

24 MORE ARMAMENTS STAMPS FOR YOUR COLLECTION—WITHIN.

The GEM

2^D

In This Issue:

"FORBIDDEN TO FIGHT!"

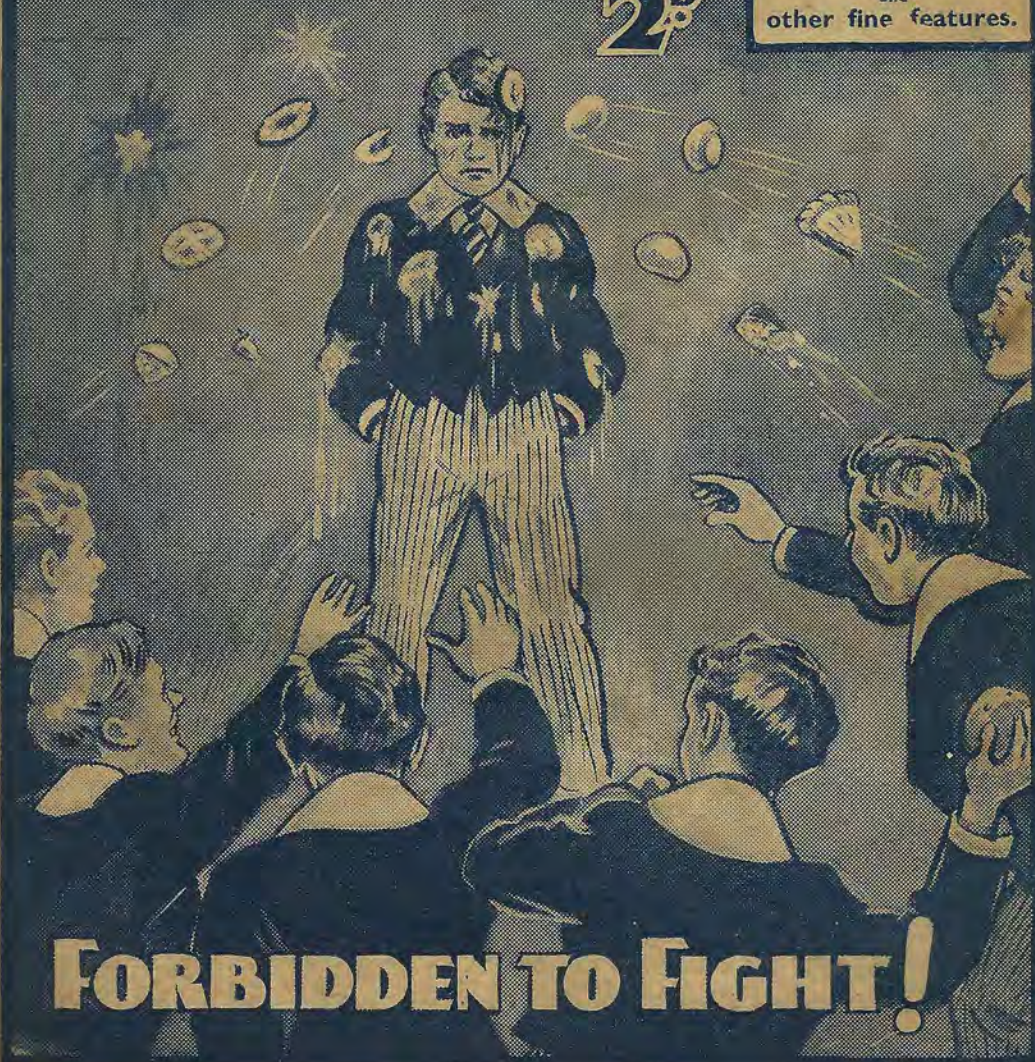
By Martin Clifford.

"BARRED BY the REMOVE!"

By Frank Richards.

also

Illustrated Jokes,
Fun Column, Stamp
Article, Pen Pals,
and
other fine features.



THE GREAT ARMAMENTS RACE

10 More First Prizes of New Bikes!

4,000 Other Grand Prizes

Still to be Won FREE

THE Great FREE Stamp-Collecting Race goes on—giving every reader the opportunity to win a splendid prize. We still want winners for Ten “Hercules” Bikes and 4,000 other grand prizes. If you are not already collecting these stamps every week, join in the race to-day. This is the idea of the scheme:

Every week in GEM we are printing Armament Stamps—BATTLESHIPS, SEARCHLIGHTS, GUNS, and so on. There are now six different kinds to be collected. Just cut them out and stick to as many others as you can get hold of. All the stamps you collected last month (except Bombers and Submarines, which we called in for the first prize-giving) can be used for this month’s contest as well.

This issue contains twenty-four more stamps in all! Ten are on this page, and fourteen more on page 35, which includes **FOUR BONUS DESTROYER** Stamps, while if you also read other popular boys’ papers like “Modern Boy” and “Magnet” you will find more of these stamps in them to help give you a big total.

Next week we shall again ask you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you’ve collected. Which stamps we shall ask for will be a close secret until then.

So go all out to get as many of these stamps as you can. Get your pals to do it, too—swap stamps with them if you like and make the “race” more exciting for everybody.

In the June contest, another Five Bikes and up to 2,000 of the other tip-top prizes will be given away! The biggest collections of stamps called for will win—and readers will be asked to say which prizes they want, too! The remaining prizes will be reserved for the July prize-giving.

No stamps to be sent in yet—we will tell you how and where next week, when we shall also repeat the full competition rules.

OVERSEAS READERS, TOO! You pals who are far away, you’re in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best collections from Overseas Readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

(This offer also appears in “Modern Boy,” “Magnet,” “Detective Weekly,” “Sports Budget,” “Thriller,” “Triumph,” “Champion,” and “Boy’s Cinema.”)



FOURTEEN MORE STAMPS TO KEEP ON PAGE 35, PALS!

THE ST. JIM'S JUNIOR WHO TRIED TO FIGHT HIS WAY INTO THE CRICKET ELEVEN!



Figgins stood up to Grundy's onslaught gallantly, but he was getting severely punished now. The contest was too unequal. But the eighth round did not finish. A sharp voice broke in suddenly: "Stop at once!" Unnoticed in the excitement, Mr. Railton had come into the gym.

CHAPTER 1. Grundy's Programme!

"GET out!"

Half a dozen voices shouted at once, in emphatic tones, as Grundy of the Shell put his head into Study No 6.

It was a meeting of the junior cricket committee.

Committee meetings were serious matters. Interruptions were unwelcome. And an interruption by Grundy of the Shell was the limit.

For all the junior committee knew what Grundy wanted before he opened his mouth. They all knew what a marvellous cricketer he was—according to himself. They all knew that he had urged his claims upon Tom Merry in vain. They all knew that he intended to urge them upon the cricket committee with all the eloquence at his command. And they were not in the least inclined to listen to the eloquence of George Alfred Grundy.

Every member of the committee pointed to the door at once as George Alfred's rugged face looked in.

Jack Blake picked up a cushion, and Figgins of the New House reached for the poker.

"Outside!" rapped Tom Merry, as Grundy stood his ground.

"Buzz off!" said Talbot.

"Clear out!" rapped out Figgins.

"Bunk!"

"Scoot!"

The variety of orders had no more effect upon Grundy than the proverbial effect of water on a duck's back. He simply waited a moment for the storm to pass, and then he spoke quite calmly.

"I understand that this is a meeting of the cricket committee, and—"

"Well, that's right," said Blake. "It's rather a surprise that you understand anything. Now try to understand that you are superfluous, and buzz off!"

"You are interrupting the

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By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Fighting barred—under penalty of a flogging and the "sack"! George Alfred Grundy, so used to punching other chaps, finds himself at the mercy of any fellow who chooses to punch him!

business, Grundy," said Tom Merry, as patiently as he could. "We've got a lot of things to settle this evening, you know."

"I want to point out to you——"

"Get out!"

"That I don't intend to be left out of the cricket any longer——"

"Brain him, somebody!"

"Owing to the crass stupidity of the silly duffer you're fatheaded enough to have for the junior skipper."

"Thanks," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Nothing against you, Merry, personally. Some fellows are born fools in cricket matters."

"They are!" said Blake, with conviction.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you're one of them, Merry! So far my claims to play for St. Jim's have been overlooked!"

"You haven't any claims, you know," Tom Merry explained. "When we play an infants' school or a lunatic asylum, we'll give you a chance. But you must wait till then."

"I only want to point out to the committee that I refuse to be passed over, and that I insist upon playing in the eleven!"

"Oh, you insist!" grinned Blake. "It doesn't matter what the committee decides on the subject?"

"Not at all. Not that I'm a pushing chap in any way; but I've got the honour of the school at heart," said Grundy loftily. "I simply can't stand by idly and see the cricket record queered by a set of incompetent asses!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I have a sense of duty," explained Grundy. "If I could trust you chaps to keep our end up on the cricket field without my help, I'd stand out. But I can't. Your cricket simply makes me weep!"

"My fist will make you weep soon, if you don't clear out!" said Blake ferociously.

"With me in the team, the junior eleven will have a chance. For that reason I simply want to point out to the committee that I'm going to be played, and I want no silly rot about it, either!"

The committee stared at Grundy of the Shell. He almost took their breath away. There were, of course, many cricketers in the Lower Forms who wanted to play for the House or the Junior School, and there was sometimes a considerable amount of grumbling over the selections made.

In the harder matches, Tom Merry made up the best team available. In easier matches, he gave the second-rate players a chance. But players like Grundy had no chance whatever of figuring in a match that counted in the school record.

Grundy smiled with satisfaction as the committee stared blankly at him, feeling that he had made an impression at last.

"So you're going to be played?" ejaculated Tom Merry at last.

"Exactly!"

"Against my will, and against the will of the committee?"

"Yes, if necessary."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Figgins. "Take him away to a lunatic asylum."

"May I respectfully inquire how you are going to manage it, Grundy?" asked Tom Merry politely. "I'm quite interested to know."

"I've come here to tell you," said Grundy

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calmly. "In the first place, I'm going to point out to you, as reasonable chaps, that you'd better play me. I should be perfectly willing to captain the team!"

"Go on!"

"But I won't insist upon that," added Grundy magnanimously.

"Thanks awfully!"

"But I insist upon playing. I may say that I'm equally good at batting, bowling, or fielding," said Grundy modestly.

"You are," agreed Tom Merry cordially, "and a howling idiot at the lot!"

"I didn't come here for funny remarks, Merry."

"You've made nothing else since you came," observed Blake. "If you're finished with your humorous turn, you may as well clear."

"Yes; go and look for a job on the front page of 'Funny Bits,' suggested Figgins, "and for goodness' sake give us a rest!"

"So you refuse to admit my claims?" asked Grundy darkly.

"Yes. Get out!"

"I haven't finished yet."

"Yes, you have. Clear out!"

"I'm going to point out to you that I decline to be overlooked. When I was at Redclyffe——"

"Blow Redclyffe!"

"The skipper didn't want to put me in. I licked him, whopped him till he fairly squirmed," said Grundy. "I did that from a sense of duty. He played me after that. I wouldn't have left a whole bone in him if he hadn't. Even then they used to lose matches, through fellows getting in my way, and all that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So you see what I've decided. Either I'm played in the eleven for both House and the Junior School, or else I'm going to whop the whole committee——"

"What?"

"I shall take you on one at a time, and whop you all round," explained Grundy. "After I've whopped the whole lot of you, I dare say you'll see reason. If you don't, I shall begin again at the beginning, and whop the whole lot of you over again."

"Great Scott!"

"I shall keep this up till I'm in the eleven," said Grundy calmly. "That's the programme."

The committee looked at one another. They had never heard of such a method of persuading a cricket committee before. George Alfred Grundy was full of surprises.

"So that's the programme?" said Tom Merry, with a chuckle.

"That's it!"

"I seem to remember that you started whopping me once before," remarked Tom. "I don't remember that I was the fellow who was whopped, though."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've been doing some special training, with this in view," explained Grundy. "I admit you are rather a handful, and so is Talbot; but I can lick you both. As for the others, I could lick them with one hand."

"Could you, by Jove?" ejaculated Blake.

"Oh, yes!"

"I'll give you a chance!" roared Figgins.

"You won't have any choice about that, Figgins, if you don't do the right thing. Now I'll leave you to think it over, and you can let me have your decision later," said Grundy.

Tom Merry jumped up.

"No need to think it over," he said. "We'll decide at once. Gentlemen, I put it to the meeting that Grundy be forthwith bumped on his neck for his confounded cheek."

"Hear, hear!"

The resolution was passed unanimously, and immediately acted upon.

Like one man, the cricket committee rushed upon Grundy.

"Here, hold on!" roared Grundy, putting up his big hands. "Yaroooh!"

Grundy was big and powerful—the biggest fellow in the Shell—but he was swept off the floor in the grasp of the indignant committee, struggling vainly.

He came down in the doorway with a heavy bump and a loud roar.

"Yoop! Groogh! Yah!"

"Now take him home," said Tom Merry.

Grundy was taken home. He proceeded along the passage to his own study in a succession of terrific bumps.

Bump, bump, bump! rang along the Shell passage.

Fellows looked out of their studies in wonder, and roared with laughter at the sight of Grundy of the Shell being taken home.

Wilkins and Gunn, Grundy's studymates, looked out and stared.

Grundy came bumping up to the door and bumped in.

Wilkins and Gunn cleared out of the way, and the committee swarmed in with Grundy.

They bumped him in the doorway, they bumped him on the floor, they bumped him on the hearth-rug. Finally, they swung him into the air and brought him down on the table with a last terrific bump.

"Yaroooh!" roared George Alfred. "Ow! Ow!"

Leaving him sprawling there, they crowded out of the study, laughing.

The cricket committee resumed business in Study No. 6, uninterrupted further by Grundy of the Shell.

CHAPTER 2.

Getting to Business!

"MY hat!" murmured Wilkins.
"Holy smoke!" ejaculated Gunn.
They stared at Grundy.

The great man was sprawling on his back on the study table, gasping for breath.

For several minutes Grundy lay and gasped, and his studymates gazed and giggled.

Finally, Grundy sat up on the table. His face was crimson, his collar was torn out, and his hair was like a mop. He gasped as if he would never leave off gasping.

"Groooogh! Groooogh! Oh! Ow! Ah! Yah! Wharrer you cackling at, you silly dummies? Groooogh!"

Wilkins and Gunn were grinning. They had been wondering how Grundy's programme would be received by the cricket committee, and they knew now.

"Hurt?" asked Wilkins sympathetically.

"Hurt, you fathead! Groooogh! Do you think a chap can be squashed on the floor fifty times without being hurt? Groooogh!"

"I rather thought they'd cut up rusty," said Gunn, with a shake of the head.

Grundy slid off the table and collapsed into the

armchair Grundy was a warlike youth, but he was quite fed-up for the present. He did not feel inclined to return and argue matters out further with the cricket committee.

He had recovered by tea-time, however, though he still had a few remaining aches and pains.

He was, in fact, the same old Grundy when he sat down at the tea-table and referred to his programme, which was apparently still unaltered.

"I've been treated in a rotten way," he remarked. "I dare say they think I shall give up my claim now to be played in the eleven."

"Better chuck it, old chap!" murmured Wilkins. "They're not—not reasonable on that subject, you know."

"I know that. I'm going to bring 'em to reason. I never stand any rot. I've got my position in the Form to think of."

Wilkins and Gunn wondered in what way Grundy's position in the Form differed from that of any other member of the Shell; but they did not say so.

Evidently Alfred George was unique in his own eyes.

"What's happened," resumed Grundy, "only

THE GEM SPELLING BEE

THIS WEEK'S TEN TEASERS!

How many of the following words are misspelled:

MEASUREABLE
RICOCHETTING
PERPENDICULER
SUBTERANEAN
AMITY
TANGARINE
GRAMAPHONE
VIOLINCELLO
CONSONENT
FEASIBLE

If you can find all the mistakes in that little selection without consulting a dictionary, give yourself a pat on the back! The corrected list will be found on page 31.

makes me more determined. I'm a determined chap, you know. I make it a point never to give in. I've told those asses my programme, and they've replied in an insulting way. Now all that remains to be done is to carry out the programme."

"Oh dear!"

"I suppose you fellows are going to back me up?"

"Oh, yes! Any old thing! Shall we fall on the cricket committee and smite them hip and thigh, and strew the hungry churchyard with their bones?" asked Gunn flippantly.

"Don't be a bigger silly ass than you can help, Gunn! You can be my second, Wilkins, and Gunn can come and cheer."

"Your second?" blinked Wilkins.

