

GRUNDY OF THE SHELL! | THE CITY OF FLAME!

A Grand Complete School Tale of
TOM MERRY & CO. AT ST. JIM'S.

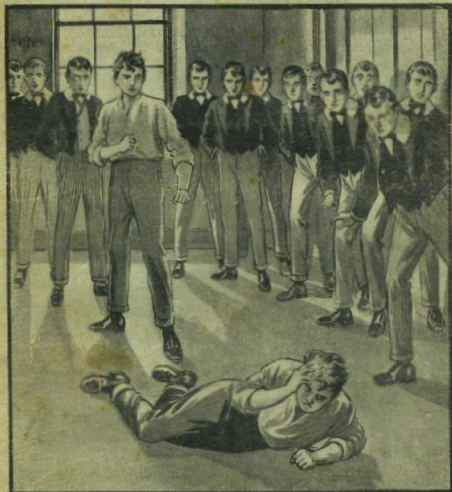
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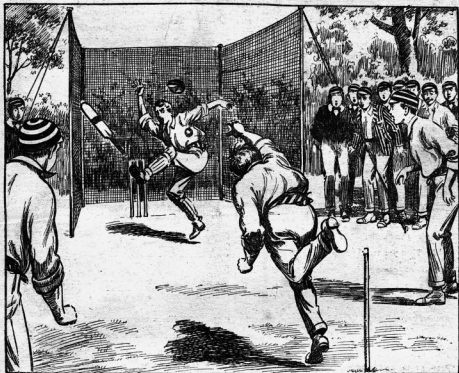


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GRUNDY OF THE SHELL!

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



The next moment there was a fiendish yell from Tom Merry. The ball, without even touching the pitch, caught the captain of the Shell in the ribs. Tom Merry dropped his bat and executed a wild dance. "Oh! Oh! Oh! Yow! Yah!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Yow-ow-ow-ow!" yelled Tom Merry. (See Chapter 8.)

CHAPTER 1. Grundy Arrives.

"YOUNG shaver!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not even turn his head.

He did not even know that he was being addressed.

That he, the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the most elegant junior in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, should be addressed as "young shaver" by a perfect stranger in a stentorian voice, across the platform of a railway-station, was impossible, or ought to have been impossible.

Arthur Augustus was strolling elegantly along the platform at Rylcombe Station. The local train from Wayland Junction had just come in. In that train

Arthur Augustus expected to see his chums Blake and Herries and Digby, who had been over to Wayland that afternoon. Arthur Augustus, with his celebrated monocle jammed in his eye, continued his leisurely inspection of the train, blind and deaf to a passenger who was looking out of a carriage window and shouting: "Young-shaver!"

"Bai Jove, they don't seem to be heah!" murmured Arthur Augustus, as he failed to detect his chums among the passengers. "I pwesume they have walked it, aftah all."

"Hi!"

Arthur Augustus turned his monocle carelessly upon the shouting youth, who was leaning out of the carriage window, and looking towards him—looking past him

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Arthur Augustus supposed. The youth in the carriage was a big fellow of over sixteen, with a bullet head and prominent features, and wearing a cap stuck at an angle upon a somewhat unruly mop of hair.

"Hi, young shaver! Hi!"

"Bai Jove, what an extwemely loud and unpleasent voice that chap has!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's. "I wondah how he's shoutin' to?"

"Hi! You with the glass in your eye!"

Arthur Augustus jumped.

That description certainly applied to no one on the platform with the exception of himself. The stranger was addressing him. There could be no mistake about it. That stentorian shout was intended for his ears. The eye of Arthur Augustus gleamed with wrath behind his eyeglass. He fixed a stare upon the youth at the carriage window, which ought to have petrified him on the spot. But the big youth did not seem in the least petrified.

"Are you deaf?" he exclaimed.

"Bai Jove! Are you addressin' me?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, driven to speech at last.

"Yes, you young duffer! Is this the station for St. Jim's?"

"Yaas!"

"Oh, good!"

The big youth threw open the door of the carriage, and stepped out. Arthur Augustus gazed at him with mingled wrath and indignation and contempt. The fellow did not seem to have the slightest sense of the enormity he had been guilty of in addressing Arthur Augustus as a young shaver.

From his question D'Arcy could guess that he was a new fellow for the school. He was big enough to be a senior, but his manners, in D'Arcy's opinion, would have been a disgrace to the Third Form. He pitched a bag and a rug out of the carriage. Trumble, the old porter, had taken a box and a hamper from the guard's van and put them on a trolley. The big youth looked up and down the platform. Then he fixed his eyes on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's was in Etons, so the new-comer jumped to a correct conclusion.

"You belong to St. Jim's?" he asked.

"Yaas!"

"Good! Then you can show me the way!"

"Bai Jove!"

"What Form are you in?" continued the stranger, looking over the elegant junior with a decidedly disparaging expression.

"The Fourth."

"Ah! A blessed fag!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "I wondah what menagewie this awful boundah has escaped from?"

Old Trumble came along closing the doors of the carriages, and the train moved on out of the station. The big youth gave him a dig in the ribs.

"Porter!"

"Ow!" said Trumble.

"Put my trunk and hamper into a cab."

"Yessir!"

"Young shaver!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, having failed to wither the new-comer with scaring looks, was walking away towards the exit, giving it up as a bad job. The burly youth seemed quite impervious to scaring looks. "Here, young shaver!"

Arthur Augustus trembled with indignation. He turned round, and fixed his gleaming eyeglass upon the new-comer.

"Will you kindly wefwain from addressin' me?" he said. "I do not desiah to make your acquaintance."

The big youth stared at him.

"I wegard you as a boundah," went on Arthur Augustus, his indignation gathering force as he proceeded. "I look upon you as an uttah outsider. I shall be obliged if you will wefwain from addressin' me again."

"My hat! What's your name?"

"That does not concern you, you uttah boundah. I wefuse to say nothah word to you. Young shavah! Bai Jove!"

"Pick up that rug!"

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"Wha-at!"

"Pick up that rug, and carry it for me!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Are you deaf?"

"I am not deaf!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I can uly conclude that you are off your weckah! Are you uttah ass enough to think that I shall fag for you, a new boy, with the mannahs of a Pwussian!"

The new boy grinned.

"You don't know who I am yet," he remarked.

"I have not the slightest desiah to know."

"I'm Grundy!"

"It is a mattah of uttah indifference to me!"

"At Redclyffe," continued the new boy. "I was in the Shell, and the Fourth fagged for me."

"They must have been awful duflahs, then."

"You see, I should have whopped them if they hadn't," explained Grundy. "I keep fags in order, I can tell you. I don't stand any cheek. Pick up that rug."

"Wats!"

"And carry it to the cab."

"Wubbish!"

"Or I shall whop you!" roared Grundy.

Arthur Augustus pushed back his immaculate cuffs. Grundy from Redclyffe was nearly twice as big as the swell of St. Jim's. But all the blood of the D'Arcys was boiling in the veins of Arthur Augustus. Grundy from Redclyffe, had apparently found more meekness in the Fourth Form there than he was likely to meet with in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

"Do you hear me?" demanded Grundy.

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard you as a bullyin' beast, and if you approach me I shall give you a feahful thwashin'."

"Are you going to pick up that rug?"

"Wathah not!"

The next moment an earthquake happened to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Precisely what came to pass he hardly knew; but when he could see clearly again he was sitting on the platform, with his silk topper squashed on his head, his elegant-clothes badly rumpled, his eyeglass streaming at the end of its cord, and he was gasping for breath with tremendous gasps. Grundy of the Shell was walking off the platform with his bag and his rug, and Trumble was wheeling the trolley after him.

"Gweat Scott!" Arthur Augustus gasped and gasped.

"Bai Jove, what a dweadful wuffian! Gweat Scott, what a feahful Hun! Oh, deah!"

Grundy of the Shell was gone before Arthur Augustus recovered sufficient breath to rise from the platform.

CHAPTER 2.

"No Rot!"

"LOOKS like a new merchant!"

Monty Lowther made the remark.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, were adorning the gateway of St. Jim's with their persons when the station cab drove up.

There were a trunk, a bag, and a hamper on top of the old cab. Inside was a burly youth, who looked out of the window as the cab drove up to the school. The Terrible Three made way for the vehicle to pass in, and it stopped at the lodge, and Taggles came out. The big youth descended from the cab.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther looked at him rather curiously. He was evidently a new boy; but he had none of the shrinking modesty of a new boy about him. If he had spent a dozen terms at St. Jim's his manners could hardly have been more assured. He gave the Terrible Three a stare, and then turned to the cabman.

"How much?"

"Four shillings, sir."

"Too much."

The cabman blinked at him. Of course it was too much, but the jeh regarded a new boy as legitimate prey. Grundy turned to Taggles.

"You're the porter—what?"

"Yes, I ham," said Taggles, somewhat surlily.

"I'm Grundy."

"Ho!" said Taggles.

"What's the right fare from Rylcombe to here?"
 "Hark the cabman," said Taggles, not at all pleased by the imperative manner of Master Grundy.
 Grundy turned to the three juniors in the gateway.
 "What's the fare from Rylcombe, you fellows?" he asked.
 "Half-a-crown," said Tom Merry.
 "I thought so. Here's half-a-crown, cabby, and a bob for yourself. You don't get four shillings out of me."
 The old cabby, without a word—perhaps his feelings were too deep for words—bumped down the box, the bag, and the hamper, and tossed the rug out of the cab, and drove away. Grundy, without a glance at him, came towards the Terrible Three. They looked at him with interest.

"I'm a new chap," he explained.
 "Not really?" said Monty Lowther.
 "Yes, really. You wouldn't take me for a new chap, I suppose. You see, I know the ropes," said Grundy. "I've come from another school. I was in the Shell at Redclyffe—that's in Kent. I'm going into the Shell here. Not much of a new boy about me, really."
 "You haven't bought the school, by any chance?" asked Lowther.
 "Bought the school? No."
 "Oh, I thought that perhaps you had!" said Lowther amiably. "My mistake."
 Grundy looked at him sharply, but Lowther's face was quite serious. Tom Merry and Manners smiled.
 "Don't think you can pull my leg because I'm new here," said Grundy. "I know the ropes. I'm an old hand. If a chap tries to pull my leg I whop him."
 "Not really?"
 "Yes, really," assured Grundy. "I could lick any fellow in the Shell at Redclyffe—anybody in the Fifth, for that matter. I never stand any rot."

"By Jove!"
 "I make it a point never to stand any rot," explained Grundy; "especially from fags. I find it's the best system."
 "Oh!"
 "Not that I'm a quarrelsome chap—not a bit of it. Only I never stand any rot—see? Is there a tuck-shop near here?"

"There's the school shop," said Tom Merry, hardly knowing what to make of this somewhat unusual new boy. The Terrible Three were in doubt whether they had better smile, or take Master Grundy by the scruff of the neck and bump him in the gateway.
 "Good!" said Grundy. "Will you show me the way?"
 "If you're a new kid, you ought to see your Form-master first," said Tom.

"Oh, he can wait!" said Grundy. "I'm hungry, you see. I've had a long journey. What Form are you fellows in?"
 "Shell."

"Oh, good! Trot along with me and have some ginger-pop."

The Terrible Three decided to smile instead of administering the bumping that Master Grundy evidently stood in need of.
 "Most potent, grave, and reverend signior," said Monty Lowther solemnly, "to hear is to obey."
 "Oh, don't be funny, you know," said Grundy.
 "Where's that shop?"

The Terrible Three led the way to Dame Taggles's little shop in the corner of the quad. They were not averse to imbibing the cheering ginger-pop on a warm afternoon; and, as it happened, funds were low in Tom Merry's study. Grundy of Redclyffe had come along in the nick of time, in fact.

There were several fellows in the tuck-shop, and they looked curiously at the new junior. Monty Lowther presented him with great solemnity.

"Gentlemen, lend me your ears! Allow me to present Master Grundy, who has left his old school for his old school's good, and deigns to honour us by coming to St. Jim's."

"He condescends to come into the Shell. It is a great loss for the Sixth, and we must expect the Fifth to be jealous."

"Which House are you in, new kid?" asked Figgins of the Fourth, amid a general chuckle.

Figgins of the Fourth was the great chief of the New House juniors.

"Eh?" said Grundy. "Which what?"
 "School House or New House?" asked Kerr.
 "Oh, School House!" said Grundy. "Ginger-pop, please, ma'am. And jam-tarts. If any fellow cares to join me, he's welcome."

"Well, I must say that's jolly decent, for a School House chap," remarked Fatty Wynn of the New House. "I'll join you with pleasure!"

All the juniors in the tuck-shop joined Master Grundy with pleasure. His invitation was given very genially and heartily, and there was no reason to refuse. And the ginger-pop and the jam-tarts were good. Quite a merry party gathered round the counter, and Dame Taggles was soon busy.

A tall and elegant senior, who was chatting with another Fifth-Former in the shop, did not appear to have heard Grundy's genial invitation. It was Cutts of the Fifth, the dandy of the School House. Grundy gave him a look.

"Hallo! Won't you trot up?" he asked.
 Cutts looked at him with his most insolent smile.
 "Thank you! I do not generally consume jam-tarts and ginger-beer with fags," he replied, in a drawing tone.

"Oh, never mind Cutts!" said Tom Merry. "Cutts is always rather a pig. Aren't you, Cutts?"

Grundy put down his glass of ginger-pop.
 "Your name Cutts?" he asked, with a glare at the dandy of the Fifth.
 "Yes, my name is Cutts."
 "You called me a fag."
 "Quite so."

"I don't stand any rot from anybody," remarked Grundy. "I'm a peaceable chap. But I don't stand any rot, and I don't like being called a fag."

"I am desolated," said Cutts, with mock humility. "I sincerely hope that you are not angry, Master Bundy?"
 St. Leger of the Fifth, Cutts's companion, grinned.
 "My name isn't Bundy. Grundy."

"Any relation to the celebrated Mrs. Grundy?" asked Cutts, and there was a laugh.
 "Look here," said Grundy. "I've told you already that I don't stand any rot. I suppose you're a senior—what?"

"Yes, I have that distinction."
 "Well, I don't care if you're in the Sixth. I don't care if you're a prefect! I don't care tuppence for you; whatever you are!" announced Grundy. "When I was at Redclyffe I whopped Fifth-Formers!"

"Indeed! You will find St. Jim's a little different from Redclyffe, then," remarked Cutts. "May a fellow inquire what you were kicked out of Redclyffe for?"
 "I wasn't kicked out of Redclyffe."

"No? Then I'm sure you ought to have been."
 "There was a row," explained Grundy. "I was really fed up. There was a row, and my pater decided to take me away. It was through licking a prefect."

"My hat!"
 "You see, I never stand any rot. I know how to look after myself. Now, my opinion of you is that you're a cheeky cad!"

"What?" yelled Cutts.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Go it, Grundy!" chorused the juniors. "Tell him what you think of him."

"I'm going to," said Grundy. "You called me a fag, Cutts. I've called you a cheeky cad! That makes us even. But don't give me any more of it, or I'll bundle you neck and crop out of this shop before you can say knife."

Cutts stared at the new junior in amazement and rage. Cutts, dandy as he was, was an athlete, and quite a formidable fighting-man. There was certainly no junior at St. Jim's who would have cared to tackle Cutts in a stand-up encounter. But Grundy from Redclyffe was nearly as big as Cutts, and he was a tremendously powerful fellow. And he was evidently not used to measuring his words.

Tom Merry & Co. looked on, grinning. They enjoyed

hearing Gerald Cutts of the Fifth talked to in this way. It was refreshing.

"You—you—you—" stuttered Cutts. "Why, I'll lick you till you can't crawl! I'll smash you, you cheeky cub!"

"That's done it!" said Grundy. "Here goes!"

"Why, what— My hat!" roared Cutts.

Grundy was attacking him right and left. The dandy of the Fifth gave ground before the attack, in great astonishment. There was a cheer in the tuck-shop.

"Go it, Grundy!"

"Give him beans!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cutts recovered himself, and stood his ground, and closed with the new fellow from Redclyffe.

Then Tom Merry & Co. beheld an amazing sight.

Cutts of the Fifth was swept off his feet in the grasp of George Grundy, and flung headlong through the doorway. He bumped down in the quadrangle with a yell.

"My hat!"

"Hurrah!"

St. Leger made a movement forward. Grundy turned on him, with his big fists up. St. Leger promptly made a movement backwards.

"By gad!" said St. Leger.

Cutts scrambled to his feet. He came raging into the tuck-shop like a tiger from the jungle. Cutts was a black sheep, and a good deal of a cad, but he had plenty of pluck. He fairly hurled himself upon Grundy from Redclyffe.

Grundy faced him cheerfully, and in a second they were fighting hammer and tongs. The juniors crowded back to give them room. Dame Taggles, behind the counter, wrung her hands and shrieked. There was a crash as a tin of biscuits was knocked to the floor, and the trampling feet of the combatants soon ground the biscuits to dust. Another crash as a couple of bottles of sweets went down.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Dame Taggles. "Stop them! Separate them! Oh dear!"

"Pile in!"

"Go it, Grundy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cave!" yelled Levison of the Fourth, from the door.

"Look out!" called out Wilkins of the Shell. "Here comes Linton!"

But the infuriated combatants did not heed. Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, stopped in the doorway, and looked in with a terrific frown.

"Stop! Do you hear me? How dare you? Stop this instantly!"

CHAPTER 3.

Wally Shows the Way.

TOM MERRY & Co. dragged the combatants apart. Cutts of the Fifth was panting for breath. His tie was torn out, and his nose was streaming red. Grundy was looking very dishevelled, and he had a "mouse" under his right eye.

Mr. Linton stared at them with towering wrath.

The Form-master had been crossing the quadrangle when the din from the tuck-shop drew him to the spot. He had expected to find a fog row going on. He was astonished to find that it was a Fifth-Former engaged in combat with a youth he had never seen before.

"Cutts!" he rapped out. "I am surprised at you! I am disgusted! You, a senior of the Fifth Form, fighting in the tuck-shop! For shame!"

Cutts was crimson with rage.

"I wasn't fighting," he howled.

"What! What were you doing, then?"

"I was thrashing a cheeky fag."

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Grundy, "I like that! Thrashing me! Why, you couldn't thrash one half of me!"

"Boy!" thundered Mr. Linton.

"Hallo!"

"Don't say 'Hallo' to me! Who are you? I have never seen you before."

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"I'm a new boy, sir. I'm Grundy—George Alfred Grundy, sir."

