to tell him what a Chinaman does when he kow-tows."

"To kow-tow, sir, is to kneel on the ground and bend over until you touch it with your forehead. The expression is derived from two Chinese words, meaning to knock the head."

"Here's an easy one for you from Fred Harris. He wants to know two good books you can recommend him to buy. They're for two cousins of his."

"Aw, this is money for jam! Even you, Ed., could tell him that! Without hesitation I recommend him to buy the two best annuals on the market to-day—'THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL,' price 6s. net, and 'THE POPULAR BOOK OF BOYS' STORIES,' price 2s. 6d. net. I pinched your office copies, Ed., and read 'em, so I ought to know. They're packed with first-class fiction."

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"You've said it. Now, what is kolinsky?"

"A Russian fur, yellow in colour. It is often dyed."

"A Jersey reader wants to know where Daytona Beach is, and how long it is, and why, and how."

"Daytona Beach is a famous place for motor speed-tests. It is a stretch of sand on the Atlantic coast, in Florida, and is thirty miles long. That's 'andy, isn't it, sir?"

"Of course it's sandy, you bald-headed baboon! How could you have thirty miles of sand that wasn't sandy?"

"I meant it was handy, sir, for the motorists. I dropped the 'h,' I'm afraid, sir."

"You're always dropping something!" growled the Ed. "I expect you'll be dropping off to sleep in a minute. Tell Claude Matthews, of Weymouth, what a slogan is."

"A slogan?"

"Yes, a slogan, and don't be so slow about it."

"A slogan, O chief, was originally a war-cry of the old Highland clans. It comes from the words sluagh and ghairm, meaning host outcry. Now any popular phrase used in an election or a fight is called a slogan."

"Can you tell a Clacton reader the best way to grow radishes?"

"Yes, sir—plant some radish seeds!"

"Can you tell K. Cornish what a hoplite was in the days of ancient Greece?"

"Yes, sir; and, funnily enough, a hoplite wasn't light, and couldn't very well hop, as this was the name given to the foot soldiers who carried the heaviest arms. They got the name from the word 'hoplon,' meaning 'weapon,' and the jolly old hoplite had something to carry, believe me, what with his shield, breastplate, helmet, greaves, sword, and lance. Not much chance of hopping off, sir."

"What is the difference between a matador and a toreador?"

"The toreador, O most high, is the man who chases the bull round the jolly old arena, and he is usually on horseback. Sometimes, of course, he falls off, but he's still a toreador, even then. The matador, he's the fellow that kills the bull—if he's lucky, that is. If the bull kills him instead, he's a dead matador, and is carried out and put on the mat at the door. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop that ghastly row!" growled the Editor, looking fierce. "You'll wake that dog up, and he'll start eating all my tales."

"Ha, ha, ha!" I chortled. "That's good! If he knew you had a lot of tails, wouldn't he be amused, what?" Then I saw the old Ed. was fingering a large paperweight very thoughtfully, so I suppressed my mirth.

"Can you tell Walter Blazer what a cachalot is, you hairy idiot?"

"A cachalot? Certainly I can, sir. A cachalot is a certain species of whale, with teeth in the lower jaw."

"And why has it got teeth in the lower jaw?"

"So that it can catch—" I just dodged the old napper in time, chums, to miss the jolly paperweight the Editor flung at me. Instead of hitting me, it landed right in the middle of the tea-things Adolphus brought in at that moment.

"Look what you've made me do!" groaned the poor old Ed. "I've smashed all the china!"

"Never mind, sir!" I said. "I'll get a japan and sweep it up. Tootle-oo!"

WON BY A FOUL!

(Continued from page 10.)

Gordon Gay had managed at last to free himself from his enthusiastic friends. He came striding across towards Tom Merry, a muddy, grinning figure, and held out his hand.

"Well, that's that!" he said cheerily. "A pretty hot game—you gave us more trouble than I thought you would! But we managed to pip you on the post, eh? I fancy Grammar School is top dog now!"

Tom Merry took Gay's hand. But the look on his face, and on the faces of the other footballers, caused the leader of the Grammarians to stare at them in bewilderment.

There was a good deal more than disappointment at defeat in their faces.

"What's up?" he inquired in astonishment.

"Your chap Derrington fouled Fatty Wynn!" snapped Herries. "He tripped him up when he ran out of the goal, and that's how he was able to score! North didn't see it, but it's a fact. You've no jolly right to the Eastwood Cup!"

"Rats!" gasped Gordon Gay incredulously.

"It's true!" growled Talbot. He shrugged. "Never mind—too late to worry now!"

Gordon Gay went crimson.

"I jolly well don't believe it!" he said heatedly. "The ref would have seen it! Fatty Wynn slipped in the mud, or something, and thought he'd been tripped up! But that goal was fair enough."

He glared round at the St. Jim's fellows with tight lips. He was breathing hard.

Tom Merry shrugged.

"Personally, I accept the evidence against Derrington," he said quietly. "But, of course, nothing can be done about it. It wasn't your fault, anyway, Gay."

"Look here," said Gordon Gay grimly. "It's all very well to make accusations like this, which you can't prove—after you've lost! But—"

"Do you mean we're making this up to excuse our defeat?" cut in Tom Merry, suddenly scarlet.

"It certainly looks like it to me!" snapped Gordon Gay bitterly. "Blessed if I didn't think you fellows were sportsmen, too!"

Gordon Gay, utterly disbelieving the accusation he had heard levelled against Derrington, was bitterly indignant, as his words showed. But before Tom Merry or any of the others could answer he had swung on his heel and marched away, a dark, angry frown on his usually cheery countenance.

Tom Merry seemed about to stride after him. But he changed his mind and shrugged.

"Well, that's that," he said quietly.

"Bai Jove! This is wotten! It's bad enough to have lost through Dewington's foul," exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly, "without Gordon Gay bein' ass enough to think that we have made the stow up! I considah that Gay deserves a feahful thwashin' for dawin' to think such a thing!"

"And as for Derrington—" began Digby fiercely.

"Oh, come on, you chaps!" cut in Figgins in a bitter tone. "It's a rotten business, but we don't want to hang round here and let everyone think we're sulking because we've lost!"

Already many curious eyes were turned towards the little group of footballers on the field. Everyone else was gathering in a big circle round the table where the glittering silver cup that had been the trophy for the winners of the match was standing, Lord Eastwood beside it, waiting to present it.

The St. Jim's footballers, together with Manners, Herries, Dig, and Cyrus K. Handcock, crossed towards the crowd.

Their faces were very grim as Lord Eastwood, with a few words of smiling congratulation, handed the cup to Gordon Gay, as the captain of the victorious team. A deafening cheer rent the air from the Grammar School supporters, and from the St. Jim's fellows who knew nothing of the foul play that had enabled the Grammarians to appear the victors.

But from George Herries, seized by a sudden impulse, there came a sudden loud hiss.

The effect was startling!

Loud though the cheering had been, the hiss was heard, and instantly the applause died away as fellows turned in utter astonishment to see from whom it had come.

Lord Eastwood's face was dark and frowning, and very much astonished. Gordon Gay's was rather pale, and his eyes gleamed angrily as they glanced across and met Tom Merry's. He evidently believed that it was Tom who had hissed.

All the Grammarians present were looking as taken aback as Lord Eastwood, and angry into the bargain. They broke into another rousing cheer—a defiant cheer, as they glared at the St. Jim's footballers, who were standing silent and rather grim.

Not for a moment did Tom Merry, or George Herries, or any of them, wish for a scene of any kind. Herries' hiss had been an impulse which he had already regretted. They did not bear any ill-will towards the Grammarians as a whole—it was Derrington who was the culprit; even Gordon Gay's bitter words they might have excused, unjust though they felt them to be.

But, knowing what they did, they certainly were not going to join in the cheering as the Grammarians walked off with the Eastwood Cup.

To have done so would have been insincere—almost farcical.

They would have cheered sportingly enough, despite their disappointment, had they known the cup to have been won honestly and fairly. But in the circumstances—no!

There was a peculiar look on Derrington's face.

He, at any rate, knew the reason for Tom Merry & Co.'s behaviour—knew that it was justified. But he put on a sneering smile, and turned to Gordon Gay.

"Got that placard, Gay?"

Gay nodded, and glanced at a Grammar School junior who was carrying a pole. The Grammarian, grinning, produced a large sheet of white cardboard from under his coat, jammed it into a notch at the end of the pole, and hoisted it aloft.

On it in huge letters were the words:

"THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL IS TOP DOG!"

Potts, The Office Boy



"It's true!" hooted Grundy. "And I'm not going to stand it, I tell you—"

"What on earth are you going to do about it, then?" yawned the new Grammarian, with an affectation of tired amusement.

Grundy pushed back his sleeves, revealing his brawny forearms. Derrington jumped, and looked suddenly uneasy. Though he was an athletic fellow in his way, he did not like the look of the hefty St. Jim's junior.

"This is what I'm going to do!" gasped Grundy. "I'm going to give you the walloping you deserve! Put 'em up!"

Derrington did "put 'em up"—very hastily! He had not much choice in the matter, unless he wanted to be knocked flying without resistance. For already Grundy was advancing upon him with his rugged fists raised in warlike fashion.

"Hands off!" panted Derrington. "I—Oh! Yoooop!" Grundy's fist had landed on his chin, staggering him. He recovered his balance with an effort, and hit out, and there was a yell from Grundy as the Grammarian's left took him on the nose. The next moment a wild and whirling fight was in progress in Rylcombe Lane.

With trampling feet and crashing fists, Grundy and Derrington were fighting fiercely.

From the very first, there was no doubt as to who was getting the better of it. Grundy was rather heavy and slow, but he had terrific weight and strength, and he soon had his man groggy. Derrington's face, before long, was so battered as to be almost unrecognisable!

His nose was bleeding and swollen, and one eye was closed. His lip was out, and his cheek was bruised, and his clothing was dusty and dishevelled, after several sprawls in the road. Grundy, with three days of growing wrath and indignation burning within him, was letting off steam at last!

"There!" gasped Grundy, as Derrington went down again, and this time did not rise. "That'll teach you to foul at footer, you blessed rotter! I said I'd give you a walloping, and I jolly well have!"

It was true enough. Derrington, blinking up at him dazedly, groaning painfully, had no fight left in him. He had been licked to the wide!

With a grim chuckle, Grundy put his tie straight, dusted down his clothes, and marched on his way, feeling that something towards justice had been done at last.

Derrington staggered up.

"The hound!" he panted. "I—I'll pay him out for this!"

His glittering eyes fell on a dusty cap lying in the road. It was Grundy's—in his triumph Grundy had forgotten it, and marched off, leaving his cap where it had fallen during the scrap. Derrington picked it up and spitefully flung it into the bushes by the roadside.

"He won't find that, anyway!" he muttered sulkily. "Oh, the rotter! I'll find a way to pay him out for this!"

And with a malevolent gleam in his shifty eyes, Derrington limped away up the lane, battered and dishevelled, and burning for revenge.

CHAPTER 7.

Grundy's Amazing Plan!

"IT'S a howwid shame, deah boys!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was seated with Blake, Herries, and Digby at a table in Mrs. Murphy's tuckshop in Rylcombe. As had been usual of late, the conversation had turned to the Eastwood Cup!

"Yes, it is!" growled Blake. "Of course, Derrington's to blame entirely, for that rotten foul. Nobody has got anything against Gordon Gay & Co.—except that they are silly asses enough to think we would make up a yarn about a foul to save our faces! That's a bit thick, that is!"

"The silly idiots!" growled Herries.

"Well, I suppose it's not very likely they would believe Derrington fouled," put in Digby thoughtfully. "Even Gussy's pater wouldn't believe it when Gussy told him. Anyway, you were an ass to tell him, Gussy!"

"My patah was watty about that hissin'," said Arthur Augustus unhappily. "I had to explain, you see."

"Well, it's rotten, the Grammar School swanking round that they licked us for the cup, and calling themselves cocks of the walk!" grunted Blake. He rose to his feet. "Let's get along!"