"Yes. I've got a number of fights on, you know. I'm going to thrash the whole cricket committee, one after another. On reflection, I

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shall keep Tom Merry and Talbot till the last, as they are rather tough."

"They are, rather," assented Wilkins, with a grin. Wilkins' secret opinion was that even the burly Grundy would find the task of thrashing Tom Merry and Talbot rather above his weight.

"I've got a list of 'em here," said Grundy, referring to a paper. "I'm going to begin with Figgins. He's a New House bouncer, and it will be rather popular to thrash him—on his side, I mean. After Figgins, Kerr—another New House waster. Then Blake of the Fourth, and then Talbot. Tom Merry will come later. Those four will keep me busy for a bit."

"They will!" said Wilkins, with conviction. "I rather think they will keep you very busy."

"There may be a row, you know," said Gunn. "You're always fighting somebody, Grundy, and Railton has his eye on you."

"If you mean that I'm a quarrelsome chap, Gunn—" roared Grundy.

"Not at all!" said Gunn hastily. "Oh, no, not in the least! Quite the reverse. But you can't deny that you have had two or three fights every week, owing to—circumstances, I suppose, and that Railton has spoken to you about it."

"I've explained to Railton that a fellow is bound to do what he considers his duty, as a prominent member of the House."

"Oh, my hat! What did Railton say?"

"He gave me a hundred lines—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at, George Wilkins," said Grundy, frowning. "I don't argue with Railton. No good arguing with a Housemaster; he can always give you lines, and it's against the rules to whop him."

"Whop him!" murmured Gunn. "Whop the Housemaster! Oh crumbs!"

"As for fighting," went on Grundy indignantly, "it's well known that I'm a peaceable chap. I suppose you're alluding to my thumping Levison. The cad was smoking—I don't approve of kids smoking. Then Crooke—he was punching a fag—I don't approve of bullying. Then Racke—I gave Racke a terrific whopping. I admit—but he's a howling cad. As for Clampe, he's a New House rotter; and Piggott, he's a cheeky little beast. And about Gore, we had a row—I forget how it started, but I remember I had some reason for whopping him, though I can't remember what it was. As for Reilly, he said something I didn't like; and as for Kerruish—he was making jokes about my cricket. I don't allow that. I can't remember anybody else I've fought with lately."

"Well, that's enough to go on with," grinned Gunn. "And if you start a fresh lot, you'll have the Housemaster down on you."

"I shall decline to allow Railton to interfere with my personal actions. Now, if you've done tea, you may as well go over and take my challenge to Figgins."

Wilkins looked helplessly at Gunn. They were faithful followers of the great Grundy; they were generally prepared to acquiesce in all that he said and did, but really Grundy seemed to be going a little too far this time.

"I—I say," stammered Wilkins, "hadn't you better think it over? You can't bully your way into the team, you know."

"Bully!" ejaculated Grundy.

"Yes. You see—"

Wilkins broke off as Grundy jumped up and pushed back his cuffs in a businesslike way.

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"Come on!" said Grundy.

"Eh?"

"If there's one thing I pride myself on," said Grundy, "it's that I've never been guilty of such a thing as bullying. Being a strong man, and a splendid boxer, I could bully if I liked; but I should be ashamed to do anything of the sort. I don't allow anybody to call me a bully, George Wilkins. If you're ready—"

"I—I didn't exactly mean that!" gasped Wilkins. "What I meant was, it might look like that to—unreasonable chaps."

"Oh, I see! Well, I'm afraid I can't neglect what I regard as a duty for the sake of unreasonable chaps," said Grundy. "I don't mind you making the suggestion, Wilkins, if that's what you meant—but it doesn't make any difference. Will you go over and see Figgins now?"

"I—I—"

"Tell him I'm ready for him any time he likes, with or without gloves, in the gym, or anywhere, and that I'm going to whop him!" said Grundy.

"Oh dear!"

"And the sooner the quicker, Wilkins. I don't believe in wasting time. I believe in being efficient."

Wilkins looked at Gunn again, but Gunn could not help him.

Wilkins rose slowly.

"Well, I'll go," he said. "If Figgins refuses—"

"In that case I shall come over and pull his nose!" said Grundy darkly. "You may as well mention that. Buck up—it's time we got to business, you know!"

Wilkins left the study.

Grundy pushed the tea-table back against the wall, and took a couple of pairs of boxing-gloves from the bookcase—a proceeding that Gunn observed with some alarm. He tossed a pair over to Gunn.

"Eh? What's the game?" asked Gunn.

"Put 'em on! I want a bit of training before I tackle Figgins—just to see the form I'm in. Don't mind if I hit you a bit hard—I want to get my hand in. I've got rather a special upper-cut with the left I intend for Figgins, and I want to try it on somebody!"

"Look here, you're not going to try your blessed upper-cuts on me!" roared Gunn.

"Oh, don't be a slacker! Put 'em on!"

Grundy squared up to his chum, and Gunn unwillingly started.

A friendly round with the gloves on was all very well, but Grundy was a dreadfully hard hitter, and Gunn looked forward to that special upper-cut with apprehension.

He got it in a few minutes, and went down on the hearthrug with a wild howl.

"Ripping!" exclaimed Grundy enthusiastically.

"Yow-ow-ow!" moaned Gunn, sitting on the hearthrug and holding his jaw.

"Splendid!" said Grundy, his eyes sparkling.

"Caught you a treat, didn't it?"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Did it feel as if a mule had kicked you?" asked Grundy, with interest.

"Yow-ow! Yes, you silly idiot! Yow-ow!"

"Feel as if your chin had been pushed up into your head?"

"Groogh! Yes!"

"Good!" exclaimed Grundy heartily. "That's what I want. Get up, and we'll try it again!"

Gunn got up, but he did not intend to try it again! He had had quite enough of having his

chin pushed up into his head. It was possible to have too much of a good thing, in Gunn's opinion.

He gave Grundy a look and a violent shove, and stamped out of the study.

"Hallo! What's the row?" exclaimed Grundy in astonishment. "Come back, Gunny! I haven't finished yet!"

But Grundy had finished, so far as Gunn was concerned. Gunny did not come back, and George Alfred had to spend his superfluous energy on the punch-ball, while he waited for Wilkins to return from the New House.

House," said Figgins decidedly. "Tell him I'll be there, Wilkins."

"All serene," said Wilkins.

He quitted the study.

"Look here!" said Kerr sharply. "It won't do, Figgy. Grundy's too big for you. He's older, bigger, heavier, and in a higher Form. It's not fair play."

"Well, I don't suppose I shall enjoy it," said Figgins. "But it can't be helped. I can't refuse. The School House cads would snigger."

"That's all very well——"



In the hands of the cricket committee Grundy was bumped into his study, bumped all round the room, and finally he was swung into the air and brought down on the table with a last terrific bump. "Yarooogh!" roared George Alfred. "Ow! Ow!"

CHAPTER 3. The First Fight!

FIGGINS & CO. were in their study, beginning prep, when Wilkins tapped at the door and looked in.

They regarded Wilkins inquiringly.

"I've got a message for you, Figgins," said Wilkins, in rather a dispirited tone. "Grundy's sent you a challenge."

"Blow Grundy!"

"Will you meet him in the gym this evening?"

"Yes, after prep," said Figgins at once.

"Hold on!" said Kerr. "You won't, Figgy. Tell Grundy to go and eat coke, Wilkins!"

"Can't refuse a challenge from the School

"Besides, Grundy's a determined chap—you've heard him say so," grinned Figgins. "If I refused, he would meet me in the quad, and punch my nose, and then I should have to tackle him. So it comes to the same thing."

Kerr frowned.

"But it's all rot! You might as well tackle one of the Fifth. Grundy's as big as most of the Fifth."

"Can't be helped."

"I suppose it will be my turn next," said Kerr angrily. "I don't see the sense of tackling a chap who's got every advantage. It isn't fair play."

"Well, it isn't," said Figgins, with a nod. "But a chap can't refuse. I don't say I can lick a tremendous hooligan like Grundy, but I shall make him sit up a bit, even if he licks me. But as for tackling him afterwards, Kerr, that's rot! You're not big enough, and I won't have it!"

"If you do—I can—"

"Oh, rot! One of us is enough to stand up for the honour of the study. If he won't let it stop there, we'll take him together, and rag him."

Kerr shook his head.

"Let's rag him, anyway," said Fatty Wynn.

"After I've tackled him," said Figgins. "I tell you we can't have the School House saying that the New House funks anybody on that side."

Figgins & Co. settled down to their prep with very thoughtful faces.

Figgins was a great fighting man in the Fourth, and more than equal to most of the Shell; but it was very doubtful whether he could hold his own against a tremendous fellow like Grundy. It was not a fair contest, though Grundy certainly did not intend to be guilty of unfairness. But Figg's pride was aroused, and he did not think for a moment of refusing.

When prep was over, Figgins & Co. proceeded to the gym, and a crowd of New House fellows, having heard the news, went with them.

Redfern sought to dissuade Figgins from the contest, but all in vain.

Figg was determined.

The Terrible Three and the chums of Study No. 6 were in the gym, and they had evidently heard of what was toward.

Tom Merry was looking angry.

"You're not going to fight Grundy, Figgins?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I jolly well am!" replied Figgins at once.

"He's too big for you."

"We shall see."

"Leave him to me!" said Tom. "It's about the cricket, of course, and as cricket captain, it's up to me."

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth. "Leave him to Tom Mewry, Figgins, deah boy. Gwunday is wathah above the weight of a New House chap!"

Figgins snorted.

"The New House will undertake to lick anything the School House can turn out," he said disdainfully.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Shut up, Gussy!" said Blake. "Always putting your blessed foot in it."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Leave him to me," urged Tom. "I don't say I'm anxious to tackle the beast, but it's up to me. I'm bigger than you, Figgins, old chap."

"How much?" said Figgins. "I'm taller!"

"Yaas, but you are wathah skinnay, old chap," remarked D'Arcy.

"You silly ass!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Can't somebody get a gag for Gussy?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah! I was only pointin' out—"

"Here comes Grundy," said Digby.

Grundy of the Shell came in with Wilkins and Gunn.

A crowd of juniors began to collect at once.

Tom Merry strode towards the great George Alfred.

"Look here, Grundy, this won't do!" he exclaimed.

Grundy looked at him loftily.

"If you're spoiling for a fight, you can pick out a fellow near your own size and age," continued Tom. "I'm ready to oblige, and so is Talbot—or Kangaroo—"

"All in good time," said Grundy calmly. "I'm going to thrash the lot of you. I'm only beginning with Figgins."

"I wegard this as a caddish pwoceedin', Gwunday! You cannot bully your way into the eleven!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

Grundy took out his pocket-book, and made a pencil note.

"What on earth are you up to?" asked Wilkins.

"Only making a note," said Grundy calmly. "Putting D'Arcy on the list for bullying."

"Bai Jove!"

"What do you call it, then?" demanded Tom Merry.

"I call it doing my duty by the school," said Grundy. "But I'm not going to argue about it. I've decided, and that's enough. Are you ready, Figgins?"

"Quite!" said Figgins promptly.

"Figg, you ass, leave him to a bigger chap!" urged Talbot of the Shell.

"Rats!" said Figgins. The hero of the New House was already slipping off his jacket. "Got the gloves, Kerr? I am ready, Grundy!"

"Same here!" said Grundy. "I hope you understand, Figgins, that there's nothing personal about this. I simply regard it as a duty."

"And I simply regard you as a silly idiot!" said Figgins politely. "Come on!"

There was evidently nothing to be done in the

The Path to Power!

You all know Billy Bunter, whose amazing exploits at Greyfriars have been chronicled in this paper week after week. Can you imagine him as a hypnotist? In this, his latest role, he's the scream of the age. You'll laugh till your sides fairly ache when you read

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way of interference. But there were some very dark looks cast at Grundy as he faced Figgins for the fight.

Grundy was quite satisfied with his programme, but his satisfaction was not shared by anybody else. Even Wilkins and Gunn were very lukewarm.

Wilkins seconded Grundy, and Kerr acted for Figgins.

The juniors crowded round in a ring, and their remarks showed that all their sympathy was with Figgins—even the School House fellows fervently wished for the victory of the New House champion.

"Time!" said Tom Merry reluctantly.

"Two to one on Grundy!" remarked Levison of the Fourth.

And Blake promptly elbowed Levison out of the ring.

"Go it, Figgins!"

"Thwash the wottah, deah boy!"

Figgins stood up gallantly to his bulky adversary. In size and weight and strength, and length of reach, Grundy had every advantage. But Figgins was a first-rate boxer, and he had heaps of pluck.

In the first round Grundy got as good as he sent. In the second round he tried the special upper-cut which had proved so disastrous to Gunn; but he found Figgins quite wide-awake, and the upper-cut did not come off. Instead of that, Grundy found Figgins' right planted fairly on his nose, and it was Grundy who went down, feeling as if a mule had kicked him.

"By gum!" gasped Grundy.

"Bwavo!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Good old Figgins!"

"Time!"

Third round and fourth were hard and fast. It was a surprise to Grundy to find the Fourth-Former standing up to him for the fifth round. But Figgins stood up like a rock, and Grundy was looking quite as damaged as the New House fellow.

In the sixth round the upper-cut worked at last, and Figgins went down heavily.

Kerr picked him up very anxiously.

Figgins sat on Kerr's knee, and blinked rather ruefully at his second.

"Going on?" asked Kerr dubiously, as Tom Merry glanced at his watch.

Figgins set his teeth.

"I'm going on while I can stand," he said.

"Bravo, Figgins!"

"Pile in, deah boy."

Figgins was looking groggy in the seventh round. So was Grundy.

Figgins had put up a splendid fight, but he was over-matched. But he did not admit defeat. Certainly, if Figgins was licked, Grundy was not likely to be in a much better state at the end of the fight.

"Time!"

The eighth round began.

Figgins stood up to Grundy's onslaught gallantly, but he was getting severely punished now.

The contest was too unequal. But the eighth round did not finish. A sharp voice broke in suddenly:

"Stop at once!"

It was the voice of Mr. Railton, the master of the School House. He had come into the gym unnoticed in the general excitement. And at the Housemaster's voice the combatants dropped their hands and stood panting.

CHAPTER 4.

Blake's Turn!

MR. RAILTON looked sternly at the panting juniors and the silent ring of spectators.

His brows were knitted.

Tom Merry put his watch back into his pocket. It was not needed any longer.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Railton angrily. "How dare you fight in such a way?"

Silence!

"There is no objection to a few rounds with the gloves," said the Housemaster. "But a fight carried on to this extent is against the rules, and you are aware of it."

"Yes, sir!" mumbled Figgins.

"Grundy, you will take five hundred lines!"

"Oh!" said Grundy.

"As for you, Figgins, I shall report your conduct to your Housemaster."

Figgins did not speak.

Grundy peeled off the gloves.

"If you please, sir—" he began.

"Have you anything to say, Grundy?"

"Yes, sir. I challenged Figgins, and he couldn't refuse, so perhaps you won't report him to Mr.



"I told you this wasn't the Suez Canal!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Taylor, 70, Kingsland Crescent, Liverpool 11.

Ratcliff, sir. He hadn't any choice in the matter."

"Indeed! Am I to understand that you are wholly to blame in this matter, Grundy?" asked Mr. Railton, with a curious glance at the burly Shell fellow.

"Oh, no, sir! I considered it my duty to whop Figgins. I don't see that there's any blame in the matter at all."

There was a suppressed giggle in the crowd.

"You are a very quarrelsome boy, Grundy," said Mr. Railton.

"I, sir!" ejaculated Grundy. "Oh, no, sir! I'm a very peaceable chap. Any of the fellows will tell you that, sir. Of course, I never stand any rot."

"Go back to your House at once, Grundy, and write your lines. Figgins, I shall not report you, as Grundy tells me you were not to blame."

Mr. Railton walked away.

Figgins slowly put on his jacket, with Kerr's assistance.

Wilkins helped Grundy.

"Well, that's rather rotten," remarked Grundy.

"We were getting on nicely when Mr. Railton chipped in. I wonder what he's given me five hundred lines for? Fancy calling me a quarrelsome chap, too. Me, you know!"

"It was wathah decent of you to own up,

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Gwunday! Othahwise I should have insisted upon givin' you a feahful waggin'," said Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, you're a silly ass!" said Grundy. And he walked off with Wilkins and Gunn.

Kerr and Fatty Wynn marched Figgins off, to help him to attend to his damages.

The crowd broke up.

"The silly idiot is rather decent in his fat-headed way," Kerr remarked. "If you had been reported to Ratty, old chap, there would have been trouble."