"Oh! The Head has mentioned you to me. You are coming into my Form," said Mr. Linton. "Grundy, you have signalled your arrival at this school by a disgraceful disturbance."

"Oh, my hat!" said Grundy.

"How dare you, sir?"

"Well, I told him I wouldn't stand any rot, sir," said Grundy. "These fellows will witness that I told him quite plainly—"

"What is the cause of this disgraceful encounter?" rapped out the Form-master.

"He cheeked me!" hissed Cutts.

"He cheeked me!" said Grundy.

"You had better go, Cutts. As I am not your Form-master, I will not deal with you. But I must point out that you are not a prefect, and have no right to chastise a junior. If you have any complaint to make of Grundy, you should make it to me. Kindly go. Your present appearance, Cutts, is a disgrace to the school."

Mr. Linton had a very sharp tongue when he let it go. Cutts of the Fifth, boiling with rage, quitted the tuck-shop without another word.

"As for you, Grundy, you must learn to be more respectful to older boys. Discipline is maintained at this school. As you are a new boy, however, I will not punish you on this occasion. You may follow me to my study."

"Yes, sir," said Grundy.

The master of the Shell rustled away.

"That's my Form-master—what?" said Grundy, looking round.

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"I don't see what he wanted to go for me for," said Grundy. "The fellow cheeked me—you all heard him. I never stand any rot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who is going to pay for those biscuits and those sweets?" exclaimed Dame Taggles wrathfully. "I shall complain to the Head."

"Well, Cutts ought to pay for them, as he started the row," said Grundy. "I'm always being picked on like this, though I'm a peaceable chap. Lots of quarrelsome fellows at Redclyffe never get into half my rows, somehow. Still, you shan't lose by it, ma'am—I'll pay."

Master Grundy threw a sovereign on the counter. Evidently the cheerful youth was very well supplied with money.

"You'd better go after Linton," said Tom Merry. "He doesn't like being kept waiting."

"I haven't really had enough yet," grumbled Grundy. "I don't see what he wanted to wedge in for. I know I'm hungry. He can wait a bit."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cut off!" said Talbot of the Shell. "You'll get into an awful row. Linton isn't the best-tempered master at St. Jim's."

Grundy hesitated.

"Well, I suppose I'd better go. Don't you fellows leave off—finish the quid."

And Grundy walked out of the tuck-shop, with his hands in his pockets, whistling. He did not seem to be feeling any ill results from his tussle with Cutts of the Fifth. He left the tuck-shop in a roar.

"Well, that merchant takes the cake," gurgled Monty Lawther. "Blessed if I've ever seen a new kid quite like that before!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Something quite new in new kids," grinned Tom Merry. "And for a peaceable chap, it doesn't take him long to get into a row."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He handled Cutts awfully well," remarked Figgins. "He seems a decent sort of ass—but a first-class ass, and no mistake."

"He's really decent," said Fatty Wynn. "The real right sort, in my opinion. He said we were to finish the quid—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors proceeded to "finish the quid" in refreshments, liquid and solid, with great satisfaction. Grundy from Redclyffe had made quite an impression upon the



Grundy picked up the fag as if he had been an infant, and mounted him on one shoulder, grinning. "Lemme down!" yelled D'Arcy minor. "You'll take me to the School House," said Grundy. (See Chapter 5.)

follows he had already become acquainted with. Pugnacious as he undoubtedly was, he seemed good-tempered and genial, and he was certainly open-handed. And the "handing" of their old enemy, Cutts of the Fifth, delighted the juniors.

Grundy of the Shell crossed the quadrangle, looking about him. His new acquaintances were still in the tuck-shop, finishing the quid. Grundy looked for Mr. Linton, but the master of the Shell had already disappeared into the House.

"Now, which blessed House is the blessed School House?" granted Grundy, halting. "Here, young shaver, which is the School House?"

It was D'Arcy minor—Wally of the Third—whom he hailed.

"Hallo! when did you get out of the Zoo?" asked Wally.

Grundy frowned.

"None of your cheek! Is that the School House?"

"Ask a policeman," suggested Wally.

"Look here, you cheeky young tomtit—"

"Why, you thumping ass!" exclaimed Wally, with

breathless indignation. "You—you—here, wharrer you at? Leggo!"

Grundy of Redclyffe picked the fag up as if he had been an infant, and mounted him on one shoulder, grinning. All St. Jim's swam round D'Arcy minor for a moment, and then he found himself seated on the big youth's shoulder.

"Lemme down!" he yelled.

"You'll take me to the School House," said Grundy.

"Now, then."

"You—you rotter!" bellowed Wally, his dignity utterly outraged by being carried on a fellow's shoulder like a "kid" in the First Form. "You—you jabberwock! Put me down or I'll pull your silly ears."

"If I put you down, I'll land you on your head," said Grundy. "And if you don't show me the way to the School House at once, I'll drop you into the fountain."

"My only aunt Jane! I—I—"

"Now then—"

"Go and eat coke!" roared Wally.

Grundy made a stride towards the fountain.

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"Hold on!" gasped D'Arcy minor. "You—you awful beast! I'll show you the way! There's the School House, you fathead! Anybody but a silly idiot would know that that other rotten old barn wasn't the School House. Now put me down, you beast!"

Grundy carried him as far as the School House, and then sat him down on the steps. He jerked off his cap, and jammed it down his back, and then went into the House. Wally jumped up, boiling with rage. Never had the hero of the Third, the great chief of the inky brigade, been so unceremoniously treated.

"Why, I'll—I'll—I'll scrag him!" gasped Wally. "I'll kick his shins! I'll—"

Words failed the indignant fag.

Completely careless of the Third-Former's fury, George Alfred Grundy strolled into the School House, Mr. Linton was standing in his study doorway, and he signed to the new boy. Grundy followed him into the study.

When Tom Merry & Co. came into tea Grundy was still in the Form-master's study, not having a happy time. Though apparently very well up in the Medical line, George Alfred's scholastic attainments made Mr. Linton smart.

The Terrible Three were still smiling over the scene in the tuck-shop as they prepared tea in their study in the Shell passage. But a sudden reflection made Tom Merry very grave.

"My hat!" he exclaimed.

"Hallo! What's the matter now?"

"That new fellow; he's in the School House—"

"Well?"

"And he said he's in the Shell. He's big enough for the Fifth, but he said he's in the Shell—"

"Well?"

"Suppose they plant him in this study?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"He doesn't seem a bad sort," said Tom Merry. "But—"

"If they plant him in here, we'll soon unplant him," said Mooty Lowther. "Crooke can save him. There's only two in Crooke's study—Crooke and Wilkins. They couldn't have the cheek to put him here. We wouldn't stand it, anyway! We're full up, and we don't want a blessed elephant here."

But the Terrible Three felt a little uneasy as they sat down to tea. They rather liked George Alfred Grundy, in a way. Certainly he had handled Cutts of the Fifth very nicely. But they didn't want him in their study. He was such an exceedingly burly and overpowering person, that they would greatly have preferred him as a neighbour rather than as a study-mate. And so the chums of the Shell were somewhat anxious to learn which study George Alfred Grundy had been assigned to.

CHAPTER 4.

Jack Blake on the War-path.

"Gussy! My word!"

Blake and Herries and Digby stared at their noble chum.

Arthur Augustus had put himself somewhat to rights after the earthquake encounter with the new boy at Rylcombe Station. But when he met his chums, on the way home, he showed many signs of dilapidation.

Blake and Herries and Dig were just turning out of the lane from Weyland, at the cross-roads, when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came along from Rylcombe. They met him face to face.

And they stared.

"What on earth have you been doing with your hat?" demanded Blake. "Trying to turn it into a concertina?"

"And your collar into a dish-clout?" asked Herries.

"And where are your waistcoat buttons?" inquired Digby.

"Bai Jove! I've had a fearful time, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "Have you seen anythin' of him?"

"Whom?" asked the three chums together.

"That wottah!"

"Somebody else been handling you?" asked Blake.

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"Yass, w'ahah."

"The Grammar School boarders?"

"Wats! No. A wotten new kid—a new fellow for the Shell, named Waddy or Bundy or Gwundy, or somethin'. A feahful beast! I was at the station," explained Arthur Augustus. "I've been to my tulah's, and I thought I'd dwop in at the station, as the tavin was due, in case your fellows came home that way. You didn't come, but that awful wottah did. A disgustin' beast! A wegulah tewwah!"

Blake & Co. grinned. Arthur Augustus was breathing indignation.

"Tell your uncle about it," said Blake soothingly.

"The frightful cad addressed me as a 'young shavah'—"

"Awful!" said Blake.

"Horrible!" said Digby solemnly.

"Unspeakable!" said Herries.

"Purdy, don't wot, deah boys! I should have tweated him with silent contempt, but he wanted me to fag for him."

"What?"

"He ordahed me to pick up a wug and cawwy it for him."

"Fagging the Fourth—a Shell bounder, and a new kid?" said Blake incredulously. "You're dreaming, Gussy."

"I am not dreamin', Blake; though I admit it seemed like a howwid dream, shortly aftahwards. He said he used to fag the Fourth at Weddlyffe."

"Comes from Reddlyffe, does he? Where's that?"

"I wathah think that is the school neah Gweyfwahs. We passed Weddlyffe goin' to Gweyfwahs, I wememph. This howwid wottah was in the Shell there. I suppose he has been kicked out for bein' such a wuffian. At least, I pweesume so."

"Why didn't you lick him?" demanded Herries.

"I started lickin' him."

"And what happened?"

"Alem!"

Blake doubled up his fists in a suggestive manner.

"I shall have to tackle him," he remarked.

"Wessly, Blake, you would hardly have much luck, as I have already failed to lick him."

"Go Hon!"

"The fact is, he is a vewwy big beast—as big as a seniah, and I suppose he is old enough to be in the Fifth, only he is probably too fatheaded to get his wemove. He is as big as Cutts of the Fifth, or very nearly—a fwightfully barlay wuffian. He left me gaspin'."

"But you didn't fag for him?"

"Wathah not!"

"If you had, we'd have expelled you from Study No. 6," said Blake. "I'm anxious to see this merchant. A Shell fellow who wants to fag the Fourth is worth looking at. He will find Study No. 6 down on him."

"I don't believe in being rough on new kids," remarked Digby. "But it would be best to start with giving him a hiding."

"Leave that to me," said Blake.

"Wessly Blake—"

"Well, if I can't lick him, he'll lick me," said Blake; "and he will feel rather groggy after he has licked me, anyway!"

"He's an awf'ly stwong beast."

"Well, so am I," said Blake.

Jack Blake hurried his steps. He was anxious to get to St. Jim's, and see that unusual new boy. The mere idea of a junior in the Shell trying to fag the Fourth put Blake's back up at once. All the fighting blood of the Yorkshire junior was aroused. He was prepared to "wade in," and wipe up the quid with Master Grundy, as a preliminary lesson in manners.

Arthur Augustus had his doubts.

Jack Blake was a great fighting-man, and had few equals in that line in the Fourth Form. Perhaps only Figgins was really quite up to his level fistically. But Arthur Augustus remembered how Grundy had swung him—Gussy—about like a sack of potatoes. And he could not help having his doubts.

The juniors were quite keen to see Grundy. They

reached St. Jim's, and hurried to the School House. They were late for tea, and tea in Hall was just over when they arrived. That did not matter to Blake & Co., who generally had tea in their study. The School House juniors who had had tea in Hall were coming out, and among them Arthur Augustus spotted the broad shoulders and bullet head of George Alfred Grundy. Grundy was looking quite cheerful and contented. His interview with Mr. Linton had not been a happy one, but he had made a good tea, and he was satisfied. He grinned as he caught sight of Arthur Augustus.

"That's the wottah, deah boys!" said D'Arcy.

"My hat! He is big," confessed Blake. "But quality is better than quantity any day."

Blake marched up to the new boy Grundy stared at him inquiringly.

"You're the new kid?" asked Blake.

"I'm Grundy!"

"The chap who thinks he can fag the Fourth?"

"You bet!"

"Will you step round behind the gym with me?"

"Certainly!"

"Come on!" said Blake impressively.

Study No. 6 led the way, and Grundy lounged after them, with his hands in his pockets. Several juniors who spotted what was on followed them. Levison of the Fourth tapped Blake on the arm.

"You're going to tackle that merchant?" he asked.

"Yes."

"He's tackled Cutts of the Fifth since he's been here."

"Really?"

"Yes, and looked like licking him when Linton chipped in and stopped them."

"Gummon!"

"He will make sawdust of you," remarked Levison agreeably.

"I'll make sawdust of you if I have any jaw!" growled Blake.

"Oh, keep your wool on!" said Levison.

"I'm coming to help carry you in afterwards."

Jack Blake turned upon him wrathfully, and Levison backed away hurriedly. Whether Blake could tackle Grundy of the Shell or not there was no doubt at all that he could make rings round Levison.

They turned behind the gym, and a crowd of juniors gathered round to see the fun. The fellows who had seen Grundy's tussle with Cutts of the Fifth had little doubt as to the result. Arthur Augustus looked very anxious. Jack Blake was not feeling over-confident now. Grundy was so much bigger and heavier than Blake, that the disproportion was really too great. But Blake was standing up for the honour of the Fourth and of No. 6, and he would not have retreated if George Alfred Grundy had been twice his size.

"Will you have the gloves on?" asked Blake.

"Not worth while," said Grundy.

"Who's going to keep time?"

"No need to keep time," said Grundy. "There won't be more than one round."

Blake snorted with wrath.

He tore his jacket off, and tossed it to Dig, and squared up to the big Shell fellow.

"Come on, you jabberwock!"

Grundy grinned and came on.

For the next minute the scene was very interesting. Jack Blake put up a fight that was really creditable. But he was overwhelmed. His skill in boxing did not stand him in much stead, for Grundy's tremendous drives smashed through his guard. At the end of the minute Blake was gasping on the ground.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

Grundy put his hands in his pockets.

"That cheeky young bantam going on?" he asked.

"G-g-going on!" gasped Blake "Yes, rather!"

"Better chuck it!" said Grundy good-naturedly.

"What's the good of tackling a fellow my size? You haven't an earthly!"

"Not much good, Jacky, old chap," murmured Dig.

"Rats!"

Blake jumped up and came on.

There was another earthquake for the unfortunate leader of Study No. 6. Grundy received two or three terrific drives, but he did not seem to mind them. And his big fists smote like flails.

Blake went down again. This time he stayed there.

"Now chuck it," urged Grundy. "You can see it's no good. What do you want to pick a row with me for? I'm a peaceable chap. I never stand any rot, especially from fags, but I'm a peaceable chap."

"Get up, and go on, Blake," chirruped Mellish of the Fourth. The cad of the Fourth was quite delighted at seeing Blake licked. "You ain't finished yet, Blake. Don't be a funk!"

Blake turned crimson. He was done; he could not go on. But to be called a funk by a worm like Mellish was bitter.

Grundy swung towards Mellish, and caught him by the ear. Mellish gave a yell.

"Who are you calling a funk?" demanded Grundy.

"Yow! Leggo!" yelled Mellish. "I was calling Blake a funk, not you. Yow!"

"Bai Jove, Mellish, you uttah wottah!"

"So you were calling this chap a funk, were you?" said Grundy.

"Well, you can do the same as he's done. Put up your hands!"

"Wha-a-at!" gasped Mellish, Mellish's idea had been to curry favour with the victor. Apparently he had not succeeded.

"Are you going to put up your hands?" demanded Grundy.

"Nunno! No fear!"

"Then I'll lick you!"

"Yah! Oh! Leggo! Help!"

Grundy, with a twist of his sinewy arm, whirled Mellish over on his knee, and then his right hand rose and fell with terrific force. Spank, spank, spank, spank!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Grundy!"

"Bai Jove! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooon!" roared the unhappy Mellish.

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo! Yah! Help!"

Grundy pitched him over on the ground, where he lay gasping. Then he turned to Jack Blake, who had risen, with Dig's assistance, and was standing very unsteadily on his pins. Grundy held out a big hand.

"You're a plucky kid," he said. "Give us your fist. I won't fag you."

"You jolly well won't!" snorted Blake.

However, he gave Grundy his fist. Grundy put his hands in his pockets and sauntered away.

The chums of Study No. 6 looked at one another grimly.

"My hat!" said Blake at last.

Then with decidedly serious looks they left the scene of the brief combat, and Blake proceeded to bathe his eyes and nose, which needed it badly.

CHAPTER 5.

Grundy's Study.

"COME in!" called out Tom Merry, as a heavy knock came at the door of his study.

The Terrible Three had finished ten.

It was Grundy of the Shell who came in.

The three juniors noted that his prominent nose was a little swollen, and guessed that the peaceable new fellow had been in another fight since his encounter with Cutts of the Fifth.

"Hallo!" said Grundy. "This is the Shell passage, isn't it?"

"True, O king!" said Monty Lowther.

"I've got to have a study in this passage."

"Inquire further along," said Manners.

"Has Linton told you which study?" asked Tom Merry.

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"No; he's going to see about it," said Grundy. "My idea is to select the study I like best, and then tell him I want that one. See? I don't suppose he cares much which study I have."

"Oh."
"That's how I used to do at Redclyffe, you know. I generally bagged the best study every term."

"Didn't anybody ever raise objections?" asked Tom.

"Lots of times."

"And what happened?"

"I whopped them."

"Oh!"

"This looks a pretty comfortable study," remarked Grundy, looking round. "I must have a study with a window on the quad—I don't like back windows—and a fire-grate. This looks rather comfy."

"You might not find it comfy if you settled down in it," suggested Lowther.

"Why not?"

"We are not looking for a new study-mate."

"Oh, that makes no difference! If I decide to come here, I shall come!"

"Without asking us?" roared Lowther.

Grundy nodded.

"What's the good of asking us?" he replied. "You'd say 'No.'"

"Went-ho!"

"Then I should whop you!"

"Would you, by gum?"

"And it would come to the same thing in the end. However, I haven't decided yet. I'm going to look at all the studies. That's how I did at Redclyffe."

"You may find St. Jim's a bit different from Redclyffe!" said Monty Lowther, glowering. "You may find yourself taken by the scruff of the neck and slung out!"

"I'd like to see anybody sling me out!" grinned Grundy. "But keep your wool on! I'm a peaceable chap, and I don't want a row. I'm going to look at all the studies."

And, with a friendly nod, Grundy walked out. The Terrible Three looked at one another. "The new fellow almost took their breath away."

"That's a cool merchant," murmured Manners at last. Tom Jerry frowned.