They paid their bill and left, turning in the direction of St. Jim's. They had not gone far before a burly figure in front of them, without a cap, came in view. It was Grundy, on his way back to the school after his visit to the village. They caught him in a hundred yards, and Blake gave an exclamation as he saw the battered state of Grundy's countenance.

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"Hallo, Grundy!" he ejaculated. "What's the matter with your chivvy? Been arguing with a steam-roller?"

"I met Derrington, and walloped him!" announced Grundy, in a tone of great satisfaction. "Fairly walloped the cad!"

"Oh, good egg!" gasped Herries. "That's great!"

"Bai Jove, yaas!"

Blake & Co. surveyed Grundy, for once, with delighted approval. But Grundy's triumphant grin died away to a scowl.

"Mind you, it doesn't really do much good!" he grunted. "Something ought to be done to put the Grammar School in their place properly. I've been thinking—"

"What with, old chap?" murmured Dig.

Fortunately, Grundy did not hear.

"I've been thinking," he repeated impressively. "I've decided to take the law into my own hands!"

"What evah do you mean, Gwunday?"



"I've made up my mind what to do!" continued Grundy, his rugged face grim with resolve. "Those Grammar School cads don't deserve the Eastwood Cup—"

"Well, we know that!" said Blake impatiently.

"Since they don't deserve it, they shan't have it!" roared Grundy. "See?"

"But they've got it!" hooted Blake. "How on earth can we stop them having it, seeing they've already got it?"

"Easy!" sniffed Grundy. "I'm going to take the law into my own hands, I tell you, and take it away from them!"

"Wha-a-at!" Blake came to a halt, staring at Grundy as though he could not believe his ears. "You—you mean—"

Grundy halted, too, his face more grim than ever.

"I'm going to collar it! See? We know where it's kept—in the glass case in the junior Common-room at the Grammar School. I'm going to take it."

Blake & Co. stared at one another. Then they stared at Grundy.

"He—he's potty!" gasped Herries.

"Rats! I jolly well mean it!"
 "But, you silly ass—" panted Blake.
 "I feel it's up to me," explained Grundy calmly. "I'm going to break out of the dorm one night, go to the Grammar School, break into their blessed Common-room, and take the cup. It doesn't belong to them really!"
 "B-bai Jove!"
 "But—but if you were found out, you blessed lunatic, you'd be expelled!" yelled Herries.



Blake's front wheel struck the man and knocked him spinning, and Blake himself shot over the handlebars on top of him!

"Rats! I shan't be found out!"
 "Gweat Scott, Gwunday, deah boy! I—I considah—" "Oh, dry up, Gussy!" said Grundy politely. "It's not right for Gordon Gay & Co. to have that cup, and so I'm jolly well going to put things right by taking it from them. It was really a drawn game, so neither team won it. Well, neither team shall have it! I'm going to see to that!"

Blake grasped Grundy by the arm, looking quite alarmed. He knew what an obstinate individual Grundy was when he had got an idea firmly fixed in his thick head. If Grundy really contemplated "putting things right" by visiting the Grammar School one night and taking possession of the Eastwood Cup, it was quite on the cards that Grundy might actually try to do it!

"You don't really mean it, Grundy?" he breathed.

"I jolly well do!"

"Oh rats!" grinned Herries. "It's only gas! Grundy's an ass, we know, but he's not ass enough to try to get himself sacked from the school for a silly wheeze like that!"

"It's not gas!" hooted Grundy. "I tell you, Gordon Gay & Co. and these Grammar School rotters aren't going

to enjoy their giddy ill-gotten gains for long if I can help it! I'll jolly well show you it isn't gas to-night!"

Grundy, with a glare at the flabbergasted four, swung on his heel and strode off alone towards the school, leaving Blake & Co. staring after him.

Whether he really meant to try to carry out his reckless plan for "putting right" the highly unsatisfactory situation over the Eastwood Cup was a question that he alone could have answered. Blake & Co. could scarcely believe that he did. But their faces were very uneasy as they moved on down the lane, discussing Grundy, for they knew that the great George Alfred could be as obstinate as a mule when he liked.

Their faces would have been considerably more uneasy still had they seen a figure emerge from behind the hedge that flanked the road the moment they had vanished round the bend!

It was Derrington.

Derrington had been limping back along the lane when he had seen Grundy coming back, in company with Blake & Co. For safety's sake, Derrington had promptly hidden behind the hedge, and he had heard every word of Grundy's startling proposal!

There was a strange look on the face of the new Grammarian as he stood staring down the road. He drew a sudden deep breath, and an evil grin appeared on his battered face.

Cautiously he moved down the lane, careful not to come within sight of Blake & Co. After a time he had reached the scene of his "walloping" at Grundy's hands. Grundy's cap was still lying behind the bushes at the roadside; if the great George Alfred had looked for it, he had failed to find it.

With a mutter of satisfaction Derrington snatched it up and stuffed it into his pocket. Turning, he hurried back up the lane, with a glitter of triumph in his dark, shifty eyes.

"I'll settle with him!" he told himself viciously. "See if I don't!"

CHAPTER 8. A Midnight Visit!

BOOM!
 The last note of the hour died away as the school clock finished striking. Two o'clock!

The Shell dormitory was sleeping. On all sides, in the gloom, the quiet breathing of sleeping fellows could be heard and the deep snores of Frederick Burkett, the bully of the Shell. There was only one fellow awake.

That was George Alfred Grundy.

Grundy sat up. Two o'clock was the hour he had been waiting for.

"Anybody awake?" muttered Grundy, peering round.

There was no answer. Grundy gave a murmur of satisfaction, and slipped out of bed.

He began to draw on his clothes silently. There was a light of grim determination in the eyes of the great George Alfred as he took a long coil of rope from beneath his mattress. He had smuggled it into the dormitory that evening while the rest of the Shell were busy with their prep.

From beneath his pillow he took an electric torch and put it into his pocket. He turned to the window by his bed and raised the lower sash softly.

It was the work of a few minutes to fasten one end of the rope to the bedstead, and drop the other out of the window. It snaked down into the dark quad, and Grundy swung out over the sill for his daring descent.

Grundy was a strongly built individual, and it was not a hard task for him to climb down the rope to the gravel below. The rope had to be left for his return, but it was very unlikely that at that hour anyone would see it. All the masters had gone to bed long ago.

A few minutes later Grundy was scrambling over the wall into Rylcombe Lane.

The night was pitch-dark and eerily silent as he strode away along the lane in the direction of the Grammar School.

Grundy's face was very grim.

In the junior Common-room that evening, Grundy had publicly announced his intention of refusing to allow the Grammar School to enjoy their ill-gotten gains. He had told the amazed juniors that he intended to go to the Grammar School that very night to take possession of the Eastwood Cup—and had been laughed at for his pains!

No one had believed that Grundy really meant it—or, if he did, that he actually would dare to carry out his plan.

Well, he would show them!

Grundy had made up his mind to right the injustice

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with regard to the Eastwood Cup, and he was going to carry out his plan at any cost, despite the risks attached.

It did not take him long to cover the mile or so that separated St. Jim's from the Grammar School. He swarmed over the wall, and dropped into the quad of the rival establishment without hesitation.

Utter silence reigned, but for the hoot of an owl in some neighbouring tree, as he peered across the dark pile of the Grammar School buildings.

He knew his way about there fairly well. The window of the junior Common-room, he knew, was directly opposite. He stole across the gravel towards it, taking out a big clasp-knife as he went.

In the black shadow of the building he crept along towards the windows of the junior Common-room, and climbed cautiously on to the sill.

Grundy was not an expert window-opener! But luckily the fastening of the Common-room window at the Grammar School was an easy one. With the blade of the knife he succeeded in pressing back the catch. It made a click that sounded weirdly loud in the silence of the night, and for a moment his heart leapt.

"Now for it!" breathed Grundy.

He pushed up the sash very gently. It made no sound. A few moments later Grundy was dropping into the big room, his face still grim with determination.

Moving away from the window he flashed on his electric torch. The vivid rays of the light lit up the table and chairs, and glimmered on the glass case over the mantelpiece, where, he had learnt, the Eastwood Cup had been placed in the position of honour.

He crept towards the fireplace, picking his way carefully among the chairs that were grouped near it. He chuckled softly. Gordon Gay & Co. would have a shock when they found that their prized trophy had vanished, next morning, he told himself with satisfaction.

"Well, it's not theirs!" he muttered. "The rotters haven't any right to it—and it's not jolly well fair for them to have it to crow about—"

His words broke off in utter astonishment.

He had directed the ray of his torchlight full on the glass case over the mantelpiece, expecting to see the gleaming, handsome cup within.

But the case was empty!

"M-my hat!" gasped Grundy.

For a moment he imagined, with bitter chagrin, that he had made a mistake—that the cup was not kept there, after all. But then his eyes rested on a small white card that bore the word:

"The Eastwood Cup. Won three-two against St. Jim's."

The cup had been there, it was clear. But it was not there now!

"Great pip!" breathed Grundy. "What the dickens does it mean?"

A sudden faint sound in the gloom behind him caused him to swing round. A startled ejaculation broke from him.

In the light of the torch he saw a dark, masked figure leaping towards him. He had no time to defend himself. Something came down on his head with sickening force.

Grundy collapsed on the floor without a sound, and lay senseless in front of the empty glass case from which the Eastwood Cup had mysteriously vanished!

CHAPTER 9.

A Shock for the Shell!

THE Grammar School clock was striking three o'clock as George Alfred Grundy opened his eyes again and sat up, very dazedly.

He put a hand to his head. It ached terribly, and he could feel that there was a large bump on his temple.

"Oh! Yow!" groaned Grundy. "Where—where am I?"

He sat up, staring round into the darkness. The dim light of the open window, overlooking the quad, met his eyes, and in a flash he remembered everything.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Grundy.

He was at the Grammar School—had been lying there senseless after that knock-out blow delivered by the mysterious shadowy figure in the darkness. Supposing he had been discovered? The very thought made Grundy go cold.

He staggered to his feet.

Though his head was still swimming, he was collecting his scattered senses quickly.

He groped round the floor until he found his torch, and slipped it into his pocket hastily. Then, turning, he reeled towards the window.

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Grundy's one idea now was to get safe away.

He had no doubts as to what had happened to the vanished cup that he had come to claim. A burglar must have been there before him, and had stolen it—the same man, he was sure, who had been hiding in the gloom when he himself had entered by the window, and had knocked him out, and left him there.

A burglar.

Grundy himself had had not the slightest dishonest intentions in his mind when he had planned to take the Eastwood Cup from the Grammar School. He had not regarded it as stealing. He had intended, once he had possession of it, to hide it somewhere until Gordon Gay & Co. could be brought to see reason, and the match played off again. The fact that it was utterly unlikely that Gordon Gay & Co. ever would come to agree to the St. Jim's point of view regarding the match had not occurred to him!

But now that he had apparently come up against real burglary, Grundy was beginning to realise how his own actions, had he actually succeeded in getting possession of the silver cup, might have been construed. Though he had had the best intention, it might have been very difficult to persuade some people—for example, the police—that he had not been taking the cup for his own advantage.

On the whole, despite his sickening headache, George Alfred Grundy was beginning to feel that it was rather a good thing that the Eastwood Cup had been stolen by someone else before he had had time to "borrow" it, preparatory to a fresh match between St. Jim's and the Grammar School.

He scrambled out into the quad, and stole across to the wall. With singing head, he climbed it and dropped into the lane, and hurried off through the darkness in the direction of St. Jim's.

Back at last under the School House wall, however, a shock was awaiting George Alfred.

The rope that he had expected to find dangling from the dormitory window was lying in a heap on the ground!

It was clear what had happened. Grundy had evidently fastened it very insecurely to his bed in his careless way, and his weight in climbing down had gradually worked the knot loose. It was only a stroke of wonderful luck that had held it long enough for him to make the descent! During his absence the weight of the rope had been enough to drag the knot finally open, and the rope had fallen into the quad.