Figgins nodded.

"Yes, he's decent, and I suppose he can't help being a dangerous lunatic," he said. "My hat, I do feel bad!"

"So does Grundy. That's one comfort!"

Grundy had been universally condemned while the fight was on, but his frank confession to save Figgins from punishment disarmed the juniors. They had to acknowledge that Grundy wasn't a bad chap really—in his own way.

Grundy was "feeling bad" that evening, as well as Figgins. He had had the better of the unfinished fight, but he had been sorely handled. His head ached, and his eyes blinked as he ground out lines in the study.

Grundy was a slow hand with lines, and by the time he had written the twentieth he struck.

"I'll take this lot to Levison," he said. "He can do them in my fist, and it's worth five bob. I can't waste my time on lines. Does my nose look bad, Wilkins?"

"Like an overripe strawberry," said Wilkins.

"It feels rather bad. Still, I think I've brought Figgins to his senses. On the whole, I shall leave Blake till to-morrow."

"I think you'd better!" grinned Wilkins.

Levison of the Fourth kindly relieved Grundy of his lines for a consideration. Levison had the dangerous gift of being able to imitate any hand—a gift that had got him into trouble more than once; and as he was generally hard up, he frequently turned a more or less honest penny by doing other fellows' lines—at a shilling a hundred.

Grundy had plenty of money, and five shillings more or less made no difference to him. Instead of doing lines that evening, he spent most of the time rubbing his swollen nose. He was "feeling bad," but his determination was unshaken. He had now put Jack Blake next on the list, and Blake's turn was to come on the morrow.

When Grundy appeared in the Junior Common-room before bed-time, he was eyed very curiously on all sides. His amazing scheme of "whopping" his way into the cricket eleven made the juniors gasp.

It was quite certain that if Tom Merry were to play him, Tom Merry would not remain skipper much longer. But it was also quite certain that Tom would do nothing of the sort—even if the egregious Grundy whopped him black and blue.

But there was consolation in the reflection that, when Tom Merry's turn came, it would be Grundy who would receive the whopping.

Wilkins and Gunn made a feeble attempt to reason with Grundy, but they only wasted their breath. They gave it up in time to avoid a fight in the study.

For a fellow who was not quarrelsome, Grundy was remarkably ready to fight anybody, friend or foe.

The next day Figgins was looking groggy at cricket practice.

Grundy had recovered, however, save for a

swelling on the nose and a shade round one of his eyes. He was ready for further business.

After tea he directed Wilkins to carry his challenge to Jack Blake.

Wilkins flatly declined.

"Look here, I'm fed-up!" he announced. "You can't keep this up, Grundy! You'll have the whole House down on you, and this study will get ragged. Chuck it, and don't be a silly ass!"

Wilkins left the study before the astonished Grundy could reply.

"Well, my hat!" said Grundy at last. "Never mind, you go, Gunny! Where are you going, you ass?"

But Gunn was gone.

Grundy snorted.

He had been deserted by his unfaithful followers; but that made no difference to him. He repaired to Study No. 6 himself.

He found Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy at tea there.

They glared at the cheerful Grundy.

"Don't hurry on my account," said Grundy magnanimously. "But when you're finished, Blake, I'd like you to step into the gym with me."

"Go and eat coke!" growled Blake.

"Weally, Gwunday——"

"You shut up, D'Arcy! You're seventh on my list."

"Bai Jove!"

"Can I rely on you, Blake?"

"I'll come and knock some of the conceit out of you, if you like," said Blake.

"Right-ho!" And Grundy left the study, satisfied.

"Bai Jove! I weally think you had bettah leave him to me, Blake," remarked Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "He is wathah too stwong for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake, Herries, and Dig.

"Weally, deah boys, I fail to see anythin' to cackle at. I wathah think I could lick Gwunday."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you're goin' to cackle at my wemarks, you asses——"

"Bow-wow!" said Blake. "Grundy would squash you. Gussy!"

"I should uttahly wefuse to be squashed, Blake," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity, "and I weally considah that you had bettah leave him to me."

But Blake only chuckled, and declined to leave Grundy to Arthur Augustus.

After tea the four Fourth Formers repaired to the gym, and the scene of the previous evening was repeated—till Kildare of the Sixth, coming in, stopped the fight.

Blake's friends were glad enough to see it stopped, for the Fourth Former, plucky as he was, was hardly a match for the burly Shell fellow.

But Grundy was wrathful.

However, Kildare was not to be argued with. He gave Blake a hundred lines, and took Grundy by the collar and marched him off to the House-master.

Mr. Railton looked very grim as the untidy junior was marched into his study.

"More fighting?" he said.

"Yes, sir," said Kildare. "I thought I'd better bring Grundy to you. He's the most quarrelsome junior in the House."

"Well, I like that!" said Grundy indignantly.

"I have given you lines, Grundy," said Mr.

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty
Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

A reader in the paperhanging business says his employer expected him to paper four rooms in one day. That was more than he could stick!

I hear Dame Taggles found two wrens perched on her radio set. Wonderful what you get on the wireless nowadays, isn't it?

The eagle can lift a heavier weight than any other bird, states Skimpole. So I was wrong about the crane. Ow!

"In the matter of health, we are advancing on a broad front," said the school governor. In other words, the school is marching on its stomach?

Glyn tells me he has invented a corkscrew without a spiral. It was time somebody got this thing straight!

News: Man in dock at Wayland insisted on talking all through the case. The judge got just one sentence in!

Story: "You mixed beans, peas, pork and cabbage all together for dinner," stormed the major. "Yes," admitted the new cook. "I made a hash of it!"

"Broadcast Talk Creates Sensation." "Mik-ing" them sit up?

Your vegetable garden may now be dug to a depth of two feet, states a gardening authority. It may, but knowing amateur gardeners, I rather doubt it.

Wayland centenarian says he attributes his great age solely to the English climate. Well, that's enough to put years on anybody!

"Polar Rescuers in Storm." They might be excused for telegraphing: "Snow use trying."

Special Prize to Baggy Trimble for thinking that the headline "British Ship's S O S" referred to the food supplies. Not a sausage!

"Some of the most commonplace things are quite difficult to grasp," says D'Arcy. The soap in the bath, for instance?

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine—and I'm out for this week! Chin, chin, chaps!

Railton quietly. "I shall cane you this time. Hold out your hand!"

"The fact is, sir—"

"Hold out your hand!" thundered Mr. Railton. Grundy unwillingly obeyed, and the cane came down.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Now you may go," said Mr. Railton, "and the next time you are reported to me for fighting, Grundy, I shall deal with you much more severely."

"Yow-wow!" groaned Grundy.

He left the Housemaster's study with his hands tucked under his arms, and went down the passage looking as if he were trying to fold himself like a pocket-knife.

Wilkins and Gunn met him at the end of the passage.

"Hard cheese!" said Wilkins sympathetically. "I suppose you're going to chuck up the game now, Grundy?"

"Certainly not! Railton's an unreasonable chap; he seems to think that I'm to blame, somehow—"

"Go hon!" murmured Gunn.

"But persecution of this sort only puts my back up. I didn't finish licking Blake, but I think he's had enough. Noble comes next; I shall tackle him soon."

"Oh, my hat!" was all Wilkins and Gunn could say. Grundy was evidently a stickler.

In Study No. 6 Jack Blake was working at his prep under difficulties. One of his eyes was closed, and he had to leave off work occasionally to mop his nose. His chums were sympathetic.

"You jolly nearly licked him," said Herries consolingly. "After all, he's a head taller than you are, old chap! You couldn't expect much."

Blake grunted.

"Yaas, I weally wish you had left him to me, deah boy," remarked Artahur Augustus. "I don't want to say 'I told you so,' but weally you must admit that I recommended you to leave him to me."

Blake's reply to that consolatory remark came in the form of a Latin dictionary hurtling through the air—much to Arthur Augustus' surprise.

And after that Arthur Augustus forbore from any attempts at consolation.

CHAPTER 5.

Up to Gussy!

"RAILTON'S an ass!"

Grundy delivered himself of that opinion at tea in the study the next day.

"Is he?" yawned Wilkins. "Pass the jam!"

"A Housemaster's business isn't to keep on interfering with a chap who's doing his duty—a painful duty," said Grundy. "Railton has no tact. I felt like dotting him in the eye yesterday, I can tell you!"

"Oh!"

"Still, I'm glad I kept my temper, on the whole. I had to leave Redclyffe for whopping a prefect, and I suppose it would be considered rather serious whopping a Housemaster."

"I—I rather think it would!" gasped Wilkins.

"Still, I shan't stand for much more from

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Railton," said Grundy darkly. "He seems to have made a dead set on me! I can't get into a fight now without Railton coming down on me. Sickening, I call it!"

"Awful!" said Gunn.

Grundy did not heed. He was too busy with great thoughts to think of such commonplace things.

"The only thing is, I shall have to keep Railton out of it," he said. "I shan't whop the next one in the school. When you take my challenge to Talbot, Wilkins—"

"Oh, you sending a challenge to Talbot?"

"Of course! This evening!"

"Don't you think you'd better chuck it, old chap?" urged Wilkins. "You'll be had up before the Head for a flogging next, you know!"

"I think I've already mentioned it, Wilkins, that this is a matter of principle to me!" said Grundy, frowning. "I'm acting for the good of the school, in the long run, though those duffers can't see it at present! I've thrashed two of them. I haven't been allowed to finish the job, owing to Railton and Kildare chipping in. But they were practically whopped. But I'm going to make a thorough job of Talbot. You'll ask him to come down behind the boathouse for our little scrap. Railton won't spot us there."

"I say, Talbot's awfully hot stuff in a scrap!" urged Wilkins. "He hardly ever gets into a scrap, but when he does—"

"I know; I'm glad of it," said Grundy. "Fellows have been saying things about me because Blake and Figgins are younger than I am, and not so big. They won't understand that I'm acting on principle. But they can't say anything about my whopping Talbot. All the Shell thinks he's a match for me. So he would be, you know, only I'm a remarkably good boxer—as good at boxing as I am at cricket, really—something a bit out of the common, you know!"

"You're a bit out of the common in a good many ways, old scout!" grinned Gunn.

Grundy nodded complacently.

"Yes; I'm not the kind of fellow you'd pass in a crowd without noticing him, Gunny. I pride myself on that!"

"Oh, no!" agreed Gunn. "You see, your face would—"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean—ahem—"

"If you're being funny, Gunn—" roared Grundy.

"Not at all," said Gunn hastily. "Gunn had no desire to be put on Grundy's list. 'I—I mean, your distinguished look—'"

"Oh, I see! Yes, I've been told before that I'm a bit distinguished," said Grundy, with a nod. "I don't brag of it—it just happens, you know. I've got rather more gifts in most ways than the usual run of chaps; it happens like that, you know. Have you got a cold, Wilkins?"

"N-no!" gasped Wilkins, who was gurgling painfully. "A—a bit of jam went down the wrong way!"

"You should eat more carefully," said Grundy admonishingly. "Well, when you've done tea, go to Talbot with my message! Any time to-morrow behind the boathouse will suit me."

And Wilkins carried that message to Talbot's study after tea.

He found Talbot and Gore and Skimpole at prep, and delivered his message.

Talbot laughed.

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"Right-ho! After lessons," he said.

"Sorry, you know!" remarked Wilkins. "It's no use arguing with Grundy; I've tried it. But he's fairly off his dot, you know!"

"Yes, I know!" said Talbot, laughing.

"I dare say you'll lick him," said Wilkins. "He's my pal, and a good chap; but I must say a licking would do him good, and I hope he'll get it!"

"He will!" grinned Gore. "And you can tell him we'll come and see him get it!"

Before long all the School House juniors knew that a meeting was arranged between Talbot and Grundy for the morrow.

Tom Merry heard it with intense exasperation.

"Something will have to be done with that thumping ass!" he told his chums. "It would be comic, if it weren't such a worry. But the silly chump will crock all the cricket team one after another!"

"He'll get crocked this time," remarked Manners. "If he licks Talbot, we'll give him a Form ragging to cure him. But a thrashing will do him more good, and I think Talbot can handle him. It will be worth watching; I'll jolly well take my camera, and get some snaps!"

The news was received in Study No. 6 with mixed feelings.

"Talbot's turn now!" said Herries. "Still, Talbot may lick him!"

"I scarcely think Talbot is up to Gwunday's weight, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "He's a tremendous chap, you know. I should be sowwy to see poor old Talbot knocked about like poor old Blake!"

"Not so much of your poor old Blake!" growled that youth. "Do you think I'm made of putty, and can't stand a thumping or two, you fathead?"

"Weally, Blake, I was bein' sympathetic."

"Well, don't!" said Blake ungratefully.

"I wegard you as a wathah unfeelin' ass, Blake. However, I was goin' to we mark that it was up to me."

"Eh?"

"Gwunday is goin' altogethah too far. I think I had better wemonstwah with him, and if that is no use, give him a feafuh thwashin'!"

"You silly ass!" roared Blake, exasperated. "If I can't lick the beast, how do you think you're going to handle him?"

"It's wathah a diffewent mattah, Blake."

"What?"

"I am wathah a wippin' boxah!"

"You shrieking ass—"

"I wefuse to be called a shwiekin' ass, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I wegard it as an oppowbious expression."

Blake glared at his noble chum. He had failed to lick the tremendous Grundy, tough fighting-man as he certainly was. It was decidedly exasperating to hear the slim, elegant swell of St. Jim's expressing the opinion that he could do it.

"You frabjous ass!" said Blake witheringly. "I've told you a hundred times that I could make shavings of you with one hand, so—"

"Yaas, you have told me so, deah boy, and I have allowed you to wun on out of politeness," explained Arthur Augustus. "But you couldn't weally, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Herries and Dig, greatly tickled by the expression on Jack Blake's face at that moment.

"You—you—you jabberwock!" gasped Blake. "I've a jolly good mind to lick you, just to stop your burbling!"

"I wefuse to heah my wemarks chawactewised as burblin', Blake! And I decline to be bothahed with lickin' you now, as I am goin' to lick Gwunday! I weward it as bein' up to me to put a stoppah on this wot!"

And Arthur Augustus walked to the door with a very determined expression on his face.

"You awful ass!" shrieked Blake. "Grundy will eat you!"

"I shall wefuse to allow him to do anythin' of the sort!"

"You—you—you—"

"Pway come with me and see fair play, deah boys! It will be all wight. You can wely on me," said Arthur Augustus reassuringly.

And he walked out of the study.

Blake, Herries, and Digby regarded one another with helpless looks.

"Come after him and drag him back," said Blake at last. "Why, that big beast wouldn't leave a whole bone in the silly duffer!"

The three juniors rushed out of the study.

But Arthur Augustus was gone.

He had gone to the Common-room in search of George Alfred Grundy, and his chums, with great misgivings, followed him there.

CHAPTER 6.

Thrashing Grundy!

"GWUNDAY!"

"Hallo!"

"A word with you, Gwunday!"

"Two, if you like," said Grundy affably.

Grundy was sprawling on the sofa in the Common-room when the swell of St. Jim's found him.

The determined expression on Arthur Augustus' noble countenance attracted some attention, and when he marched up to George Alfred Grundy a good many glances followed him.

"I am goin' to speak to you vewy plainly, Gwunday," said Arthur Augustus, in measured tones. "The whole House is gettin' fed-up with your silly wor."

"Eh?"

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther heartily.

"That's right on the wicket, at any rate! Endorsed and passed unanimously, also nem. con."

"I am goin' to speak like a candid fwient to you, Gwunday. You are no cwicketah, and your play is more than enough to make a cat laugh. It is quite imposs for you to play in any match unless we were playin' a home for idiots! If Tom Mewwy put you in the team we should



"Yow-ow-ow!" moaned Gunn, sitting on the hearthrug and holding his jaw. "Did that upper-cut feel as if a mule had kicked you?" asked Grundy. "Yow-ow! Yes, you silly idiot!" gasped Gunn.

"Good!" exclaimed George Alfred heartily. "Get up, and we'll try it again!"

scalp Tom Mewwy. I want you to undahstand that cleahly, so that you will realise that the soonah you chuck up playin' the giddy ox the wisah it will be. There has been quite enough of your wot. You are goin' to stop it!"

"Am I?" said Grundy, blinking. "And who's going to make me?"

"I am!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Grundy.

"I would wathah wemonstwah with you in a fwiently way and bwing you to weason," said Arthur Augustus. "But if you wefuse to come to weason, I shah have no wesource but to admintash a feahful thwashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Grundy.