"A jolly good deal too cool for a new kid. If he plants himself in this study there will be trouble. I won't have it, for one!"

"Hear, hear!"

Quite regardless of what the Terrible Three might be thinking, Grundy went along to the next study and opened the door, after knocking politely. Talbot and Gore and Skimpole were there, finishing their tea.

They looked in surprise at the new junior as he strolled in, and stood looking round the room with a critical eye.

"What the dickens do you want?" demanded Gore. "I'm looking at the study."

"Take your time!" said Talbot, laughing.

"Thanks! I mean to. I don't care for this study," said Grundy. "It's smaller than the next one. Three of you here?"

"Yes."

"Well, I sha'n't dig here."

"That you jolly well won't!" roared Gore. "And if you want a thiek ear—"

Grundy strolled out of the study without replying. Talbot laughed, and Skimpole blinked, and Gore scowled.

"By gum," said Gore, "if that fellow plants himself here, I'll warn him! The blessed cheeky burler!"

Grundy stepped to the next study. It was the room belonging to Crooke and Wilkins. As it happened, Crooke and Wilkins had that study to themselves, though the Shell generally went three to a study. The room was better furnished than most of the Shell studies, Crooke being the son of a millionaire, with plenty of money and a habit of "splashing" it about.

It was quite a pleasant room, and Grundy's expression showed that he was pleased with it. Crooke and Wilkins stared at him.

"Hallo, new kid!" said Wilkins. "What may you happen to want?"

"This is going to be my study, I think," said Grundy.

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Crooke scowled.

"Has Linton sent you here?" he said.

"No. I'm looking them over."

"Well, you jolly well won't plant yourself here unless Linton says so," said Crooke.

"How many to this study?" asked Grundy, unsmiled.

"Us two," said Wilkins.

"There's three in the others—what?"

"Yes."

"Then there'll be more room here. I'll settle on this room," said Grundy. "There'll be room for another armchair, and my bookcase, too. Good!"

"Look here—" roared Crooke.

"Anybody object?" asked Grundy.

"Yes; I do!" shouted Crooke. "I don't like three to a study. Unless old Linton says we're to take you in you're not coming! See?"

"What's your name?"

"My name's Crooke, you long-legged scartcrow!"

"Mine's Grundy. I dare say we shall get on all right. If we don't, I'm sorry for you."

"Look here—"

"Nuff said! This is my study!"

"I tell you—"

"Better settle it at once, I suppose," said Grundy. "I may as well warn you that I'm always cock of the walk in my study! I'm going to be cock of the walk in this study?" See?"

"Here, hands off!"

Grundy grasped Crooke by the collar. Crooke struck out furiously, but he was whipped off his feet and flopped down on the hearthrug. Grundy proceeded coolly to rub Crooke's nose in the rug. The astonished Wilkins looked on as if mesmerised.

"Gurrrrrrrrr!" came from Crooke.

"Any more objections to my sharing this study?" asked Grundy.

"Grooooooh!"

"Now, then—"

"Tew-ow-ow! No; it's all right!" yelled Crooke. "Leggo, you beast! You can come here if you want to! Gerrooh!"

"That's better!"

Grundy released Crooke, who staggered to his feet, crimson with rage, and spluttering.

The new boy did not seem at all perturbed. He turned to Wilkins.

"You got any objections?" he asked.

"No!" gasped Wilkins. "Oh, no! Not at all! You're very welcome."

"Good! You'll find me a decent fellow to get on with," said Grundy. "There's only one thing for you to remember—I never stand any rot."

"D-d-don't you!" murmured Wilkins.

"Never!" said Grundy. "But I'm a peaceable chap. You're really lucky to get me here. I shall make this study top study in the Shell. If anybody objects, I shall whop him. You can come and help me get my traps in, if you like."

"Oh, c-c-certainly!"

"I want to get my hamper up to the dormitory too," said Grundy. "I've got an awfully ripping spread, you know, and all the Form will be invited. Do they allow hampers in the dorm here?"

"No fear!"

"Then we shall have to smuggle it up somehow."

"I'll help you, with pleasure," said Wilkins, quite cordially.

Wilkins left the study with Grundy. Crooke sat in the armchair, and rubbed his nose and scowled. He did not think of raising any more objections to the new boy's "digging" in that study. His nose was very sore.

Grundy proceeded to Mr. Linton's room, and made his request to be assigned to No. 5 in the Shell passage. He pointed out that there were only two fellows there, and three in the others, and Mr. Linton gave his assent at once.

Then Wilkins helped Grundy to carry his belongings into the study.

Grundy had a good many belongings. Boxing-gloves and punch-ball and fencing-foils and Indian clubs figured

more largely than books. Grundy was not greatly "gone" on books. He told Wilkins that other property was coming down by rail—a bookcase and a desk and a comfortable armchair and so forth.

"Rolling in tin!" asked Wilkins, in surprise.
 "Only five bob a week from my pater," said Grundy.
 "But my Uncle Grundy whacks out big tips. He's rolling in money. I generally have enough. I'll lend you some if you want any, as you're in my study."

Wilkins, who was not well provided with that very necessary article, cash, began to think that his new study-mate was an acquisition.

The Terrible Three, coming out of their study, passed the open door of No. 5, and found the new boy and Wilkins arranging Grundy's things there, and Crooke looking on with a scowling brow and a red nose.

"Hallo! Settled down?" asked Tom Merry.
 Grundy nodded affably.
 "Yes, I've selected this study. I think I shall be all right here. I've got a hamper I want to get into the dorm for a feed to-night. Will you lend me a hand?"

"What ho!"
 And Grundy and the Terrible Three, on the best of terms, concerted measures for getting that hamper to the Shell dormitory.

CHAPTER 6. Quick March!

STUDY No. 6 were just finishing their preparation that evening when the new boy looked in.

Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy all looked at him. They supposed that the big youth was on the warpath again. They were prepared to make Study No. 6 very warm quarters for him.

But Grundy was not on the warpath.
 He came into the study with quite an affable expression.

"I'm standing a feed in my dorm to-night," he remarked.
 "Stand it and be blowed!"—was Blake's genial reply.

"We've got the hamper up there, and hidden it in the cupboard, without being spotted, you know."
 "Well?"
 "Will you fellows come?"
 "Eh?"

"You can scout out of your dorm after lights out, and come along, you know," said Grundy. "It will be easy enough. And it will be a top-hole spread. I can promise you that. My Aunt Grundy packed the hamper."

The four juniors looked at him very oddly. After the way he had handled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at the railway-station, and after his fight with Blake, they had not expected a friendly visit and an invitation to a feed. It took them by surprise.

Blake rubbed his swollen nose.
 "Bai Jove!" remarked Arthur Augustus, at last. "I wegard you as a vewy extraodinary person, Gwundy."
 "What's the matter?"
 "You treated me with gress diswuspect at the station."

"Well, you cheeked me."
 "I wufuse to have my wemarks chawactewised as cheek!"

"Bless you, I only whopped you," said Grundy. "I dare say I shall whop you again, as far as that goes."
 "Bai Jove!"

"You see, I never stand any rot."
 "This study doesn't stand any rot, either," said Jack Blake warmly. "And you can keep your feed, and go and eat coke!"

"Hold on, dear boy! If Gwundy is extendin' the olive-branch, it is up to us to buy the hatchet. If Gwundy apologise—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Grundy.
 "What are you cacklin' at, you duffah?"
 "Catch me apologise to blessed fags," said Grundy.
 "Don't be a young ass! You'd better come to the feed. It will be ripping, I can tell you!"

"I wufuse to come to the feed."
 "Same here," said Blake. "I dare say you don't mean

any harm. I'm willing to look on you as a harmless lunatic. But travel along!"

Grundy held up a warning hand.
 "No rot!" he said.
 "You loag-legged ass—"
 "Yaas, wathah! I must wemark that you are a howlin' idiot, Gwundy!"

Grundy frowned.
 "I've warned you that I never stand any rot," he said.
 "I came here quite friendly, to ask you to a feed. But I'm quite ready to dust up the whole study if I have any rot. See?"

"The—the whole study!" gasped Blake.
 "Yes, rather!"
 "You—you think you could dust up the whole study—Study No. 6!"

"Why not?"
 "Then you'd better start," said Blake truculently.
 "Yaas, wathah! Start, you wotahh!"
 "Oh, do start!" said Herries and Dig together beesechingly.

"I'll start soon enough!" exclaimed Grundy, and he started with a rush at the four juniors.

Study No. 6 closed in upon him joyously.
 It was only too plain that in single combat they had no chance against the big Shell fellow. But when it came to a rag, Study No. 6 was "all there." The cool cheek of the new fellow in tackling the whole study astounded them. But they were pleased.

Four pair of hands closed upon George Alfred Grundy. It was evident that Grundy of the Shell never counted odds. But he would have done more wisely to do so in this case. Study No. 6 was a hard nut to crack.

Grundy, big and powerful as he was, found himself swept off the floor, and he came down on the carpet with a concussion that made the dust rise from the carpet and a terrific yell from Grundy.

Bump!
 "Yoh!"
 "Chuck him out!" gasped Blake.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Struggling wildly in the grasp of the four Fourth-Formers, Grundy was whirled to the door. Study No. 6 did not escape unscathed. The Shell fellow was a hard hitter, but they were much too much for him.

Grundy went whirling through the doorway, and he landed in the passage with a tremendous bump.

Kerruish and Reilly came jumping out of the next study as they heard the concussion. Other fellows rushed out, and there was quickly a crowd of the Fourth round the sprawling Shell fellow.

Grundy sat up dazedly.
 In the doorway of No. 6 four juniors stood grinning, waiting for him to come back if he chose to do so.

"Groeh!" gasped Grundy. "My hat! Oh!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Sure, you've woke up the wrong passenger at last, Grundy!" chuckled Reilly.

"Why, I—I—I'll smash 'em!" roared Grundy.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy bounded up, and made a wild rush for the study doorway. Before that heavy charge the chums of the Fourth had to give ground; but they closed on Grundy as he charged in and hauled him over, and he went down on the carpet, and then the four juniors seized a leg or an arm each and swung him into the air. Grundy struggled and wriggled and roared.

"Leggo! Oh, my hat! I'll pulverise you! Yarohh!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Kim along!" said Blake. "Give him the frog march! Take him back to his quarters."
 "Yaas, wathah!"

"March!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy struggled desperately as he was rushed out of the study, held up by his arms and legs. But he had no chance. The crowd in the passage yelled with laughter as he was rushed along. Reilly dived into the study for his tin-whistle, and then followed the procession playing "Tipperary." With a swarm of howling juniors behind them, the procession turned into the Shell passage.

The Shell fellows crowded out of their studies. There

was a roar of laughter at the sight of the unfortunate Grundy spreadeagled in the grasp of Study No. 6.

"What's the little game?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Grundy's the little game," said Blake. "He undertook to dust up Study No. 6. This is the result!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo! I'll whop you! I'll pulverise you! You-wow!"

Grundy's face was crimson, his hair was like a mop, and his collar was torn out, and he was quite helpless in the grasp of the four juniors. Grundy had for once bitten off more than he could chew, so to speak.

Study No. 6 marched him the whole length of the Shell passage, to the cheery strains of Reilly's tin-whistle, and, bumping him every now and then on the linoleum, eliciting scendish yells from George Alfred.

The Fourth-Formers and Shell fellows looked on, roaring with laughter. It was a case of the mighty fallen. The general opinion was that it would be a valuable lesson for Grundy.

At the end of the passage the procession turned back, and Grundy gave a wild whoop as his head cracked on the wall in turning.

"Better not wriggle so much," advised Blake. "You may get another knock!"

"Yaroooh!"

"I told you so."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! Leggo! I—I won't whop you!"

"Bai Jove!" You do not look much like whoppin' anybody at the present moment, Gwundy!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

Back came the procession along the passage to the tune of "Tipperary." But now there was an interruption. Kildare of the Sixth came striding from the direction of the stairs. The tremendous din in the junior quarters had brought the prefect to the spot.

"Cave!" yelled Hammond.

The juniors dropped Grundy as if he had become suddenly red-hot and bolted.

Almost in the twinkling of an eye the passage was clear, save for George Alfred Grundy, who lay gasping on the floor, completely out of breath. Kildare stopped and stared down at him grimly.

"Well, what's this little game?" he demanded.

"Yow! I'll smash 'em! Yow!"

"A ragging, I suppose," said Kildare. "I've had my eye on you, Grundy. You're too quarrelsome. I'm not surprised that you've been ragged. If there's any more of it I shall drop on you!"

"Groot! I'll—I'll whop 'em! Cheeky fags! Yow!"

"Do you hear me?" roared Kildare.

"Look here, I'm hurt, and I'm not going to stand any rot!"

Kildare grasped Grundy by the collar and jerked him to his feet. Grundy gasped, and blinked at him. Even the war-like George Alfred was not inclined to "go for" the captain of the school.

"If there's any more rowing I'll lick you!" said Kildare. "And if you say another word I'll lick you now!"

"Oh!"

Kildare strode away. Grundy blinked after him. He made a step in the direction of Study No. 6, and then he stopped. Even George Alfred was fed-up at last. There was no more "dusting-up" in Study No. 6 that evening.

CHAPTER 7.

After Lights Out.

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY was looking red and breathless when he came into the Shell dormitory a little later. A general grin greeted him. Only Skimpole uttered a word of sympathy. He blinked at Grundy through his big glasses.

"My dear Grundy, I trust you do not feel very sore!" Skimpole remarked, in his solemn manner.

"Oh, rats!" said Grundy.

"You must expect some horse-play, my dear Grundy, being a new kid," said Skimpole soothingly.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Grundy. "Not so much of your new kid!"

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"My dear Grundy, I was sympathising with you," said the good Skimmy.

"Well, don't. I don't like it."

"My dear Grundy—"

"And don't call me your 'dear Grundy.' I don't like that either."

"Dear me!" said Skimpole, blinking.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see what you fellows are cackling at," said Grundy crossly. "I don't see anything to cackle at."

"There's a looking-glass yonder," said Monty Lowther obligingly.

"Eh? What about it?" said Grundy, not comprehending. The great George Alfred did not seem very quick of comprehension.

"Look in it," explained Lowther.

"What for?"

"To see what we're laughing at."

Grundy appeared to reflect for a moment. Then the inner meaning of Monty Lowther's humorous remarks seemed to dawn upon him.

"I suppose you think that's funny?" he remarked.

Lowther nodded.

"Yes, a little," he agreed.

"Well, I don't. If you make any more of your funny remarks to me you'll get whopped."

"Spare me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy made a stride towards the humorist of the Shell. Kildare came into the dormitory at the same moment.

"Turn in, you young sweeps! Hallo, Grundy! What are you up to?"

Grundy looked rosy.

"I'm going to whop this cheeky sweep!" he replied.

"Do you remember what I told you a quarter of an hour ago?" asked Kildare.

"I'm not going to be checked!"

"You will take a hundred lines, Grundy," said the captain of St. Jim's; "and if there is any row in this dorm to-night I shall come back with a cane."

"My hat!"

"I—I say, Kildare," murmured Lowther, "I was pulling his leg, you know."

"Quite so," said Kildare. "That doesn't make any difference. You must learn not to be quarrelsome, Grundy."

"Me quarrelsome! I'm a peaceable chap. The only thing is that I won't stand any rot," explained Grundy.

"Turn in," said Kildare, without replying to that remark. "I shall be back in five minutes."

Grundy looked very thoughtful as the captain of St. Jim's quitted the dormitory.

"Hundred lines!" he growled. "I'm blessed if I shall do them! I hate lines! Some fag will have to do them for me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at? I had a fag at Red-clyffe," said Grundy. "I'm going to have a fag here. I'm not going to stand any rot."

And Grundy turned in. Kildare found peace in the dormitory when he returned to put out the light. The juniors were all very orderly, and Kildare extinguished the light and departed. As soon as his footsteps had died away down the passage Grundy sat up in bed.

"Anybody feel inclined for a feed?" he asked.

"What-ho!"

"Hear, hear!"

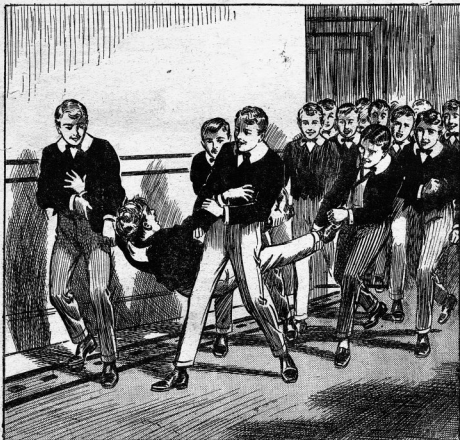
"Better give Kildare time to get clear," said Tom Merry. "If he came back he would confiscate the grub."

"We'll give him ten minutes," said Grundy.

They gave Kildare ten minutes, and he did not come back; and then the Shell turned out. Several candle-ends were lighted, and Wilkins helped Grundy to bring the hamper out of the big wardrobe where it had been concealed.

The juniors, in pyjamas, gathered round the hamper. Some of them had had a peep in it already, and they were aware that Aunt Grundy had well provided for her nephew.

Grundy opened the hamper and turned out a supply of good things that almost took away the breath of the



Grundy struggled desperately as he was rushed out of the study, held up by his arms and legs. But he had no chance. The crowd in the passage yelled with laughter as he was rushed along. (See Chapter 6.)

Shell fellows. If Aunt Grundy had expected her nephew to stand a siege at St. Jim's she could hardly have provided for him more generously. Grundy's popularity was on the increase at once. There was enough there, of the very best, to give a severe attack of indigestion to every fellow in the dormitory—if the juniors had not possessed digestions like unto that of the ostrich.

"Gather round, my infants," said Kangaroo. "Grundy, old man, you're more than welcome to St. Jim's. You're an acquisition. You're a giddy jewel. Must be something really decent about a fellow with a hamper like that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pile in!" said Grundy hospitably. "What are you sticking in bed for, you funny merchant? Ain't you hungry?"

Monty Lowther had not turned out with the rest. As Grundy had just quarrelled with him, and had only been prevented by Kildare's entrance from committing assault and battery, Lowther had not joined the feasters. But Grundy's good-nature and hospitality were unbounded.

"Ye-es, I'm hungry," said Lowther.

"Well, why don't you turn out, then?"

Lowther laughed.

"Oh, I'll turn out!" he said.

And he did. Good things were passed from hand to hand, and in the sickening light of the candles the Shell fellows enjoyed a tremendous feed such as the dormitory had seldom or never seen.