"Oh, blow!" groaned Grundy.

He stared up. It was impossible to climb to the window now. The ivy had been recently trimmed and offered insufficient hold altogether.

There was nothing for it but to wake up somebody in the dormitory. Grundy stooped and selected some small pebbles from the gravel and threw them up one by one. They tinkled against the glass, and at last an astonished head appeared from above.

"What the dickens—"

It was the voice of Tom Merry.

"It's me," growled Grundy. "I say, catch on to the end of this blessed rope, will you, and tie it to something for me to climb up."

"Grundy! You—you blessed lunatic!" gasped Tom, peering down. "Where on earth have you been?"

"The Grammar School!" snapped Grundy. "I told you I was going, didn't I?"

"Great Scott! Grundy, you chump—"

"Oh, rats!"

Grundy flung up the rope, and Tom Merry caught it. A minute later Grundy was swarming up and swinging in over the sill. Tom Merry's pyjama-clad figure surveyed him grimly.

"So you've been to the Grammar School, you dummy?" muttered Tom. "You're stark, staring potty, Grundy! You—"

"Oh, rats!" grunted Grundy. "If it's the Eastwood Cup you're worrying about, you needn't. I didn't get it!"

"Thank goodness for that!"

There was a note of intense relief in Tom's voice. Grundy chuckled.

"And the reason I didn't get it was that it's been burgled already," he explained. "I got into their Common-room all right—and the cup wasn't there!"

"But—"

"The glass case was there, and the giddy label; but the cup wasn't," said Grundy. "Then somebody hit me over the head and knocked me out. Must have been the burglar, you see. When I came round I buzzed along back here!"

"My giddy aunt!" Tom Merry stared at Grundy hard. "Is that a fact that the Eastwood Cup has been pinched? Great Scott!"

"Serve Gordon Gay & Co. right!" snapped Grundy. "They hadn't any right to it at all."

CHAPTER 10.

Awkward for Grundy!

"You didn't raise the alarm?"

"Never thought of it," confessed Grundy. "Anyway, I don't see how I could. I should have had to explain why I was there. And, anyway, the burglar must have gone long ago by the time I came round. Phew! I'd like to meet that chap again and sock him on the jaw!" he finished with a growl, tenderly feeling the large bump on his head. "Owl! My giddy head still sings!"

He hauled in the rope and closed the window. But as he turned towards his bed the rope became entangled in Grundy's legs, and he went sprawling with a crash.

"What on earth—"

"Great Bohunkus! For the love of Mike—"

Grundy's fall had awakened the whole dormitory! The Shell fellows sat up in bed with astonished ejaculations. There was just enough light in the dormitory for them to make out the fully dressed figure of Grundy scrambling to his feet, and the pyjama-clad figure of the captain of the Shell by the window.

"What the dickens?" exclaimed Burkett. "Grundy!"

"Grundy, you ass—"

"Shut up!" snorted Grundy. "Don't make such a row! Nothing to get excited about; I've just been to the Grammar School, that's all. You'll remember I told you I would."

"Wha-at?" gasped Monty Lowther. "You—you've been?"

"I have!" sniffed Grundy. "Didn't I say I would?"

"And you've collared the Eastwood Cup?" panted Wilkins.

"No! It wasn't there. Somebody must have pinched it before I turned up!" growled Grundy. "Go to sleep, you asses!"

And, despite the excited questions that were hurled at him on all sides, George Alfred Grundy refused to say another word. He undressed in the gloom and climbed back into bed and pulled up the blankets—with a last tender feel of the bump on his cranium.

Grundy might have failed to get possession of the Eastwood Cup, but it looked as though Gordon Gay & Co. would have to do without it, too, in future—and that was all that Grundy cared about!

But if Grundy expected that his daring visit in the dead of night to Rylcombe Grammar School was finished and done with, then George Alfred was doomed to be very disappointed.

"MY hat!" It was Gordon Gay who gave that exclamation.

Gordon Gay was standing in the doorway of the junior Common-room at Rylcombe Grammar School, staring across towards the fireplace with startled eyes.

It was early the following morning. Gordon Gay and Frank Monk and the two Woottons had been for a swim in the Rhyl before breakfast. They had returned to the school feeling very fit and fresh, and Gordon Gay had looked in at the Common-room to collect a book he remembered having left there the previous evening. But on entering the room he had halted with a breathless exclamation, staring across at the glass case over the fireplace in utter amazement.

"What's up?" asked Frank Monk, from the passage.

"Look!" yelled Gordon Gay, flinging out a pointing hand.

Monk and the two Woottons entered the Common-room. They, too, gave breathless ejaculations as they glanced in the direction of their chum's pointing finger.

The Eastwood Cup was missing.

There was a step in the passage behind them as the four juniors stared almost dazedly at the empty case. Morton, the captain of the Grammar School—also an early riser that morning—had been passing from the stairs, and had paused to see the cause of Gordon Gay's dismayed shout. The tall Sixth-Former stepped into the Common-room.

"What has gone?"

Gordon Gay turned an excited face to the captain of the school.

"The—the Eastwood Cup!" he stuttered. "It's gone! The case is empty!"

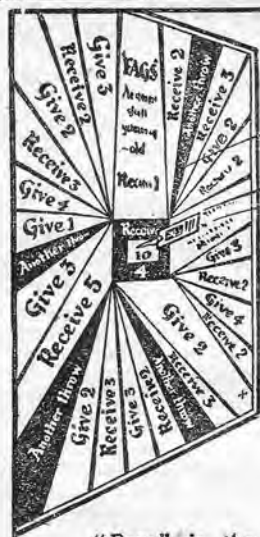
"Gad!" ejaculated Morton swiftly.

He strode quickly towards the case. The glass door was unfastened, though it should have been locked. Evidently the lock had been picked, for the only key he knew, was in the possession of Dr. Monk, the Headmaster of the Grammar School.

His eyes went to the window. He saw instantly that the catch was unfastened, though the window was shut.

"Someone got in at the window in the night!" he said

(Continued on next page.)



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grimly. "That's what's happened, kids! Though they shut the window when they cleared out with the cup, they couldn't, of course, fasten it again. It's plain burglary!"

"Great pip!" breathed Gordon Gay.

His face was filled with consternation. It was not the intrinsic value of the cup—though that was considerable—but the "moral" value of it that he and the rest of the junior footer eleven—in fact, every Grammarian—prized so highly. It was concrete evidence of their victory over St. Jim's, and of their claim to be top dog of the two schools, that had disappeared!

The faces of the four juniors were as grim as the captain's as they stared at one another with gleaming eyes.

"Who on earth—" began Frank Monk fiercely.

There was a sudden exclamation from Morton. The Sixth-Former strode quickly across to something he had seen lying under the table. He picked it up.

"Look at this!" he said quietly.

In his hands he was holding a school cap.

"A St. Jim's cap!" breathed Gordon Gay, staring at it in blank bewilderment.

"I fancy this makes it clear enough who the thief is," said the captain of the Grammar School, in grim tones. "Some St. Jim's fellow has been here in the night and collared that cup. Let's see if there's a name in it."

He examined the lining of the cap. But there was no name in it.

"My only aunt!" panted Frank Monk. "Some St. Jim's cad has been here all right! They were so sick at us licking them for the cup that they've collared it!"

"A jape's a jape—but this is a bit too thick!" said Gordon Gay fiercely.

"I agree!" nodded Morton grimly. "This is a serious matter. I shall inform the doctor of the facts immediately after breakfast. In the meanwhile, I shall take possession of this cap."

He strode from the Common-room with frowning brow, leaving Gordon Gay & Co. staring at one another, utterly staggered.

The sensation at the Grammar School when it was learnt that the Eastwood Cup had been taken in the night, and that a St. Jim's cap, found in the Common-room, showed the thief to have been a fellow from the rival school, was terrific.

It was known that Dr. Monk had already got into touch with Dr. Holmes of St. Jim's, and there was going to be serious trouble over the matter.

But the sensation at the Grammar School was scarcely greater than the sensation at St. Jim's that morning, when Dr. Holmes had the whole school gathered in Big Hall at the hour when last lesson should have been starting, and in curt tones outlined the facts in connection with the missing cup.

Though the Shell fellows had known of the affair, no one else had, for the Shell had agreed to keep silent concerning Grundy's reckless escapade. Grundy might be a terrific ass; in fact, they all thought he was; but they wanted to shield him from any possible results of his folly. So not even the Fourth had been told that Grundy had actually been to the Grammar School that night.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he stared at the dais where the Head's majestic, frowning figure stood. "The Eastwood Cup stolen—and a St. Jim's cap found there! Whatevah can it mean?"

"Grundy!" gasped Herries. "Grundy said he was going to pinch it! I never thought he'd dare, but it jolly well looks as if—"

"M-my hat!" gasped Blake, staring across at Grundy. "Grundy—the ass!"

Grundy was looking quite unruffled, however, as he stood with the rest of the Shell listening to the Head. One or two of his Form-fellows were glancing at him rather oddly, Blake noticed. Grundy seemed puzzled, but quite unconcerned.

"These, then, are the facts!" The Head's deep tones rang out in Big Hall with a very grim note. "That this is a very serious matter indeed, it is needless for me to remark."

He surveyed the assembled fellows with a dark frown.

"I order the boy who broke into the Grammar School last night, and took the Eastwood Cup, to stand forward!"

No one moved. The Head's frown deepened.

"Very well. If the culprit will not stand forward, investigations will be put into operation immediately, and he will be traced without doubt. Remember, his cap is in the possession of Dr. Monk! Once more—will the boy in question stand forward?"

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Still there was no movement, no sound. The Head's eyes gleamed.

"Very well," he said quietly. "Dismiss! Go to your Form rooms for last lesson, boys!"

The fellows tramped out of Big Hall, buzzing with excitement. In the quad, Tom Merry seized Grundy's arm.

"Grundy!" he muttered.

"Well?" growled Grundy.

"You ass! Why didn't you tell the Head?" breathed Tom.

Grundy stared at him.

"Me?" he said indignantly. "Rats! I never pinched the blessed cup! It's nothing to do with me!"

"But that must have been your cap that was found—"

"Rats!" Grundy shook his head. "I did lose a cap yesterday; but that can't have been it. I went without a cap last night to the Grammar School!" He frowned.

"It's rum, about that cap that was found—"

"If it isn't yours, who on earth does it belong to?" ejaculated Tom Merry, more mystified than ever.

"Goodness knows! But—"

Grundy broke off. Kildare of the Sixth had approached. He was looking grave.

"Grundy," said the captain quietly, "the Head wishes to see you in his study at once."

Grundy jumped.

"Me?" he gasped. "Wh-wh-what—"

"You'd better get along!" said Kildare curtly.

Grundy stared at the captain, then at Tom. Tom's face had gone white. Grundy, too, was looking dismayed. Without a word he turned and made his way into the House. In the Hall he almost ran into Blake & Co. They halted and surveyed the great George Alfred with peculiar looks.

"Grundy, you ass—" breathed Blake excitedly.

"Gwunday, deah boy! Was it you that collared the cup, you uttah ass?" breathed Arthur Augustus. "You said you were goin' to, and—"

"I know I did—but I didn't!" growled Grundy.

"Sure you didn't?" queried Herries, staring at him hard.

"Yes, ass!" hooted Grundy. "Shut up!"

"Didn't do it in your sleep, I suppose?" asked Digby curiously.

"No, chump!"

Blake & Co. knew that Grundy, even though a champion ass, was truthful and honest. If he said he had not taken the Eastwood Cup, he had not—unless, as Digby had suggested, he had done it while walking in his sleep!

With a glare at the puzzled chums of the Fourth, Grundy marched on towards the Head's study.

In his heart, George Alfred Grundy was beginning to wish that he had never meddled with the unlucky Eastwood Cup.

CHAPTER 11.

Sacked!

DR. HOLMES was seated at his desk when Grundy arrived at the dreaded sanctum. He was not alone. To Grundy's dismay, the tall figure of Dr. Monk, the headmaster of the Rycombe Grammar School, was there, too.