There was a general grin round the Common-room. The slim and elegant swell of St. Jim's did not look much like thrashing the burly Grundy.

"I see no weason for laughtah, Gwunday. You will not find it a laughin' mattah if I begin thwashin' you!" said Arthur Augustus warmly.

"I think I shall, rather!" chuckled Grundy. "Here, Blake, take this silly idiot away and keep him quiet! I don't want to hurt him!"

"Come away, Gussy," said Blake.

"I wefuse to come away, Blake! Gwunday has not yet assured me that he is goin' to stop playin' the giddy ox."

"He couldn't!" said Lowther. "Grundy was born a silly ox. Weren't you, Grundy?"

"I suppose that's meant for a joke," remarked Grundy. "I shall put you on my list, Lowther. You will come next after Tom Merry."

"All serene!" said Lowther. "Tommy, dear boy, you'll leave a bit for me, won't you, when you've finished with Grundy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gwunday, I take that remark to mean that you are goin' on. I have already remarked that you leave me no wesource but to thwash you. I wegard it as bein' up to me to bwing you to your senses. You are becomin' a geneveal nuisance to the whole House. Will you come into the gym or have it here?"

Grundy rolled on the sofa in mirth.

Arthur Augustus' noble eye gleamed at him through his eyeglass. Arthur Augustus was in deadly earnest.

"Leave him to me, Gussy!" called out Talbot. "It's my turn next, you know, and I'm booked for the slaughter to-morrow!"

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"No, deah boy! I'm goin' to stop Gwunday makin' himself a geneveal nuisance in the House. It's time somethin' was done, and I'm goin' to do it! Gwunday, I will twouble you to follow me to the gym!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Grundy.

"Will you follow me to the gym, Gwunday, or will you compel me to chawactise you as a wotten tunk?" demanded D'Arcy.

"Take him away!" gasped Grundy. "He's too funny to live; but I don't want the job of slaughtering him! Take him away, somebody!"

"Gussy, old chap, don't bite off more than you can chew!" said Kangaroo.

"Let him run on," chuckled Mellish. "Go it, Gussy! This will be worth seeing!"

"Weally, Mellish—"

"Play you at chess, Gussy!" said Julian of the Fourth.

"Yaas, deah boy. Aftah I have thwashed Gwunday."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Grundy, in a paroxysm

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of mirth. "Take him away! Hallo! Groogh! What are you at? Groogh!"

Arthur Augustus seized one of Grundy's ears and jerked him off the sofa.

Grundy roared, but not with laughter, as he bumped on the floor.

"Now will you come on, you wottah?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, dropping his eyeglass.

He removed his jacket, threw it to Blake, and squared up very scientifically.

Grundy jumped up in towering wrath.

"You blessed tailor's dummy!" he gasped. "I won't fight you, but I'll shove you across my knee and spank you, by gum!"

"I wefuse to be spanked, Gwunday! Oh, bai Jove, I'm weady for you, you wottah!"

Grundy was rushing on like a whirlwind.

The juniors looked on grimly. As Arthur Augustus had started the row, fairly thrusting himself into the lion's jaw, as it were, his chums were not entitled to interfere. He had to fight it out. That he was fully prepared to do. And, though he was physically no match for the burly Grundy, he was wonderfully active, he had plenty of science, and his pluck was simply unlimited.

He stood up to Grundy like David to Goliath, and as Grundy came in like a bull, the slim Fourth Former parried his heavy drives and drove in his right on the side of Grundy's square jaw and sent him spinning.

Grundy staggered over the sofa and sprawled on it, in great surprise.

"Well hit!" shouted Blake, in great delight.

"Bravo, Gussy!"

"Shut the door!" exclaimed Wilkins. "We don't want a prefect here."

Grundy rolled off the sofa and jumped up. He rubbed his jaw for a moment. He would never have suspected the swell of St. Jim's of possessing the strength to deliver a drive like that.

"My hat!" gasped Grundy.

"Have you had enough, Gwunday?"

"Enough! My hat! I'll show you in a minute! Why, I'll make shavings of you!" yelled Grundy. He rushed on again.

This time D'Arcy's skill did not save him. He caught a tremendous drive on the chest, with all Grundy's great strength behind it, and it fairly lifted him off his feet. He flew away backwards and bumped down on the floor.

"Ow!"

Blake ran forward anxiously.

"Gussy, old man—"

Arthur Augustus blinked up at him.

"Bai Jove! Was that an earthquake?" he gasped.

Grundy grinned.

"Take him away!" he said. "I don't want to hurt him."

"Gwoogh!"

Blake and Digby raised up the swell of St. Jim's.

That tremendous blow had told on Arthur Augustus. He stood limp and unsteady.

"Come on!" said Blake.

"Wats!"

"Look here, Gussy—" urged Dig.

"Gwoogh! I am goin' to thwash Gwunday!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"But look here, old chap—"

"Wats! I am goin' to thwash Gwunday! Are you weady, Gwunday?"

"Oh, quite!" grinned Grundy. "I warn you that you'll be laid up afterwards. But if you ask for it, you can have it."



Abraham Lincoln, hero of the American Civil War. His portrait was replaced by—

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—George Washington, American citizen No. 1, who appears on the most frequently used U.S.A. stamps.

I was re-mounting my collection of U.S.A. stamps the other day, and though I have many times examined them before, of course, several points puzzled me anew.

Why, for instance, I asked myself, is Benjamin Franklin so frequently coupled with George Washington on most of the States' issues? Washington's prominence is thoroughly understandable, for, to the Americans, he is undoubtedly American No. 1.

Then I remembered that Franklin was the first U.S.A. Postmaster-General, besides being a brilliant diplomat and writer. That might have satisfied me had I not discovered also that Franklin was postmaster only when the U.S. was a British colony.

No, the truth of the matter is that it was because he organised some private posts for the revolutionaries' benefit that Franklin, like Washington, has figured on most American series.

THE FIRST PRESIDENT.

Another interesting point you'll discover is the fact that Washington's portrait always appears on the most frequently used stamps—usually the 2-cents value. Possibly you may remember the attractive Washington commemoratives, which honoured the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of the States' first president.

While the bicentenary celebrations lasted, these stamps, all featuring George, replaced the regular issues, and all was well. When, however, the old stamps were reverted to, it was found that the postal rates had increased, with the result that the most frequently needed stamp was the 3 cents.

This value in the original series bore the

portrait of President Lincoln, who was so tragically assassinated after the American Civil War. So, to be consistent, the authorities introduced a new "Washington," and, to save time and trouble, modified the handsome 2 cents of the bicentenary set. Hence you have the same design for both the 2 and 3 cents items.

INTERESTING ITEMS.

There's a wealth of interest in the designs of the many U.S.A. pictorials, and, if you have any, study them very carefully. The 4 cents of the Pan-American Exhibition of 1901, for example. Have you noticed that there's a picture of the Capitol, in Washington, behind the odd-looking automobile in the foreground?

Again, the Hudson-Fulton item of 1909 commemorated the three hundredth anniversary of the discovery by intrepid Henry Hudson of the river which now bears his name, and its conquest by the steamboat. In this stamp's design are recorded all the then known means of travelling on this famous river—Red Indian canoes of the pre-discovery days, the *Half Moon* in which Hudson sailed up the waterway in September, 1609, and the *Clermont*, the child of Robert Fulton's brain, and the first steamboat to traverse the Hudson. The *Clermont's* engines, incidentally, were built by our own Boulton and Watt, in Scotland.

Coming to more recent years, do you know what the flowers are in the borders of the Pilgrim Fathers' Tercentenaries of 1920? In case you don't, those on the left are sprigs of hawthorn blossom; those on the right, some trailing arbutus. The former flower is known as the British may-flower, the latter, the American variety. One of these plants is said to have provided the name for the *Mayflower*, the flagship of the expedition which laid the foundation for the world's first and greatest people's republic.

"Pway stand aside, Blake!"

"Gussy—"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus shoved past his anxious chums, and advanced upon Grundy of the Shell.

In a moment more they were fighting hammer and tongs. To Grundy's surprise, he received a good many hard knocks; but the two were altogether too unequally matched, and Arthur Augustus went down again.

He was gasping on the floor, when the door opened and Darrell of the Sixth came in.

"Bed-time!" said Darrell. "Hallo! Fighting again, Grundy?"

"Oh, no!" said Grundy. "This isn't really a fight—only a little game."

"Gwoogh!"

"Get up, D'Arcy!" said Darrell, frowning.

"Gwoogh! It's all wight, Dawwell! I'm only thwashin' Gwunday."

The prefect grinned.

"Grundy and D'Arcy, go to Mr. Railton's study!" he said. "The rest of you go off to bed!"

"Weally, Dawwell—"

"Orders are for Grundy to be reported every time he is found fighting," said Darrell. "You hear me, Grundy?"

Grundy and Arthur Augustus left the Common-room to report themselves, and the rest of the juniors made their way to the dormitories.

CHAPTER 7.

Put on His Honour!

MR. RAILTON looked inquiringly at the two juniors as they presented themselves.

"Well?" he asked.

"Dawwell has requested us to report ourselves to you, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "I am THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,583.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Well?" rapped out Mr. Railton.

"You—you see, sir, I—I'm not a quarrelsome chap at all," faltered Grundy, vainly seeking to make himself understood. "I feel bound to whop the cricket committee for leaving a player like me out of the team—"

"You young ruffian!" exclaimed the House-master.

"Eh?"

"You seem to have no sense of propriety at all, Grundy! I fear that this school is no place for a boy of your disposition."

"I—I—I— You misunderstand, sir—you do, really! I'm acting on principle all the time!" muttered Grundy.

"Reasoning appears to be lost upon you, Grundy. Will you give me your word of honour not to enter into any fights for a week from this date, in any circumstances whatever? Otherwise, you will now come with me to the Head."

"If—if you insist, sir—"

"I certainly insist!"

"Well, I haven't any choice, then," said Grundy lugubriously. "I've always been misunderstood. I was misunderstood at Redclyffe before I came here. People seem to go out of their way to misunderstand me."

"You give me your promise on your honour?"

"Yes, sir!" groaned Grundy.

"I think, Grundy, that in spite of your stupidity, you are honourable enough to keep a promise. I shall trust you."

"I've never broken my word yet, sir!" said Grundy loftily.

"Very good! You may go."

Grundy left the study in a very disconsolate mood. He had had no choice about making the promise; it was either that or a succession of floggings, to be followed by expulsion from the school—and all owing to the way Grundy was misunderstood.

It was absolutely certain that the cricket committee wouldn't entertain his claims for a moment unless they were whopped into it.

It was certain enough, anyway, for that matter, if Grundy had only known it. And he was booked for a fight with Talbot—that would have to be called off now. And he hadn't finished whopping Blake and Figgins and D'Arcy—now he couldn't finish.

Grundy was not the kind of fellow to break his word. But, even if he had been willing to do so, it was not good enough, with floggings and expulsion looming in the distance.

Grundy felt that he was hardly treated and cruelly misunderstood; but there was nothing for it but to grin and bear it as best he could.

He came lugubriously into the Shell dormitory.

"Licked?" asked Wilkins.

Grundy snorted.

"Worse than that!" he said. "Railton's an ass—an awful ass! He's got the idea fixed firmly in his head that I'm a quarrelsome chap—"

"Go hon!" said Lowther, with an air of surprise.

"Yes, he has. And he thinks I'm a bully—me, you know!" said Grundy, with breathless indignation.

"Now, I wonder what could possibly have put that idea into his head?" said Monty Lowther reflectively; and there was a chuckle from the Shell.

"Yes, I wonder," said Grundy. "I've often been misunderstood, but Railton fairly takes the cake. I always rather liked old Railton; he's a

good sort in his way. But I must say he's a fool—an absolute fool! He doesn't understand me in the least. Now I shan't be able to whop Talbot to-morrow, and Tom Merry the next day, and Lowther the day after. It's rotten!"

"Well, you wouldn't be able to do all that, anyway," grinned Tom Merry. "But what's happened to stop you trying to do it?"

"Railton's made me promise not to fight anybody for a week!" groaned Grundy.

"Oh crumbs!"

"He says it will show whether I can control my temper—me, you know, the best-tempered and most peaceable chap in the House!" hooted Grundy.

"I shall have to ask you to excuse me to-morrow, Talbot. Railton had no right to make me give my word; but a promise is a promise."

"All serene!" said Talbot, laughing.

"Same with you, Merry, and Lowther and Manners and—"

"And half the giddy House!" said Tom, laughing. "Railton's a jolly sensible chap. This has saved you from a dozen or so lickings and a Form ragging, Grundy."

"Oh rats!"

"Turn in!" said Darrell, looking in at the door.

"Right-ho, Darrell!"

The Shell fellows turned in, and Darrell put out the light and retired. Then the voice of Crooke was heard:

"I say, Grundy!"

"Hallo!"

"You've promised Railton not to fight anybody for a week?" asked Crooke.

"Yes!" grunted George Alfred.

"And you're going to keep your word?"

Grundy sat up in bed.

"If you want a whopping, Crooke, you smoky cad, you've only got to ask me that question again!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "Is that how you do it, Grundy?"

"Oh, I—I forgot!"

"What's going to happen if you don't keep your word?" persisted Crooke. "You might—ahem!—forget, you know."

"I might," assented Grundy. "You chaps might remind me if you catch me forgetting, because if I don't stick to it, I'm to be flogged in Hall—"

"Great Scott!"

"And very likely expelled, Railton said."

"Expelled!" ejaculated Crooke. "What ripping fun! Splendid thing for the House if you got sacked, Grundy!"

"Why, you sneaking worm—"

"Oh, shut up, you silly cad!"

"What!" yelled Grundy in wrath.

(Continued on the next page.)

ROYAL NAVY

Boys may now enter between the ages of 15 and 17½ years. Full particulars are

contained in the illustrated booklet "The Royal Navy as a Career and How To Join It," which may be obtained on application to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. and R.M. (N), 85, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, or at any Post Office.

Crooke, the cad and funk of the Shell, had never ventured to call Grundy names before. He felt he could do so now with freedom.

Grundy had called him names often enough. Indeed, sometimes when he found Crooke smoking, he took the liberty of shaking him and throwing away his smokes. Which was certainly no more than Crooke deserved, but rather cool of Grundy, all the same.

"Dry up!" said Crooke coolly. "We're all fed-up with you, Grundy, and I'd give a week's pocket-money to see you sacked."

"I'd give a fiver!" chimed in Racke.

"Do you want me to come to you?" roared Grundy, kicking off the bedclothes.

"Yes, if you're going to get sacked for getting into a fight!" chuckled Crooke.

"Oh!" ejaculated Grundy.

He pulled the bedclothes over him again. Another consequence of his unhappy promise dawned upon him. He was at the mercy of fellows who had hitherto trembled at his frown.

Grundy had always expressed his contempt in the most emphatic way for Crooke and Racke, and Levison and Mellish, and the other black sheep in the House; for Grundy, with all his weird ways, was a healthy-minded fellow, and had no vices at all.

It was their turn now. They would have been glad to see him flogged and sacked. And Crooke, funk as he was, would have ventured to tackle him if that object could be effected thereby.

It dawned upon George Alfred Grundy that his programme had landed him in a very serious scrape. A single fight during the ensuing week would have the most direful results, and he was unable to raise his hand in defence of himself, and every mean fellow in the House was sure to take advantage of that fact. It was an appalling prospect.

"Well, why don't you come?" chortled Crooke.

"I'm waiting for you, you funk!"

"What?" gasped Grundy.

"Funk!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Rotten funk!" chortled Racke.

"I—I—" Grundy spluttered. "Oh, you wait till next week, you rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crooke and Racke ran on, with great enjoyment, calling Grundy all the offensive names that they could think of, while the Shell fellows chuckled with merriment.

Grundy fairly writhed; but there was too much at stake, and he did not leave his bed. He was already learning the lesson of self-control that Mr. Railton had so kindly mapped out for him.

His tormentors were not silent till Wilkins and Gunn rose and smote them with pillows, and silenced them at last.

But it was some time before George Alfred Grundy slept. He was thinking of the morrow, with sickening apprehensions.

CHAPTER 8.

A Painful Predicament!

WHIZZ!

"Yoop!"

The rising-bell was clanging out in the morning, and as George Alfred Grundy turned out of bed a hurtling pillow caught him on one ear.

Grundy rolled off the bed and came down on the floor with a bump.

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He was on his feet again in a twinkling, his big fists clenched and an angry look on his face.

"Who chucked that pillow?" he roared.

"I did," said Gore coolly.