"Those Fourth-Form kids haven't come," remarked Grundy. "Somebody ought to cut along and tell 'em. There's plenty for all."

"Oh, I'll cut along and tell 'em!" said Kangaroo, with a chuckle. "Perhaps they feel a little modest about coming after frog marching you along the passage, you know."

"Oh, rot!" said Grundy. "Why shouldn't they come? Most likely I shall whop them to-morrow, but that's no reason why they shouldn't feed to-night, is it?"

"Ha, ha! Not at all."

The Cornstalk slipped quietly out of the dormitory, and scudded along to the Fourth-Form quarters. He opened the door of the Fourth-Form dormitory and whispered:

"You fellows asleep?"

"Not yet," replied Blake's voice. "What's on?"

"You four are wanted. Get a move on!"

"Right-oh! What's the little game?"

"Come along to the dorm, and you'll see."

"All serene!"

Kangaroo returned to the Shell dormitory. A few minutes later the chums of Study No. 6 followed him in.

They were in their pyjamas, but Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had donned a gorgeous dressing-gown. They stepped in quickly and closed the door.

"Hallo!" said Blake. "What's the game? I thought perhaps you were ragging that new kid."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, and we would lend a hand with pleasah."

"Oh, would you?" said Grundy belligerently. "I'd like to see 'em rag me! I'd like—"

"Peace, my infants!" said Tom Merry. "The new kid's standing a topping feed, my sons, and he wants the pleasure of your company."

"Bai Jove!"

"Well, that's really decent," said Herries. "We take back that frog march, Grundy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Study No. 6 joined in the feast with great gusto. If George Alfred Grundy was willing to make it past after the way they had handled him, there was no reason why they should not bury the hatchet.

And the feed was really, as Grundy had declared, top hole.

"Bai Jove, you know! I regard this as weally wippie, you know!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Gwunday is weally a vewy forgivin' chap. Pewwaps we have misundahstood him a little, deah boys."

"Perhaps we have," agreed Blake cordially.

"Oh, you'll find me all right," said Grundy affably. "If one of you kids chooses to fag for me, I'll promise him a good time."

"What?"

"Grundy's going to have a fag," explained Monty Lowther. "Finding that our institutions are not quite up to what he has been used to at Redclyffe, he is going to make some improvements."

"Oh!" said Blake. "Well, as I'm feeding with him, I won't tell him what I think of him. It wouldn't be polite."

"Wathah not," said Arthur Augustus. "Mannahs befoah ewevythin'. We'll tell Gwunday what we think of him to-morrow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The best thing you can do, Grundy," said Lowther seriously, "is to put a notice on the board, 'Fag Wanted,' giving the number of your study. Then you'll have a rush, and you'll only have to pick and choose."

"By Jove!" said Grundy. "That's a good idea. Thanks!"

"You—you—you're really going to do it!" stammered Blake.

"Yes. Why not?"

"Oh, all serene! It's a ripping idea."

The juniors grinned gleefully. Great and important persons in the Sixth Form sometimes put a notice on the board when they wanted a fag. A Shell fellow had never done so, so far. But Grundy was evidently something a little out of the common in the way of Shell juniors.

The juniors anticipated that notice on the board and its probable results with much glee. But for the present everything was merry and bright. When the feed was over, Blake & Co. returned to the Fourth Form dormitory smiling.

"That idiot doesn't seem a bad sort of idiot," Blake remarked; "but of all the idiots that ever idioted, he's the biggest idiot."

"Where have you fellows been?" inquired a voice from Lumley-Lumley's bed.

"Feeding with Grundy."

"My hat!"

"Grundy doesn't bear any malice," said Blake; "and Grundy wants a fag! He's going to put a notice on the board to-morrow—'Fag Wanted.' He expects a rush of custom."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He'll have the prefects down on him," said Leivson.

"He'll have the whole House down on him before long. I expect," chuckled Blake. "Some merchants are born to hunt for trouble as the giddy sparks fly upward."

But Grundy, in the Shell dormitory, had turned in, in a state of complete satisfaction. Grundy was not aware that he was hunting for trouble. But he was; and he was quite certain of finding it.

CHAPTER 8.

A Candidate for the Eleven.

THE next day Grundy took his place in the Form-room with the Shell.

Grundy had excited quite a lot of attention since his arrival at school. Most new boys were a little shy at first, and slipped into their places very quietly, and only gradually came out of their shells, as it were.

Not so Grundy.

Grundy was "all there" from the start. Grundy had a first-class opinion of himself. He was not slow to let it be known. And he was ready to "whop" anybody who disagreed with him. That settled it.

Mr. Linton's opinion of him, however, did not seem to be high. Grundy was not distinguished for his erudition in class. Indeed, he confided to Tom Merry, in a whisper, that he regarded Latin as all rot, and the rest of the lessons as not being much better. With that fixed opinion of the Form work, Grundy was not likely to distinguish himself in it—and he didn't!

He received some scathing remarks from his Form-master, without appearing much perturbed thereby, however.

His manner was quite jaunty, as he came out of the Form-room after morning lessons. The Terrible Three fetched their bats to go down to a little practice before dinner. Grundy joined them.

"You play cricket?" he asked.

"Well, we've heard of the game," said Monty Lowther. "Got your fag yet?"

"I'll see to that after lessons. I suppose you've got a junior eleven here?"

"We have," said Lowther—"we has."

"Who's skipper?"

"I am," said Tom Merry.

"Oh, good! I'll play for you."

"Thanks!"

"Not at all. I mean to play cricket, of course. I'm a first-rate cricketer. We played a good game at Redclyffe. I was in the junior team."

"Skipper, of course?" murmured Lowther.

"Well, no! There was some jealousy, I'm afraid. Anyway, they wouldn't make me skipper. In fact, our skipper didn't want me in the team at all."

"But you played all the same?"

"Oh, yes," said Grundy; "I played all the same."

"How did you manage that, if the skipper objected?" asked Tom Merry curiously.

"Oh, I whopped him!"

"Oh, you—you whopped him!" ejaculated Tom. "I—I see! Quite so! A really first-class way of getting into a cricket team."

"It was the only way, as it happened. Still, there won't be any trouble of that kind here," said Grundy reassuringly. "You're going to put me in the junior eleven."

"That depends on your play, my son," said Tom Merry coolly; "I'm not exactly yearning for a new kid to shove into the eleven. Still, if you can play, you've got as much chance as anybody else."

"I'm going to play," said Grundy decidedly. "Still, I think, when you've seen me play, you'll be glad to have me. I'm a first-class cricketer."

"Blessed is he that bloweth his own trumpet!" murmured Lowther.

"Oh, I don't believe in false modesty!" said Grundy. "If a fellow can play a good game of cricket, why shouldn't he say so? I never did hide my light under a bushel. I'll get my bat, and I'll show you something."

Grundy cut off for his bat, and the Terrible Three

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walked on to Little Side smiling. Talbot joined them there, and a crowd of the Shell and the Fourth. The great summer game was reigning at St. Jim's now, and Tom Merry was keeping his team well up to practice.

The captain of the Shell was batting to Talbot's bowling when Grundy appeared, with a bat under his arm. He looked on at Tom Merry's performance with a critical eye, and raised his eyebrows a little.

"Not quite up to the Redclyffe mark—what?" asked Manners, a little irritated by Grundy's look.

"Well, in a general way, yes; but not quite up to my style," explained Grundy. "I hardly like the way he stands at the wicket. I could improve on that bowling, too."

"Why, you fathead," said Manners, "Talbot's the best junior bowler in the school, excepting Wynn of the New House?"

"Then you don't know what bowling is," said Grundy. "Here, Tom!" yelled the exasperated Manners. "Let this chap get on, and show us some of his wonderful cricket."

"Righto!" said Tom. "Here you are, Grundy. Look out, Talbot! This chap is first cousin to Hayward and Grace."

Grundy made his way to the wicket. He took up his position there with an exaggerated straddle, and Wally of the Third yelled "Tuck in your tuppenny!" amid a shout of laughter.

Talbot smiled as he prepared to deliver the ball. He did not think that that batsman would give him much trouble, judging by appearances.

The ball came down like a bullet, and the middle stump went down, Grundy making hardly a movement. There was a yell from the onlookers.

"How's that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wasn't ready," remarked Grundy. "You try that again."

"Certainly," said Talbot, laughing.

Kangaroo fielded the ball, and tossed it back to Talbot. Grundy watched very carefully for the next ball. This time it was his leg-stump that flew out of the ground, while Grundy's bat described a wild circle in the air. There was a yell of laughter.

"If that's how they play cricket at Redclyffe they must be regular corkers," grinned Tom Merry. "No wonder the skipper had to be whopped before he would put Grundy in the team."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I regard that chap as a wank ass," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I weally don't believe he can stop a ball at all."

The juniors watched the third ball with great interest. This time it was the off stump that fell. Talbot was playing with the batsman. Having given each of the stumps a turn, the bowler came off the crease.

Grundy looked round, and seemed surprised to find all the juniors laughing like hyenas.

"I'm a bit off my form," he remarked. "I'm not used to this pitch either. Give me that ball, and if you've got a batsman that can stand up against my bowling I'll eat my hat!"

"I hope you hat's digestible, then," said Tom Merry. "I'll give you a trial."

Tom Merry went to the wicket, and Grundy walked away with the ball. Every eye was upon him. Grundy had succeeded in making himself the centre of interest, at all events. He was the cynosure of all eyes.

Tom Merry smiled as he stood at the wicket. If Grundy's bowling was anything like his batting, there was not much to fear. Grundy took a little run, and turned himself almost over, and the ball flew.

"Throw!" roared Blake.

The next moment there was a scendish yell from Tom Merry. The ball, without even touching the pitch, caught the captain of the Shell in the ribs. Tom Merry dropped his bat, and executed a wild dance.

"Oh! Oh! Ow! Yow! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, that duffah is dangewous!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Gweat Scott! He might have bwnained him!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" yelled Tom Merry.

"Here, field that ball!" called out Grundy. "You can try again, Merry. You'd be out if it was in a game. Leg before wicket, by Jove!"

"Leg before wicket!" yelled Tom Merry. "You shrieking ass, I was a yard from the wicket. And you've nearly punctured my ribs, you dangerous ass! Keep that ball away from him. If he bowls again I'll brain him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give me that ball!" shouted Grundy wrathfully. "I'm going to show you what my bowling is like."

"You've shown us!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Life is sweet, my son. We don't want to be shown any more!"

Grundy came wrathfully along the pitch. Tom Merry was rubbing his side, and mumbling.

"I call you a clumsy duffer!" said Grundy. "You captain of the eleven, by gad! However, when you have me in the team, you'll have one good man!"

"Take him away, somebody," mumbled Tom Merry. "Find a strait-jacket for him if you can."

"I'm going into the eleven?" asked Grundy.

"Yes; the next time we play a home for idiots," said Tom Merry, "or when we have a match with a lunatic asylum. Not before."

"Look here—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"I'm going into the eleven!" roared Grundy.

"Clear off, fathead!"

"Mind, I shall whop you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry's patience was exhausted. He brought his bat into play, and prodded Grundy with the business end, and Grundy retreated with a roar.

"You ass! Wharrior you at?"

"I'm driving a silly jackass off the field!" said Tom, prodding harder. "No room for stray jackasses on a cricket-field. Clear off!"

"Why, you— Yah! Oh! Stoppit! I'll— Yaroooh!"

Grundy had to beat a retreat. Tom Merry was hurt, and he was wrathful. And there was no arguing with a cricket-bat. So Grundy had to go. But he went in great wrath, and fully resolved to carry out his excellent idea of "whopping" the junior captain if he was not put into the eleven.

CHAPTER 9.

Fag Wanted!

AFTER lessons that day there was a notice on the board in the School House. It was written in a large, sprawling hand, and the orthography did not seem to show that George Alfred Grundy had paid much attention to the rules of spelling when he was at Redclyffe:

"NOTICE.

"Fag wanted. Aply Studdy No. 5 Shell passidge." There it was in George Alfred Grundy's big and sprawling "fist." The juniors gathered round the board, and read that notice with many chuckles. That Grundy should be ass enough to suppose that anybody would fag for a fellow in the Shell was astonishing. But they had already discovered that Grundy was several sorts of an ass.

"Now look out for the rush," said Monty Lowther. "Who's going to make the first offer?"

The juniors chuckled, but they did not rush off to "Studdy No. 5, in the Shell passidge," to offer their services to George Alfred Grundy.

At tea-time Grundy was at the table in the study, which was well spread. Crooke and Wilkins, his study-mates, were with him. Wilkins was in high good-humour. Wilkins was short of cash, as usual; but Grundy was lavish, and he did not mind standing tea for two. Crooke was looking very sour. His nose was still sore from its experience of the previous day. And the new fellow had been heavy-handed since then. He had found Crooke smoking in the study. He had told Crooke to stop it, and as Crooke had not stopped it,

Grundy had taken his cigarettes away and "whopped" him. Really, it was no more than Crooke deserved, but he could not be expected to see it in that light, and he was feeling very sore—in a double sense.

Grundy had told him that if there was any more of his rot he wouldn't have him in the study, which, as Crooke was really the owner of the study, fairly put the lid on, so to speak.

But there was no arguing with George Alfred. He was prepared to "whop" Crooke on the spot, if he argued. Crooke was accustomed to all sorts of little games in his study—indeed, he had a little card-party fixed for that very evening. It looked as if the even tenor of his way would be very much disturbed by the arrival of that big, boisterous, and obstreperous person, George Alfred Grundy.

"No fag's come along yet," remarked Grundy. "Don't seem much good putting a notice on the board, after all."

Wilkins chuckled, and Crooke snorted. "You silly ass!" said Crooke. "Will fag for you? It wouldn't be allowed, even if any chap was rotten ass enough."

"Rot!" said Grundy. "If a prefect sees your idiotic notice on the board, you'll get into hot water," said Crooke. "I jolly well hope you'll be licked."

"You'll be licked, anyway, if I have much of your rot," said Grundy. "I want it to be understood that I'm head of this study. There are some fellows who are born to command, you know, and I'm one of them. Hallo, here comes somebody!"

Wally of the Third looked into the study.

"Grundy here?" he asked. "Here I am, kid." D'Arcy minor came in smiling.

"You're the chap wanting a fag?" he inquired.

Grundy gave his study-mates a triumphant look. His notice on the board had evidently produced an applicant, after all.

"Yes, I'm the chap," he said. "What's your name?"

"D'Arcy minor."
"Form?"
"Third."
"Can you cook?"
"First-rate."
"Brush clothes?"
"Top-hole."

"Wash tea-cups without smashing half of 'em?"
"I'm a dab at washing tea-cups."

"Know how to light a fire?"
"First-rate."

"I'll take you on trial," said Grundy. "I always treat my fag well. You'll have plenty of tuck, and I'll help you with your lessons."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wilkins. He remembered Grundy's performances in the Form-room, and Mr. Linton's remarks thereon. Grundy's help with lessons was not likely to be very valuable. But seniors generally helped their

fags with their work, and Grundy was following the rules.

"What did you say, Wilkins?" asked Grundy, fixing him with his eye.

"Ahem! I—I said I'm glad you're suited."

"I dare say this kid will suit me all right," Grundy rose from the table. "My bookcase has come, kid, and you'll find a bundle of books to sort out and put in it. Stack away the boxing-gloves and things in the lower shelves—see? There's not so very many books. I think books are rot. You can unpack my pictures, too, and hang 'em. Put 'em up all round the walls, and mind you stick the nails in tight. If you're a decent fag, I shall treat you well. If you're not, I shall whop you."

"I savvy!" said D'Arcy minor sleekly.

If Grundy had had more acquaintance with Wally of the Third, he might have been suspicious. But he did not know D'Arcy minor yet, and he wasn't a suspicious fellow.

"I'm going down to the cricket now," he remarked. "You wire in while I'm gone."

"Right—ho!"
"That kid's not going to muck about in my study!" howled Crooke.

Grundy looked at him. "If there's much more of your rot, it won't be your study long," he said. "Kid, if this fathead bothers you in any way, tell me, and I'll whop him fast enough!"

"Hear, hear!" said Wally. Crooke flung out of the study in a temper. There was evidently no way of dealing with Grundy of the Shell, unless he brained him with the poker, which was not feasible. Grundy strolled away with Wilkins.

The new fag was left in possession of the study. He smiled. When the Shell fellows were gone, Wally stepped to the door and whistled. Frayne and Jameson of the Third came scudding along the passage.

"That fathead," said Wally. "thinks he can have a fag! We'll fag him!"

"Ear, 'ear!" said Frayne. "You can help me fag for him! When we've finished I think he will be fed-up."

Grundy's notice on the board had greatly incensed the fags. They fagged for the Sixth; but that a Shell fellow should imagine, for one moment, that he could have a fag, put their backs up. Even the Fifth Form were not entitled to fags, and they were seniors. One thing was perfectly clear to the fags, and that was, that Grundy of the Shell had to be brought to his senses. Wally & Co. had a little scheme. They proceeded to fag for Grundy.

The tea-table was cleared first. It was cleared rapidly and efficaciously, by the table being pitched over into the grate. There was a terrific crash of crockeryware. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, who were going down to the cricket, heard the crash as they passed, and looked in.

For Next Wednesday—

KILDARE FOR ST. JIM'S!

A great school story which is intended to further increase the popularity of "The Gem" Library

IN IRELAND.

The school story for No. 381, "The Gem," has been specially written for the huge reading public

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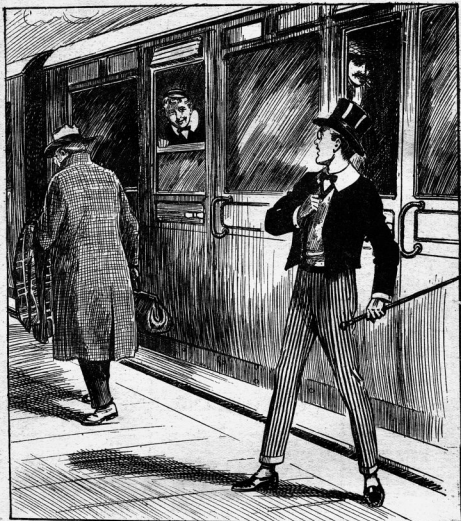
IN ENGLAND.

WE ARE ALL BRITISH!
But this Novel Scheme is a form of **AN INTERNATIONAL MATCH.**

Your Editor wants to prove
**Which Country Can Produce
the Keenest Number of Readers**

(See Page 28.)

