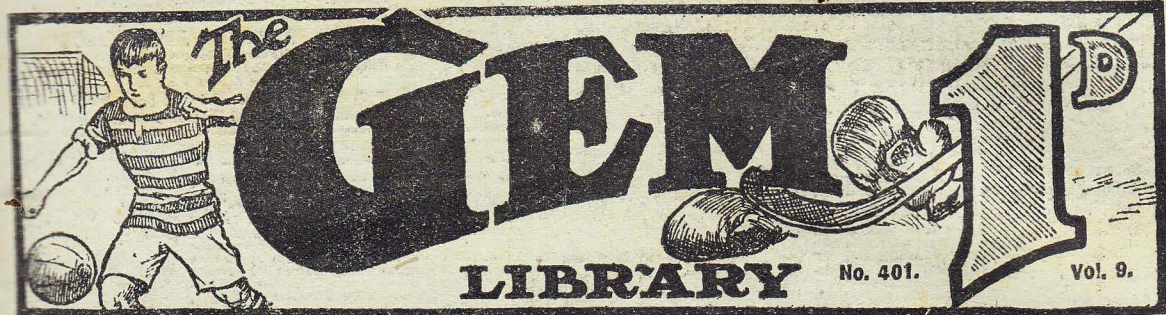


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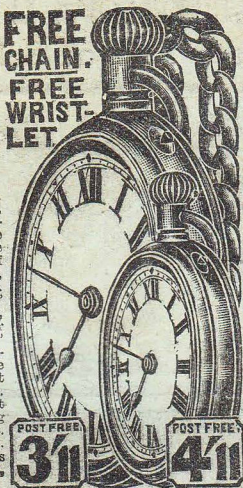
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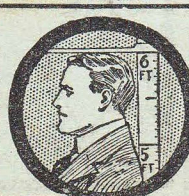
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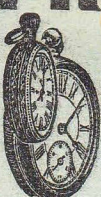
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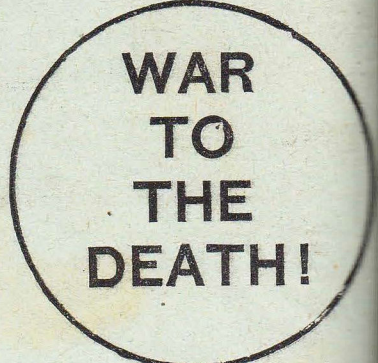
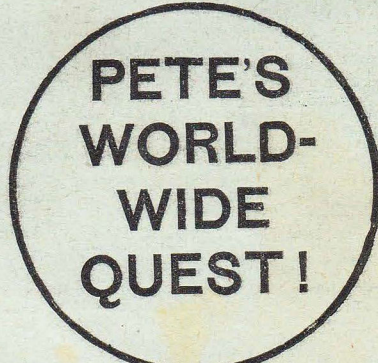
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By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



"What do you mean by letting them get through?" demanded Grundy, in his turn. "Do you call yourself a footballer?" "Wha-a-at?" "Why didn't you back me up?" (See Chapter 3.)

CHAPTER 1. Left in the Lurch.

GIVE Grundy a chance!" Monty Lowther of the Shell grinned as he made the suggestion. But Tom Merry did not grin. Tom Merry frowned.

It was a very serious occasion, and not, in Tom's opinion, a time for Monty Lowther's little jokes.

Tom Merry was seated at the study table with a stump of pencil in his hand, and a deep wrinkle in his boyish brow. He looked as if a large part of the world's troubles had descended upon his young shoulders. Before him was a sheet of impot paper, upon which he

Next Wednesday:

"WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!" AND "UNDER THE DRAGON!"

had been scribbling a list of names—with many erasures.

Fellows had often envied Tom Merry his position as junior football captain, but it was not all "lavender." Sometimes he needed an immense amount of tact in dealing with a swarm of fellows who simply couldn't see why they should be left out of the junior eleven. Sometimes he had to make up a team under difficulties. That was the trouble at the present moment.

While Tom knitted his brows over the football list, Monty Lowther tried to look sympathetic. He felt sympathetic enough. But it was a little difficult for the most humorous fellow in the Shell to be serious at any time.