"Ah, Grundy!" The Head glanced up as Grundy closed the door behind him. His voice was a trifle steely, Grundy noticed, with increasing uneasiness. "I wished to see you about—er—this cap!"

He opened a drawer and took out a dusty St. Jim's cap, and held it out to Grundy. Grundy took it, and recognised it, to his great astonishment, as his own.

"Is that your cap, Grundy?"

"Yes, sir," nodded Grundy uneasily. "But—"

"I thought as much!" The Head's voice was very grim this time. "Though it bears no name, Mr. Railton told me that he felt sure it was yours. But I wished to make sure."

"Yes, sir. But—"

"That cap, Grundy, is the cap that was discovered at the Grammar School this morning!"

"What?" yelled Grundy.

"It was discovered at the Grammar School!" repeated the Head sternly. "It is evident that it was left by the individual who feloniously took the Eastwood Cup! You say it is your cap, and so—"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Grundy.

His brain was in a whirl. How his cap had come to be at the Grammar School was more than he could imagine. And he realised only too well that, to put it bluntly, he was "in the soup"! He stared dazedly from Dr. Holmes to Dr. Monk. The latter's eyes were gleaming in a way that struck Grundy as being very unpleasant.

"Well, Grundy?" barked Dr. Monk.
 Grundy stared back at him rather defiantly. Now that he knew the worst, and had overcome his first amazement, Grundy was not the fellow to show timidity.
 "That is my cap!" growled Grundy. "But I didn't pinch the Eastwood Cup, sir!"
 The Head surveyed him curiously.
 "That is surely an extraordinary statement, Grundy!" he said at last. "If the cap is yours, how did it come to be where it was found?"
 "I dunno, sir! But I didn't take the cup——"
 "Nonsense!" cut in Dr. Monk.
 Grundy glared at him.
 "I tell you I didn't!" he said warmly. "I'll admit I'd thought of pinching it——"
 "What?" ejaculated the Head. "You admit——"
 Grundy realised he had better make a clean breast of things.
 "I went there to take it," he said defiantly. "You see, the Grammar School won it jolly unfairly! The game ought to have been a draw really. So I thought I'd collar the cup, since they hadn't a right to have it, and keep it safe until that ass Gay—I mean, till Gordon Gay—agreed to play the match over again properly. But when I got into the room, the cup wasn't there. It had been pinched already!"
 "Bless my soul!" gasped the Head.
 "There was a burglar!" explained Grundy. "He hit me on the head, and knocked me out before I saw much of him—all I saw was a chap in a mask. When I came to, he'd gone, and I cleared out. And that's all I know!"
 "I totally decline to believe it, Dr. Holmes!" said Dr. Monk cuttingly. "In my opinion, it is an ingenious story to explain the presence of the cap, and yet escape the consequences of the theft of the Eastwood Cup!"
 "Look here——" roared Grundy.
 "Silence, Grundy!" said the Head quietly. "I am afraid I agree entirely with Dr. Monk."
 "You—you think I stole the cup, sir?" stuttered Grundy.
 "There is nothing else for me to believe, after your

peculiar statement, Grundy," said the Head in icy tones. "You seemed to have devised a cunning statement to explain the fact of the cap being found, but it is one which I cannot credit in several particulars. I regret——"
 "Well, you jolly well have a look at this bump!" panted Grundy indignantly, thrusting his shaggy head down towards the Head's nose. "That's where the chap in the mask hit me——"
 "Nonsense, Grundy! That bump is no proof. You may have received it in any other way."
 Grundy gasped, and stood speechless. Indignation rather than alarm was the chief emotion within him. Grundy was a truthful fellow, and to have his word disbelieved infuriated him.
 "But——" he began.
 "Silence, Grundy!" Dr. Holmes turned to Dr. Monk. "I am glad to have discovered the culprit, Dr. Monk, as I feel that the whole unhappy affair is a great stain upon the good name of my school. This boy will, of course, be expelled, and if the cup can be found, it shall be returned to the Grammar School at once."
 "Exp-p-pelled?" stuttered Grundy.
 The Head did not answer. He pressed a bell, and Toby, the School House page, appeared.
 "Send Kildare to me immediately, Toby!"
 The captain of St. Jim's did not take long to arrive. The Head indicated Grundy with a nod.
 "I wish you to take Grundy to the punishment-room," he said in steely tones. "I shall be glad if you will then inform Mr. Linton that Grundy will not be in Form for last lesson this morning!"
 Grundy wrenched himself free as Kildare laid a hand on his arm.
 "Hands off!" roared Grundy wildly. "I jolly well won't be expelled! I——"
 "Don't be a young ass!" said Kildare quietly. "Are you coming with me peaceably, or shall I have to cart you along?"
 Grundy decided to go peaceably. With a last glare at

(Continued on next page.)

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Dr. Monk, he turned and strode from the study, his head high. Whatever happened, Grundy was not going to show the white feather!

CHAPTER 12.

An Amazing Discovery!

CRASH!

The door of Study No. 10 in the Shell passage flew open violently, and Manners came rushing in with such violence that Tom Merry, who was busy with his prep at the table, together with Monty Lowther and Cyrus K. Handcock, upset the ink.

"You—you burbling dummy!" panted Tom.

"For the love of Mike, what's the hurry, buddy?" demanded Handcock warmly, his books having been liberally bespattered by the overturned inkpot. "I guess—"

"The photos!" gasped Manners, utterly heedless of his chums' wrath. "The footer photos—"

"Blow the footer photos!" growled Monty Lowther, mopping ink from his Latin grammar.

After the conversation in the Common-room that evening about Grundy's unhappy fate, Tom, Monty, and Handcock had come up to their study to do their prep. But Manners, the photographic fiend, had gone to the dark-room upstairs to develop photographs.

Apparently, in some mysterious way, the photographs were causing him some excitement.

"The footer photos—" he repeated excitedly.

"The footer photos may be the world to you, but they're a pain in the neck to me!" grunted Cyrus K. Handcock, mopping inkspots off his plus fours with blotting-paper. "Next time you come into a room why not blow the door down with dynamite? It'll be a lot quieter, I guess."

"Listen, you asses!" snorted Manners. "This is important!"

"I know," grinned Monty Lowther. "You've got the finest photograph you've ever had, old chap. So we've heard before."

"You dummy, it's not that! It's about the Eastwood Cup match—Derrington's foul!"

"What about Derrington's foul?" cut in Tom Merry quickly.

"I've got a photo of it!" yelled Manners.

"Great Bohunkus!" ejaculated Handcock, interested at last.

Manners stared round at his chums with gleaming eyes. "I dropped the giddy camera just before that goal was scored," he said, his voice quivering with excitement. "I heard the shutter click, and, of course, I thought it was a wash-out—a photo of the blessed grass, or something. But, since the film had been exposed, I turned it on for the next picture. And I've just developed the spool! That accidental snap is a clear picture, showing Derrington sticking his leg out and tripping up Fatty Wynn—as plain as I see you!"

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. He jumped to his feet. "Where is it? Let's have a look!"

"It's in the dark-room, drying," grinned Manners.

Tom Merry & Co. raced excitedly from the room and up the stairs. In the dark-room Manners showed them the still wet film. Thought it was only a negative as yet, it was perfectly clear, and showed very plainly a deliberate foul on the part of Derrington.

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"That settles it!" he said quietly. "We'll show this photograph to Gordon Gay. He'll have to believe us now!"

"My hat, yes!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, with shining eyes. "This proves it! After he's seen this, Gordon Gay will have to offer to play the match off again—if he's anything of a sportsman!"

"The only thing is," said Manners dryly, "what's the good of playing a match for the Eastwood Cup now? The Eastwood Cup has been stolen!"

"Well, anyway, we can prove what we said was true," said Tom Merry. "That's the chief thing! Manners, how long will it take you to get a print done of this?"

"If you like, I can dry the film quick with chemicals," explained Manners, "and let you have a print quite soon."

"Good man! I'll take this photograph along to the Grammar School to show Gordon Gay to-night. There'll be just time," said Tom Merry.

"I guess I'll go with you, Tommy!" chuckled Handcock. "It ought to be a swell treat seeing Gordon Gay's face when he sees this photograph!"

"My hat, yes!" muttered Monty Lowther, with rather a grim smile. "We'll all go!"

Not long afterwards the chums of Study No. 10 were hurrying down the School House steps on their way to the cycle shed. Blake and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were with them. Herries and Dirby, though they had been as excited

as the rest of the juniors who had all been told now of the evidential snapshot, had not yet finished their prep, and so had reluctantly been forced to stay behind.

As the six School House juniors wheeled out their machines Tom Merry glanced at a lighted window high under the eaves.

In the punishment-room, George Alfred Grundy was spending his last night at St. Jim's, in ignorance of the strange discovery that had been made on Manners' film.

"Poor old Grundy!" muttered Tom, as they sped out of the gates and turned towards the Grammar School. "That blessed Eastwood Cup has got a lot to answer for!"

"Well, so-long, Gay!"

Tom Merry held out his hand. Gordon Gay gripped it. The St. Jim's party were leaving the Grammar School to return home, after their interview with Gordon Gay.

The evidence of the photograph had convinced Gay in a moment of what all the talk in the world would never have convinced him. His face had gone dark; and there and then he had offered a handsome apology on behalf of the Grammar School—an apology which Tom Merry and his companions had accepted gladly.

Gordon Gay was now standing at the gates of the Grammar School, seeing them off. The truth had come as a great shock to him. But, sportsman as he was, he was very glad indeed that the bitter feeling between the two schools had been brought to an end at last.

"We'll play off that match again as soon as possible," he said quietly. "Although the ref didn't see that foul, I shouldn't be happy to let things stand as they are. We'll play again for the Eastwood Cup!"

"Unfortunately, dear boy, the Eastwood Cup has disappeared!" Arthur Augustus reminded him.

"Oh, Grundy will admit where he's hidden it, I suppose," said Gay, with a frown.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I'm sure Grundy did not take it, Gay," he said quietly. "I dunno who did, but it wasn't Grundy."

"But, hang it all, it must have been!" persisted the leader of the Grammarians. "Still, we won't argue over that," he added hastily. "If the cup turns up, we'll play for it again, though. And Derrington won't be in the Grammar School team, I can tell you!"

There was a very grim note in Gay's voice.

"The chap's out now," he added. "When he gets back he'll be sorry he was born, when our chaps get hold of him!"

The St. Jim's juniors mounted their cycles, and, with friendly nods to Gordon Gay, they pedalled away up the dark lane.

"Got to buck up, or we'll be locked out!" said Blake.

There would be trouble if they arrived back at St. Jim's to find that old Taggles had closed the gates. They pedalled hard in consequence, speeding along the gloomy lane.

But they did not get very far!

Jack Blake, swinging round a corner a little ahead of his chums, gave a sudden, startled yell as he found himself whizzing full at a couple of shadowy figures standing by the roadside.

"Look out!"

He swerved desperately, and had the two individuals in the road kept their heads as well as Blake, there would have been no harm done. But one of them—a thick-set man with a cloth cap pulled down over his eyes—sprang backwards to save himself from being run into, just as the leader of the Fourth had swerved. The result was that Blake's front wheel struck the man and knocked him spinning. Blake crashed over, with the bike on top of him, in the grass at the roadside, and Tom Merry and the rest jammed on their brakes, drawing up just in time to avoid further disaster.

The man in the road was scrambling up. From his companion there broke a startled exclamation. Tom Merry glanced swiftly round. He knew that voice!

"Derrington!"

And then from Cyrus K. Handcock there came an excited, amazed shout:

"Great juniors! Take a look at that!"

The American junior was staring down through his horn-rimmed glasses at something lying in the grass at the roadside.

As Blake had whizzed round the bend he had just been in time to see the figure which the juniors now recognised as Derrington, of the Grammar School, handing a large cardboard box to the man in the cloth cap. This box had gone flying when Blake had crashed into the man and sent him spinning, and now it was lying with the lid half off in the long grass at the edge of the lane.