BUCK UP, GEMITES!



"Hi! young shaver! Hi!" "Bai jove! what an extremely loud and unpleasant voice that chap has!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's, "I wondah who he's shoutin' to?" "Hi! You with the glass in your eye!" Arthur Augustus jumped. (See Chapter 1.)

"What on earth are you kids up to?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Fagging for Grundy."

"What?"

"I'm his fag," explained Wally.

"You young rascal! Is that how you fag?"

"That's how I fag for Grundy!"

The Terrible Three grinned.

"You see, he's got to have a lesson," explained Wally.

"We're going to give him a lesson on the subject of fagging. After this, perhaps he won't advertise for any more fags. I think perhaps he won't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three went on their way grinning. On the cricket-field, Grundy of the Shell was distinguishing himself. Wilkins was bowling to him—nobody else wanted to be near him when he was playing cricket—

but Wilkins felt that it was up to him, after the feed in the study—and with the expectation of more feeds to come. Grundy was pleased to feel that while he was at cricket his study was being put to rights by his fag. He little dreamed how it was being put to rights.

CHAPTER 10.

Fagging for Grundy:

BUMP! Bump! Crash!

"Bai Jove! What are you young wascals doin'?"

Arthur Augustus's eyeglass almost fell from his eye in his astonishment, as he gazed at three dusty fags who were bearing a bookcase along from the box-room.

The glass doors of the bookcase had flown open—it was

a rather large bookcase, and not easy to carry. Before it was half-way to No. 5 Study all the panes of glass in it had been smashed, and the fragments were scattered along the passage.

"You young wascals!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"What the dooce—"

"Fagging for Grundy."

"I refuse to allow you to fag for Gwunday, Wally," said his major severely. "A Shell fellow has no wight to a fag, as you vewy well know."

"That's what we're going to show him," chuckled Wally.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Get this blessed thing along," said Wally. "It's beasily heavy! It's getting a few knocks, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a final rush, the fags brought the bookcase to the doorway of the study. It was not easy to get it in. But they pitched it over on its side, and it was merely a regrettable incident that one of the doors was smashed off in the process. The fags shoved it in, and set it up against the wall—upside-down. Wally thought it looked better that way, and his chums agreed with him.

Arthur Augustus walked away smiling. He confided to Blake and Herries and Digby that his minor was "faggin' for Gwunday," and when he explained how they were fagging, Blake and Herries and Digby smiled too. They came along to look in. Blake thought that the process of fagging for Grundy would be worth watching. So did a good many more of the Shell and the Fourth, and there was soon a crowd outside No. 5.

Wally & Co. were very busy.

Having set the bookcase upside-down, they proceeded to fill it. They did not trouble about unpacking the books—there were other things they could put in the bookcase. Broken crockery-ware, cinders and ashes, mixed up artistically with the supplies from the study cupboard, soon filled the bookcase to overflowing.

Wally surveyed it with great satisfaction.

"That's bound to please Grundy," he remarked. "It will show him that we've taken a lot of trouble."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, from the passage, "the boundah will be twightfully watty!"

"You young duffers will be skinned!" said Clifton Dane. Wally snorted.

"He advertised for a fag, didn't he? If he's not satisfied, he can come along to the Third Form-room and tell us so. But we're not finished yet!"

Wally & Co. were by no means finished. The pictures were unpacked. They were big and highly-coloured oleographs, quite dazzling to look at. Wally had provided a hammer and nails. He proceeded to hang the pictures. The process of hanging was quite simple.

Jameson and Frayne held the pictures against the wall, while Wally hammered nails through them. Quite a large number of nails were expended. When Wally had finished the pictures had a spotted look.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Blake. "Poor old Grundy!"

"What about the carpet?" said Wally, looking round. "The carpet?" said Frayne.

"Yes. We ought to beat the carpet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fags dragged up the carpet from the floor and proceeded to beat it. The dust flew, and the crowd retreated, coughing, from the door. The carpet was draped artistically over the mantelpiece, and Wally drove in a few more nails to keep it there.

There was a sudden shout from Reilly in the passage. He had spotted Grundy, from the window, coming back to the House with his bat under his arm.

"Here comes Grundy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I think we're about finished here, you chaps," said Wally hastily. "Come on! No good staying here to see Grundy!"

"Not a bit of good," said Frayne. "Master Blake, you can tell 'im that we're in the Third Form-room if he wants to see us."

"And we'll be glad to see him there!" chuckled Jameson.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 372.

OUR COMPANION

PAPERS,

"THE BOYS' FRIEND,"

Every Monday.

"THE MAGNET,"

Every Monday.

"THE DREADNOUGHT,"

Every Thursday.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"

Every Friday.

"SHUCKLER," 10,

Every Saturday. 1

And the three dusty fags scuttled away.

Grundy came up the passage. He was looking a little cross. He had had an argument with Tom Merry on the cricket-field. He had fully explained to Tom Merry that he would be whopped if he did not put him—Grundy—into the junior eleven. But apparently the threat of whopping had no terrors for the junior captain. He had told Grundy to go and eat coke, and half a dozen juniors had chased the new fellow off the field with their bats.

Grundy looked surprised as he found a grinning crowd in the Shell passage. He did not see what there was to grin at—yet.

"Got your fag, I see, Grundy?" Blake remarked affably.

"Oh, yes!" said Grundy. "A kid in the Third!"

"Satisfied with 'im, deah boy?"

"Oh, I dare say he'll be all right!" said Grundy. "He's putting my study to rights now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"

The juniors did not reply to that question, but yelled with laughter. A surprise was waiting for George Alfred Grundy, considerably puzzled, strode on to his study. He looked in, and stood transfixed in the doorway.

"Great Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who's done this?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's my fag?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ain't you satisfied with your fag?" asked Levison of the Fourth. "He's been working jolly hard for you."

"The—the young villain! The young rascal! The—the— Why, I'll smash him!" roared Grundy. "I suppose this is a joke."

"Well, it looks like one," agreed Blake; "and that's the only kind of fagging you're likely to get here, Grundy."

"Where is he?" shrieked Grundy.

"You'll find 'em in the Third Form-room," chuckled Levison.

Grundy rushed downstairs. The juniors rushed after him. They knew that Wally & Co. would be gathered in force for the interview with Grundy, and they were keen to see what would happen.

Wally & Co. were there, waiting. There was a chuckle in the Third Form-room as the door was flung open, and Grundy rushed in. About forty fags were waiting for him.

"D'Arcy minor!" yelled Grundy. "Is that young villain here? D'Arcy minor!"

"Hallo!" said Wally.

"You—you—you young villain!"

"Ain't you satisfied?"

"I'll pulverize you!"

Grundy swept down on D'Arcy minor like a cyclone.

"Back up!" yelled Wally.

With one accord the army of fags rushed on Grundy. They swept over him like a tidal wave. Grundy went down on the floor, and the fags simply flowed over him. He disappeared from view.

"Bump him! Scrag him! Wallop him! Whop him!"

"Hurrah! We'll give him fag!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wild and muffled roars came from the unfortunate Grundy. He had no chance whatever. He rolled on the floor, gasping for breath, under the horde of fags.

They bumped him, and ragged him, and scragged him, and rolled him over, and pommelled him till he hardly knew whether he was alive or dead.

His roars died away into feeble gasps.

When he had not even a kick left in him the fags dragged him along to the door by his angles, and he was pitched, gasping, into the passage, into the crowd of yelling juniors there.

Wally & Co. crammed themselves in the doorway, ready for another charge. But Grundy was not able to charge any more. He lay on the floor, pumping in breath, in a shocking state of rags and tatters, while the juniors howled with laughter.

"Bai Jove, you know," remarked Arthur Augustus, "I

wathah think that ass will be fed-up with faggin' aftah this, you know! How do you feel, Grundyday?"

"Goooooooooooh!"

"Feel wathah bad, deah boy?"

"Yurrrrrrrigh!"

"Seems to be enjoying himself," remarked Blake.

Grundy sat up dazedly.

"Oh, my hat! Yooooooofrooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll whop 'em! I'll smash 'em! I—I—I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Wally invitingly. "We're waiting for you! All ready to fag for you, Grundy! Do come on!"

Grundy did not come on. He picked himself up limply and crawled away. The fags of the Third gave him a yell as he departed, and Grundy could only moan. In the Third Form-room there was great triumph and jubilation.

"I think he must be fed-up," Wally remarked. "But if he isn't we'll give him some more! If he's still advertising for a fag to-morrow, we'll fag for him again!"

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

But Grundy was not advertising for a fag on the morrow. That evening Kildare of the Sixth spotted his notice on the board. Kildare stared at it, frowned, jerked it down, and strode away to "Studdy No. 5 in the Shell passage" with the offending paper in his hand. He found Grundy looking unusually subdued, and the study far from being "to rights."

Kildare held out the paper, and Grundy blinked at it.

"Did you put this on the board, Grundy?" demanded the prefect.

"Yes!"

"Are you idiot enough to think that a junior in the Shell can have a fag?"

"I had a fag at Redclyffe."

"Didn't the fellows tell you you couldn't have a fag?"

"Yes. I took no notice of their rot, of course. I never stand any rot."

"Take that paper," said Kildare.

Grundy took it.

"Now put it in the fire."

"What?"

"Put it in the fire!" roared Kildare, taking a grip on his ashplant.

Grundy looked rebellious for a moment, but he did not like the look of the ashplant. He put the paper in the fire.

"You will take two hundred lines," said Kildare, "and if there's any more nonsense of this sort, I'll lick you. Remember that!"

And the captain of St. Jim's strode from the study without waiting for Grundy to reply. From that time nothing more was heard of fagging for Grundy.

CHAPTER 11.

Grundy Means Business.

TOM MERRY, during the next few days, was observed to be very keen on boxing.

The captain of the Shell was a good boxer, and there were few juniors in the school who could stand up to more than a few rounds with him. But just now Tom Merry was very keen to perfect himself in the manly art of self-defence.

Every day he spent at least an hour with the gloves on, picking out the most formidable opponents he could find in the Lower School. He even put the gloves on with some fellows in the Fifth, and held his own pretty well against them.

His chums took a great interest in his progress. For it was a very important matter.

Grundy had announced his intention of whopping the captain of the junior eleven unless he was put in the team. As Tom had no intention whatever of putting such a dufer as Grundy in the cricket eleven, it was evident that he had to prepare for the whopping.

Of course, if he had been "whopped" till he was black and blue, it would have made no difference so far as put-

ting Grundy in the eleven was concerned. There was no place in the eleven for so remarkable a cricketer as George Alfred.

But Tom Merry, naturally, did not want to be whopped. He could not refuse a challenge if he received one; neither did he wish to refuse it. But tackling Grundy was a very large order. The new fellow was nearly a head taller than Tom Merry, much bigger in every way, and very muscular and powerful. Such an encounter would undoubtedly have been very interesting and exciting for the onlookers, but it was likely to go very hard with the captain of the Shell, unless he was at the top of his form. Even then he was far from feeling certain of victory.

Grundy had disposed of Blake quite easily. He had tackled Cutts of the Fifth, a senior; and Cutts, though he had certainly not been licked, had shown no desire since to come into collision with the new Shell fellow. Cutts, apparently, had had enough; and Cutts was a good boxer. When the whopping started, therefore, it was only too clear that Tom Merry was booked for a high old time.

He prepared for that high old time cheerfully and coolly, determined that if Grundy threw down the gauntlet, there should be a record "scrap," even if the new fellow was victorious.

On Saturday School House and New House were playing a match, and Grundy again preferred his claims, and was politely told to go and eat coke. Grundy watched the match, with his hands in his pockets, criticising the play very severely to Wilkins.

Wilkins was a devoted follower of Grundy by this time. It was the only way to get a quiet life, as he was Grundy's study-mate. Not that Grundy was anything like a bully. He was down on bullying—and had already "whopped" Gore of the Shell for pulling the ears of a fag. He pulled the ears of the fags sometimes himself. But that was, of course, quite a different matter.

Grundy was, in fact, a really good-natured fellow, brimming over with good-humour and a tremendous sense of his own importance, and everybody rather liked him. It was impossible to dislike him. He had only one enemy, and that was Crooke. Crooke was suffering severely from his study-mate. He had put off his little card-party. He never ventured to smoke in the study now if Grundy was about. Grundy was down on smoking.

It was right enough of Grundy, so far as that went; but his study-mate could not be expected to be pleased. It was a little too much for a Shell fellow coolly to assume the rights, manners, and customs of a prefect of the Sixth.

"Pretty rotten show" on both sides," was Grundy's comment when the House match was over. "They want a really good cricketer. Look at the way Talbot was batting."

Wilkins grinned. Talbot of the Shell was a first-class cricketer, quite the equal of Tom Merry, who had been the best before Talbot came to St. Jim's. To hear a player like Grundy criticising Talbot was funny. But Grundy was very much in earnest.

"And that fat chap Wynn," went on Grundy. "See the way he delivers the ball! I could give him some points."

"He takes the wickets," murmured Wilkins.

"That's because the School House batting is rotten."

"Oh!" said Wilkins.

"He wouldn't take my wicket," said Grundy confidently. "It's simply rot that I should be left out of the House eleven. No wonder the New House have pulled it off. However, I'm not going to stand it. I'm going to play for the House and for the School. I consider that my due."

"How are you going to manage it?" grinned Wilkins, winking at Gunn of the Shell, who was standing near.

"I'm going to speak to Merry again."

"And after that?" asked Gunn.

"Well, if he doesn't do the right thing, I shall have to whop him, that's all."

"And after that?"

"I shall have to keep on whopping him till he puts me in the eleven," said Grundy. "There's nothing else for it. I'm not going to see the House beaten in cricket matches because Tom Merry is an ass!"

CHAPTER 12.

Evicted!

"Ha, ha, ha!" Grundy joined the cricketers when they came away from the field. He was looking very determined.

"Just a word with you, Merry," he said.

"Pile in," said Tom Merry affably.

"The New House have beaten you."

"Yes. They were one too many for us to-day," said Tom. "Only by three runs, though."

"It would have been a bit different if I'd been in the team."

"Yes; three dozen, or three hundred, perhaps, instead of three," assented Tom Merry.

"I don't mean that!" roared Grundy. "Now, when is the next match?"

"Grammar School next Saturday."

"I'm playing in that match."

"Bow-wow!"

"Mind, I mean it. I'm not going to stand any rot."

"Same here," said Tom cheerily.

"Weally, Gwunday, you are makin' a silly ass of yourself," remonstrated Arthur Augustus. "Pway wun away, and don't talk out of your neck, deah boy."

"You can leave that duffer D'Arcy out, and put me in," went on Grundy.

"Bai Jove!"

"Or Blake—Blake's not much good."

"What!" said Blake sulphurously.

"Still, you can please yourself about that, Merry," said Grundy magnanimously. "I don't care which fellow you leave out."

"Thanks!"

"All I care about is that you put me in. Can I take it that that's settled?"

"Certainly."

"It's settled that I'm in the eleven?"

"Oh, no! It's settled that you're not."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll put it plain," said Grundy. "I'll give you 'I'll Friday. On Friday I shall expect to see my name in the cricket list."

"Blessed are those who don't expect," remarked Monty Lother. "They never get disappointed."

"And if my name isn't down," said Grundy. "I shall whop you. I'm sorry to have to do it—very sorry—but—"

"You may be still sorrier when you come to do it," suggested Tom Merry.

"Oh, don't be funny! Mind, I mean business. On Friday my name goes down in the list, or else you get whopped. I know this looks a bit 'high-handed, but what I'm really thinking of is the good of the team."

Tom Merry made a note with a pencil and paper. Grundy watched him in rather a puzzled way.

"Making a note of it?" he asked.

"Yes."

"To put me in the team on Saturday?"

"Oh, no! To lick you in the gym on Friday!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The cricketers walked on, leaving Grundy frowning. Grundy looked at Wilkins, who made an heroic attempt not to smile.

"Well, I've done my best," said Grundy. "If the fellow won't have any sense, I'll try to knock some into him. You fellows come along to the gym on Friday next week, and you'll see that duffer whopped."

"Oh, we'll come!" said Wilkins and Gunn together.

"You've seen me play cricket?" said Grundy.

"We have," agreed Wilkins and Gunn. "We've never seen a fellow play cricket like it before. There isn't a cricketer in the school like you, Grundy. Coming to the tuck-shop?"

Grundy accompanied his two friends to the tuck-shop, pleased and soled by their appreciation of his powers as a cricketer, and over a liberal supply of tuck—stood by Grundy—Wilkins and Gunn pulled his leg to their heart's content. But though George Alfred's leg could be pulled to any extent, he was in deadly earnest; and unless his name was in the list for the junior School match the following week, there was a whopping to be expected by somebody. It only remained to be seen whether the whopping would fall to Tom Merry or to George Alfred.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 379.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE BOYS' FRIEND," "THE MAGNET," "THE DREAMBOAT," "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," ED.
Every Monday, Every Thursday, Every Friday, Every Saturday, 2

ON Wednesday afternoon, which was a half-holiday, there was a merry little party gathered in Grundy's study. It was not a Grundy party. Grundy was out with Wilkins, who was very chummy now with Grundy. Crooke was taking advantage of his absence to hold the merry little meeting which had had to be postponed.

The St. Jim's fellows were mostly out of doors in the bright spring weather. But the playing-fields, the meadows, and the river did not appeal to Crooke & Co. With the study door locked the black sheep of the School House were enjoying themselves in their own way.

It was a party of four—Crooke of the Shell, Levison and Mellish of the Fourth, and Piggott of the Third. The study was hazy with cigarette smoke, and there were cards on the table, and little heaps of sixpences and shillings. The four young rascals were playing nap.

Crooke had intended the little party to be over before Grundy came in. He had told his precious visitors that Grundy would be a beast if he found the card-party going on there. The cheeky new cad, as Crooke remarked, had set himself up as head of the study, and assumed the right to lay down the law there, and he was too big for Crooke to tackle. Indeed, Crooke never showed any desire to tackle anybody, big or little. But in the keenness of the little game the black sheep forgot the passage of time, and they were still going strong when there were heavy footsteps in the passage. Those heavy footsteps could belong to nobody but George Alfred Grundy, unless indeed an escaped dray-horse had got into the School House.

Crooke started to his feet in dismay.

"That rotter's coming in!" he exclaimed.

The door handle turned as he spoke, and there was a loud exclamation outside as the door did not open.

"Hallo! Who's been locking my study door?"