"You cheeky rotter!" shouted Grundy. "I licked you last week! I suppose you want another licking?"

"Exactly!" said Gore. "Come on!"

Grundy came on furiously.

Wilkins caught him by the arm.

"Hold on, Grundy!"

"Leggo, fathead!"

"Suppose Railton hears you?"

Grundy stopped suddenly. He had forgotten



"Put up your hands!" said Levison, advancing upon him, burst into a howl of laughter at the sight of the truculent Grundy. "Yo

his unfortunate promise. He remembered it now.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. "My hat!"

"Come on!" said Gore invitingly.

"Yes, come on, funk!" yelled Crooke. "Mop him up, Gore! Yah! Funk!"

"Rotten funk!" chortled Racke.

"Go for him, Gore!"

"I—I can't mop you up now!" stammered Grundy. "I've promised Railton, and—and I don't want to be sacked."

"Any excuse is better than none!" grinned Crooke.

"It isn't an excuse, you rotter! You wait till next week!"

"Well, I shan't wait till next week if I have

any of your cheek!" said Gore. "I've a jolly good mind to mop up the dorm with you now!"

"Why, you—you—you—" stuttered Grundy.

"Shut up!" commanded Gore.

"Wha-a-at!"

"Shut up!"

Grundy gasped, and shut up. He couldn't fight Gore, in the circumstances, and he began to be worried by the apprehension that Gore would insist upon fighting him. He had to keep the peace, and he wondered dazedly what he would do if another fellow "began it."

The extraordinary tameness of the burly, overbearing Grundy made the Shell fellows chuckle.



George Alfred backed away, and Trimble and Mellish funk a fight with Levison. "Keep off, you cad!" "I can't lick you now!"

George Alfred was in a subdued mood that morning. While he bathed and dressed he was the recipient of many personal remarks from Crooke and Racke and Gore, and he did not reply to any of them.

Wilkins and Gunn were sympathetic, and at last they splashed water over Crooke and Racke and shut them up, but they did not trouble Gore.

Gore was almost as burly a fellow as Grundy himself, and was not to be tackled lightly.

Wilkins and Gunn, too, had to admit that Grundy had only himself to blame.

He had had rather more than his just allowance of scrapping, and it was his own fault if scrapping was barred to him. He had, in fact,

fairly asked for it, and now he had got it, and his chums charitably hoped that it would do him good.

Grundy left the dormitory quite early, breathing hard through his nose. His promise to Mr. Railton held good for seven days, and this was only the morning of the first day. How was he to get through the whole seven?

It was a kind of discipline to which the great Grundy had never been subjected, and he looked forward to the prospect with dismay.

Every fellow who had felt Grundy's heavy hand would have his chance now if he chose to take advantage of it. And Grundy could not doubt that a good many would take advantage of it.

Even the fags! Grundy had rather a high-handed way with fags. He had whopped Piggott for being a smoky little beast; he had cuffed Manners minor for looking cheeky; he had licked D'Arcy minor on general principles, because lickings were good for cheeky fags, in Grundy's opinion. Suppose D'Arcy minor of the Third took it into his head that a licking would be good for him—Grundy? It was an appalling possibility.

The Shell fellows at breakfast regarded Grundy with amused interest. Grundy's awful predicament tickled them immensely.

Monty Lowther remarked that he had never expected old Railton of being such a humorist. If Railton had specially wanted to "make the punishment fit the crime," he could not have thought of a better plan.

Grundy was accustomed to falling out with anybody, and getting into a scrap with anybody, without stopping to think. Thinking was not much in his line. But he had to stop and think now, with a vengeance. He would punch a fellow's nose in the most free-and-easy way. His own nose was now at the mercy of anybody who chose to punch it, and it was a strange and almost unnerveing experience for Grundy.

It was evident that only excessive civility and control of temper could save Grundy from a most unpleasant time. And excessive civility and self-control would come very hard to George Alfred—very hard indeed.

Even Wilkins and Gunn, his own faithful chums, assumed a freedom of speech towards Grundy that they had never shown before. They had always been very careful with Grundy, partly because they really liked him for his good qualities, but chiefly because it was too much trouble to be always rowing and scrapping in the study.

But now that scrapping was barred to the great Grundy, Wilkins and Gunn did not take so much trouble—not at all.

When Grundy called Wilkins a "fathead," Wilkins promptly called him a "frabjous idiot," and, indeed, went on to express his general opinion of Grundy's intellectual powers in terms that made Grundy first open his eyes wide and then clench his fists hard.

But he unclenched them again. He was already learning his lesson.

The story of Grundy's peculiar predicament was soon known all over the school, and both Houses chuckled over it.

Cuts of the Fifth looked for Grundy after lessons.

Grundy was so big and reckless and truculent that Fifth Formers had generally found it expedient to show him a civility they seldom wasted on juniors. But they did not like it.

And Cutts immediately took advantage of the new state of affairs. He met Grundy in the Form-room passage and stopped him.

"Hold on, Grundy!" he said, in a bullying tone.

Grundy stopped in sheer amazement. He was not the kind of fellow to be bullied by a senior—not as a rule.

"Hallo, you a.s!" was his reply.

"Don't swagger about like that!" said Cutts.

"What?"

"I don't like that kind of thing in a junior! Stop it!"

"My hat!" ejaculated the astounded Grundy.

"I don't like these airs in a fag!" explained Cutts.

"A—a—a fag!" howled Grundy. "Me a fag!"

Why, you silly cuckoo—"

"Do you want your ear pulled?"

"Eh? My ear?"

"Because you'll get it, if you're not jolly civil!" said Cutts sharply. "Now cut off! Get out of my sight!"

"Cut off!" repeated Grundy. "Why, you Fifth Form dummy, do you think you can order me about? What the dickens do you think I care for the Fifth? For two pins I'd mop up the passage with you!"

Cutts advanced upon him, with hands outstretched to seize his ears.

Grundy doubled his fists.

Then he backed away, remembering.

"You rotter!" he howled. "You know I can't lick you just now. Keep off, you cad! Oh crumbs!"

Cutts laid hold of his ear.

Grundy jerked it away, without hitting out. A fight in the Form-room passage was not to be thought of. Mr. Railton would have been on the scene in a couple of minutes, and then—the Head's study, the flogging, the sack!

Grundy had to make the best of it pacifically.

He backed away hurriedly, Cutts grinning, and following him up.

Grundy dodged out into the quadrangle, but he had escaped out of the frying-pan into the fire.

Levison and Mellish and Trimble of the Fourth were waiting for him there.

"Here he is!" called out Mellish.

Grundy stopped, and stared at them angrily. All three of the Fourth Formers had felt his heavy hand, and now, evidently, they meant to turn the tables.

"Hallo, you cheeky cad!" said Levison. "You took a packet of cigarettes away from me the other day! You owe me a bob for them! Pay up!"

"Go and eat coke!" growled Grundy. "I don't believe in fags smoking."

"Are you going to pay up?"

"No, you young ass!"

"Then put up your hands!" said Levison, advancing upon him.

Grundy backed away.

Trimble and Mellish burst into a howl of laughter at the sight of the truculent Grundy backing away from a fight with Levison.

"Keep off, you cad!" exclaimed Grundy. "You know I can't lick you now!"

"I know I can lick you," said Levison calmly. "Are you going to pay up the bob you owe me, or are you going to take a hiding?"

"A—a—a hiding! Oh, my hat! Keep off!" yelled Grundy, jumping back as Levison began to hit out.

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They were in sight of the Housemaster's window, and Grundy was in terror of seeing Mr. Railton at his window any moment.

"I—I—I'll pay you!" he stammered.

"Sharp's the word, then!"

Grundy, with feelings too deep for words, handed out a shilling.

"Good!" said Levison. "I'll let you off, as you're so funky, Grundy. But don't let it occur again, mind! Now cut off!"

Grundy almost staggered away, leaving the Fourth Formers howling with laughter.

Like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, the great Grundy had fallen from his high estate, and great was the fall thereof!

CHAPTER 9.

Grundy's Guests!

"HALLO, what do you kids want?"

Tom Merry asked that question.

He was going to his study to tea when he came upon a party of the Third in the Shell passage.

The party consisted of D'Arcy minor, Joe Frayne, Jameson, Curly Gibson, and Hobbs.

The five fags were grinning as if in possession of an uncommonly good joke.

"We're going to Grundy's to tea," said Wally cheerfully.

"My hat! Has Grundy taken to asking fags to tea?" inquired Tom Merry, in surprise.

"Oh, no! Not at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're going without being asked, then?" asked Tom.

"We've asked ourselves," explained Curly Gibson. "Grundy has been on the high horse for a long time, and now he's come down off his perch. We're going to talk to him as he used to talk to us!"

"And he's going to stand us a tea," grinned Frayne, "and if it ain't a good tea I'm sorry for him!"

"Oh!" said Tom.

The fags marched on to Grundy's study.

It was tea-time, and Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn were there.

Wally kicked open the door and marched in with his followers.

Tom Merry looked after them and laughed.

The tables were turned now, and it was not surprising that the heroes of the Third should seek to repay the rather long debt they owed to George Alfred Grundy.

Grundy & Co. stared at the fags as they came marching in.

"What do you want?" exclaimed Grundy.

"We've come to tea," announced Wally.

"To—to—to tea?"

"Yes. Get out of that chair!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I want it. Get out!"

Grundy got up in a white heat.

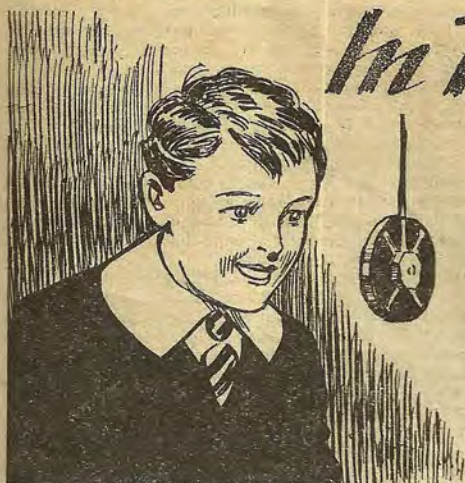
"My hat! Why, I'll make mincemeat of the lot of you!" he shouted. "Blessed if I ever heard of such cheek! I'll—"

"Better not let Railton hear you!" grinned Jameson.

Grundy paused suddenly.

"You're rather a bullying beast, Grundy," said D'Arcy minor. "It would serve you right if we walloped you. But we won't take advantage—if you behave yourself. But, mind, you've got

(Continued on page 22.)



In Town To-day

**Introducing
Harry Noble (Kangaroo)
to the Microphone. By a
B.B.C. TALENT SCOUT.**

INTERVIEWER: Welcome, Australia! It's a pleasure to have you at the microphone.

NOBLE: I'm more used to performing at the wicket, Mr. Interviewer, but I'll do my best at this spouting game, so as not to let the team down.

INTERVIEWER: You are one of the best batsmen in the Junior XI, I hear, Noble?

NOBLE: Well, I think Tom Merry is actually the best, though Talbot runs him close. I should put myself down as No. 3—which, incidentally, is the place I usually occupy on the batting list.

INTERVIEWER: I see Tom Merry described you in an interview with the local Press as the steadiest bat in the side.

NOBLE: Steady, please, Mr. Interviewer. I shall be getting a swelled head—which reminds me of the story of the batsman who was so swollen-headed that he got his napper in the way of the ball—and was given out, leg before wicket!

INTERVIEWER: Ha, ha! Did that happen in Australia, Noble?

NOBLE: Well, I heard it first in my native Queensland, "down under." But don't run away with the idea that we are in any way "down under" at the game in Australia. If England was the cradle of cricket, Australia was the place where the game, like the kangaroo, went ahead by leaps and bounds. And, judging by the past results of Test Matches, we Aussies have learned to bound pretty fast!

INTERVIEWER: You certainly have. Why do you think Australians are so successful at cricket?

NOBLE: Frankly, we Aussies have one thing over you—application. In Australia, cricket is taken very seriously, and youngsters are specially coached to make Test players. In England, methods are looser—and so, often, is their bowling.

INTERVIEWER: What about the cricket at St. Jim's?

NOBLE: Among the bowlers, Fatty Wynn takes a long run and gives batsmen short shrift. Blake and Figgins are on the mark, too. But there are others, like Grundy, whose bowling is remarkable for breadth rather than length. Five to fifty yards wide is nothing for Grundy. George Alfred's a card—but the wrong stamp.

INTERVIEWER: And the batting?

NOBLE: I'm not finding fault—that's Tom Merry's job. But I do think a straight bat and squared shoulders reduce the angle of the enemy's attack. One day in Queensland I was playing for a junior side against fellows quite a lot older. The bowling was too much for many of our men—their display was so average that our ranks were decimated. I hung on, hoping to make a draw of the match. I was struck on the forehead by a fast rising ball, and it raised a swelling as big as an egg. But that only egged me on to shoulder the yoke more determinedly. My partner and I played out time—and I had the satisfaction of smiting the last ball of the day for six. It was, actually, the only ball I hit out at. We had contented ourselves with defending our wickets doggedly for more than an hour, and we had saved the match.

INTERVIEWER: In England, your skipper would probably have told you to get on or get out?

NOBLE: Exactly. With so many more matches to be played in England, quick results are essential. In St. Jim's last match against Greyfriars, Tom Merry and I were in an almost identical situation to the one I have described. We either had to defend grimly, or chance our arm and go all out for a win.

INTERVIEWER: What did Tom Merry order?

NOBLE: He didn't order. Merry just set an example by opening his shoulders and smiting three sixes running. We needed fifty to win. I decided to keep my end up, whilst Tom Merry attempted the impossible. And, perhaps in proof that he knew what he was doing, Merry hit off the required runs with just two minutes to spare.

INTERVIEWER: So perhaps it is impossible to give a verdict in favour of either method?

NOBLE: We'd better leave it at that. After all, whichever way a batsman looks at the game, it's the sport that counts. By the way, Mr. Interviewer, did you hear the story of the giant Australian Aborigine who went out to bat grasping a New South whale? Howzat, Mr. Interviewer? A whale of a batsman!

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to behave yourself! We never stand any rot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the fags.

Grundy's face was a study.

"We've come to tea—and we want rather a good tea," said Wally calmly. "We shall expect you to wait on us, Grundy!"

"Wait on you!" stuttered Grundy.

"Yes; and if you don't do it properly you'll get a thick ear!"

"A—a—a thick ear! I—I suppose I'm dreaming!" Grundy gasped.

"You'd better wake up and get to work," said Wally. "We're hungry. Don't stand there mooning!"

"Get a move on you, Grundy!"

"Buck up, fathead!"

Grundy seemed to experience some difficulty in breathing.

Wilkins and Gunn were grinning. But they ceased to grin as the fags surrounded the table, and began to help themselves.

"Look here, you fags clear out!" said Wilkins. "Grundy may be standing this, but we're not!"

"No jolly fear," said Gunn. "You clear off before I take a stump to you!"

"Two can play at that game," remarked Wally. "You take a stump, and I'll take the poker, I can tell you! If you're spoiling for a scrap, you can come on. There are enough of us to handle you, I fancy."

"And we're ready," said Jameson. "Now, then, are you coming on? P'raps Grundy wants a fight in his study? I hope it won't bring Railton here, for Grundy's sake!"

"You're jolly well not going to plant yourselves here for tea, you cheeky little scoundrels!" growled Wilkins.

"Come on!" said Gunn. "Kick them out!"

The fags lined up defensively. Evidently they intended to give battle.

Five fags were a match for two Shell fellows, anyway—Grundy being barred from taking a hand in the conflict.

"Hold on!" gasped Grundy.

"You don't want those cheeky young cads to tea, I suppose?" bawled Wilkins.

"N-no! B-but I don't want a fight here!" faltered the unhappy Grundy. "Suppose Railton hears?"

"I suppose Railton can't object to us kicking these inky little villains out of the study!"

"N-no! But—but I don't want a row. You can't do it without my help, either!"

"Well, wire in, then, and help."

"I—I can't!"

"You can, if you like," said Wally sweetly.

"By the way, we passed Railton in the lower passage. He will hear it if there's a row here. But we don't mind. Come on, the lot of you! I may as well explain, Grundy, that if you don't keep your studymates in order, I'm going to thrash you!"

"Eh?"

"I've thought a lot of times that a thrashing would do you good. Now, we expect civility in this study. If we don't get it, you're going to be thrashed, Grundy!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Look here——"

"Shut up!" said Wally commandingly. "You talk too much, Grundy!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"We're ready for tea, and we want a bit better spread than this. You can send Wilkins for something!"

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"I—I—I'll go!" mumbled Grundy.