(Continued on page 28.)

TRAVEL WITH DICK AND DANNY ON THE TRAIL OF DOLLARS!



The Dollar-Hunters



CHAPTER 1. Looking for Work!

"IF it wasn't for the expense I'd have it all drawn up by a full-blown lawyer," said Danny Malone, grinning all over his freckled face. "We're a firm, we are—Dollar Hunters, Incorporated."

Dick Yates, his British pal, puckered his brows. "We'll be trying to run before we can walk if we do that," he objected. "Besides, our capital isn't anything to shout about. I've got a thousand dollars in cold storage." Danny Malone, born and bred in New York City, looked glum.

"I can only put up fifty dollars," he said. "That makes me a junior partner. But see here, buddy, I've got the low-down on New York business methods. I can steer you clear of trouble, so that even things up considerable."

"Very likely," agreed Dick. "We won't quarrel about it. We've got to get busy."

"Sure," said Danny. "And the first thing we do is to get a post on Wall Street. That's where the dollars are made, buddy, believe me. If we can get into a broker's office and keep our ears open, maybe we'll get in on the ground floor of a real bonanza."

"If it's anything like the Plenty Bay prospectus I'm not anxious to risk my money," retorted Dick.

Danny scowled darkly at the memory. Dick had come to America to live with his uncle, Sam Schuster, a New York policeman, because he believed that there were more opportunities, especially for making a fortune, in America than in Great Britain. Dick had lost both his parents, so that he had nothing to keep him in the home country.

His first job had been in the office of a solicitor named Van Duren, who, in conjunction with Danny Malone's former employer, had nearly swindled Dick out of the thousand dollars he had inherited from his parents by trying to induce him to buy land at Plenty Bay, in Florida, which was nothing more nor less than barren sandhills.

Alston had subsequently gone to prison for fraud. Both Danny and Dick had lost their jobs, and had made an enemy of Van Duren, although they were not worrying so much about that. They had become fast friends, and were determined to wrest a fortune from New York, working together as partners.

"Buddy," said Danny, "Alston was a rogue. Plenty Bay was a fake, but it's sure

wrong to reckon it's going to be like that all the time. Anyway, I reckon Wall Street is the place for us. What d'you say?"

"Let's go," said Dick.

They travelled by subway in the thick of the morning rush. At their destination they fought their way out to the busy street, amongst the towering skyscrapers, then walked leisurely down Wall Street, more than a little thrilled by their surroundings.

"But now we're here, what do we do?" asked Dick. "We can't walk into every office asking for a job. Besides, what office will employ us both?"

By
**PERCY A.
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NEW YORK ADVENTURE: The Ghost of Wall Street!

"Now, listen to me, buddy," said Danny. "If we can both get in the same office, so much the better for us; but if we can't—well, we can't. We'll have to work in different offices, but if one gets to know about a good investment, then we both share in it. You get me?"

"That's all right," agreed Dick. "But we shan't find jobs

walking along the street—we'll have to look at the advertisements—"

"Nix on that, buddy," said Danny. "Everybody knows that the best jobs are never advertised, though we may have to look 'em up in the end. We'll try our luck first. We say, here in New York, buddy, that opportunity jostles every man's elbow in Wall Street, if he's got the grit to grab it and the wit to see it. Now, step it out and—"

"Look out!" cried Dick.

Danny had hardly time to gape his amazement before Dick had left his side. He dashed madly across the road and charged a white-haired gentleman from the roadway to the sidewalk. A speeding car that would have struck him came to a standstill with a screeching of brakes. The old gentleman fell on the flagstones, but he was practically unhurt. The nearside mudguard of the car just touched Dick and flung him down in the kerb.

Danny rushed to the spot and helped Dick to his feet. The old gentleman scrambled up, helped by a policeman who had sprung from nowhere, apparently. The driver of the car, white-faced and shaken, left his vehicle to make inquiries.

"Anybody hurt?" he asked huskily. "That old joy-walker stood there star-gazing—"

"Yes, yes," put in the old gentleman. "It was my fault, officer—I freely admit it. I am given to daydreaming."

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Dick and Danny get in on the ground floor of a deal, but nearly drop to the basement!

The policeman curled his lip in scorn. "Who let you out without your keeper?" he asked. "Say, if you're that keen on going up to the stars that's sure the way to get there in a hurry—I'll tell the world."

"My fault," repeated the old gentleman. "And if it had not been for this young fellow I'd not be talking to you now."

"You've said it," put in Danny eagerly. "And—gee!" He was staring at the old gentleman.

"It was nothing," said Dick modestly.

"Not saving my life?" exclaimed the old gentleman. "I don't agree. It means a lot to me, and if I can repay the debt, young fellow—"

"Gee, it's a wow!" cried Danny. "Just like a bit out of a book! I'll say it is. Fancy, buddy, you've saved the life of Colonel Tait."

"You know me, eh?" grinned the old gentleman.

"I don't," said Dick.

"Shucks, buddy, don't show your ignorance!" put in Danny. "Most everybody knows Colonel Tait, President of the Inter-State Investment Trust, Inc.—at least, by sight."

"And if I can repay the debt I owe you, young fellow—"

"Ask him for a job," whispered Danny hoarsely. "Don't stand there like a gink."

"But I don't want a reward for doing things like that," said Dick modestly. "I'm glad I was quick enough to be of use."

"Britisher?" asked the colonel.

"Yes, sir."

"And you're looking for a berth?"

"We are—both of us. And if we can both get in the same office—"

"Enough!" cried the colonel. "Come with me—my office is right here."

"Hot diggity!" chuckled Danny. "What did I tell you, buddy? On Wall Street opportunity jostles every man's elbow."

Barring a few minor cuts and bruises neither the colonel nor Dick was very much hurt. Danny was in high glee as they entered the great suite of offices, while the policeman put his notebook away, twirled his baton, and calmly resumed his beat, contenting himself with cautioning the motorist.

"Not so much gas, next time," he growled. "Brake down a bit, unless you're natchurally hankering after going up the river."

The motorist scowled at him, and drove on his way at not quite such a reckless speed.

CHAPTER 2. A Quick Sale!

TWO days later Danny and Dick were installed in the office of the Inter-State Investment Trust, Inc., and giving every satisfaction. Dick was particularly pleased with himself. It seemed to him as if all his fond beliefs of opportunity in America were coming true at last.

Danny was more dubious about it.

"See here, buddy," he said. "I'm not the sort of guy to throw cold water on your ideas, and I sure did think that Colonel Tait was a good bet for us. I'll say he's straight and honest. But you can't fool me all the time, and I'm not sure that things are exactly okay with this firm."

"Oh, I don't know," replied Dick. "Times are hard everywhere."

"Yeah," drawled Danny thoughtfully. "But just you watch."

And after that Dick could not blind himself altogether to the fact that Colonel Tait certainly was worried, and that the shares in the Inter-State Investment Trust slumped rather badly.

But Danny came rushing to Dick, all thoughts of the colonel's troubles gone from his mind.

"I've got it, buddy! The Honduras Loan is going to boom!"

"How d'you know?"

"Heard someone tell the colonel on the phone."

"How could you do that?" asked Dick. "You weren't at the other end of the wire."

"Now, snap out of it, buddy. I was in the colonel's room when he answered the phone. That's how I know. Get your jack out of cold storage. I'll get mine, and we'll buy on a rising market before the rise gets too big. Come on."

Dick was due to go out to lunch just then with Danny, but they did not waste time in eating. They were on Wall Street hoping to make a fortune, for the dollar hunter never troubles about food when there is a chance handy of doubling his capital.

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They ran to the bank, and this time Dick was careful to dodge the policeman, because his uncle, Sam Schuster, had already stopped him once from drawing his dollars out of the bank. True, that fact saved Dick from losing them, but this was a different proposition altogether.

With their dollar bills they rushed round to the offices of the Honduras Loan, and the sight of the busy clerks and many people at the counter confirmed all that Danny had said. Honduras Loan stock was beginning to soar, and lots of buyers were anxious to get in on a good thing.

Feverishly they shouldered their way forward, and put their money down. Of course, they had no need to pay out the full price of the shares. Dick wanted a thousand dollars' worth of script, but there was no need to pay out the whole amount. He put down a third of that sum and he would be called upon to pay up the rest later on, possibly in two instalments.

But they were only just in time. Danny secured his modest share, Dick got his, three more purchasers took up large blocks of shares, and then the clerk in charge of the counter closed his books and shook his head at all the other clamorous customers.

"Too late, gents," he said. "Issue fully subscribed."

There were no more shares for sale to the general public. "Gee!" murmured Danny. "That was fierce while it lasted, but we got what we wanted. We'll wait a few days till the price goes up sky high, then we'll sell out at a profit. Hot diggity, we're starting in on our first million dollars right now, buddy, and further—"

"Quiet!" hissed Dick.

They were going down the stairs. The elevator had just shot up to the floor they had left. The gates clanged open and a burly man strode across the landing and into the offices of the Honduras Loan.

"Did you see who that was?" asked Dick curtly.

"Van Duren," said Danny. "But—"

Dick had bounded back up the stairs. He brushed past the disgruntled and disappointed would-be purchasers and into the offices of the Honduras Loan. He was just in time to see Van Duren raise the counter flap and march across to a private office. The clerks bent over their work and did not even raise their heads, a fact which meant that the solicitor had some official connection with the loan.

Danny was by Dick's elbow, frowning with perplexity.

"Now, what does that mean?" he wanted to know.

"It's a lesson to us," retorted Dick. "Never to buy shares in a firm until we know who are the men behind it. We've rushed into this. Would you have bought if you'd known Van Duren was in it?"

"I don't know," murmured Danny. "Gee, but I'd have wanted to know a bit more about it. Still, it's too late now."

Then a man came rushing in and banged his fist on the counter excitedly.

"I want two thousand dollars in this!" he cried.

"Where's a form? You hear, there, you guys? Two thousand dollars in Honduras Loan."

"Nothing doing, mister," said a clerk, without glancing up. "List closed!"

"Aw, shucks!" growled the man, turning away disgustedly. Then Dick went up to him.

"If you're that keen," he said, "we'll sell out our option on a thousand and fifty dollars' worth at a five per cent profit."

Danny scowled and fingered his lips.

"Say, speak for yourself, buddy," he ventured.

"I'm selling out," declared Dick firmly. "Are you with me?"

"What's the use of being partners if we quarrel on our first deal," said Danny. "Go ahead. I won't argue."

"Right! We sell. A thousand and fifty dollars' worth at five per cent on the option price."

"What d'you know?" asked the man.

"Nothing," replied Dick. "Only there's a man on the Board of Directors we don't like."

The purchaser put back his head and guffawed.