"It's rotten," said Tom Merry. "Do be serious, Monty! I've never been in such a beastly fix over a match. If it weren't a Form match we should be all right."

"Right as rain!" agreed Lowther. "If it were a House match, for instance, we could find plenty of players in the Fourth."

"Lots!"

"If it were an outside match, the same. But it's a Form match, and we've got to get all the players from the Shell."

"More Shell trouble!" murmured Lowther. "The way the fellows have left you in the lurch, Tommy, constitutes another shell scandal!"

"Oh, don't be funny! As a rule, I have to jaw to half the Shell explaining to them why they can't play in the Form matches," said Tom. "Now that I want them, the silly asses are off the scene!"

"Twas ever thus!" sighed Lowther.

"Practically the whole team knocked out," said Tom, looking dismally at his list. "The usual eleven would be Manners, Lowther, Talbot, Gore, Thomson, Kangaroo, Glyn, Dane, Huggins, Jones, and myself. That's a good Form team from both Houses, and we usually have plenty of reserves."

"Too many!" agreed Lowther.

"Now Kangaroo's uncle is in England, home from the Dardanelles, and, of course, Kangy has gone off to see him, and taken Glyn and Dane with him. He might really have left it till Saturday. An uncle is an uncle, but a Form match is a Form match."

"This one is a special Dardanelles uncle," said Lowther.

"Then Gore is bound to be seedy; I shouldn't wonder if he's been smoking again," grunted Tom Merry. "Anyway, he's seedy!"

"You will have to shed Gore," concurred Lowther, with almost an appealing glance at Tom Merry. But Tom did not even see the pun.

"I shall have to shed nearly all the eleven," he growled. "Talbot, the best of the bunch, has been walked off by Colonel Lyndon for the day. I suppose the colonel didn't know there was a Form match on."

"He couldn't have," said Lowther solemnly.

"Then Manners had to march off with his silly camera. I shall jump on that camera one of these days!"

"Hear, hear!"

"That's six gone out of eleven," said Tom. "It wouldn't matter if we had our reserves. Smith and Williamson and Curtis had to catch colds and get into the sanatorium—of course!"

"Of course! It never rains but it pours."

"Wilkins had to damage his fatheaded ankle, and Gunn had to hurt his arm—just like those two silly duffers!"

"Awfully inconsiderate of them."

"And the upshot is that I'm blessed if I know what we're going to do," said Tom Merry finally. "I suppose I can scare up Shell fellows somewhere, but they'll be a scratchy gang. The Fourth will beat us, hands down!"

"They've got all their men on tap," said Lowther.

"But if you're going to scare up Shell fellows you'd better get a move on or they'll be off the scene. A lot of them are going over to Abbotsford to see the khaki footer match."

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"If I'd seen Manners going I'd have busted his silly camera on his napper!" said Tom Merry crossly. "It's really too bad. Of course, he didn't know about the other fellows all leaving me in the lurch. We shall take a gang of scratchy outsiders into the field at the best. The only good players will be you and me and Thompson of the New House. Blessed if I know where we shall put em. As good—or as bad—in one place as another. If that fellow Grundy weren't a born idiot I'd give him a chance. He's big and heavy, and might be useful at back. But he's such a thumping duffer!"

The captain of the Shell rose, and crumpled the list in his hand.

"Better go and look for recruits," he remarked.

There was a knock at the door, and Grundy of the Shell looked in. Tom Merry gave him a grim glance. George Alfred Grundy was a tremendously powerful fellow, and ought to have been a splendid back. But George Alfred's brains had not developed on the same scale as his body.

Grundy was looking quite affable. He nodded very pleasantly to the captain of the Shell.

"Thought I'd look in," he remarked.

"Thanks," said Tom. "Good-bye! Come on, Lowther!"

"Hold on!" said Grundy, in surprise. "I've come here to speak to you!"

"Sorry—no time!"

"It's about the footer," said Grundy, planting his burly form in the doorway and blocking it. "I've offered you my services for the Form eleven, for the House eleven, and for the School eleven till I'm tired. You've refused, in a silly, fatheaded, obstinate way every time. I've told you, too, that I'm not going to be kept out of the footer as I was out of the cricket. If you don't know a good player when you see one, it's time you learned!"

"Is that all?" asked Tom Merry.