"You won't," said Wally, barring his way to the door. "You'll stay where you are, my pippin. You're not getting away so easily as all that!"

"No jolly fear!" chuckled Curly Gibson. "You cuffed me the other day, Grundy. Well, if you come near this door, I'll cuff you. See?"

"Cuff him, anyway!" said Jameson.

Grundy almost groaned.

Wilkins and Gunn were nonplussed. It would not have been easy for the two of them to eject the fags, anyway. But it was clear that if there were a fight, Grundy was to be dragged into it, whether he liked it or not.

Wally & Co. had the whip-hand!

"I—I say, let 'em alone, you chaps!" mumbled Grundy. "I—I don't want a fight here. Railton would be sure to misunderstand. He always misunderstands me. I—I—I don't mind the little beasts having tea here, once in a way!"

"The what?" demanded Wally sharply. "I've told you, Grundy, that you've got to be civil! Do you want a licking? I suppose you were meaning to say the young gentlemen of the Third?"

"You—you——"

"Do you mean the young gentlemen of the Third, or do you not?" rapped out Wally.

"I—I—yes!" gasped Grundy.

"That's better. We'll teach you manners in the long run. Now set about getting tea—something decent, mind. Wilkins can go and get the stuff in."

"Dashed if I will!" said Wilkins wrathfully.

"I—I say, go, old chap!" said Grundy. "Oblige me, you know!"

"But look here——"

"Oh, don't jaw, Wilkins!" said Grundy irritably. "I tell you I'm not going to have any scrapping in this study. Perhaps you want me to be sacked, you ass?"

"Well, it wouldn't be much loss!" snapped Wilkins.

"You cheeky ass!"

"You silly burler!" retorted Wilkins independently.

"Why, I—I—I——"

"Oh, dry up!" said Wilkins. "I'll go and get the stuff, if you like, but I think you're a silly chump, Grundy, and a good bit of a funk, if you ask me!"

Grundy did not reply; he was at a loss for words. Wilkins departed to do the shopping—with five shillings from Grundy—and the fags sat down round the table in great spirits.

They called to Grundy to wait on them—and he waited on them. He made the tea, at Wally's order; he poured it out; and he listened in infuriated silence while Wally called him a clumsy ass, and Curly Gibson told him he was a burling cuckoo, and Jameson remarked that if he didn't leave off spilling the tea, he would box his ears.

Probably the fear of a flogging, and even of the sack, would not have restrained Grundy; but he was on his honour, and Grundy was a fellow of his word.

He had made his promise, and, apart from all question of consequences, the promise had to be kept. And as the only alternative to fagging for the fags was fighting with them, Grundy had to fag.

He was only reaping the reward of his previous high-handedness, and undoubtedly it served him right; but it was decidedly unpleasant, all the same.



Piggott came up grinning, with the amiable intention of ragging Grundy. But he didn't grin for long. Wilkins took him by the collar and proceeded to bang his head against the passage wall, while Grundy and Gunn walked on laughing.

When Wilkins returned with the provisions the fags fairly revelled.

Grundy was kept very busy waiting on them. And, as it was getting abroad that Grundy was entertaining a party of the Third—against his will—fellows came from far and near to look into the study and see him doing it. They howled with laughter at the sight of Grundy waiting on the fags.

"Bai Jove! It's weally too bad!" chuckled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Wally, you young wascal, I wegard this as wathah too bad!"

"Bow-wow!" said D'Arcy minor. Levison of the Fourth looked into the study and grinned, and then came in to join the party.

"Get out, you cad!" shouted Grundy. Levison picked up a tart from the table, and hurled it across at Grundy, catching him fairly on the nose.

"Take that, and shut up!" he said. "Ha, ha, ha!" Grundy came round the table like a flash, but Mellish shouted from the passage.

"Look out! Here comes Railton!" And Grundy dropped his hands.

It was only a false alarm, but it reminded Grundy of what was at stake. He did not handle Levison of the Fourth.

Grundy's amazing submission encouraged the fags. As they satisfied their appetites they

utilised the remaining fragments of the feed to pelt Grundy, and he spent some time dodging chunks of cake and fragments of sardines.

It was not till the guests were tired of that cheery amusement that they departed and left the unhappy Grundy in peace.

Grundy mopped his perspiring brow when they were gone.

"I—I say, I can't stand much more of this!" he gasped.

Wilkins snorted angrily. "Look at the study! Like a blessed bear-garden! Look here, Grundy, if you're going to have your fag friends to tea often, you'd better change into another study!"

"I—I didn't want 'em, did I?" groaned Grundy. "I—I say, this is only the first day—there's another week of it! It was rotten of Railton, wasn't it?"

"Serve you right!" said Gunn. "It was your own fault. If you hadn't always been getting into rows, Railton wouldn't have chipped in. It's all your own fault for being such a dashed hooligan!"

"Such a—a what?" gasped Grundy. "Hooligan!" growled Gunn. "Picking rows with everybody—"

"I was licking the cricket committee, from a sense of duty. I explained that to you, Gunn."

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"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Yes, shut up, and don't talk silly rot, Grundy, for goodness' sake," said Wilkins peevishly.

Grundy blinked at his studymates. Never had there been such plain speaking in Grundy's study before. Grundy began to wonder dazedly whether he was, after all, to blame in the very slightest possible degree.

CHAPTER 10.

Not Required!

TOM MERRY & Co. were playing the return match with Rylcombe Grammar School on Saturday afternoon.

Grundy and his chums had come down to see the match. Grundy had hoped, by his drastic measures with the cricket committee, to get into the junior eleven for that match. But his drastic measures had been brought to a sudden end owing to the intervention of the Housemaster—not that they would have been of any use, if Grundy had only known it.

"Railton doesn't know what his silly rot means to the junior cricket!" Grundy remarked bitterly to his chums. "Without me, what chance do you



"Please, sir, would you bring down that bird's nest with you?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to P. Skinner, 63, D'Arcy Gardens, Kenton, Harrow.

think we shall have against the Grammar School, what?"

"Oh rats!" said Wilkins.

"Did you say rats to me, George Wilkins?" roared Grundy, in angry astonishment.

"Yes, I did!"

"And I say the same!" chimed in Gunn heartily. "You can't play cricket for toffee, Grundy!"

"I—I can't play cricket!"

"No, you can't! Marbles is about your mark!"

"Mum-mum-marbles!" stuttered Grundy.

"And if Tom Merry played you, I'd vote for turning him out of the captaincy!" said Wilkins. "Dash it all, we can't afford to throw away matches to please you, Grundy! Who are you, anyway?"

"Who—who—who am I?" said Grundy dazedly. And Monty Lowther, who heard that cheery colloquy, chimed in with a very apt quotation from the immortal Shakespeare:

"But yesterday the word of Caesar might Have stood against the world. Now lies he here, And none so poor to do him reverence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Gwunday!" murmured Arthur

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Augustus. "I wathah think he is heawin a lot more plain twuths than he is used to."

Grundy did not reply to Wilkins' impertinent question as to who he was, anyway. He crossed over to Tom Merry, who was chatting with Talbot and Kangaroo.

"Just a word with you, Merry, before the Grammarians come," said Grundy.

"Two if you like. Cut it short!"

"You know how Railton's interfered with me in a fatheaded way!" said Grundy. "I haven't been able to carry out my programme."

Tom Merry laughed.

"You couldn't have done that, anyway!" he exclaimed.

"Now, I'm not going to thrash you!" said Grundy.

"Thanks awfully!"

"I've promised Railton, and I can't break a promise—"

"Perhaps you couldn't hand out the thrashings, either," suggested Tom Merry gently. "It's barely possible, you know."

"I'm not going to thrash you," pursued Grundy, unheeding. "I'm just going to put it to you as a sensible chap. Owing to Railton chipping in, I can't bring the cricket committee to their senses, as I intended. My programme is cut off. But I suppose you want to beat Gordon Gay's team?"

Tom nodded, with a smile.

"Well, put me in! I put it to you as a sensible chap!" urged Grundy. "You can't afford to leave out the best junior player in the school! This isn't a time for petty, personal jealousy. I put it to you—do the sensible thing!"

"I will!" said Tom.

"You will!" exclaimed Grundy eagerly.

"Certainly!"

"Good egg! Shall I change, then?"

"Change! What for?"

"For the match, of course."

"What match?"

"This match—the match this afternoon," said Grundy, puzzled. "Didn't you just say you were playing me?"

"My dear chap, you're dreaming," said Tom Merry pleasantly. "I said I'd do the sensible thing. The sensible thing is to leave a silly, fumbling idiot out of the eleven, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" roared Grundy furiously.

"Sorry—no time!" said Tom politely, and he moved away to meet the Grammarians, who had just arrived.

Grundy snorted. He remained on the ground to watch the match, with considerable apprehension for St. Jim's. Without his valuable assistance, he did not see how the St. Jim's cricketers were to keep up their end against the Grammar School.

To his surprise they did it. The match was a hard-fought one, but it ended in a victory for St. Jim's.

"Fool's luck, you know!" Grundy remarked to Wilkins and Gunn.

A few days before, his chums would have assented—with mental reservations—for the sake of peace and quietness. But it was no longer necessary for the sake of peace and quietness to assent to Grundy's lofty pronouncements. So they didn't.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Wilkins. "It was jolly good play that won the match—first-rate."

"What on earth do you know about cricket,

Grundy?" urged Gunn. "Talk about something you understand, old chap!"

"Something I—I—I understand!" stuttered Grundy.

"Yes. You don't know anything about cricket, you know!"

And Wilkins and Gunn strolled away, leaving their chum to digest that.

Grundy stood rooted to the ground for some moments. His own familiar friends had raised their heel against him, along with the rest. It really seemed to Grundy that it was time for the skies to fall.

He drove his hands deep into his pockets, and tramped away to the School House. An apple whizzed through the air from the direction of the tuckshop, and knocked his cap off.

Grundy fielded the cap, and charged towards the tuckshop, with a face red with fury. And Crooke, who had hurled the apple, and was grinning over his success, left off grinning suddenly.

But at that moment Mr. Railton came from under the elms, and at the sight of him Grundy halted.

"Well, Grundy!" said Mr. Railton, fixing his eyes on him.

"Ah, oh!" stuttered Grundy. "I—I—I was just going to—to speak to Crooke, sir."

Mr. Railton gave him a severe glance, and walked on.

Grundy strode away, simmering with wrath.

Crooke chuckled, and a second apple caught Grundy on the back of the head.

Grundy did not even look round.

CHAPTER 11.

Grundy's New Programme!

"IT'S simply awful!"

Thus Grundy, pathetically.

Wednesday had come round—a half-holiday at St. Jim's, but Grundy of the Shell was not likely to enjoy his half-holiday.

Grundy's existence for the past few days had been full of incident. If he had ever wanted an exciting time, he had it now.

Grundy of the heavy hand had been experiencing the heavy hand—of others—upon his unfortunate self.

Some of the fellows admired the way Grundy was sticking to his word. Certainly it could not be denied that Grundy, with all his faults—and their name was legion—was an honourable chap, and that he was the slave of his word. His promise to the Housemaster held good, in spite of his trials—which were, as he pathetically told Wilkins and Gunn, enough to turn his hair grey.

Whether it was his strict regard for his word, or the dreadful consequences of breaking his word, certain it was that Grundy kept it.

To do that, it was necessary to keep his temper. From the loudest and most truculent fellow in the House, he became the most soft-spoken. It was an astounding change in Grundy, and it made the fellows grin.

Grundy, indeed, dropped into a habit of kind civility and politeness, so that in a few days he was barely recognisable.

Most of the fellows were disarmed by Grundy's painful predicament, and by his unaccustomed civility. But some weren't—some became only worse.

Wally & Co. of the Third magnanimously forgave him. Gore of the Shell ceased to worry him.

But meaner fellows, like Crooke and Mellish and Racke, persecuted him without ceasing.

Grundy promised them all sorts of things when the fatal week was up, but they expected heavy-handedness from Grundy anyway, so that did not make much difference.

Besides, as Levison sagely pointed out, the Housemaster's eye was specially on Grundy now, and any scrapping on his part would be followed by trouble, even after the week for which his promise held good. It was, in fact, safe to worry Grundy, and he was paid with tenfold interest for the way he had worried others.

Grundy's intentions, certainly, had always been good. But there was a plentiful lack of gratitude for his good intentions.

It was really remarkable to see the burly, warlike Grundy—warlike once—sneaking quietly round the corner to avoid a meeting with Piggott of the Third. That young rascal knocked Grundy's cap off whenever he met him—which was awfully humiliating for the big Shell fellow—but Piggott couldn't be stopped without a fight.

Grundy would move quietly out of the Common-room when Crooke came in—a well-known funk like Crooke. He would give up the armchair if Levison demanded it—he would allow himself to be contradicted point-blank by Mellish or Clampe.

Once upon a time it was scarcely possible to contradict Grundy, even in the gentlest way, without great risk. Now, the biggest funks in the House would tell him he was a dummy, and command him to shut up—and Grundy would shut up!

No wonder he declared pathetically that it was awful!

Wilkins and Gunn agreed that it was; but they agreed also that it served Grundy right, and they told him that it was doing him good.

"You see, the study's much more pleasant now," Wilkins remarked. "When a chap tells you what he thinks of you, there isn't a row as there used to be."

"That's so," said Gunn, with a nod. "For instance, what would you have said last week, Grundy, if I'd pointed out to you what your cricket's really like? There'd have been a row. Now, with us giving you plain tips about your cricket, you may improve your game, and not be such a fumbling ass, you know."

"It's too jolly bad you chaps turning against me like this," said Grundy pathetically. "I did think you were real pals."

Wilkins' heart smote him. He was really attached to old Grundy after all, but he had found him hard to bear at times.

"Well, old chap, you're so jolly obstreperous," he said. "You fill the study, you know, and you won't let a chap call his soul his own. You're overwhelming, you know."

"I never meant to be," said Grundy. "I've been thinking about it a bit lately, and perhaps I've been a bit too—too drastic. That cad Levison punched my nose this morning—my nose, you know! I—I never thought it was so rotten for a fellow's nose to be punched before! I've punched his often enough. Somehow, it seemed different."

"By gad, it's doing you good!" said Gunn. "Old Railton knows something, he does. Fancy you beginning to think, Grundy!"

"Amazing!" said Wilkins.

Grundy was on the verge of an outbreak once more, but he controlled himself. He was quite getting into the habit of controlling himself of late.

"Well, I don't think it's pally for my own study-mates to round on me," he said, with unexpected patience. "I've got enough to stand outside the study. Look at me—it's a half-holiday, and I'm bunged up in this study."

"Come out," said Wilkins; "we're going out."

"Can't!" groaned Grundy. "Piggott's waiting in the passage."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wilkins and Gunn.

The bare idea of the great Grundy skulking in his study because a fag of the Third was waiting for him in the passage, made Wilkins and Gunn roar.

But it was not a laughing matter for Grundy. He did not laugh.

"Well, what can a chap do?" he said. "I could slaughter Piggott with one finger, but if I touch him he'll yell, and up comes Railton and finds me fighting a Third Form kid. Bullying again, he'll call it. And there's my promise, too! I'm always being misunderstood. If I go down the passage, Piggott's going to pull my nose—he's been bragging that he's going to do it. And—and I can't stop him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All very well for you to cackle!" snapped Grundy. "Jolly funny, isn't it?"

"Yes, rather! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better turn pacifist, and not get Railton down on you again!" chuckled Gunn. "It isn't good enough, Grundy."

"I—I—I've chucked up my programme that I mentioned to you," said Grundy. "I—I can see that it won't do. I shall stand out of the cricket until the committee come to their senses and put me in on my merits."

Wilkins and Gunn roared again. They thought it was likely to be a long time before Grundy was put into the team on his merits—about as long, in fact, as it would have taken him to get in by "whopping" the cricket committee.

"Cackle away!" said Grundy sarcastically. "Don't mind me! They say a chap never knows his pals till he's in trouble. I've found that out now."

"Well, you aren't an easy chap to pal with," said Wilkins. "You want too much of the kowtow bisney. Still, we're your pals, and we're going to stand by you now. You seem to have a bit more sense. You can't wallop Piggott, but I can. Railton isn't down on me; I haven't been fighting every chap in the House. Come on, Grundy, old scout, and we'll look after you."

"Come on!" said Gunn. "I think you've been ragged enough, Grundy—not that you didn't need it, you know! Come on!"

Grundy & Co. left the study, Grundy feeling rather dubious.