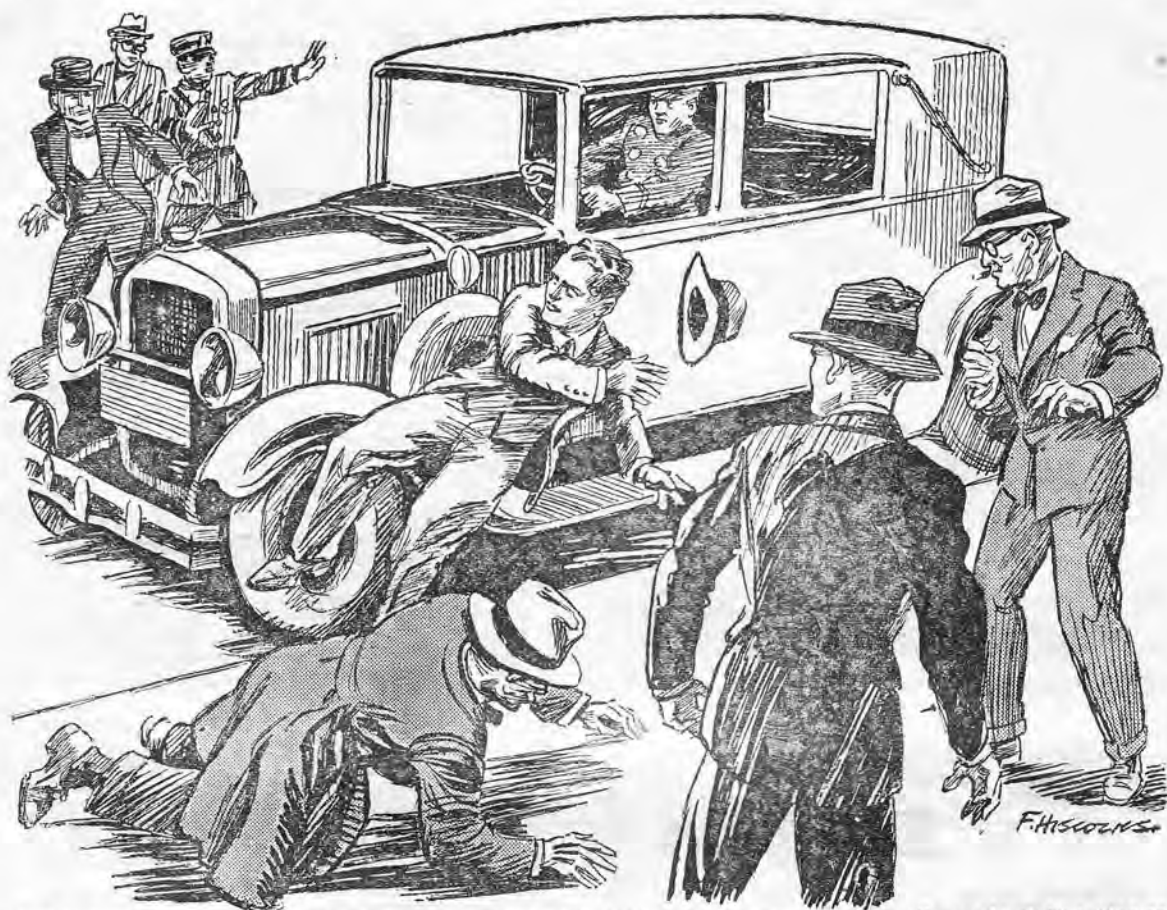
"And you'd draw out of a good thing because you don't like the chairman's nose? Say, that's a good one, that is! Listen! I tell you this Honduras Loan will be soaring to-morrow, and you'll get a hundred per cent profit on your outlay."

"If you believe that, I'm not arguing. You can buy our little lot at a five per cent. Is it a deal?" asked Danny.

"Hot diggity, I'll tell the world! Here, get paper and we'll fix it."

They went to the counter, called a clerk, and registered the transaction in a proper manner. The man was satisfied, and Dick leaved a sigh of relief.

"We've hoodwinked nobody," he said. "He was keen, and he bought. We've made a profit of fifty two and a half dollars in about a quarter of an hour."



Just in time Dick pushed the old gentleman out of the path of the oncoming car, but he himself was struck by a wing and flung to the ground.

"Look here, buddy," said Danny, gripping Dick's arm. "You're my partner in this, and I've stood by you because you had more money ventured than I had. You get me? But we've sold out, and if this stock shoots up to the stars and stays there, so's we might have made hundreds of dollars profit, then I'll just have to punch you squarely on the nose."

"I don't blame you for feeling that way," said Dick. "But I don't trust Van Duren, and I won't risk a cent in anything with which he's connected."

The words had barely left his mouth when the door of the inner office opened, and Van Duren himself stood on the threshold. He glared across at the pals, his eyes glinting angrily.

"What d'you two want?" he snarled.

"Nothing!" snapped Dick.

"You've got it!" retorted Van Duren. "Fade!"

The chums didn't stay to argue. They left those offices and returned to attend to their duties with the Inter-State Investment Trust, Inc.

Colonel Tait looked angry when they arrived.

"You're late!" he snapped. "Five minutes late, and I want one of you to rush this form round to the Honduras Loan."

The pals exchanged troubled glances.

"The list's closed, sir," Danny managed to blurt out.

"What!" The colonel started out of his chair, his face flushed, his white hair bristling. "How d'you know that?"

Dick was recovering from his first embarrassment.

"We bought, and sold out again, sir."

"Is that what made you late?"

"Yes," said Dick.

"But who told you anything about this issue?"

"Gee! We're dollar hunters, colonel," said Danny. "I heard you talking on the phone about Honduras Loan, so we made up our minds to get in on a good thing."

"That was Van Duren talking to me," said the colonel, a trifle tartly. "I don't mind telling you fellows the Inter-State Investment Trust is rather shaky, and I'm plumb anxious to make a lot of dollars as soon as I can. Van Duren said he'd help me."

"Van Duren isn't the man to help anybody except himself," said Dick.

The colonel shot a keen glance at him.

"You seem to know a lot about him."

"We both do," replied Dick. And he told Colonel Tait of his personal experiences with the solicitor. "We bought stock in the Honduras Loan," he concluded. "But when we saw Van Duren parking his sneering face in those offices we sold out the first chance we got, and we're lucky to get away with a five per cent profit."

Colonel Tait rose to his feet and paced his office.

"I've sold a lot of my old stock to get the money to buy this Honduras Loan," he said regretfully.

"Keep it, then, sir," said Danny. "Gee, but it's lucky we're here to warn you against Van—"

The door opened and Van Duren brushed past the pals towards the colonel.

"Say, colonel!" he cried. "What are you hanging back for? I gave you the tip as soon as we started business in Honduras Loan, and now the list's closed!"

"Can't help it!" retorted the colonel. "I told you I'd have to realise on other securities first. In any case, the list's closed, and I don't know that I want to buy Honduras stock now."

There was something very terse and final in his voice. Van Duren stared at him in amazement, then glanced round the room. For the first time he realised that the pals were there, and who they were. His eyes blazed with fury as he faced them.

"You, is it!" he blared. "You cubs have been talking! You—"

"That's enough from you, Van Duren!" snapped the colonel. "These young fellows earn the money I pay them."

"But it's slander, that's what it is!" raved the solicitor. "You answer me, Tait! Are you withholding from Honduras stock because of what those guys have told you about me?"

"Yes!" The word came from the colonel's lips sharply. "I believe them. They bought, and they sold out, before I knew anything about it. That's good enough for me, Van Duren."

"You won't buy, then? I can let you have as many shares as you want."

"No!" snapped the colonel. "I have made up my mind." Van Duren could not miss the finality of that answer. The colour ebbed from his florid face, leaving him shaking with rage and ash.

"You miserable palooka!" he hissed. "You quitter! You'd take the word of those cubs before mine? You'd—you'd—"

"Get out!" cried the colonel.

Danny was turning back his cuffs. "Say the word, boss," he said. "And I'll sure be only too glad to help my buddy throw him out!"

"You lay a finger on me, that's all!" warned Van Duren, backing towards the door. "But mind this, Tait, you'll regret letting me down. You'll be sorry you went back on me. I know that things are phoney with the Inter-State—"

"Careful," warned the colonel, "or I'll have you for libel. We are in a tight corner, but there's nothing phoney. We're all straight and above-board, even if we've met with bad luck."

"Bad luck!" sneered Van Duren. "Yeah, I know. And before twenty-four hours have gone I'll smash you into a thousand little bits, you miserable quitter. I'll teach you to give me the air! I'll—"

"Get out!" roared the colonel.

Instinctively Dick and Danny stepped forward, and Van Duren bolted for it, slamming the door behind him.

When the pals turned back they found the colonel slumped in his chair, a look of utter despair on his face.

"It's the end for Inter-State," he said. "At least, as far as I am concerned. I am getting too old for this job, I guess. I'd better call a meeting of the shareholders."

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"That means working late," said Danny, with a wry face. "To type out notices and mail them off."

"If it's got to be done, then it's got to be done," put in Dick.

The colonel nodded his head grimly.

"It's got to be done," he said. "Sure, it's the best thing to let them decide."

CHAPTER 3.

Payment Suspended!

DICK and Danny worked very late that night, writing stereotyped letters to all the shareholders of the Inter-State Investment Trust, Inc., and mailing them. It was dark when they left the office for home, and Wall Street was deserted.

Neither of them was feeling particularly happy.

"Fierce, I call it!" grumbled Danny. "We get a chance on Wall Street, and it turns out to be no good, and it'll fall down on us!"

"Can't be helped," said Dick stoutly, although he was bitterly disappointed.

"Yeah, I know," said Danny. "You Britishers are mighty quick at saying 'it can't be helped,' but that doesn't help any."

"Well, it can't be helped," Dick persisted. "Colonel Tait is straight and honest. He's run smack into a bad patch, and that might happen to anyone."

"I guess so," agreed Danny.

They were walking swiftly along Wall Street, the great buildings towering high over them and disappearing into the blackness of the sky. And suddenly they became aware of a man walking rapidly along ahead of them. He kept close to the wall all the time, and well in the shadow.

There was nothing so very remarkable about that, and neither of the pals said a word or appeared to notice him until Danny grabbed Dick's arm.

"Buddy," he exclaimed in a hoarse whisper, "he's gone!"

Dick knew at once what he meant, for he had been on the verge of saying the same thing. The man had passed into a dark, sombre shadow, and had not come out of it. He had vanished as completely as if the sidewalk had opened and swallowed him up!

"Where could he have gone to?" asked Dick.

They quickened their pace, and came to the deep shadow. It was under the overhanging porch of the Hoboken Bank building, but the doors were closed and locked.

Hardly able to believe their own eyes, they paused there, staring about them; then from an alleyway near by came the burly figure of a policeman. It was Dick's uncle, Sam Schuster.

"Hallo! You boys staging a bank hold-up?" he asked jovially.

"Nix on that, you big stiff!" growled Danny. "There was a guy walking along the sidewalk, and he seemed to go into nothing just about here. What d'you know about that?"

"Tell me more," snapped Schuster.

But it wasn't much more they could tell him. When he had heard it all Sam went up to the door of the bank and banged on the panel with his baton, calling to the night watchman.

"Hey, Jud, you there?"

From within came the muffled sound of doors opening and shutting, and the jangling of keys. Then the night watchman answered.

"What's the racket? Earthquake, or something? Who is it?"

"This is Schuster—patrol man. Suspicious character seen roaming about these parts. You all okay in there?"

"All okay, Sam, thanks. No need to worry about us, big boy. If there's any tough guys hankering after a dose o' lead, this here's the place to get it quick and hot. You get me?"

"Yeah, sure," said Sam. "But don't sleep yet awhile, that's all."

He walked off, whistling softly to himself, and twirling his baton. The pals, not sure whether to be angry or amused, continued on their way; but at the end of the street a car passed them, not showing any lights. It was crawling, and after their surprise over the ghost it struck them as suspicious.

"Hot diggity!" exclaimed Danny. "Something's liable to happen in a minute. Hold on, buddy!"

They drew into the deep shadow of a doorway and watched the dark car. It came level with the porch of the Hoboken Bank, and as they watched, the pals saw the

shadowy figure of a man dash from the bank across the sidewalk to the car. They saw the door of the car open, and heard it slam. Then the engine roared, and the car sped away at a terrific speed into the night.

"Gosh!" exclaimed Dick. "If that was a ghost he was pretty nippy!" "You've said it, buddy," agreed Danny. "He moved so fast he was blurred. But we can't do a thing. Those guys are well away by now. Let's beat it. I'm not hankering to get mixed up in any gang stuff."

They went home and tried to forget about the ghost of Wall Street. In the morning, however, they were still discussing what it might have meant. But at the office they were so immersed in work, and Colonel Tait was so irritable and worried, that they hadn't time to give the mystery any more thought.

The tape machine clicked with monotonous regularity. Colonel Tait studied the figures, and his hands trembled.

"I've made a mess of things," he groaned. "Look! Van Duren is keeping his word. Inter-State shares are slumping. Honduras Loans are soaring—gone up twenty points overnight!" He slumped down into the chair miserably, then seized a small bundle of cheques. "Here, Yates," he said to Dick. "Pay these into my account at the bank. No use leaving them lying here. Besides, I'll be wanting all the balance I can get at the bank. Hustle, now."