"Is it locked?" said the voice of Wilkins.

"Try it yourself," said Grundy.

Bang, bang, bang!

"Here, open this door, do you hear? My hat! Open this door at once! I want my tea. Locking me out of my own study, by gum! Open this blessed door!"

Crooke & Co. looked at one another. Levison unlocked the door. The terrific noise Grundy was making was likely to bring a prefect on the scene. That would hardly have suited Crooke & Co. under the circumstances.

Crooke hastily swept the cards into the table drawer. Grundy strode into the study and snorted emphatically as the cigarette fumes smote upon his nostrils. He snorted again at the sight of the loaded ash-tray, and the money, which the gamblers were quickly gathering up, and the cards Crooke was trying to get out of sight.

"Oh, let's get out of this!" said Wilkins. "We can have tea in Gunny's study—can't we, Gunny?"

"Certainly!" said Gunn, who was with Grundy—another faithful follower who had become attached to him.

"Come to my study, Grundy, old man."

"I've got something to do here," said Grundy, frowning.

"These cards have been gambling in my study."

"We did not expect Little Eric back so soon!" sneered Mellish.

"Who are you calling Eric?" demanded Grundy.

"I—I—" Mellish backed away in alarm.

"I don't approve of these blackguardly goings on," said Grundy. "I've told you before, Crooke, I don't approve of it."

"I don't care a tuppenny swear whether you approve of it or not!" snarled Crooke. "What's it got to do with you, anyway?"

"Isn't it my study?"

"Well, get out of it, if you don't like what goes on here. You weren't asked into this study."

"My study!" repeated Grundy, unheeding. "My study turned into a tap-room! Smoky as a tap-room at the Green Man, by gum! Reeking with it! You three cads"—he glared at Levison and Mellish and Piggott—"how dare you come and gamble in my study?"

"We—we were invited, you know," stammered Mellish.

"Get out!"

"Don't go!" said Crooke.

"They'd better," said Grundy grimly. "I give them two seconds to get out."

Levison and Mellish and Piggott thought they had better, too. The two seconds were more than enough. In one second they were outside the study, and in another they were at the end of the passage. Grundy's leg-of-mutton fists were not needed.

"Stir up the fire, Wilkins, old chap," said Grundy. "I've got some rubbish to burn."

"Let my ash-tray alone!" howled Crooke.

Unheeding, Grundy jammed the ash-tray into the fire. Then he tore open the drawer of the table and scooped up the cards.

"Let my cards alone!" Crooke yelled.

Whiz went the cards into the fire. Crooke made a jump to save them, and Grundy caught him by the collar, and whirled him across the study. Crooke collapsed into the armchair, gasping. Wilkins, grinning, stirred the cards into the flames. Wilkins did not quite approve of Crooke's "goings-on" either, and if Grundy was starting on a career as a reformer of manners, Wilkins did not mind backing him up. Certainly it was no use opposing him. Opposition would only have made him more obstinate. Grundy prided himself upon being firm.

Crooke sat and gasped, and glared at him. He wished fervently that he had been a fighting-man. He would have given a term's pocket-money to be able to give Grundy a tremendous hiding.

"Now, you worm!" said Grundy, glaring at him.

"Hang you!" stuttered Crooke.

"Get out of my study!"

"What!"

"Clear off! I'm fed up with you. You're not going to share this study with me any longer," said Grundy autocratically.

"Wh-wh-what?" gasped Crooke. "Why, you—you blinking idiot, it's my study, not yours!"

"Are you going?"

"Go out of my own study!" stammered Crooke.

"Well, rather not! I think you're off your rocker! You silly ass, I—"

"Mind, if you don't go I shall boot you out. I never stand any rot. And if you come back I'll whop you!"

"But it's my study!" shrieked the hapless Crooke.

"Tain't your study any longer. I order you out!"

"Why, you—you—you—" Words failed Crooke. He could only gasp and glare at Grundy.

Grundy pointed to the door.

"Will you get out?"

"No!" yelled Crooke. "I won't! And if you lay a finger on me I'll brain you!" He jumped up and grasped a cricket-bat, and swung it into the air.

"Brain me!" said Grundy indignantly. "By gum, I'll show you!"

He rushed at Crooke. Crooke could certainly have brained him, as he threatened, but the consequences of braining Grundy would have been a little too serious for him to face. And it was evident that nothing short of braining would stop Grundy. Crooke faltered, and Grundy knocked the bat out of his hands, and grasped Crooke by the collar, and swung him round. Then he took a grasp with his other hand on the seat of Crooke's trousers, and swung him into the air.

"Leggo!" shrieked Crooke. "I'll go!"

"That's all right; I'm taking you," said Grundy.

He rushed the unfortunate Crooke through the doorway, and landed him in the passage with a bump. Crooke roared, and Grundy walked back into the study.

"Now we'll have tea," he said cheerfully. "Wave a newspaper round, and clear off that filthy smoke. By gum, the awful cheek, smoking in my study!"

"I—I say, ain't you letting him come back?" murmured Wilkins.

"Certainly not!"

"But—but he must have a study, you know."

"Let him find another, then. He's not coming back here. If he puts his nose inside this study again I'll alter the shape of it for him."

But Crooke did not put his nose inside the study again. He stamped away, vowing vengeance, and Grundy & Co. sat down to tea.

CHAPTER 13.

The Autocrat of No. 5.

THE eviction of Crooke from his study caused howls of laughter, and Crooke did not get any sympathy.

The next day he made an attempt to establish himself in his study again, as if nothing had happened. Grundy found him there, and without speaking a word made a rush at him. The hapless black sheep of the Shell dodged round the table, and whipped out and fled. Grundy was not to be reasoned with.

Grundy's high-handed proceedings, however, only caused merriment among the other fellows. Crooke threatened to appeal to Mr. Linton; but as it would undoubtedly have come out why Grundy had evicted him he did not carry out his threat. He did not dare to go into the study again, and that evening he did his preparation down in the Form-room.

But he was furious. There was no fire in the Form-room, and the evenings were still cold. Crooke came out, feeling chilly and enraged. He presented himself in Tom Merry's study, to appeal to Tom Merry as captain of the Shell. The Terrible Three greeted him with a smile. They had no sympathy to waste on him.

"Look here," said Crooke savagely, "you call yourself head of the Shell, Tom Merry!"

"I am head of the Shell," said Tom cheerfully.

"Then it's your business to see that a chap isn't put upon by a big, lumbering beast he can't tackle. It's up to you to put down bullying."

"Quite so. If you've been bullying anybody, tell me all about it, and I'll lick you fast enough!"

"I'm talking about Grundy!" roared Crooke.

"Oh, Grundy!"

"Yes, Grundy. He's turned me out of my study, and the beast won't let me go back. I don't want to complain to the Form-master."

"You're entitled to it if you want to. It might be a little awkward if it came out about the cards, certainly."

"That bally ought to be stopped. You ought to see that he lets me back into my study. I call on you as captain of the Form."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Yes, if he was bullying you," he said. "But he's kicked you out for smoking and gambling in the study. If you were my study-mate, and you smoked and played cards here, I'd have kicked you out just the same."

"Why, you rotter—"

"Nothing doing!" said Tom.

"You're afraid of him!" hooted Crooke.

"Well, he's a big beast, isn't he?" said Tom, with perfect good humour. "Any chap might be afraid of him, mightn't he?"

"Look here, what am I going to do?"

"Looks to me as if you can't have a study. Grundy can't be expected to have a smoky, gambling blackguard in a respectable study."

"Tain't his study; it's my study."

"It appears to be his now. Still, you can argue that out with Grundy, if you like."

"Well, if you funk tackling him—"

"My dear chap, I'm going to tackle him to-morrow. But I'm not going to ask him to let a smoky, disreputable rascal into his study. I wouldn't have you in mine. You can't expect a decent chap to put up with you. Now, can you?"

Crooke spluttered with rage. He did not answer the question.

"Try to change with somebody else," suggested Tom. "Somebody else may be willing to dig with Grundy, and let you have his study."

Crooke stamped away in a fury. There was no help to be had in that quarter. However, he adopted Tom Merry's suggestion, and wandered up and down the Shell passage seeking somebody who would change with him. It was not an easy quest, as nobody appeared to be very

anxious to share Grundy's quarters. It seemed very much like putting one's head into the lion's mouth.

Gunn offered to change at last. Gunn was already chummy with Grundy, and he resolved to risk it. He presented himself rather doubtfully in No. 5. Grundy and Wilkins were there, making a substantial supper of rabbit-pie. Grundy was standing the rabbit-pie.

"Come in, Gunny!" said Grundy hospitably. "There's a plate and a fork. This is a good pie."

"Oh, good!" said Gunn. "I've been talking to Crooke

Grundy frowned.

"No good asking me to take him back. I won't!"

Gunn grinned. Grundy's persuasion that he was monarch of all he surveyed, and that his word was law, struck him as funny.

"He wants to change with me," he explained. "The chap must have a study, you know. If you don't mind—ahem!—my coming here."

To Gunn's great relief Grundy nodded cordially.

"All serene!" he said. "You're quite welcome. But I can't send Crooke at any price. He's a rank outsider. Why, his beasty cards and smokes might be found in the study some day, and get the whole study into hot water. Besides, it's caddish; I'm down on caddishness. You can stay and welcome!"

"Oh, good!" said Gunn.

And he stayed. That amicable arrangement having been made, Crooke looked in to ask Wilkins and Gunn to help him move his things. Excepting for the chair and table, the studies at St. Jim's were furnished by the occupiers. Grundy glared round as Crooke made his request.

"What things?" demanded Grundy.

"I want my things moved," growled Crooke.

"What things?"

"The furniture, of course."

"It belongs to Crooke, old man," Wilkins explained. "Crooke stood the carpet and the looking-glasses, and the feeder and the fireirons, and the bookcase and the armchair. The rest belongs to me."

It was a little difficult to see in what the "rest" consisted.

"I suppose you don't want to stick to my property, Grundy?" sneered Crooke.

"Certainly not," said Grundy. "I can furnish my own study, I suppose. But you can't move the things till I've got a new lot. I can't be left with nothing on the floor. And those beastly fags smashed my bookcase, and it's taken away for repairs. You can wait for your things till I've had time to furnish the study."

"Look here!"

"Enough said!"

"But I'm going to have my things!" roared Crooke.

"You can wait!"

"Oh, go easy, Crooke!" said Gunn, the peacemaker. "My old study's all right. Mathers and Gibbons won't mind if you don't bring in any sticks for a few days. Grundy can do his shopping on Saturday afternoon, too."

"No, I can't," said Grundy. "I shall be playing in the Grammar School match on Saturday afternoon."

"Ahem!"

"I want my property!" howled Crooke. "I'll complain to Mr. Linton if you interfere with my taking it, too."

"Go ahead!" said Grundy. "I'll explain to Mr. Linton. He won't expect me to stay here without any sticks. Get out!"

Crooke almost foamed. He did not dare to complain to the master of the Shell, lest the whole story should come out.

"Well, I'll jolly well take the things away to-morrow!" he snarled.

"You touch 'em, and I'll give you such a whopping you won't be able to crawl for a week!" said Grundy. "I'm not standing any rot."

Crooke departed in a homicidal frame of mind.

"Awful check!" said Grundy. "Fancy thinking of leaving me here without any furniture, as if the study had had the bailiffs in! Bless if I know where some fellows get their nerve from, really!"

Wilkins and Gunn were just thinking the same thought. THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 378.

though it was Grundy's nerve that astonished them, not Crooke's.

"We'll go and do some shopping in Wayland early next week," said Grundy. "I shall be busy on Saturday afternoon. Crooke can wait, of course."

"Playing in the Grammar School match?" said Gunn blandly.

"Yes."

"You've fixed it up with Tom Merry, then?"

"No. I'm going to whop him to-morrow. Then it will be all right."

"Oh!"

The next day was Friday, and the list for the Grammar School match was posted up on the board. Grundy of the Shell read that list over with careful attention. The name of George Alfred Grundy did not appear there.

"Merry, Lowther, Blake, D'Arcy, Noble, Talbot, Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, Redfern Owen," read out Grundy. "Looks as if the duffer has left me out after all."

Wilkins winked at Gunn.

"It does look like it," he assented. "Perhaps he's forgotten you."

"If he has, I'll soon remind him," said Grundy.

Grundy proceeded to No. 9 in the Shell passage, where the Terrible Three and Talbot were having tea. He strode in with a frowning brow.

"I've just seen the list," he announced.

"Good!" said Tom Merry.

"My name isn't down!"

"We're not playing a home for idiots," explained Tom Merry. "When we do, I'm going to put your name in the list. Not before."

"You know what to expect?"

"Yes; I think we can beat the Grammarians this time. You see, Talbot is a regular rod in pickle for them, and Figgins—"

"You know what I mean!" roared Grundy. "I'm going to whop you if you don't put me into the eleven."

"Oh, thanks!"

"Changed your mind?"

"No," said Tom, laughing.

"Then I'll see you in the gym after tea."

"Right-ho!"

"And look out for squalls," said Grundy impressively.

"Thanks! I will."

Grundy departed and slammed the door. He left the Shell fellows grinning.

"It won't be an easy thing, though," said Talbot seriously.

"I don't suppose it will," said Tom cheerily. "Still, I think I shall have a dog's chance. Anyway, I can't refuse. If I get licked, though, and the ass says anything more about whopping, he'll get a Form-ragging. Pass the jam."

After tea the Terrible Three and Talbot proceeded to the gym. And as all the School House and the New House were aware of what was on, there was a tremendous crowd of juniors to see the fun. It was likely to be such a mill as the gym had seldom seen, and the result was very doubtful.

Tom Merry, however, did not seem much perturbed, and Grundy, when he came in with Wilkins and Gunn, seemed quite confident. Grundy had no doubts whatever about the result.

CHAPTER 14.

Whopped!

KILDARE of the Sixth came in as the juniors were preparing for business. The captain of St. Jim's knew what was on, too, and he intended to keep an eye on the proceedings. It was a prefect's duty, of course, to stop fighting; but a mill with the gloves on, and according to rules, was permissible, so long as it was not carried too far. Kildare had had his eye on Grundy, and he was convinced that what that cheerful youth needed more than anything else was a good licking, which was likely to do him more good than any amount of punishments from those in authority.

"Well, what are you up to here?" asked Kildare.

"Ahem! Only a little mill," said Tom Merry. "Gloves

on, you know. Everything in order. Just a friendly round or two."

"Yaas, watah! Pway don't intahfere, Kildare, deah boy."

"I shall keep an eye on you," said Kildare. "I will keep time."

"Hurray!"

"Yaas; that will be wippin'!"

"There won't be much time to keep!" said Grundy, with a sniff. "I'm not accustomed to more than one round with anybody!"

"You are a young ass!" said Kildare.

"What!"

"Where are the gloves? Get your jackets off and the gloves on."

"I don't need my jacket off," said Grundy.

"Do as I tell you!"

"Oh, all right!" said Grundy. "It's a lot of fuss about nothing, you know. I don't really want to whop that kid at all. We should get on all right if he only had a bit more sense. But he can't expect me to stand quietly while he throws cricket matches away. That's a bit too thick."

"Bai Jove! Weally, Gwundy—"

"Ready!"

Tom Merry and Grundy, without their jackets, and with the gloves on, stepped up to the line. A crowded ring surrounded them. Talbot was Tom Merry's second, and the obliging Wilkins looked after Grundy.

"Time!" said Kildare.

"Go it, ye cripples!" murmured Blake.

Grundy grinned, and started. He started with a tremendous rush, which Kildare himself would not have found it easy to stop if he had been in Tom Merry's place. But Tom did not try to stop it. He side-stepped, and Grundy whirled past him, and Tom's right came on the side of his jaw, and then his left, like lightning, and the big youth pitched over and sprawled on the floor.

"Groooh!" came in a gasp from George Alfred.

"Bravo!"

"Hurway!"

Grundy sat up, looking dazed. Kildare began to count:

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—"

It looked as if Grundy would be counted out in the first round. But at eight he scrambled up, and came on again. He did not give Tom Merry another chance like that. But for the rest of that round he was quite groggy, and he was gasping when he retreated to Wilkins's sympathetic knee at the call of time.

"That kid's tougher than I thought," he confided to Wilkins. "I shall need another round, after all, to whop him."

"You will," agreed Wilkins.

Wilkins's private opinion was that Grundy would need a good many more rounds to attain that object.

"Time!"

Tom Merry stepped up briskly. Grundy began again with a thunderous attack, and this time he was a little more careful. But he found Tom Merry's guard almost impenetrable, and his heavy rushes were dodged, and Tom fended him off with great skill. But Grundy got two or three blows home, and they were hard and heavy ones, and they made the captain of the Shell blink.

But the return was equally emphatic, and at the end of the round Grundy's left eye persisted in winking incessantly, and there was a crimson stream flowing from his nose.

"How do you feel?" asked Talbot, as he sponged Tom Merry's heated face.

"Right as rain so far."

"Your wind is better than his," said Talbot, "and if you can stall him off you ought to lick him. But if he gets home one of those sledge-hammer drives—"

"I shall take jolly good care he doesn't."

"Time!"

The third round was fast and furious. So was the fourth. Grundy was getting very excited by this time. It exasperated him to see the captain of the Shell coming up smiling every time. He began to get reckless, and his recklessness had to be paid dearly for. The fourth round ended with Grundy on his back, gasping loudly.



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Both the combatants were showing signs of wear and tear, and Kildare looked a little anxious. He was in doubt whether to stop the fight; but he knew that if he stopped it at that stage it would be continued in some quiet corner without his observation, and probably without gloves. It was evidently better to let it go on. So he called "Time!" again.

The fifth round was rough on Tom Merry. Grundy succeeded in getting home one of the sledge-hammer drives, and Tom Merry went down like a log. Kildare had counted up to nine, when he jumped up, feeling very groggy, but quite game. Grundy gave him plenty of time to get up. He was a chivalrous fighting-man. But the end of the round came only just in time to save Tom, who was at the end of his strength. The captain of the Shell panted as he sank on Talbot's knee, and Monty Leather fanned him.

"That was a twister," murmured Tom Merry. "Never mind. Better luck next time."

"Time!"

The sixth round was exciting, but it ended without either combatants showing signs of yielding. The seventh was equally without result. But by that time, in spite of the gloves, the faces of the opponents were considerably damaged, and their noses looked very bulbous, and their eyes were winking.

"You'd better call this a draw," said Kildare, hesitating.