Piggott of the Third came up grinning, and Wilkins took him by the collar and proceeded to bang his head against the passage wall, while Grundy grinned and walked on with Gunn. The unfortunate Piggott's yells rang along the passage.

"What on earth's the row?" exclaimed Tom Merry, coming out of his study.

"Little beast cheeking my pal Grundy," explained Wilkins. "We're looking after Grundy now; we think he's had enough."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Piggott tore himself away and fled. He had quite relinquished his designs on Grundy's nose now.

Crooke and Racke were chatting outside the

School House, and they hailed Grundy as he came out with his friends.

"Hallo, funnyface!"

"Come and have your ear pulled, Grundy!"

"Come on, Gunny!" said Wilkins.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Grundy, as his chums started on Crooke and Racke. Those two cheery youths fled wildly across the quad, Wilkins and Gunn dribbling them like footballs.

Grundy was quite cheery when his chums rejoined him. His week of probation was likely to finish much less uncomfortably with Wilkins and Gunn looking after him in this pally manner.

It was, he told them, the case of the lion and the mouse over again—Grundy being the lion and Wilkins and Gunn the mice.

Wilkins remarked that it seemed to him more like the case of the ass in the lion's skin—Grundy being the ass. And Grundy took Wilkins' remark quite good-temperedly. There was no doubt that a change had come over the great Grundy—a change very much for the better.

GRUNDY'S persecution was over now, his loyal pals making it a point to chip in every time. And Grundy was grateful—really grateful.

A day or two later Mr. Railton called Grundy into his study.

"I am glad to see that you have kept your word, Grundy," he said. "And I hope that you have learned the lesson of self-control. I trust it will be of benefit to you."

"The fact is, sir," said Grundy, "you've rather misunderstood me—all along—"

"You may go, Grundy."

"I was going to say, sir—"

Mr. Railton made a movement towards his cane and Grundy retired from the study with his remarks unfinished.

In the Common-room he found the whole cricket committee waiting for him.

"Here he is!" said Blake.

Grundy looked eager.

"You want me?" he asked.

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"You've decided to put me in the eleven, after all?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Oh! Then what the merry thunder do you want?" growled Grundy.

"We want to know about this precious programme of yours," explained Tom Merry. "Is it going on? If it is, we're going to bump you now, and bump you regularly every time you send a challenge to anybody."

Grundy snorted.

"Well, you can all go and eat coke!" he said.

"I've given up the idea of trying to knock any sense into your silly heads. I'm going to wait patiently until St. Jim's has been licked in a dozen or so matches. Then I expect the fellows will insist upon my playing, Tom Merry, for the sake of the school record. That's my programme now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, got anything to say?" snorted Grundy.

Tom Merry & Co. hadn't anything to say. Grundy's new programme had thrown them into hysterics, and they only shrieked.

(Next Wednesday. "**BETRAYED BY HIS COUSIN!**"—a powerful yarn of thrilling school adventure, starring Talbot and Crooke of the Shell. Reserve your GEM in advance.)



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A. Funnell, 28, Newtown Rd., Hove 4, Sussex; age 15-16; Toronto.

L. Sudano, Old Langham Hotel, Co. Kerk & Polly Streets, Johannesburg, S. Africa; age 14-16; soccer, tennis, scouting and cricket; America, British Empire.

B. Sheard, 277, Roseberry St., St. James, Manitoba, Canada; age 12-15; stamps.

C. Katz, 157, Allenby Ave., Witbank, Transvaal, S. Africa; pen pals; age 12-14; Canada, America, Australia.

B. Katz, 157, Allenby Ave., Witbank, Transvaal, S. Africa; pen pals; age 9-11; British Empire.

V. Burnette, 306, N. Lawrence St., Montgomery, Alabama, U.S.A.; age 13-17; coins, stamps, books, postcards, newspapers, etc.; anywhere.

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Miss M. McGovern, 13, Summer Hill, Dun-Laoghaire, Co. Dublin; girl correspondents, age 14-16; Scotland, New Zealand, America and India.

W. Preston, 129, Kingsford Rd., Ilford, Essex; old "Magnets" and GEMS, dance bands.

Miss Bridget Johnston, 42, Observatory St., Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, B.W. Indies; girl correspondents, age 13-15; stamps, films, postcards, and snapshots; any part of the world.

C. Woods, 131, Sherringham Ave., Tottenham, London, N.17; Wanted—members for a stamp club. Members must live in the South of England.

R. Pinner, 12, Rosebery St., Leicester; age 12-15; stamp, exchanging; England only.

K. Thompson, 23, Newcastle St., Carlisle, Cumberland. Members wanted for "C.K. Stamp Club" in N. England. Please write to the above address. Also wants pen pals interested in cage-birds, photography, fretwork; anywhere.

PEN PALS COUPON

18-6-38

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,583.

SENSATION AT GREYFRIARS! INSULTING LETTER ABOUT A MASTER
SENT TO THE HEAD! WHO IS THE CULPRIT?

Barred by the Remove!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

Trouble!

"LOOK out for squalls!"

Frank Nugent whispered the words as the Remove entered the Form-room at Greyfriars for morning lessons.

It was a bright, sunny summer morning, and the juniors, fresh in from the wide green Close, were mostly in cheery spirits, which became subdued as they caught sight of their Form-master's face.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was standing by his desk. The Form-master had a somewhat severe countenance at any time. Now it was clouded over so darkly that it did not need Nugent's whispered warning to put the Remove on their guard.

There was something wrong with Mr. Quelch. So much was evident at a glance, and the juniors wondered whether there was a storm coming, and when it would burst, and upon whose devoted head.

The Form filed to their places in chilly silence.

Mr. Quelch watched them without speaking a word, but his eyes—which juniors had compared to gimlets—seemed to see right through them, as Bob Cherry observed in a confidential whisper to Harry Wharton.

The Form-master suffered sometimes from fits of sharp temper, and on such occasions the Remove was wont to be very careful. But it was clearly not sharp temper that was the matter now.

The juniors felt that something unusual had happened, and there was a strange hush. Many of them ran over in their minds their latest delinquencies, trying to think whether those little delinquencies could possibly have come to the Form-master's ears.

The Famous Four—Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, and Hurree Singh—felt the most confident of all. They had had a wonderfully clean record for the past few days, being too much occupied in cricket interests to have much time for japes of any sort.

Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove, looked sullen and a little apprehensive. Once or twice his bullying proclivities had brought down upon him scathing words from Mr. Quelch. Hazeldene, who was sometimes in trouble, looked nervous, and so did Skinner, Snoop, and Stott.

Most of the juniors, in fact, looked more or less apprehensive.

Only one face remained quite calm and composed—that of Wun Lung, the Chinese junior. Wun Lung sat at his desk with a smile that was childlike and bland. But considering that the little Chinese was as mischievous as a monkey, it is probable that his confident manner was not wholly genuine.

It was a silence that might have been felt, and Mr. Quelch seemed in no hurry to break it. Bulstrode thought that he was purposely keeping them in suspense, and his sullen look intensified. But Harry Wharton, looking at his Form-master's face, could discern more of sorrow than of anger there.

"My boys!"

It was not a sharp, rapping tone when Mr. Quelch spoke at last; it was quiet, restrained, though quite clear to every ear in the room.

"My boys, there has been a very unpleasant, a very disgraceful occurrence in this school—unfortunately due to the base action of someone in this Form."

The Form thrilled a little.

If there had been a theft and someone was to be expelled for it, Mr. Quelch could not have spoken more seriously.

"The guilty boy," went on Mr. Quelch slowly, "is here; he hears me speak now. He will know to what I am alluding. I should greatly prefer not to go into details. I ask the guilty boy to step forward before the class."

"My hat!" whispered Bulstrode. "Quelch is getting too generous! I can see somebody jumping at the offer!"

And Skinner grinned.

As a matter of fact, no one stirred. The Form looked amazed, that was all. What was the crime, who was the culprit, they had no idea—with doubtless one exception.

Mr. Quelch waited a few moments, and then in a deeper voice he resumed.

"I appeal earnestly to the guilty boy to stand forward and admit his fault to save this unpleasant affair from going further."

He paused again. Harry Wharton heard a faint gasp close to him, and he looked round to see Billy Bunter looking very nervous. The fat junior blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"Quiet, you young ass!" muttered Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shut up!"

"But—but don't you think I—I had better own up? Do you think it will be a licking?" murmured Bunter.

Wharton started.

"Do you mean to say that you—"

"I—I didn't mean any harm, and—and I'm sorry—I—"

"Someone is whispering," said Mr. Quelch.

Bunter froze into dead silence.

"If the guilty party does not own up it will be the worse for him," said Mr. Quelch in a harder voice. "If I am compelled to make the matter public he will suffer. If he comes forward now I offer him a pardon for his offence."

Bunter looked appealingly at Harry Wharton, and the latter nodded. The fat junior scrambled out before the class. Mr. Quelch looked at him.

"Bunter!"

"Ye-e-es, sir?"

"It was you?"

"Ye-e-es, sir," stammered Billy. "I—I didn't mean any harm, sir."

"What?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "You committed this base, this mean and cowardly action, and you did not mean any harm?"

"N-n-no, sir. I—I didn't think it was mean

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and cowardly to borrow a camera, sir, and—and—

"What?"

"You see, sir, I've been taking up photography lately," stammered Bunter, blinking at the Form-master. "I—I haven't a camera yet, sir. I'm going to get one when my next postal order arrives, sir. I wanted to do a little practice first, sir. Ogilvy won't lend me his camera, sir—he's a mean beast—and so—so—"

"Is this a joke, Bunter?"

"N-n-no, sir, I didn't do it for a joke, sir. I'm sorry, sir. I took your camera out of the dark-room just to try it, sir, but I haven't done it any harm."

"You—you have taken my camera to play with!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, aghast.

"N-n-no, sir—to work with. I'm going to put it back, of course, sir; I shouldn't have let you miss it if I could help it—"

"Bunter—"

"I'm sorry, sir—"

"You may go back to your place, Bunter. I had no idea that you had taken my camera, and I was not referring to that in the least. It is quite another matter. Not another word—go to your place."

Billy Bunter gasped as he went back. Quite another matter! The Owl of the Remove could have kicked himself hard. He had owned up to the unheard-of impertinence of borrowing the Form-master's camera without permission—and all for nothing!

It has been said that a guilty conscience needs no accuser, and Bunter had proved the truth of it. He gave Wharton a reproachful glance. The Remove had not been able to restrain a giggle at Billy Bunter's misunderstanding; but a glance from the Form-master made them serious again.

A chilling silence fell upon the Form-room.

An Anonymous Letter!

MR. QUELCH looked grimly over the silent Form. Every junior was on tenterhooks now.

"As the culprit does not choose to own his action," said the Form-master, "it will be left to me to find him out."

He paused once more, but there was still silence.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"Very well. Dr. Locke received a letter this morning."

"Nothing surprising in that," murmured Ogilvy. "I had a letter myself."

"Faith, so did I!" said Micky Desmond.

"This letter," resumed Mr. Quelch, in a cutting voice, "was an anonymous one. It was a letter containing abuse of a certain person, and it was not signed by the writer."

The Remove thrilled once more.

They could guess who the "certain person" was, and they understood now why Mr. Quelch was looking so disturbed that morning.

"This letter," said Mr. Quelch, "Dr. Locke showed me this morning. The letter was written by a boy in this Form, for the purpose of prejudicing the headmaster against a Form-master. I need not point out the uselessness and the insolence of such a proceeding. Dr. Locke is hardly likely to be influenced by an anonymous letter-writer. It is my duty to discover the writer of this letter. If any boy knows



A loud and prolonged hiss from the crowd of juniors followed Bulstrode as he walked away. The Remove bully looked round savagely, as if he had half a mind to charge back and run amok among the Removeites.

who the writer is, I appeal to him to speak up."

There was a grim silence.

Mr. Quelch's eyes roved over the class, but they sought in vain for signs of guilt in any face.

"Very well," said the Remove master, "the matter drops for the present."

"If you please, sir—" said Harry Wharton. The Form-master looked at him.

"Do you wish to speak, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir. As captain of the Form, I think I ought to speak," said Harry firmly. "We have not seen this letter—"

"I should not care to show it to you."

"No, sir; but the handwriting—"

"The letter is written in block capitals, and gives no clue."

"I do not ask to see it, sir, but I think it only fair to point out that it might not have been written by a chap in the Remove. I don't want to accuse anybody, but the Form oughtn't to be condemned unheard. A fellow in the Upper Fourth, for instance, might have written the letter just as easily."

Mr. Quelch shook his head.

"Quite as easily, Wharton, no doubt; but he would have had no motive for doing so. This letter contains insolent references to myself, such as could only have come from a Remove boy. There is no doubt in my mind that the anonymous letter-writer is in this Form," went on Mr. Quelch. "The writer cannot pretend to have any motive but spite and malice, which, so far as I am aware, were quite unprovoked on my part. I have always done my best to make my boys like and respect me."

"And we do, sir!" exclaimed Harry.

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"Yes, rather!" chimed in Bob Cherry.

"I quite believe you, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, with a slight smile. "This anonymous writer is, I hope, quite alone in the opinion he is unreasonable enough to hold of me. I am sorry to say that there is no doubt that the writer is in the Remove."

"Then we shall find him out, sir," said Harry quietly; and he sat down.

The matter dropped, and lessons began; but the anonymous letter was certainly more in the boys' minds than lessons that morning.

It had evidently caused more pain than anger in Mr. Quelch, and most of the juniors were angry and indignant.

It was a stigma on the whole Form until the culprit was discovered. When he was discovered he was likely to have a warm time at the hands of the Remove.

Harry Wharton gave Bulstrode one expressive look. The Remove bully had been guilty of mean actions enough for it to be quite possible that he was guilty of this one, too. Bulstrode met his glance with one of sulky defiance.

Wharton set his lips and waited. When the class was dismissed the chums of the Remove went out together, and Harry looked round for Bulstrode. The latter was sauntering away in the Close, with his hands in his pockets, and Harry quickened his pace to overtake him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "What's the trouble?"

"I am going to speak to Bulstrode."

"About the letter?"

"Yes."

"But you don't know—"

"I'm going to find out."

Bob Cherry whistled softly. He went with Wharton, and so did a crowd of Removites, who read in the Form captain's face that something was likely to happen.

Bulstrode had gone under the trees, and he turned round suddenly as he heard many footsteps behind him. He looked surprised to see the crowd with Wharton.

"Hallo!" he said, with an unpleasant sneer. "Are you looking for me?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Well, here I am. Want me to captain a cricket match, or is it simply a testimonial?" asked the Remove bully.

The juniors grinned, but Harry Wharton's face remained as hard as a rock.

"It's about the letter?"

"What letter?"

"You know well enough," said Harry angrily.

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders. He seemed to be deliberately bent upon exasperating the captain of the Remove as much as possible. And Wharton's temper was not of the best. He had come into rough contact with Bulstrode too often to have much patience with him.

"How should I know?" said Bulstrode, in an airy manner. "There are lots of letters, and I don't know which one you are talking about. There are twenty-six in the alphabet—"

"I am speaking about the anonymous letter sent to the Head," said Harry, controlling his temper with difficulty as the juniors round him chuckled.

"Oh! Are you owning up to it?"

"What?"

"No good coming to me; you'd better go to Quelch."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Skinner.

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"Look here," said Harry. "Enough of this rot. I want to know whether you wrote that letter or not."

Bulstrode's eyes glittered.

"You've come to ask me whether I wrote the anonymous letter?"

"Yes."

"And you want an answer?"

"Of course I do!"

"There it is, then!"

Bulstrode drove his fist fairly into Harry Wharton's face, and the junior, taken utterly by surprise, fell to the ground, and lay there dazed.

Wharton versus Bulstrode!

"SHAME!" There was a moment's silence after the blow, and then that shout rang out on all sides.

Bulstrode glared about him fiercely. He met angry and scornful looks on all sides.

Wharton lay on the ground, utterly dazed by the fierce blow. He had never expected such a blow without the slightest warning. Bulstrode had struck with savage force, and Wharton was dazed for some minutes.

Bob Cherry had made a movement to spring upon the Remove bully, but Nugent dragged him back.

"Hold on, Bob!"

"But—"

"Leave him to Wharton."

Bob gritted his teeth.

"Right!"

He knelt beside his chum and raised him from the ground. There was a lump forming under Wharton's left eye, and the eye was partially closed. He looked dizzy, and he staggered as he was helped to his feet. His eyes blazed as he looked at the bully of the Remove.

"You—you coward!"

Bulstrode flushed a dull red, but he did not reply. The hisses of the juniors were ringing in his ears.