"The bank?" echoed Dick.

"Hoboken Bank!" snapped Tait. "Hustle!"

But in the bank there was confusion. The clerks stood about in little groups, looking worried and talking in whispers. Men came rushing in, setting the swing doors swishing to and fro, smacking down cheques on the counter, and grabbing at the dollar bills that were handed to them under the grills.

"Guess I'll wait a bit," Dick told himself. "That ghost is still haunting the Hoboken Bank."

Then suddenly Dick came face to face with Van Duren.

"Hallo, you meddling pup!" snarled the solicitor. "For two pins I'd sue you for slander and—"

"You're too afraid of the law to do that," retorted Dick.

"What are you doing here, anyway?"

"Waiting and watching what's going to happen over there." He jerked his head towards the Hoboken Bank. Then another thought suddenly occurred to him. "Gosh, I never thought of that before!" He fumbled in his pocket and drew out the prospectus of the Honduras Loan issue.

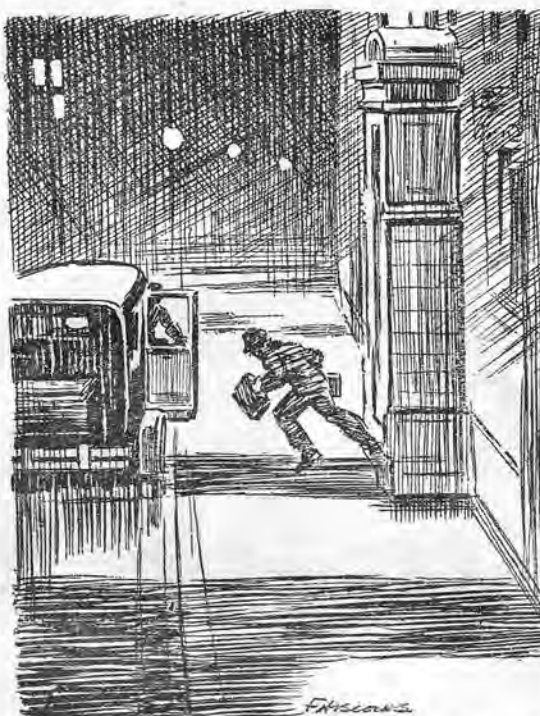
"Here we are!" he exclaimed. "You're Vice-President. The President is John Jenkinson, who is also Vice-President of the Hoboken Bank. Now laugh that off, you rogue."

A hunted look came to Van Duren's eyes.

"Curse you!" he snarled. "One day I'll get even. But now—gee, if Jenkinson has gone back on me—"

He didn't stop to finish the sentence. He was rushing across to the bank to draw out his money.

Dick waited and saw him come out, mopping the perspiration from his brow, and go striding away up the street. Then several cars drew up outside the bank and discharged their load of grim-faced men and half a dozen policemen. All but the uniformed men went inside. There was a hubbub and a clamour. Customers came out, all talking together in a medley of sounds. Then the great doors of the bank were closed, and a notice was fastened to one of the panels—a sinister notice that spelt ruin for hundreds:



As the pals watched they saw a shady figure dash from the bank across the sidewalk and into the car!

"PAYMENT SUSPENDED."

Dick shrugged his shoulders and returned to the office. Danny glanced up, a questioning look in his eyes.

"Okay for us," said Dick, and briefly explained. Then he strode across to Colonel Tait's room.

The colonel was holding the telephone receiver to his ear, and his face was ghastly white.



"What?" he cried. "Payment suspended!" The instrument dropped from his nerveless fingers. "I'm ruined—ruined! Just sent all my cheques round!"

Then Dick placed the cheques on his desk.

"I waited, sir," he said modestly. "Half guessed some-

thing was wrong. I heard the talk afterwards. Jenkinson has absconded with a lot of money, some belonging to the bank and a lot belonging to the Honduras Loan."

The colonel leapt to the tape machine that was clicking away. He picked up the tape and read the latest figures.

"Gee, you're right," he said. "Honduras has slumped badly. Not worth waste paper price. You fellows have saved me, I guess. But I'm getting too old for this job. Wall Street is not what it used to be. Too many sharks about. I'm going to sell out and retire. And if you fellows will be guided by me you'll leave speculation severely alone."

Later that day Danny glanced up from the newspaper he was reading.

"That was a mighty substantial ghost we saw, buddy," he said.

"It was Jenkinson bolting," said Dick. "It says he bribed the night watchman. He smashed the bank and the Honduras Loan, but I'll bet that Van Duren got a fair amount of the Honduras money, although Jenkinson will get most of the blame."

"Correct," said Danny. "The police suspect Van Duren. They have questioned him, but they can't prove anything against him. He's mighty slippery is Van Duren, but one day he'll get his due. But what d'you think? Shall we leave Wall Street and try something else?"

"I think so," replied Dick. "Speculation is too much like gambling. The odds are too great. The Inter-State Investment Trust's saved, but they won't make a lot of money for anybody—not for years to come. We'll try something else—half a dozen taxi-cabs, or a hot dog stall. Let's get busy, Danny. We'll strike something sooner or later."

"Okay with me, buddy," grinned Danny. "This high finance is sending me plumb batty."

THE END.

(Boys, Danny and Dick appear in another thrilling adventure next week. Don't miss it, whatever you do!)

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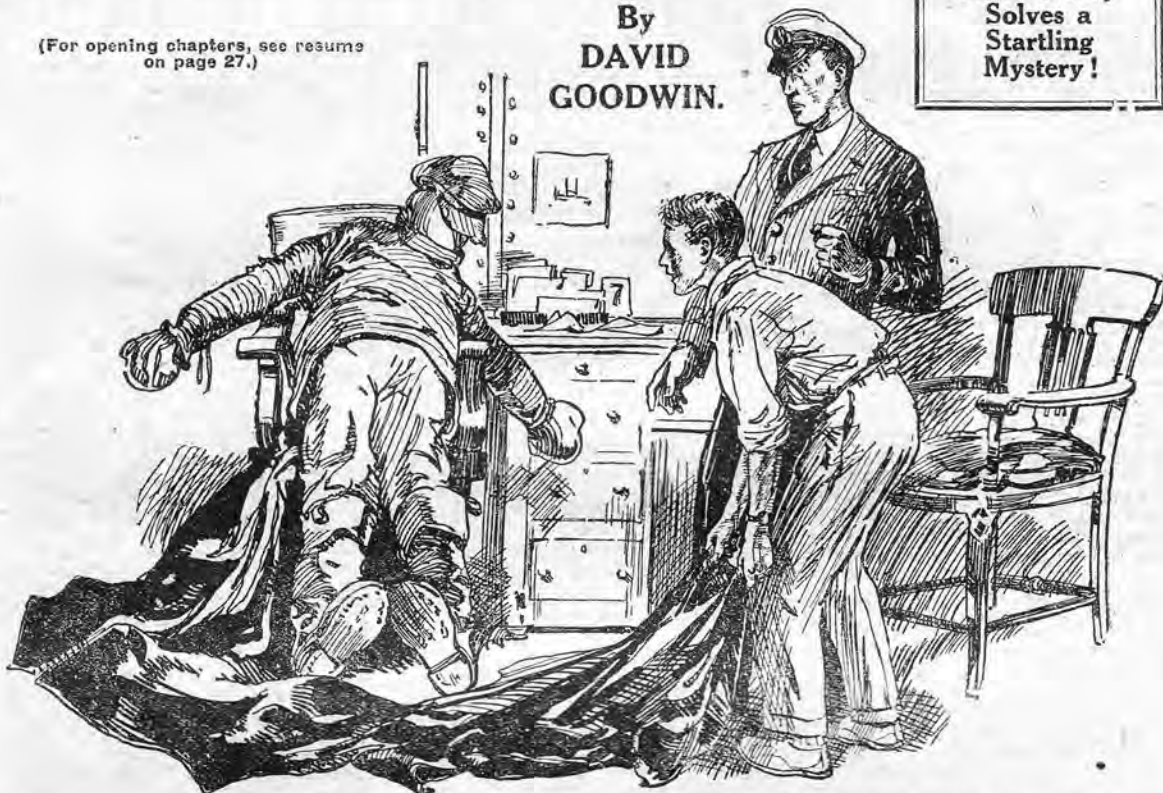
THE FIGHTING MIDDY!

(For opening chapters, see resume on page 27.)

By
**DAVID
GOODWIN.**

**THE POACHER
PINCHED!**

**Ned Hardy
Solves a
Startling
Mystery!**



The Fatal Shot!

BANG! went the twelve-pounder. The smack, a moment afterwards, shot up into the wind and became motionless, heaving on the swells, her canvas slatting wildly, and there was a visible commotion aboard her.

"That's stopped her, sir," cried Ned, who was watching with tense excitement, "and no mistake! She pulled up as sharp as if she'd been hit."

"Lucky for her she wasn't!" said Rourke, as the Speedwell ran down towards the trawler, which was now hove-to.

She was a Dane, sure enough, for under her counter, in small letters, was the name, "Skald-Esbjerg."

But barely a glance did Rourke give to that. His attention was caught by something very different, and the scene he saw made him catch his breath. Ned Hardy was already staring at the trawler's decks with eyes full of dismay. A cold chill ran up his spine.

"Great guns! Did the shell catch her, after all?" muttered Ned.

On the trawler's deck, near the hold, lay a prostrate human figure, in jersey and sea-boots, limp and inert. It was doubled up in gruesome fashion, and the deck around it was dark with blood.

"Good heavens!" gasped Rourke to himself. "The shell must have caught one of them!"

He hailed the smack, whose crew were launching their boat, and the skipper, a big Dane, replied in broken English.

"Ja, I am coming to you!" he cried, in a deep voice. "You haf done your vork vell, captain. You haf killed my mate!"

Rourke felt the blood leave his face as he heard the words. He needed little telling. That grisly scene on the trawler's deck was quite enough. He felt physically sick.

The young officer had been in the last year of the War, as a midshipman, and had seen enough of sudden death to accustom him to it. But this was different. He had

given the order that led to the slaying of an unarmed man, following a peaceful trade. As for Ned Hardy, he felt physically sick, strong though his nerve was.

The dead Danish fisherman was a poacher, certainly, but his offence did not deserve the death penalty. It was an awful sight to Rourke's eyes. He saw two of the crew pick the limp body up and carry it down the smack's hatchway in dead silence.

What would come of it? Would he be held blameless, as the smack was in a prohibited area? Or would he be dismissed from the Service, with an ugly blot upon his name—or worse?

The gunboat had hardly hove-to, some twenty yards from the smack, when the skipper put off in his boat and came alongside the Speedwell.

"You had better come aboard," said Harry, his throat so dry that he could hardly speak.

The Danish skipper did so. He was a large, ruffianly-looking man, in regular North Sea fisherman's garb. Rourke took him into the chart-house alone.

"Vell," said the Dane grimly, "you vill haf to answer for dis, captain!"

"Nobody can regret it more than I do," said Rourke heavily, his heart sinking. "I would give my head to undo it. The shell was not meant to do any actual damage, and I am at a loss to know why it did."

"Ve vos nod doing any harm," said the skipper. "My smack vos outside der Scotch waters, as all mine crew can swear."

"No use saying that. You were a mile inside the limit, and in a prohibited area, to boot!" replied Rourke.

"Vell, den," said the Dane grimly, "ve vos your brisoners; and you vill haf to answer to your admiral and to my country for der dead man who is on my vessel."

Rourke was silent for some moments, for the mishap had hit him hard.

"See here, captain," said the smack's skipper in a lower voice, "perhaps dere is no need for you to be thrown out

from der Navy, nor for me and my vessel to be made brisoners—eh? Subbose ve settle id between us?"

"What do you mean, man?"

"See, der dead man haf a widow and children. Dey get nodings from your Government, because dey vill say he was a poacher, but you gif me von honderd bounds cash for der widow, and ve say no more. I go away vith my ship, der dead man is buried at sea, and all is vell. You can trust your men not to talk."