"No," roared Grundy. "That isn't all! I hear that you're in a fix this afternoon for a team, and the Fourth are expecting a walk-over. Well, I think it would be only decent to give me a chance."

"So I would if you weren't such a thundering idiot," said Tom candidly. "But I've seen you play footer. I've had some, you see!"

"How are you going to make up a team with nearly all the players away and most of the Form gone out?"

"Goodness knows!"

"Then give me a chance. Now," said Grundy impressively. "I haven't come here to quarrel with you, Merry. I want to be reasonable. You think I can't play footer—"

"I know you can't!"

"I think I can. You're in a fix for players. Well, put me in. If I'm no good it will prove you are right," said Grundy, with the air of a fellow making a tremendous concession, "while if I show up well you can admit that you've made a mistake about my play. Nothing to be ashamed of in making a mistake, you know. We all do at times. I've made mistakes myself."

"Go hon!" ejaculated Monty Lowther, in astonishment.

"It's a fact," said Grundy. "I don't mind admitting it. It doesn't often happen, but it has happened! Well, I expect you to own up like a sportsman, Tom Merry, when you see that you've made a mistake."

"So I would," grinned Tom, "but there isn't any mistake in this matter, you see. Try the Second Form—your footer is about on their level. Come on, Lowther, we've got no time to waste!"

"Look here—"

"Sorry; in a hurry!"

"You're jolly well not going out of this study till I've had my answer," said George Alfred Grundy determinedly.

"But you've had it," said Tom Merry.

"I want a better answer than that. I want it settled that I'm going to play in the Form match, and show just what I'm capable of."

"Just what I'm afraid you would do," said Tom.

"You're capable of mucking up the whole game, and

kicking away our last earthly chance. Buzz off, and don't be funny! Come on, Monty!"

George Alfred Grundy apparently did not understand that the matter was finished and done with, for he did not move from the doorway. But Tom Merry had no more minutes to spare, and he marched at Grundy; and Monty Lowther marched too, so, as Grundy did not move, there was a collision in the doorway.

Two bodies were heavier than one—a simple scientific truth which was amply demonstrated by what happened to Grundy.

Grundy went staggering into the passage, with a gasp. Tom Merry and Monty Lowther immediately caught him in their grasp—perhaps to keep him from falling. If that was their object, they failed, for in their grasp G. A. Grundy came to the floor with a heavy bump.

Then they walked down the passage, smiling, leaving George Alfred sitting on the cold, unsympathetic linoleum, and gasping in a state of dazed breathlessness.

CHAPTER 2. Grundy's Chance!

WHEREFORE that wowed bwow, deah boy?" Study No. 6 were adorning the steps of the School House with their persons when Tom Merry and Monty Lowther came out.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy asked the question, as he noted Tom Merry's thoughtful look; while Blake and Herries and Digby grinned. They knew the difficulties that beset the captain of the Shell that afternoon.

Tom Merry paused.

"Beastly fix," he said. "All my duffers cleared off, and left me in the lurch. Of course, we shall beat you all the same, but it's a bother."

"Beat your grandmother!" said Jack Blake. "Why, we shall simply walk over you. If you were at the top of your form you wouldn't have much chance."

"Bow-wow!"

"If you can't make up a full team, Tom Mewwy, we can lend you some playahs," remarked Arthur Augustus. "We have lots of good playahs to spare in the Fourth. Young Julian is comin' on wemarkably well—"

"Oh, I'm going to make up a Shell team of sorts!" said Tom. "You can depend on getting a licking."

"Wats!"

The two Shell fellows walked on into the quad, looking for recruits. It was really a very unfortunate state of affairs. The khaki footer match at Abbotsford was a great attraction, and a crowd of St. Jim's fellows had gone over on their bikes. Most of Tom's reserves were out of reach just when he had been unexpectedly deprived of his best men.

Several fellows who hadn't gone were stopped in the quad, and told that they were wanted for the match, and they assented gladly enough. They were more or less indifferent players; but Tom was determined that the team should be composed exclusively of Shell fellows. It was a Form match—Shell against Fourth—and he did not want to be driven to the necessity of borrowing players from the Fourth.

Tom Merry's list began to fill up.

Monty Lowther made a grimace when he looked at it. The team was decidedly "scratchy." And there were only ten names.