"I'm going to whop him!" said Grundy.

"Oh, let's go on to a finish!" said Tom.

"Yaas, watah! Bettah finish heah than begin again to-morrow, you know," said Arthur Augustus.

Kildare felt that that was true, and, as the combatants were still full of fight, he called "Time!" again.

Grundy was looking very groggy in the eighth round. Tom Merry was much the better boxer of the two, and he called on all his skill now. A right-hander on the point of the jaw almost lifted the big Shell fellow off his feet, and he dropped on the floor of the gym. Kildare counted:

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine—out!"

Grundy staggered up.

"Hold on! I'm not out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going on, you know!"

"You're not going on!" said Kildare sternly. "You're counted out, and you're licked! This has gone too far already. Put your jacket on."

"But, I say—"

"Put your jacket on at once!" Kildare thundered.

Grundy sulkily obeyed. But he evidently did not regard himself as defeated. He was good for a couple

more rounds yet. However, he quitted the gym with Wilkins and Gunn, leaving the crowd cheering the victor. But Tom Merry did not stay many minutes after Grundy; he wanted to bathe his eye, which needed it badly. The Terrible Three quitted the gym, and made their way to the Shell dormitory in the School House.

Tom Merry was bathing his eye there, when Grundy came in with Wilkins and Gunn. The latter two were grinning, but Grundy was looking truculent. His left eye was quite closed, and he could not open it, and his nose looked like a beetroot. But he was still on the war-path. A crowd of juniors followed him into the dormitory.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry, sponge in hand, blinking at him through the water.

"I was counted out," said Grundy. "That's all rot, you know. We couldn't expect to fight it out with a blessed perfect looking on. I suppose Kildare really couldn't allow it to go on to a finish. I don't blame him."

"But it did go on to a finish," said Tom warmly. "You're licked!"

"Rot!"

"You blithering ass!" said Tom Merry, "I've licked you once—"

"Oh, rot!"

"If you're still looking for trouble, I'll lick you again," said Tom grimly. "Shut the door, you fellows, and don't make a row. Kildare would be waxy if he knew we were going on. You keep time, Talbot. Now then!"

"That's right," said Grundy heartily. "You've got some pluck. You're a chap that it's worth while taking the trouble to whom!"

"Time!"

"Round number nine, continued in our next," grinned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There were no gloves in the dormitory. The great fight finished "old style." The ninth round was wild and whirling. Grundy piled it in for all he was worth, and Tom Merry received two or three hard knocks.

But Grundy was winded, and the captain of the Shell closed in on him with right and left, and Grundy went down with a bump that shook the dormitory.

"Time!"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Grundy.

"Satisfied?" grinned Lowther.

"Rot! I'm going on, of course!" growled Grundy. "Ow! Ow! I'm going on! I'm not licked! I've never been licked!"

"Then it's time you started."

"Time!"

The tenth round was breathless. Tom Merry was hitting his hardest, and, as it was a case of bare knuckles, Grundy's punishment was simply terrific.

His right eye was nearly closed now, and he could not see; but his pluck was unlimited, and he fought on blindly. He was floored again by a terrific drive on the mark, and then he lay gasping feebly, and blinking with one eye.

The other was hermetically sealed.

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The other was hermetically sealed.

"Wow—wow!" murmured Grundy.

"Time!"

Grundy made a great effort to rise. But he sank back again on the floor with a groan.

"Give him time," said Tom Merry, who was very nearly at an end, too. "Take a bit of a rest if you like, old chap."

"Wooh—wooh!" mumbled Grundy. "I—I can't get up, you know. My blessed head's swimming. But I'm not licked! I've never been licked!" He made another effort, and sat up. But he could not get to his feet.

"Well, you've had four minutes," said Talbot, at last. "You'd better own up, Grundy. You know very well you can't go on."

"Can Merry go on?" mumbled Grundy.

"I'm waiting for you," said Tom.

"Well, I—I can't! I—I—I'm jolly well licked!" gasped Grundy. "Licked, you know! Me! They'd never believe it at Redclyffe! Licked—me! My hat!"

His right hand sawed blindly in the air. He could not even see his opponent now.

"Give us your fin," he said. "You're the first chap that's ever licked me. But I don't bear any malice. It was a ripping fight!"

Tom Merry shook hands with him cheerily enough. Wilkins and Gunn raised up the defeated hero. They helped him to bathe his injuries, which were many and various. Tom Merry was similarly engaged. The "casualties" had been heavy on both sides. The Grundy, as he mopped at his nose with a crimsoned sponge, repeated several times, in a state of unending astonishment:

"Licked, you know! Me! What would they say at Redclyffe? Me!"

The next day, when the Grammar School match took place, Grundy was a spectator.

Tom Merry was not feeling at the top of his form that day; the effects of that tremendous mill had not left him yet. But Talbot of the Shell played up in first-class style for St. Jim's, and Fatty Wynna's bowling was unequalled; the Grammarians were beaten by a narrow margin.

Grundy looked on, but he did not see the match very clearly. He had two black eyes, and his nose looked twice its usual size. For some days after that the state of Grundy's face attracted mirthful attention. And Grundy was a little more subdued in his manners and customs.

A new light seemed to have dawned on his mind, and it was evident that that "whopping" had done him good. And as he had not succeeded in "whopping" Tom Merry, the junior cricket team of St. Jim's was not blessed with the valuable services of Grundy of the Shell.

THE END.

(Next week the Great Irish Number of "The Gem" Library will appear, featuring Eric Kildare of St. Jim's. Order your copy now!)

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On the opposite page is a miniature reproduction of pages 8 and 9 of a recent issue of our companion paper, "The Boys' Friend." On the next page you will find miniature pages 7 and 10 of the same issue.

In the "Magnet" Library, No. 373, published last Monday week (your newsgirl will still be able to get you a copy), pages 1, 2, 15, and 16 appeared in the same way. The "Gem" Library, out last Wednesday, contained pages 3, 4, 13, and 14; and the "Magnet," now on sale, contains pages 5, 6, 11, and 12, thus forming a complete miniature number of "The Boys' Friend."

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CHAPTER I.

The Finding of the Metal Tablet.

"Well, of all the bare, desolate, uninviting places that it has ever been my fate to visit, these islands take the prize!" declared Jim Holdsworth, as he dropped his perspiring face with a cambic handkerchief. "Not a bush to be seen. Nothing but rock and sand, baking all day long under a tropical sun. Phew! Thank goodness there is a slight breeze springing up!"

He was standing at the entrance to a cave, on the slope of a cliff about a hundred feet above sea-level. Suddenly he turned round, and peered into the semi-obscurity of the cavern.

"I say, Harold," he continued, "what on earth are you pottering about in there? You will be suffocated. The interior is like an oven!"

"I have made a queer discovery," replied Harold Mackenzie. "Come here!"

"What have you discovered—a portrait in bas-relief of the Queen of Sheba? You have always been interested in the career of that dead and gone lady. She crossed the Red Sea on more than one occasion, I believe, so she may have visited these islands."

"Don't be an ass, Jim! Come here!"

"You are so beastly energetic!" murmured Jim lazily, as he entered the cave, and joined his chum at the upper end of it.

Harold Mackenzie had dislodged a slab of rock from the side of the cavern, disclosing to view a recess which had undoubtedly been cut out by human hands. Within the recess was an oblong sheet of metal of the colour of bronze, and it was this which Mackenzie had referred to as his "queer discovery."

"The slab of rock which closed the recess," he explained, "was fixed into its place with cement. The cement had become dry and powdery with extreme age, and a small portion of it had crumbled away. I dug at the crack with the point of my knife, with the result that the flat piece of rock dropped forward, and would have given me a nasty tap on the head if I had not managed to catch it."

"Ah! The guardian spirit of the cave—"

"Shut up!" interrupted Mackenzie, laughing. "I lowered the slab of rock to the ground, looked into the recess, and saw this metal tablet. It is covered with writing, as clear now as on the day when it was engraved, and that must have been three thousand years ago at least."

Jim Holdsworth was becoming interested.

"Then the bronze tablet you think has not been disturbed from the time that it was originally placed in this recess, whenever that may have been, until to-day," he said.

"That is my opinion," replied Mackenzie; "and I don't think I am wrong. The condition of the cement bears out my view. Help me to carry the tablet out to the mouth of the cave. It is fairly heavy."

It was heavy—far heavier than it looked. The metal was not bronze; it was three times the weight of bronze, and was indeed a metal the like of which neither Holdsworth nor Mackenzie had ever seen before. Between them they carried it to the cave entrance.

"Can you read those hieroglyphics?" asked Jim Holdsworth.

Mackenzie was kneeling down, studying the strange-looking inscription closely.

"Yes," he answered. "I don't mean that I can read them straight off now, as I might translate a passage in a foreign language in a book; but with the aid of a key which I have I shall be able to manage it." He rose to his feet. "I will go down to the yacht and fetch that key now," he added.

"It is on the bookshelf in my cabin. Will you wait here until I return, Jim!"

"Certainly," said Jim. "I am by no means anxious to scramble about these baking-rocks."

The two friends, both of whom were possessed of wandering, adventurous spirits, had been yachting in Eastern waters; but in the Red Sea the engines of the *Isis*, as the yacht was named, had broken down, and with some difficulty they had sailed her to a sheltered anchorage among the barren Hanish Islands.

These islands are near the south end of the Red Sea, and about equidistant from the coasts of Arabia and Africa.

While the engineers were endeavouring to effect repairs Holdsworth and Mackenzie had been exploring the largest of the group. It was while engaged in this occupation that Mackenzie had discovered the mysterious tablet.

After an absence of about twenty minutes he returned, bringing with him a couple of volumes, one of which was in manuscript, a parchment affair, yellow with age.

"It won't take me long now to decipher the inscription," he declared.

He was an Oriental scholar, and had spent most of his time since he left college in wandering through unexplored regions of the East.

While he was engaged upon his task, Jim Holdsworth re-entered the cave, to make further examination of the recess. He was inside for a long time—so long that Harold Mackenzie had finished the work of deciphering the hieroglyphics on the metal tablet by the time he came out again to the open air.

"I have done it," cried Mackenzie triumphantly. "Listen to this. It is the strangest statement I have ever read, and I have read some queer things in my time."

Then from a sheet of paper on which he had written the translation in English he read the following:

"We give thanks to thee, O great and wondrous Clytemna, Queen of the Flame City, Goddess who knows not Death, for having guided us back safely over the White Mountain and the Plain of Terror. From the riches which we gathered in thy City we will set apart one-sixth to build a temple to thy worship, where we will offer up the sacrifices which thou dost love, O Queen! This is the vow of Anubis, the Egyptian, and Orastes, the Greek."

"Strange enough in all conscience!" exclaimed Jim Holdsworth. "I wonder what style of sacrifices they were that that queen-goddess loved? And the fitches which those ancient explorers gathered—well, we have an opportunity of judging of what they were composed, as they have left a specimen behind them."

"Eh?"

"Oh, you are not the only one who has made a discovery!" continued Jim. "While you were busy at your work of translation I was rummaging around inside the cave. The recess yielded up this sample of treasure."

He handed to his chum a thick gold armlet of curious workmanship, in which was set a large diamond of the purest water. The lustre of a diamond is supposed to dim with age, but this one was of a remarkable brilliancy. The reason of that may have been because it had been shut up in a dark and air-tight chamber all the time. However, that was a point which they did not trouble themselves to discuss just then.

"I have never seen anything like it before," declared Harold Mackenzie. "The workmanship is entirely different from the specimens of ancient gold ornaments which I have examined in the various European museums. It is certainly as old as the metal tablet, and probably very much older."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 379.

OUR GREAT INTERNATIONAL MATCH! (SEE PAGE 28.)

If it was brought by the Greek and the Egyptian from the place which they have named the City of Flame—"

"What do thou, O white strangers, know of the Flame City? And by what right do you hold in your possession property which does not belong to you?"

The voice came from behind them, and at the words the two sprung round sharply, Harold leaping to his feet. Standing not two paces away from them was a tall man, with a peculiarly repulsive countenance. He had but one eye, and a scar that extended down the whole length of his cheek added to the cruel and malevolent expression of his face.

He was dressed in the ordinary loose, flowing costume of an Arab, and at first they supposed him to be an Arab, though his skin was not quite so dark as that of the men of that race. How he had contrived to get up so close to them without his approach being heard was something of a mystery. But it was a still greater mystery that he should be there at all, for the islands were supposed to be uninhabited, and no dhow or craft of any kind had come over from the mainland since their arrival.

The fellow repeated his question, and both his tone and manner were somewhat insolent.

"What do you, O white strangers, know of the Flame City?"

CHAPTER 2.

Like a Thief in the Night.

The man had addressed his questions to them in English, which language he spoke exceedingly well for a native—indeed, the tone of his voice, though otherwise disagreeable, was that of a person of education.

"What we may happen to know of that or any other city," replied Mackenzie sharply, "is no concern of yours."

"Yet it may be," returned the man—"at least, those things"—he pointed to the amulet and metal tablet—"do concern me, for they are mine. How comes it that they are in your possession?"

"Because we discovered them in a place where they had lain buried for three thousand years or more," said Mackenzie; "so if they are your property, you must be a pretty old man. As, however, you don't look to be more than fifty, I take leave to question your ownership."

"It is an easy matter to prove," put in Jim Holdsworth. "If the things are his, he must, of course, know where they were hidden. No, my friend, you are not going into the cave to try and find out."

For the man had made an attempt to enter the cave, but Jim Holdsworth blocked the way. With a scowl of anger he stepped back.

"No matter where they were hidden," he said doggedly. "It is enough that I claim the amulet of Clytemna as my property, and the piece of metal with the writing upon it also."

They were surprised to hear him give the name of the queen who was referred to in the writing on the metal, but the fact that he evidently did not know where the articles had been hidden gave the lie direct to his claim of ownership.

The idea occurred to Mackenzie that there might be some legend concerning the things extant among the Egyptian Arabs, that this man had heard it, and had come to the islands in search of them, believing, perhaps, that there was a considerable quantity of treasure buried there.

"You will have to establish your claim more clearly, my friend," declared Mackenzie, "before we hand these articles over to you. For the present, at all events, we retain possession of them by right of discovery. I don't know whether the law of treasure trove has effect on a desert island. I should think not. That is all I have to say, except that if you desire to know who we are, you can pay a visit to our yacht, which is at anchor in the small harbour at the north of the island."

"You have spoken," answered the man. "Listen now to me, I, Anubis of Shoa, give you this warning. The possession of those things"—he pointed again to the amulet and metal tablet—"will lead you into dangers which will end surely in your destruction, not simply because you possess them, but because of the thoughts, the desires, which they have already put into your head." He was looking straight at Mackenzie. "The desire has come to you, since you have read the writing on that tablet, to go in quest of the City of Flame. But you will never reach it. You will go only to your doom!"

He ceased abruptly, and, turning on his heel, descended the steep cliff-path, disappearing from sight a minute later round an angle of the rock.

"Anubis of Shoa," repeated Jim Holdsworth. "Why, that is the name of one of the writers of that inscription, although on the tablet he describes himself as an Egyptian! It is

a queer—a very queer—coincidence, particularly if that tablet was engraved three thousand years ago. There is a mystery about this business that is beginning to get a grip on me."

"Shoa may have belonged to Egypt in those far-off days," said Mackenzie. "It lies to the south of Abyssinia, and there is a belief that it is really the land of Sheba, which was ruled over by that famous queen who visited King Solomon. I have often had the desire to penetrate to the interior of that mysterious and little-known country—"

"Look here, Harold," interrupted Jim Holdsworth, "what idea have you got simmering at the back of your brain? Did that fellow who has just left us read your thoughts aright? Because, if so, we have made an enemy of a fellow who must be something of a wizard, and—well, a bit unanny."

"He is certainly a clever thought-reader," Harold admitted, laughing in a slightly self-conscious manner. "I have the desire to go in quest of the City of Flame; and what is more, I intend to carry it out—or try to."

Nothing further was said on the subject then, and soon afterwards they returned to the yacht with the precious treasures which they had had unearthed. However, after dinner that night they held a long discussion on the subject, and it was finally decided that they should provision one of the largest of the yacht's boats, and, taking with them all that they required in the way of an outfit, set sail for the Gulf of Tajurrah, whence they hoped to strike a caravan route into the Shoa country.

Only one member of the crew was to accompany them—an American named Bob Sigsbee—who was a hunter as well as a sailor. He had been acting as boatswain's mate of the Isis, but was one of those roving, adventurous spirits who never seem able to settle down to any regular occupation.

As soon as the engineers had completed the necessary repairs, the yacht was to proceed to Aden, there to lay up until their return.

"If ever we do return," thought Holdsworth. "As the nights were so hot, both Holdsworth and Mackenzie had their beds made up on the upper deck, for the cabins were too stuffy. Mackenzie slept right aft by the stern gratings."

At about two o'clock in the morning, as he afterwards learned, Mackenzie was roused to sudden wakefulness by a curious sense of impending danger. He opened his eyes, but did not move his head or limbs. A dark form was bending over him, and in the outstretched right hand something gleamed in the pale light of the stars—a knife.

He saw the arm move downwards to make the thrust which was intended to end his existence, but, throwing out his own hands, he gripped his assailant's wrists. A fierce struggle ensued, but, owing to the fact that Mackenzie was in a semi-recumbent position, he must assuredly have been overpowered, when fortunately an interruption occurred. Footsteps were heard running along the deck, and a man's voice shouted:

"Keep hold of him, sir! We're coming along!"

But Mackenzie was not able to keep hold of him. His assailant wrenched himself free, sprang on to the rail, and dived overboard. He must have been a skilled swimmer, and able to remain under water for a long time, for, although a boat was lowered, no trace of him could be found.

"A slippery customer, I guess!" observed Sigsbee. "An Arab, by the look of him."

"He is not an Arab," replied Mackenzie. "He is a native of the country to which we are going."

"Is that so? Then you've met him before, captain?"

"Yes, I have met him before."

"Was, I reckon you ain't likely to meet him again," declared Sigsbee.

"I am not sure of that," replied Hal Mackenzie thoughtfully. "I have a queer sort of presentiment that he will not see the last of that gentleman."

His assailant was Anubis of Shoa.

CHAPTER 3.

Into the Unknown.

Eight days had passed—days crammed full of incident, which, however, need not be set down in detail here, since they had no direct bearing on the adventurous quest which the daring trio had embarked upon.