An overpowering temptation suddenly seized Rourke to close with this offer, which seemed like a rope held out to a drowning man. He was not poor. He had a good private income besides his pay. Would it not put things right, and get him out of this terrible scrape?

"A hundred pounds?" he muttered. "I have not so much money here."

"You haf your cheque-book, ain'd id?" said the Dane eagerly. "Gif me a draft on your bank. It is enough."

Rourke's cheque-book, indeed, was before him in his writing-case, which he kept in the chart-house. His fingers reached it, and mechanically he sat down and took a pen.

"I'll make it five hundred pounds," he murmured, under his breath, "for the widow."

The Danish skipper watched with greedy eyes. But Rourke paused as he opened the cheque-book, and he sat for a moment motionless. Then he flung down the pen and rose to his feet, flushing hotly.

"No," he cried, "I won't do it! I'll act neither like a fool nor a cad, and I don't want to sneak out of it! I'll stand by the consequences!"

The skipper was removed, excitedly protesting. While the arrangements were being made for towing the Skald Ned came up to his cousin. Rourke, in a few words, told him of the skipper's offer and his own refusal.

"Of course you refused!" said Ned. "What did he take you for? That looks fishy to me. Don't take it to heart. I can swear you weren't to blame, and so can we all. Look here, I've been thinking this over. Would you mind me going on the trawler with your prize crew?"

"Yes, go if you like, Ned," said Rourke miserably.

And Ned took him at his word and went.

The gunboat took the smack in tow and started for Aberdeen.

The "Corpse"!

THE Skald—a dismal-looking object enough—dragged heavily astern, and the day passed slowly as the two vessels made their way southward. The sight of the trawler was not calculated to cheer Lieutenant Rourke. Her crew had hoisted the Danish flag at half-mast as a sign of mourning; they had also spread a heavy black cloth over the hatchway of the cabin in which the dead man lay. The prize crew, of course, had not interfered as far as Rourke could see, nor would he have allowed them to.

Rourke bore the strain for over an hour, but the sight of that woe-filled vessel overcame him, and, going into the chart-house, he buried his head in his hands.

"What am I to say to the Admiralty?" he muttered. "And ten times worse, how am I to break it to the poor wretch's widow?"

He was interrupted by a sudden commotion that called him out of the chart-house. There was quite a little riot on the Skald, and the prize crew were quelling it. He saw Mr. Pyke laying about him with a belaying-pin.

"What's the matter?" roared Rourke through the megaphone. "Mutiny?"

Ned Hardy was seen struggling up through the hatchway of the Skald with a huge bundle in his arms.

"Speedwell, ahoy!" he yelled. "Can you slow her and take me aboard, sir? Got a message of great importance to communicate!"

Utterly puzzled, Rourke had the gunboat slowed, amid an excited clatter of foreign tongues from the trawler, and Ned came off in her boat and boarded the Speedwell with his bundle.

"I want to see you in the chart-house, sir," he said eagerly to Rourke, who, wondering what was in the wind, took him there at once.

Ned followed with his burden, which was wrapped in a tarpaulin. He took this off, and flung into Rourke's chair a limp, inert body in jersey and fisherman's boots.

Lieutenant Rourke started back with a cry of horror and turned deadly white.

"How dare you—"

And then broke off suddenly as he saw a wide grin on Ned's face.

Rourke stared again at the

body lolling in the chair. Its limbs were round, like sausages, its sea-boots were tied on with string, and there was some sticky red stuff on the jersey. It had no head to speak of.

"What—what's this?" gasped Rourke.

"The man you shot!" chuckled Ned.

"Great Caesar! D'you mean to say it was a dummy?"

"Dummy it is!" returned Ned, purple with suppressed mirth, for he feared to hurt Rourke's feelings, though he was nearly bursting. "Nobody's killed at all! That's the only blessed victim that met his death on the trawler!"

He pointed to the ridiculous figure in the chair and almost choked.

Rourke gave a great gasp of relief; then, dropping into the chair opposite the dummy, he roared with laughter, and Ned joined him.

"Explain, you young miracle—explain!" panted Rourke, wiping his eyes. "How on earth did you find it out?"

"Why, I thought it looked fishy from the first," said Ned. "We had a jape something like this in our gun-room once. That's why I asked you to let me board the Skald, sir. When she'd been in tow a while and I'd time to look about me, I inspected the blood on deck—they'd tried to mop it up—and soon found it was only paint."

"That increasing my giddy suspicions, so to speak, I went below, having said a word or two to your Mr. Pyke. The foreigners tried to make a fuss, but Pyke and his men kept 'em in order while I reverently inspected the poor corpse in the cabin. Finding this jolly old Guy Fawkes there I brought it tenderly away, and here it is! They were going to take it to pieces, but, having more reverence for the dead, I brought it to you."

Rourke laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Ned, you're the sharpest little beggar in the entire Fleet, and, by Jove, I owe you a debt I shall never be able to repay! They fooled me properly!"

"It did look horridly natural from a distance," said Ned. "It made me feel quite queer. They saw we were bound to catch 'em, so they drew our fire, and faked up this dummy to fool us with. They must have expected they'd scare us into letting 'em go."

"By Jove, yes!" exclaimed Rourke. "And it's as clear as mud, now, what Farrell's trouble was up here. They spoofed him the same way, only he must have paid 'em what they asked, and let them go, and the poor old chap thinks he's a murderer! He fell into the trap, that's clear. No wonder he was miserable! By Jove, I'll send him the corpse by parcel post! Ha, ha!"

Rourke and Ned had another hearty laugh, and went on deck together. They were greeted by a volley of strong language from the Skald, whose excited skipper was waving his arms like a windmill.

"It was only a choke!" he cried. "It was a choke!"

"You'll find it a pretty expensive joke for you, my corpse-peddling friend," returned Rourke calmly, "as soon as we reach Aberdeen."

Twenty-four hours later the Speedwell entered Aberdeen with the poacher smack astern, and when Captain Plowden, of the Ixion, came aboard and heard the tale, the old iron hull of the gunboat boomed and echoed with laughter. The captain complimented Ned heartily, for Rourke gave him the whole credit of the discovery, and that night the three of them dined together in the captain's sumptuous cabin of the Ixion.

But the greatest relief of all was that of Lieutenant Farrell when he received by the parcels express, carriage paid, a limp body on which he had paid blood-money to the extent of hundred pounds sterling.

"Youngster," said Rourke to Ned when he saw the midshipman off by the Southern express, at the expiration of Ned's leave, "I'll never forget the turn you've done me up here!"

"Oh, don't mention it!" said Ned cheerily. "I've had a nailing good cruise, and you've treated me like a brick! It's been much better fun than sticking at home, and I've a yarn for the gun-room mess that'll make some of 'em weep! Good-night, and thank you for a ripping time!"

The express steamed out and thundered on its way south. Twenty hours later Ned was aboard the Victorious in Portsmouth Harbour once more, telling his chums a tale

of the northern seas that made them laugh till the gun-room beams rang again, and Lieutenant Hart came in and restored order with a dirk-sabbard.

(Don't miss the continuation of this thrilling yarn of the fighting Navy, chums. There'll be another ripping instalment in next week's GEM.)

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

MIDSHIPMAN NED HARDY, son of a line of sea captains, is appointed to the Victorious, the same ship from which his brother Ralph has been cashiered in connection with a robbery. Misfortune soon befalls the new snotty, for he is made the scapegoat of a Russian plot to wreck the British Navy. A warning note from Ralph, however, results in Ned establishing his innocence and bringing his enemy to book. Granted leave, in consequence of his meritorious service, Ned joins his cousin Rourke aboard the fishing protection gunboat Speedwell, bound for duty in the North Sea. Surprising a Danish fishing pirate in forbidden waters, Rourke sends a shell signalling across her bows as a signal to heave-to. (New read on.)

WON BY A FOUL!

(Continued from page 29.)

It had been a gleam of silver in the dusk that had caught Hancock's keen eyes. He dropped his cycle and stooped swiftly over the fallen box.

There was a peculiar, choking cry from Derrington. He had seemed a little dazed at the sudden turn of events, but now he sprang into life! He leapt forward as if to prevent Hancock examining the box. But the American junior thrust him aside.

"Stand clear, you!" he snapped. There was a strange gleam in Hancock's eyes. "I guess I'm gonna take a peep into this box, buddy!"

The next instant he straightened himself, holding in his hand something that glittered in the dim light.

"The Eastwood Cup!" yelled Monty Lowther. "Sure!" said Cyrus K. Hancock, surveying Derrington's deathly white face with steady eyes. "It's the Eastwood Cup, O.K.! I guess this'll take some explaining, Derrington!"

Derrington stood as if stupefied. His cheeks were white as chalk. He stared round at the St. Jim's juniors, with a desperate, hunted look. But they were surrounding him, and if he contemplated escape, he saw that it was impossible.

"B-bai Jove!" stuttered Arthur Augustus faintly. "It's the patah's pot! Dewwington, you uttah scoundwel—"

There was a sudden scuffle of feet. The man in the cloth cap had been watching the scene with a curious look on his unshaven countenance. No one had paid much attention to him; it was upon Derrington that the juniors' eyes were bent. And the man to whom the new Grammarian had been handing the stolen cup when Tom Merry and the rest had arrived on the scene suddenly decided that he wanted a change of air! He bolted off into the gloom.

The St. Jim's juniors did not mind very much about him, however. It was Derrington whom they were anxious to deal with!

"Well, Derrington," said Tom Merry, in grim tones, "we'll be interested to hear your explanation of how you came to have this cup in your possession!"

"Bai Jove! Wathah!"

"Sure! It'll be mighty interesting!" drawled Hancock.

Derrington licked his pale lips, but did not speak. Tom Merry smiled dryly.

"You'll come back to the Grammar School with us, then, Derrington," he said, in a quiet tone. "We'll go

straight to Dr. Monk. And don't give us any trouble! It would give me a good deal of pleasure, I'll admit, to thrash you soundly—first, for that foul in the match for the cup, and secondly, for stealing the cup and letting poor old Grundy be sentenced to expulsion!"

Derrington said no word. Wheeling their cycles, with Cyrus K. Hancock carrying the Eastwood Cup, and Derrington walking in their midst, the St. Jim's juniors turned back down the dark lane towards Rylcombe Grammar School.

George Alfred Grundy was not expelled from St. Jim's after all.

The whole school knew next day that Derrington, of the Grammar School, had been proved the guilty party! Grundy's story had been true in every particular, as even the Head now realised. And Dr. Holmes evidently considered that Grundy had suffered enough during those long hours when he had expected expulsion; for he did not flog Grundy for his visit to the Grammar School, as he would otherwise have done. The Head let Grundy off with a good talking to, which was a great relief to George Alfred Grundy!

That Derrington had overheard Grundy's intention, and had laid a trap for him, was proved to the hilt. And had Derrington been content with his evil work, all would have been well so far as he was concerned. But having the valuable Eastwood Cup in his possession, instead of simply hiding it where it would never be found, Derrington had thought he might as well sell it—and that had been his downfall, as it had turned out.

Derrington was not in the Grammar School eleven that fought out the replay for the Eastwood Cup! He had been expelled from the school. And despite all Grundy's arguments, the great George Alfred was not included in the St. Jim's team when that memorable match took place a week or so later.

Nevertheless, Grundy bore no malice. And his cheers were as lusty as anyone's when Tom Merry planted the ball in the Grammar School net for the only goal scored in the match, and when the match over, Lord Eastwood handed the captain of the St. Jim's eleven the handsome silver trophy that had caused so much bitter feeling between the rival schools!

But even Grundy's cheers were no louder than those of Gordon Gay & Co., who, though they had lost the Eastwood Cup, were sportsmen all.

THE END.

(There'll be another rattling fine story of Tom Merry & Co. in next week's GEM, entitled: "THE HEAVYWEIGHT HERO!" It's a real stunner, too, chums, so make sure of reading it by ordering your copy WELL IN ADVANCE.)

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