Up and down and round about the two chums hunted, but there was simply not an eleventh man to be had.

The fine weather had tempted the fellows out of doors, and the khaki match at Abbotsford had attracted them, and of all the Shell there were only ten fellows still within the school walls, with the exception of those who were crocked.

"Must take in a Fourth Form chap, I suppose," said Lowther.

Tom shook his head.

"Not if we can help it. The young bounders will make out that we couldn't beat them on our own."

"Rotten to play a man short!"

"Let's go and see Gunn—he may be able to play, after all."

"Oh, all right!"

Gunn of the Shell had damaged his arm in a fall, and was crocked. He was not a first-class player at any time, though he could play at back in his own way. Tom Merry looked for him. Wilkins and Gunn and Grundy shared a study together, and it was in their study that Tom found them.

The deep, booming voice of Grundy was audible in the passage as Tom and Lowther arrived at the door of No. 8.

"I call it rotten! Of course, the Shell will be beaten! Blessed if I can understand why the Shell don't get fed up with that fathead Merry!"

"There's an unsolicited testimonial for you, Tommy," murmured Lowther.

Tom laughed, and threw open the door.

Grundy and Gunn and Wilkins turned their eyes upon him as he came in. Grundy frowned portentously.

"Changed your mind?" he demanded.

"Not exactly," said Tom. "How's your arm, Gunn?"

"Stiff," said Gunn.

"Think you can play back? After all, you won't want your arm."

"I can't leave it in the study," said Gunn.

"Ass! If you think you could play, I'll put you in. Every other blessed ass has gone out."

"Oh, I'll play, if you like!" said Gunn. "But I sha'n't be much good, I warn you of that. I'm not going to get my arm knocked."

"Oh, crumbs! How's your ankle, Wilkins?" asked Tom.

Wilkins grinned.

"Getting on nicely, thank you. I shall be able to play next week."

"Blessed if I don't chuck up captaining a Form of blessed crocks and duffers!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in exasperation. "It looks as if we've got to play a man short."

"Look here!" roared Grundy. "Do you mean to say you'd rather play a man short than put me in?"

Tom hesitated.

"Well," he said reflectively, "I don't know whether you'd be worse than playing a man short, Grundy."

"Why, you ass—"

"Give old Grundy a chance," urged Wilkins. "He's jolly useful in a charge. The Fourth-Form kids could never stand his weight."

"He's more likely to charge his own side," said Tom.

"You know how he plays footer—like a rhinoceros!"

"Look here—" bellowed Grundy.

"You can't leave him out, and play a man short," said Wilkins. "Dash it all, give the chap a chance!"

Tom Merry glanced at Lowther, who nodded. The captain of the Shell made up his mind.

"Well, get into your things, Grundy," he said. "I'll give you a chance. For goodness' sake, don't kick the ball through our own goal, or charge our forwards from behind!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy snorted.

"I've a jolly good mind to refuse, if you put it like that," he said. "But I won't, for the sake of the Form. After seeing me play to-day, perhaps you will have sense enough to play me in House and School matches."

"Perhaps!" grinned Tom. "Well, it's settled. I'll put your name down. It's jolly near time we got on the field."

Tom Merry and Lowther quitted the study, and went to change. It was high time they were on the ground. Grundy looked at his study-mates.

"It's my chance," he said.

"It is!" said Wilkins. "It are!"

"Now even that fathead will see how I can play. If he tries to keep me out of the House team after to-day, I shall appeal to the committee—after showing what my football is really like, for all St. Jim's to see. What are you sniggering at, Gunn?"

"W-a-was I sniggering?" murmured Gunn.

"Yes, you were! If you don't think I can play footer—"

"My dear chap, there isn't a fellow at St. Jim's who can play footer as you do," said Gunn.

"Well, that is so," agreed Grundy. "I'm glad you can

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see that, Gunn. I wish Tom Merry could see it. Perhaps he will after this match."

"No doubt about that," said Wilkins. Grundy, in a great state of anticipation and satisfaction, went to change. It was his chance at last, and he meant to make the most of it.

Ten minutes later Tom Merry led his team on to Little Side.

The Fourth-Form eleven were already there. The Fourth team was in great form. There were Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, Redfern, and Lawrence of the New House, and Blake, Herries, Digby, D'Arcy, Hammond, and Reilly of the School House.