"You coward!" said Wharton. "You wouldn't have done that so easily if I had been ready! Put up your fists!"

"I'll put them up willingly enough!" sneered Bulstrode. "Do you think you're going to bully me because you've licked me once? If you do you've made a mistake! Come on!"

Nugent held Wharton's arm.

"You're not fit to tackle him now, Harry," he said quietly. "Leave it for a bit."

"I don't care! I can handle him!"

"Come on, then!" said Bulstrode. "I'm ready!"

"I wouldn't touch him," said Ogilvy. "A chap who writes an anonymous letter isn't fit for a decent fellow to fight with!"

"Quite right!" said Russell. "Let the cad alone!"

Bulstrode's eyes blazed.

"So you've made up your minds on that point?" he said thickly. "You believe that I wrote the letter to the Head?"

"You haven't said that you didn't."

"And if I do say that I didn't, will you believe me?" sneered Bulstrode. "You've made up your minds on the subject without asking for any proof."

"I don't see where proof could be got," said Hazeldene. "We can't have the letter to see."

But the way you answered Wharton wasn't the way of a chap who was innocent."

"I'll answer you in the same way if you begin jawing, Vaseline! I'm ready for you, Wharton!"

"I'll make you sorry for that blow, you cad!" said Wharton, between his teeth.

No more time was wasted in words. In the midst of the ring of excited juniors the old enemies faced each other.

It was not the first time they had fought. At one time the advantage had been with Bulstrode, and he had made merciless use of it. Since then training had done much for Harry, and he had licked the bully of the Remove in a stand-up fight that was still talked about among the juniors. Besides Mark Linley, the junior from Lancashire, he was the only fellow in the Remove who could do it. Even the sturdy Bob Cherry was no match for Bulstrode.

But Wharton was not in form now. That stunning blow had hurt him more than he realised. His head was still singing, his left eye was almost closed, and he felt dizzy. And Bulstrode, who was evidently in a savage temper, was a dangerous opponent at that moment.

The fight was hard and fierce, and punishment was about equally balanced at first. Many times Wharton's usually careful guard was wanting, and Bulstrode's heavy fists crashed home upon his face.

There was a general exclaiming among the crowded spectators as one of the fighters was seen to fall, and it was Harry Wharton.

He went down with a heavy bump, laid on the ground by a terrific upper-cut that had caught him fairly on the point of the chin. Bulstrode stood over him, with blazing eyes.

It seemed to the Remove bully almost too good to be true, but he was licking Wharton at last. His face showed the intense satisfaction it gave him. From two or three voices came a faint cheer for Bulstrode.

"Go it, Bulstrode!" said Snoop.

Trevor, who was standing next to him, turned upon his savagely.

"What's that you're cackling about?" he demanded.

Snoop receded a little.

"I suppose I can speak if I like!" he snarled.

"No, you can't! Shut up!"

It was a little high-handed of Trevor, but Snoop did shut up. Although Bulstrode was getting the better of the fight, feeling was strong against him among the Removites. Few of them doubted now that Bulstrode was the author of the anonymous letter. His surly defiance was not the way to convince them of his innocence, if he was innocent. And the juniors knew that the very advantage he was now gaining was due to the blow he had struck before the beginning of the fight.

Wharton was looking groggy as he staggered to his feet, but his spirit was undiminished.

"Had enough?" sneered Bulstrode.

"No!"

And it was Wharton who attacked again. He seemed to be collecting himself now, and he pressed his enemy hard.

A hard left-hander sent Bulstrode in a heap on the grass, and this time a cheer greeted the fall.

"Bravo, Wharton!"

The Remove bully scrambled up. He was convulsed with rage. His own success was greeted with silence or hisses; Wharton's was cheered. He fully understood what it meant, and it maddened him.

Straight at Wharton he rushed, and in a

moment they were gripping each other, and the fight was at close quarters.

There was a sudden shout from Morgan:

"Cave!"

But the combatants were too enraged to hear it. They fought on furiously.

"Look out!" cried Nugent. "Harry, here's the Head!"

Harry Wharton heard him, and he relaxed his hold upon Bulstrode. But Bulstrode was too furious to hear or to heed. He simply thought Harry was slackening, and he freed his right hand and struck out.

The blow caught Harry on the temple, and he crashed to the ground.

"Shame!"

The shout burst irrepressibly from the juniors. But the next moment there was a grim silence as the Head's voice was heard:

"Boys!"

The Head of Greyfriars looked upon the scene with contracted brows.

Guilty, or Not Guilty?

DR. LOCKE looked at the startled, scared juniors, at Bulstrode, and then at Wharton.

Wharton had just staggered up, and he looked dizzy. Bulstrode stood in an attitude of sulky defiance, his eyes on the ground. Dr. Locke looked at them earnestly.

"You two are fighting again!" he said. "What does this mean? You know that I do not object to a round or two with the gloves on in the gymnasium. But this—this brutal display, and in the open Close, too. I saw you from my window!"

Wharton flushed scarlet. He realised that he ought to have been a little more careful in selecting the scene of the explanation with Bulstrode.

"I am sorry, sir!"

"I am glad of that, at all events. And, now, what is this dispute about?"

The juniors were silent.

"I am waiting!" said the Head icily.

Still Harry did not speak.

"Nugent, you tell me what has caused this!" said the Head.

Frank Nugent shifted uneasily.

"It's about the letter, sir."

"What letter?"

"The anonymous letter, sir. It looks to some of us as if Bulstrode wrote it, and he won't explain. That's all, sir."

"Ah!" Dr. Locke turned to the burly Removite. "Did you write the anonymous letter that reached me this morning, Bulstrode?"

Bulstrode's face set obstinately.

"Answer me!" thundered the Head.

Right or Wrong?

The Spelling Bee on page 5 contained seven errors. Here are the corrected words:

MEASURABLE
PERPENDICULAR
SUBTERRANEAN
TANGERINE
GRAMOPHONE
VIOLONCELLO
CONSONANT

Try again next week.

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"I have nothing to say, sir."

"Am I to take that as an admission of guilt?"

Bulstrode bit his lip.

"I don't think I ought to be asked the question, sir! It's an insult to a fellow to ask him if he wrote an anonymous letter!"

"Ahem! There is certainly something in that. I do not like to think that any of the boys could be guilty of such meanness, and yet it is certain that a boy in the Remove wrote the letter. I shall discover him, and the punishment of the culprit will be a severe one. Do not let me see any more of this quarrelling."

And the Head moved away. Bulstrode cast a savage look at Harry Wharton.

"Well, do you want any more?" he asked.

"You heard what the Head said."

"You can come behind the chapel."

"I shan't fight you now," said Wharton. "But this isn't the finish. It looks to me as if you wrote that anonymous letter; but I'm going to find out who did it, and the chap who did it is going to be shown up."

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders.

"Find out, then!"

And he walked away.

A loud and prolonged hiss from the crowd of juniors followed him. Bulstrode looked round savagely as if he had half a mind to charge back among the Removites and run amok among them. But he thought better of it, and walked away furiously. The juniors hissed him till he was out of hearing.

"The cad!" said Bob Cherry. "He wrote the letter—it's as clear as daylight."

"It looks like it."

"The clearfulness is terrific."

"Oh, it's plain enough!" said Russell. "Did you notice how careful he was to avoid saying a direct 'No' when the Head asked him?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Faith, and he's as good as owned up!"

"Oh, I don't know!" said Snoop.

"Of course you don't," said Ogilvy. "You're another of the same sort. Birds of a feather. Hold your tongue!"

"But—"

"Oh, shut up!"

There were few voices raised in defence of Bulstrode. His overbearing ways had made him many enemies, and there was a general opinion that he had written the anonymous letter. Direct proof there could be none; but, as Nugent remarked, the letter had certainly been written by someone, and such evidence as there was pointed to Bulstrode.

Harry Wharton walked away with his friends. He was feeling dazed and sore. He knew that the Head's interference in stopping the fight had saved him from a defeat, and the thought was not pleasant. He would not have borne malice for a defeat in a fair fight. But he had not had fair play in his fight with Bulstrode.

He went to the bath-room to wash off, as far as possible, the signs of battle. There was a sound of running water in the bath-room as he reached it. A fat form was leaning over the rim of the bath, washing what looked like a photographic plate under the tap.

"What on earth—" began Harry.

Billy Bunter blinked round at him.

"It's all right, Wharton; I shan't be a minute. I'm washing my plate. As I had to own up about old Quelch's camera, I thought I might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, you know, so I

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took a photo before I took the camera back to his room."

Wharton looked at the blurred plate curiously.

"Is that the photo?" he asked.

"Yes; you have to wash the plate under running water, you know," said Bunter, with the air of a professional giving instruction.

As a matter of fact, Bunter's ideas on the subject of photography were of the vaguest, and though he had asked for information in many quarters, the net result had not been great. Fellows who dabbled in photography were willing to tell him things, but some of them told him more cock-and-bull stories than facts, and Bunter had not perception enough to distinguish the one from the other.

Added to that, his intelligence was by no means of a first-rate order, and he misunderstood half of what was told him. The jumble of more or less accurate information in his brain made him an extremely unsafe person to trust with a camera.

"But have you developed it?" asked Harry.

"No; I'm going to develop it afterwards," said Bunter innocently. "You see, you take the photo first, and then you wash the plate under running water, and then you develop it in the fixing solution, so Micky Desmond told me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at."

"Ha, ha! Micky was pulling your leg, you young ass! You've spoiled the plate by exposing it to the light before developing and fixing it."

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked at his plate in dismay.

"It does look rather smudgy," he confessed. "I thought perhaps that was due to my accidentally rubbing my fingers over it, though."

"My hat! It ought to be a beauty altogether!" laughed Wharton.

Bunter disconsolately carried away the plate which he had been patiently washing under the tap for the past ten minutes, and Wharton proceeded to bathe his face. But he could not remove all the signs of battle. There still remained a cut on the lip and a big lump under his left eye, and Bob Cherry grinned a little when Harry rejoined him.

"Does it look very bad?" asked Harry anxiously.

"N-no. Of course, it doesn't improve your beauty."

"I was thinking about Marjorie. We're going to see her to-morrow, and—and I don't want her to think I'm always fighting."

"Oh, I dare say it will tone down by to-morrow!" said Bob Cherry consolingly. "That black lump will be an art shade of blue, and—"

"Oh, rats!"

Barred!

THE next day one thing was very noticeable in the Remove—Bulstrode was barred! There had been no formal motion on the subject; the fellows dropped into the way of it, and it came about gradually.

At bed-time several had said good-night to him, but in the morning when the Remove arose no one addressed a remark to Bulstrode.

Even his own chums, Stott and Skinner, were "standoffish." Even Snoop, who, as a rule, toadied to Bulstrode for the sake of protection, looked the other way now.

Bulstrode was barred!

SAVE THESE STAMPS, PALS! See page 2.



take your choice. If you speak to me, I shall answer you. I won't join in sending anybody to Coventry unless the proof's as clear as sunlight against him. But I haven't any axe to grind."

He turned and walked away. Bulstrode quickened his pace and overtook him. There was a strange expression on the face of the burly Removite.

"I say, Linley, I'm sorry! I—I didn't mean that; only those cads have ragged me into a state of nerves!" he said awkwardly.

"Right you are," said Linley, his face brightening up. "It's all right! I might have taken it quietly, too. I'm sorry!"

Bulstrode nodded and walked away.

He passed the Famous Four, who were going down to the junior cricket ground with their bats, and he favoured them with a dark scowl. Bob Cherry and Nugent took no notice of him, but Harry Wharton stopped.

"Hold on a minute!" he said. "I want to speak to that chap."

"Better let him alone," said Nugent. "It will only mean another row."

"I shan't be a minute."

Bulstrode stopped and looked round as he heard Wharton hastening after him. There was a dangerous light in his eyes.

"Well, what do you want?" he asked. "Have you come to finish that little affair we left unfinished yesterday? I'm quite ready."

"No," said Wharton, keeping his hands at his sides. "I don't want a row with you. I—"

"Perhaps you've found out that you're not such a great fighting-man as you believed," suggested Bulstrode. "You'd have been licked if the Head hadn't interfered, and you know it."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Never mind that now. I want to speak about the anonymous letter. All the fellows believe that you sent it."

"Yes—you've fixed that for me."

"I've had nothing to do with it—only it looks like it. If you sent it you ought to be cut by every decent fellow in the school. I thought you sent it—and the way you've acted doesn't look innocent, Bulstrode. But—well, I'd like you to have the benefit of the doubt."

"Do you mean to say that you would believe me if I denied having sent it?" asked Bulstrode, with the same unpleasant sneer on his face.

"I don't know. But you haven't denied it yet."

"And I don't mean to. You can believe that I sent it if you choose. I don't care for your opinion; and the Form can go hang! You've taken my place here; and I detest the whole set of you," said Bulstrode bitterly. "I won't say a word."

"That isn't the way to prove your innocence, if you are innocent."

"I don't care to prove it."

"Very well; have your own way."

And Wharton rejoined his chums, with his face still troubled. Bulstrode's manner was against him, certainly; yet Wharton could not help having strong doubts on the subject. After all, a fellow who was mean enough to send an anonymous letter would be mean enough to lie about it afterwards. If Bulstrode had really written that letter, surely he would have denied point-blank any knowledge of it.

"Well, what's the verdict?" asked Bob Cherry.

"He has nothing to say."

"Oh, he's guilty!"

"I don't know."

"Blessed if I understand you, Wharton. You've always been enemies, and now you're sticking up for him when he's done a mean, crawling, rotten sort of thing."

"Yes—if he did it! I mean to find out."

"How?"

"I don't know yet. I must think it out. Let's get down to the cricket."

And in the cricket practice the chums of the Remove forgot, for the time, the anonymous letter, and Bulstrode, too.

Bulstrode walked under the trees, with his hands thrust deep into his trousers pockets, and

I suppose you would manage to see me next time you wanted to borrow some tin. You worm! So even you think that I wrote that letter, eh?"

Snoop shifted uncomfortably from one foot to another.

"N-n-n-no, I don't, Bulstrode. I—I think very likely Wharton wrote it, and is trying to put it on you," stammered Snoop.

"You lying little beast!" said Bulstrode. "You know very well Wharton didn't do anything of the sort. Get out of my sight, before I jump on you!"

Snoop gladly got out of his sight. Bulstrode stood lost in gloomy reflection till his meditations were broken in upon by a squeaky voice.

"I say, Skinner—"

Bulstrode looked round.

"Oh, is it you, Bulstrode?" said Billy Bunter, blinking at him through his glasses. "I suppose I ought not to be speaking to you, as you're sent to Coventry, but I don't believe in being hard on you. Of course, it was mean to write an anonymous letter, but we all know what to expect of you. That's how I took it. I say, Bulstrode, I've been disappointed about a postal order. Do you think you could manage to lend me five bob till to-morrow morning?"

Bulstrode looked at him grimly, without speaking.

"You shall have it back in the morning, honour bright," rattled on Billy Bunter. "My postal order may come to-night, or, at the latest, by first post in the morning. And look here, Bulstrode, I know you must be feeling pretty rotten now, with all the fellows giving you the cold shoulder over that anonymous letter business. I don't mind talking to you a bit, on the quiet, you know, when the other fellows are not about. Of course, it wouldn't do to be seen talking to a chap like you. But—Ow-ow! What are you up to?"

"You fat worm!"

"Ow! Don't shake me like that! You'll make my glasses fall off, and if they get broken you'll have to pay for them, so I tell you! Ow! Ow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter sank, gasping, in the grass, and sat there dazed and blinking, as Bulstrode walked away.

(Bulstrode's having an unhappy time in the Remove. Is he really guilty of sending the insulting letter to the Head? Look out for next week's startling developments.)

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a sullen scowl on his face. He had always been the head of a little set in the Remove, and unaccustomed to solitude, and so his isolation cut him very deeply. Yet he had shown the surliest side of his nature to one or two fellows who would have treated him better.

Under the trees, he came in sight of Snoop, who pretended not to see him, taking another path to avoid the meeting. Bulstrode gritted his teeth, and, quickening his pace, caught up the ead of the Remove and grasped him by the shoulder.

"Stop, you worm!" he said savagely.

Snoop stopped.

"Hallo!" he said. "I didn't see you, Bulstrode."

"Don't lie to me! You saw me, right enough!"

"I—I—I—I—"

"You were trying to sneak away without speaking," said Bulstrode, regarding the other with a look of bitter scorn. "You—you toady!"

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Printed in England and published every Wednesday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered monthly. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.—Saturday, June 18th, 1935.