The Isis, with engines sufficiently repaired to enable her to proceed at a slow speed, had gone on to Aden. She had been shadowed out of the Red Sea by a fast-sailing dhow, and it was owing to this fact that Mackenzie decided to make some alteration in their original plans.

He ordered the yacht to steer south after she had cleared the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, instead of east, which latter course would have carried her to Aden; and it was not until the mysterious dhow had been left out of sight astern during a calm that he and his two companions embarked in

the big whale-boat with their provisions and outfit, and set sail for the African coast.

They were then within thirty miles of the entrance to the Gulf of Tajurrah. But it was impossible for the Isis to go any further out of her course with her engines in such a crippled condition; so, with much handshaking, and three hearty cheers from the crew of the yacht, the adventurers said farewell to their shipmates.

They all three gazed after the Isis until she had steamed nearly out of sight to the north-east, en route to Aden, and so doubt each one was wondering if they would ever see the dear old vessel again. But they remained silent, keeping their thoughts to themselves.

Now, although they were so close to the mouth of the gulf that the mountains which bordered its northern shore could be seen, grey and cloud-like, on the horizon, they were yet fated never to enter it. For three days they were hampered by light and baffling winds, and were practically at the mercy of the current, which carried them slowly but steadily southward.

Then, on the fourth day after parting company with the yacht, there came a change in the weather. The blue sky was shut out by a heavy, purple darkness, which had not the ordinary appearance of cloud, but looked like some Titanic ceiling roofing in the world.

From different points of the compass there came low growlings of thunder, while here and there amid the gloom the lightning flickered. The heat was intense, for the air was stagnant and motionless.

"We are going to have it hot and strong," declared Hal Mackenzie. "I wish we could see the land. It is a dangerous bit of coast hereabouts."

"Here it comes!" shouted Jim Holdsworth suddenly. "Holy Prophet, see how it is lashing up the water! Hold on for your lives!"

With a deafening shriek the tornado raced down upon them like a black, palpable thing, stretching far across the sea, fringed at the base with a line of white, seething foam. As it struck the boat the sturdy little craft sank right down until her gunwales were level with the surface of the water, fairly pressed down by the terrible weight of the wind.

Had she not been as buoyant as a lifeboat she would have gone clean under in that first awful minute; but she slowly rose up to her normal height, and, shaking herself like some marine animal instinct with life, plunged forward at racing speed before the hurricane.

Mackenzie was at the tiller, crouching low in the stern-sheets. Holdsworth and Sigsbee were lying flat in the bottom of the boat. There was not a rag of sail set, not a piece of canvas the size of a pocket-handkerchief showing above the gunwale, nothing but the bare, stump mast; yet the whale-boat was tearing through the water knots faster than she had ever gone before since she was built.

The terrific pressure of the wind prevented the sea from getting up, the crests of any waves that tried to rise being cut off as though by some gigantic knife, and scattered as stinging, misty spray far and wide. It was impossible to see very far in any direction, and in any case a look-out would be useless. All that Mackenzie could do was to keep the boat dead before the wind. It was the only chance of safety, so long as they were in open water. But the unpleasant knowledge was all the time in his brain that they were rushing straight on to the land, that bit of East Africa that sticks out like a lip south of the Red Sea, terminating in Capa Guardafui. If they struck on that breaker-fringed shore it would mean certain destruction.

"This is the end!" thought Mackenzie.

He had expected that within the next few minutes the boat would be dashed to pieces amid the boiling surf, and to his amazement no such thing happened. The line of breakers was left behind, the boat having passed through a gap in the middle of it, into comparatively smooth water.

Then, as though the tornado, having done its worst and failed to destroy them, could do no more, the wind began to subside. It passed away in its great circular course to other regions, and, as if by magic, it became calm. The air cleared, and they saw that they had run into the mouth of a river, the banks of which were fringed with palms, ceibas, and great cotton-wood trees.

"Thunder! Where are we?" cried Sigsbee, rising to his feet and gazing around him.

"I don't know," replied Mackenzie, "except that we have providentially run into safety. Fate has brought us into this river, so that the best thing that we can do is to follow its course."

"Where will that take us?"

"To the interior. At least, a good stage on our journey to the land of Sheo—or of Sheba."

"Into the unknown!" said Jim Holdsworth.

— CHAPTER 4.

In the Hands of Arharas.

For a hundred miles the nameless river, which was not marked on the chart which they possessed, wound its way through a network of swamps. At times they caught glimpses of stretches of flat land on each side; at other times the river was shut in by a wall of mangroves, with their wire-like stems and shining green leaves.

Alligators basked on the muddy banks of the river, and as the country seemed bare of game, Mackenzie and his comrades did not trouble to land. They pushed on up-stream, lying for the most part on fish, as they wished to save the tinned provisions which they had brought with them from the yacht as long as possible, using them only as "emergency rations."

Alternately rowing and sailing, they had navigated a hundred miles of the waterway in five days, but, having got so far, they found their further progress blocked. The character of the country had changed. The swamps were left behind, and the river, which narrowed at this point, became studded with rocks. The current also, which they had been battling against for the last twenty miles, now ran so strongly that they could not make headway against it.

"I guess we'll have to be up to the bank now, Cap," said Sigsbee.

The sun had just set, and then darkness suddenly spread itself over the land like a pall. In those tropical latitudes there is no twilight.

Some dry wood had been collected, and they soon had a roaring fire burning on the river-bank. It served a double purpose—to cook their food and to frighten off any prowling wild beasts that might be in the neighbourhood.

Fish, fried bacon—the last rations of their stock—and biscuits made a very acceptable repast, washed down with tea, of which they still had a good supply.

"It will be advisable," said Mackenzie, "to anchor the boat out in the stream, a dozen yards or so from the river-bank. We shall then be safe from any of the wild beasts that happen to infest this part of the country."

This arrangement was carried out, the fire on the bank being first of all made up so that it would burn all night without further replenishing. As they had not seen a single human creature during their voyage up the river, and there were no signs of the presence of men in the neighbourhood of their camp, they did not consider it necessary to have a regular watch kept. They were all tired after a very heavy day's work, and as it was their custom always to rise at daybreak, they rolled themselves in their blankets at the bottom of the boat, and had composed themselves to sleep while the night was still young.

It must have been close upon midnight, judging by the position of the stars in the heavens, that Sigsbee awoke, conscious that something unusual was happening. He lay still and listened. From the shore came a sound that he could not make out, and which had the effect of sending a decidedly unpleasant chill down his spine.

It was a weird sort of chant of many human voices, yet so low and soft that it was almost like a lullaby. It had not aroused his companions; but the American was as alert and wakeful as a cat.

Slowly he rose to a kneeling position and looked over the gunwale of the boat. A strange sight met his eyes. Grouped about the fire, but with their faces all turned towards the river, were about a score of men, dark-skinned natives of the land. Those who were chanting wore on their heads, like helmets, the bleached skulls of antelopes, or some similar animal, with the horns still attached.

As they swayed their bodies to and fro to the rhythm of the chant, with the wavering red light of the fire playing on them, the effect was weird and startling in the extreme.

Suddenly, as though at some preconcerted signal, they became silent and motionless. Then, what seemed to be a flash of light leaped from their midst and passed over Sigsbee's head. There was a splash in the river behind him. The American knew that the flash of light was the reflection of the fire on the broad blade of a throwing-spear which had been hurled at him.

Mackenzie and Holdsworth were awake in an instant, and as they flung off their blankets they were just in time to see Bob Sigsbee pick up his rifle and take aim at some object which was invisible to them.

The report of the shot was followed by the most appalling cry that ever human ears had listened to.

(The second instalment of this Magnificent Tale will appear in next Wednesday's GEM. The only way to make sure of your copy every week is to place a standing order with your newsagent. Then you can't possibly be disappointed.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 379.

OUR GREAT INTERNATIONAL MATCH! (SEE PAGE 28.)



THIS WEEK'S CHAT



Whom to Write to —
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OUR GREAT INTERNATIONAL MATCH!

In No. 388 of "The Gem" Library I published on my Chat Page a letter from a reader signing himself "Scottie," in which he cast aspersions upon the loyalty of "Gem" readers in other nations.

The communication in question has brought about a very keen controversy between English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh readers as to which country evinces the greater loyalty towards the old paper, and in order to settle this highly important question once and for all I have arranged for Mr. Martin Clifford to write

FOUR EXTRA-SPECIAL STORIES,

featuring an Irish, Scottish, Welsh, and English character respectively.

Next Wednesday's issue of "The Gem" Library has been prepared for the express benefit of my chums in the Emerald Isle, and the grand, long, complete story of school life which it contains, entitled

"KILDARE FOR ST. JIM'S!"

By Martin Clifford,

will make a considerable stir throughout the length and breadth of Ireland.

Eric Kildare, the sunny lad from the Emerald Isle, and the good-natured skipper of St. Jim's, takes the title-role in the story, which is written throughout in that powerful, captivating style which has made the name of Martin Clifford a household word wherever the good old "Gem" Library penetrates.

The Irish are an enthusiastic people, and I have little doubt but that the sale of this journal in Ireland next Wednesday will eclipse all previous records. "Scottie's" somewhat unfair statements will put my Irish chums on their mettle, and they will be quick to rally round and show their Scottish critic that "The Gem" Library is in great demand, not only in the Highlands, but in their own country.

The forthcoming stories will go to prove beyond all question in which country this bright little journal receives the greater measure of support; so if Irish readers do not wish to "get left" when the result of this great scheme is announced, they should make a concerted attempt to buy up

EVERY SINGLE COPY

of next Wednesday's "Gem" Library which is on sale in their country! Even this, however, will not be sufficient if they want to outsoar the efforts of their English, Scottish, and Welsh cousins. Not only must they buy up all available copies, but

ORDER ADDITIONAL COPIES

from their newsgents, who can obtain them at once from the publishers. To be absolutely frank, I am very keen on

DOUBLING THE SALE OF "THE GEM"

in Ireland, and I look with confidence to my Irish chums to see that neither time, effort, nor energy are spared to achieve this great end.

"KILDARE FOR ST. JIM'S!"

is a yarn which will gladden the hearts of all my readers, and no son of Erin's Isle will regret having placed his order well in advance for

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S SPECIAL IRISH NUMBER!

"RALLY ROUND 'THE PENNY POP'!"

There must still be many hundreds of my "Gemite" chums who, displaying that peculiar hesitation in starting

a new-story-paper, are non-readers of "The Penny Pop." Let me assure such readers that the splendid combination of first-class fiction which appears in our superb companion paper should not be missed by anyone. If they will purchase a copy of this Friday's issue, they will see that my words ring true.

To begin with, there is a magnificent long, complete story of famous Sexton Blake, detective, entitled

"SIMON LEACH—SWINDLER"

which "grips" the reader from start to finish, and is intensely dramatic in its many developments.

Both a holiday and a cricketing flavour are given to the splendid complete story of Tom Merry & Co., entitled

"BOWLING OUT THE BOUNDER!"

By Martin Clifford,

which is one of the most powerful stories of St. Jim's ever written.

The great doings, at once exciting and amusing, of the famous adventurers, Jack, Sam, and Pete, are set forth in spirited style in

"PETE'S SUBMARINE"

a story which needs no further recommendation beyond the fact that it is one of S. Clarke Hook's "very best."

There, my chums, you have the complete contents of this Friday's issue of "The Penny Popular." What story-paper could possibly offer a more comprehensive and entertaining budget of first-class reading-matter for the week-end? No "Gemite" worthy of the name would think twice about purchasing his—or her—copy, for the pleasure and amusement to be derived from our great companion paper is incalculable.

Do your Editor and yourself the best possible turn, therefore, by ordering this Friday's issue from your newsgent at once, and always make it your golden rule to

"RALLY ROUND 'THE PENNY POP'!"

BEST THANKS FROM YOUR EDITOR.

I have of late received a large amount of particularly helpful correspondence. I am sorry that I am unable to write and acknowledge each letter separately, but I take this opportunity of thanking the following readers for their kind letters and suggestions:

Private G. F. Curtis (1st Heris Regt.), W. Tipper (Manchester), "One of the Ethels" (Belfast), Arnold Haskell (London), Kenneth Ware (St. Austell), F. Simpson (Suffolk), W. H. (Chatham), W. A. E. (Leeds), "Two Ardent Readers" (Croydon), "Two Loyal Chums" (Swansea), Mary T. (Birmingham), Charles Quinn (Co. Durham), Nancy B. (Barnsley), "A Leicester Reader," J. Harris (Sydney), D. W. M. (Salisbury), W. Austin (Peckham), Dorothy Robinson (Manchester), "Two Liverpool Chums," Frank Knight (Millsbridge), "A Faithful Reader" (Stafford), Jack Prince (Birmingham), G. Pavey (Kennington), Doris King (Upper Tooting), "Ethel" (Aberdeen), Stanley Harris (Thornton Heath), "Cymro" (Holyhead), "A Streatham Reader," L. Smith (Plumstead), W. Alderico (Chesterfield), W. Baxendale (near Wakefield), C. A. Shelley (Peckham), Harold Beechey (New Jersey), William Scott (Newcastle), J. N. Coatts (Dublin), "A Regular Reader" (Belfast), W. A. B. (Kensington), Leonard Inskip (Leicester), K. D. S. (Montreal), N. W. W. (Yanconver), W. S. Mutch (Hamilton), "A Loyal Welsh Gemite" (Carnarvon), E. K. (Dowbury), R. W. (Rochester), F. H. H. (Anorley), "Scout" (West Norwood), L. E. F. (Bermondsey), "A Loyal Reader" (Portsmouth), "A Loyal Girl Chum" (Blackheath), "A Patriot" (Bristol), Alec C. Savoy (London, S.E.), L. S. A. (Birmingham), "Clericus" (Halifax), J. F. and D. S. (Leith), Arthur Moore (Douglas), Harry Wallis (Enfield), and A. J. M. (London).

THE EDITOR.



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LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE.

A LESSON IN ETIQUETTE.

The skipper was trying to impress on the old tar the importance of saying "Sir" in addressing his superior.
 "How's her head?" he asked.
 "Nor-by-east," gruffly answered the sailor.
 Another trial without success.
 "Let me take the wheel," said the skipper, who prided himself on his patience with the hands, "and you ask me the question."
 "Ow's'er 'ead!" roared the sailor.
 "Nor-by-east, sir," replied the captain.
 "Keep her so, my man," said the old tar, "while I goes for'ard and 'as a smoke."—Sent in by James Turner, Glasgow.

RELIABLE KNOWLEDGE.

A scientist once found a little boy sitting under an apple-tree doubled up with pain, so he asked him why he was in such a painful position.
 The boy replied:
 "I've been eating some green apples, and, oh, how I ache!"
 "No, you don't," replied the scientist, "it's quite imaginary. You only think you do."
 "Oh, do I?" said the boy, so he squirmed afresh. "That's what you may think; but I've got inside information."—Sent in by Richard H. Streatham, S.W.

A FABLE.

A Certain Philosopher, wishing to test the Shallowness of Human Nature, put up a notice outside his door, stating that any man who could prove that he was Perfectly Contented would be presented with his House and Lands.
 In a short time a Crowd had gathered.
 Interviewing the First Claimant, the Philosopher said:
 "Art thou contented, my son?"
 "I am," answered the Claimant. "Perfectly."
 "Then, if that be the Case," asked the Philosopher, "why art thou after my House and Lands? Go to, thou art a Fraud!"
 And the Crowd, hearing this, melted away like Snow before the Nocturnal Sun.
 Moral:—"Never try to Outrace a Philosopher."—Sent in by E. Bloomfield, Brookwood.

FREDDIE'S VERSION.

The class was being instructed in the use of commas. The teacher dictated the following passage to her little learners, and told them to put the commas in the right places:
 "Lord Kitchener then entered on his head his helmet, by his side his sword, on his feet his boots—sat down, and did not speak."
 A discordant scratching of slate-pencils proclaimed that the class was valiantly grappling with the problem, and after a little while young Freddie looked up, with a gasp of relief.
 "Let me see yours, Freddie," said the teacher. And she was vastly astonished to read:
 "Lord Kitchener then entered on his head, his helmet by his side, his sword on his feet—his boots sat down and did not speak."—Sent in by H. Cox, Oldham.

TOO PREMATURE.

Some time ago a tradesman happened to look through his shop window, when he observed an elderly gentleman, whom he recognised as an Excise officer, attentively examining the outside of the premises.
 Presently he entered the shop, notebook and pencil in hand, and opened a conversation with the mystified tradesman:
 "Mr. Jones, I believe?"
 "Yes, I am Mr. Jones."
 "You keep a trap, I understand?"
 "Yes."
 "Have you a licence for it?"
 "No." (Entry in notebook.)
 "Did you have a licence last year?"
 "No." (Another entry.)
 "Why did you not take out a licence?"
 "I didn't think it necessary."
 "Um! That's bad." (Entry in notebook.) "How many does your trap hold?"
 "Five."
 "How many wheels has it?"
 "None."
 "None! What sort of a trap is it?"
 "A mousetrap."
 "Er, er, er—oh!" And the Excise officer turned pale, green, and promptly disappeared.—Sent in by F. Lovell, Bristol.

TOLD OFF.

The coach-drivers in a tourist region of America are often bothered by the foolish questions asked by the passengers, and in self-defence sometimes resort to satirical answers.
 Once a lady, who seemed deeply interested in hot springs, asked:
 "Do these springs ever freeze over in winter?"
 "Oh, yes!" replied the driver. "A lady was skating here last winter, and she broke through the ice and scalded her foot!"—Sent in by Joseph Saw, Rotherham, Yorks.

WORTH THE MONEY.

On the journey to Petrograd a thought-reader entertained the company. A Pole, who took the whole thing as a hoax, offered to pay a certain sum if the thought-reader divined his thoughts.
 The latter immediately replied:
 "You intend going to the fair at Nijni-Novgorod, and purchasing goods there. You mean to spend a lot of money, after which you will declare yourself bankrupt, and compound with your creditors for three per cent."

The Pole gazed at the thought-reader open-mouthed, pulled out his purse, and paid the amount proposed.
 The thought-reader asked triumphantly:
 "So I have guessed correctly!"
 "No," was the reply. "But you've given me a brilliant idea."—Sent in by A. Heaven, Stroud.

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THE NU' SPRING.
 "What's name, please?"
 "Hammarspring."
 "Beg pardon?"
 "Hammars-spring."
 "Would you kindly spell it?"
 "He-hem-hem—hey — He-hem—ma: He-hem-hem-hi-ben-hiss —R-minis."—Sent in by Sidney Stafford, Liverpool.