"You fellows ready?" asked Tom Merry. "Weady and waitin', deah boy." "Been ready for ten minutes," said Figgins. "Have you sorted out your cripples? Hallo! What's Grundy in footer rig for?"

"Grundy's playing." "Oh, my hat!" "Bai Jove, what a despewate wesoource!" said Arthur Augustus sympathetically. "Howevah, you wouldn't have had much chance, anyway!"

The two skippers tossed for choice of goal. Grundy tapped Tom Merry on the shoulder.

"You've shoved me in as left-back," he said. "Well?" "Of course, I'm a jolly good back," said Grundy. "That's all right. But, seeing that it's such a scratch team, I think I could be more useful in the front line. We don't want to defend all the time. The best defence is attack, you know. Hadn't you better get behind, and leave me at centre-forward?"

"Fathead!" "I'm as good a forward as I am back——" "Very likely," said Tom. "But you'll do less damage at back. Get into your place, and don't jaw." "You mean you want to stick to centre-forward?" said Grundy. "On an occasion like this, I should think you'd be willing to get out of the limelight for a bit, for the sake of a win. But you're captain!"

"Has that just dawned upon you?" asked Tom sarcastically.

"But what about putting me in as centre-half, instead of that ass Thompson——" "I'll put you outside the field, if you don't shut up!" exclaimed the exasperated captain of the Shell.

Grundy snorted, and retreated to his place. He wasn't at all satisfied with the arrangement of the team; he had no great reliance upon Tom Merry's judgment, while upon his own his reliance was unbounded. He confided to Huggins, at right-back, that the game was probably a goner. Huggins nodded a cordial assent.

"What the dickens is to be expected, with you in the team?" demanded Huggins.

Whereat George Alfred grunted again, more emphatically than before, and told Huggins that he was a New House waster.

Lefevre of the Fifth, who was referee, was waiting impatiently. George Alfred having subsided at last, the whistle went, and the ball rolled from Jack Blake's foot. Then the Form match started.

CHAPTER 3. Checked Off!

THE football match was soon going hot and strong. With so weak a team to uphold the colours of the Shell, Tom Merry's idea was to devote himself chiefly to defence, and look for opportunities. He had little choice about the matter, for the Fourth-Formers attacked hotly, and from the kick-off, the tussle was mostly in the Shell half.

As a rule, there was a goodly crowd to watch the junior matches, but on this occasion the field was almost deserted. Most of the fellows had gone out for the half-holiday; and a Form match, too, was not considered as being of so much importance as a House match or a School match. Tom Merry was not displeased at the lack of spectators. At the best, the Shell were not likely to put up a very impressive show with so scratch a team.

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And when Grundy got to work he was still more pleased that there were few fellows present to see the exploits of his latest recruit.

If Grundy had known the A B C of footer, and had devoted himself to his duties at back, he could have made himself very useful in defence.

But that was not in Grundy's line.

Grundy had theories of his own; and one theory—a very good theory in itself—was that attack was the best form of defence. That it was not the business of a back to lead crushing attacks upon the enemy, and that it was the skipper's business to give directions, anyway, were considerations that did not appeal to Grundy in the least. Grundy's belief was that, having a decidedly poor captain, and a weak team, it was up to him to do his very best. If the forwards couldn't get going—why, he could get going. If that ass Thompson, or that dufter Jones, or that fathead Lowther, got on the ball and got in his way, so much the worse for the ass, dufter, or fathead concerned. Grundy's business, as he worked it out to his own satisfaction, was to win that match for the Shell. That was what he set out to do.

Huggins simply gasped as his fellow-back shouldered him off the ball, and took it up the field, deftly showing the halves out of the way, and bumping into the surprised forwards. Figgins, in the Fourth-Form front line, robbed the obstreperous back of the ball without the slightest difficulty, and the Fourth-Formers came on with a rush. Grundy was lumbering about somewhere on the half-way line, and his place was empty. The attack came through quite easily, and Jack Blake kicked for goal. Harris' goal was beaten hands down, and the leather lodged in the net.

"Goal!" chortled Figgins.

"Goal! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Goal, by gum!" gasped Wilkins, who was looking on with Gunn, very keen to watch Grundy's exploits. "Good old Grundy! He's worth a guinea a box—to the other side!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harris tossed out the ball. Tom Merry strode up to Grundy, with knitted brows.

"You blithering ass!" said Tom. "What the thunder do you mean by charging us from behind, you shrieking idiot?"

"What do you mean by letting them get through?" demanded Grundy, in his turn. "Do you call yourself a footballer?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Why didn't you back me up?"

"Back you up?"

"Yes. I was getting fairly going, if I'd had any support."

"S-s-support!" stuttered Tom Merry.

"Yes, support. You keep your eye on me, and the next time I get away with the ball, you play up to me."

"Play up to you!" shrieked Tom Merry.

"Certainly! Those lightning rushes are my strong point."

"You—you—you unspeakable idiot!" yelled the captain of the Shell. "I don't want a back who makes lightning rushes. I want you to play back, and——"

"That's all very well; but a good player's place is where he's needed most," explained Grundy. "The best thing you can do is to pass the word round for the team to back me up."

"Do you want to be kicked off the field?" roared Tom. "If you don't, get into your place and stay there."

Grundy grunted disdainfully, and went to his place as the eleven lined up for the restart. Lefevre grinned as he blew the whistle. The junior match was more entertaining than usual, from the Fifth-Former's point of view. He was quite interested in Grundy.

Pheep! went the whistle.

Tom Merry kicked off. The Fourth-Form forwards had the ball at once, and they brought it on in a charge. The Shell packed their goal, and defended hard. The tussle was long, but the leather was kept out. At length the Shell forwards succeeded in getting away with the ball, but they found the Fourth-Form defence sound. Fatty



Grundy stood rooted to the floor with astonishment. The Oakshott secretary—if he was the Oakshott secretary—stood aghast. "Good afternoon!" said the extraordinary object. "Great Scott!" ejaculated Grundy. (See Chapter 9.)

Wynn, in goal, was grinning. He did not seem likely to have very much to do.

There was a tussle in midfield, and then luck favoured Tom Merry, and he came through the Fourth-Form halves, and passed to Monty Lowther as the backs tackled him, and Lowther shot for goal. But Fatty Wynn grinned and fisted out the ball, and Herries cleared to Redfern, who sent it up the field. Tom Merry was racing back, when he met Grundy. Perhaps, in the excitement of the moment, Grundy mistook Tom for a Fourth-Former, or perhaps he felt that the captain of the Shell was in the way. At all events, he charged him over, and Tom bumped on the ground. Grundy staggered from the shock, and looked round him. Figgins & Co. were attacking goal again, and Huggins had been floored. Harris kicked out the ball, but there were no backs to help him. The leather whizzed in again, and stayed there.

"Goal!" chirruped the Fourth.

Tom Merry staggered up just as the goal was taken.

"Pretty muck you're making of this game!" said Grundy.

"Ow!"

"What did you get into my way for?" asked Grundy.

"Don't you know how to play football?"

Tom Merry gasped.

"You play the fool again, Grundy, and I'll kick you off the field!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Bai Jove! If I had a playah like that, I should wing his neck!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked to Blake, and Blake chuckled.

The sides lined up again, Grundy looking very discontented. In spite of his efforts, the enemy had taken two goals in twenty minutes. It did not occur to Grundy that it was because of his efforts.

Tom Merry was greatly inclined to pitch him off the field there and then, but he resolved to give him one more chance.

A chance was what Grundy was looking for. He was determined that the game should not go on in this rotten way if he could help it.

As usual, there was an attack upon the Shell goal immediately after the kick-off, and Grundy's chance came. He could have cleared to midfield if he had liked; but he did not like. He kept the ball, and dribbled it away down the touch-line. Figgins and Blake and D'Arcy were upon him at once, and he was stopped; he hadn't the remotest chance of getting through. Grundy kicked the ball away wildly as he was stopped. He might have intended it for a pass, if he had any intention at all. But, as a matter of fact, it whizzed behind the flag. It was the last straw.

"Grundy!" roared Tom Merry, as the whistle went.

"Hallo!" growled Grundy. "Complaining again—what? I'm getting fed up with this! Why don't you back me up? I've told you to."

"Told me to!" stammered the captain of the Shell.

"Yes; told you so plainly."

Tom Merry raised his hand.

"Get off the field!" he said.

"What!"

"I'm sending you off. We're going to play a man short. Understand?"

"No, I don't understand anything of the kind!" snapped Grundy. "I'm certainly not going off."

"N-u-not going off!" said Tom, hardly believing his ears.

"Certainly not! The best thing you can do is to get off yourself, and leave me to skipper the team."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get off the ground!" yelled Tom.

"Rats!"

"Are you going?"

"No, I'm not."

"Mutinay, bai Jove!" chuckled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Oh, my hat!" said the referee.

Tom Merry rushed up to Grundy.

"Are you going to walk off, or are you going to be chucked off?" he shouted.

Grundy snifed.

"I'm certainly not going to walk off, and if anybody tries to chuck me off there will be trouble."

Tom Merry did not waste any more words upon his valuable recruit. He grasped him with both hands, and yanked him away to the ropes.

"Oh, would you?" gasped Grundy.

He returned grasp for grasp, and there was a terrific struggle.

The Fourth-Form team looked on and howled with laughter. The Shell fellows were aghast. Lowther and Thompson and Huggins rushed to Tom Merry's aid. Grundy was seized by his arms and legs, whirled into the air, and carried struggling to the ropes, and pitched over. He sprawled on the ground, breathless and gasping. Tom, with a flushed face, went back into the field.

"Don't mind us," grinned Blake. "We'll wait while you chuck off half your team, if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Tom crossly.

The game went on from the corner kick. The footballers were under the impression that they were done with Grundy.

But that was quite a mistake. They were by no means done with George Alfred yet.

CHAPTER 4. Strong Measures.

HURT, old scout?" Wilkins asked that question sympathetically as he helped Grundy of the Shell to his feet. Gunn helped him on the other side. Both of them were trying loyally to suppress any signs of merriment.

Grundy staggered up, and stood unsteadily on his "pins." He was feeling decidedly the worse for wear.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped. "I—I've been chucked off—chucked off the field, you know!"

"Yes, we saw it," murmured Gunn. "Hard cheese!"

"They want to muck up the game," said Grundy.

"They don't want a good player."

"Leave 'em to stew in their own juice, old chap. Come and bathe your nose!"

"Rot! I'm not going to see the match chucked away if I can help it," said Grundy. "I'm in the team, ain't I?"

"Well, you were," said Wilkins, with a stare. "But now—"

"So you think I'm the kind of chap to allow myself to be chucked off the field?" demanded Grundy.

"Ahem!"

"I'm jolly well going to show Tom Merry that I can't be chucked out. 'Tain't only that either. The Shell are getting beaten, and it's up to me to pull off the match if I can. I'm going back!"

"Going back! My hat!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I—I say, old chap, I wouldn't go back," urged Wilkins. "They'll scalp you if you interrupt the game."

"They'd have all their work cut out to scalp me!" snorted Grundy. "But I'm not going to interrupt the game. I'm simply going to resume my place in the team, and play up."

"Oh, crumbs! I say——"

"Rot!"

Grundy, having recovered his breath, and pulled himself together, strode upon the field, Wilkins and Gunn watching him in utter dismay. They had always known that their study-mate could be obstinate. But they had not expected this, even of George Alfred Grundy. They waited for the earthquake.

The Shell were getting away at last. Luck was befriending them for once, and the forwards were attacking, and looked like getting through. It was at this critical moment that Grundy rushed to lend his aid.

The footballers were too keenly excited to see him coming. They did not know that he was coming till he was in their midst, with a charge like a bull.

Grundy was "on the ball" in a twinkling.

Monty Lowther went "off the ball" and bumped on the ground, as Grundy's heavy shoulder sent him reeling, and Grundy footed the leather on, right at Figgins, who kicked it clear over the heads of the Shell fellows within a few feet of goal. The chance of the Shell team was gone—for good. The footballers were speeding after the ball. Grundy, wondering what had become of the leather, stared round him blankly. Tom Merry caught him by the shoulder, and sent him spinning, and then rushed into the scrimmage. Grundy sat down.

"My hat!" ejaculated Grundy.

The Fourth-Formers were attacking goal hotly, and they had it all in their own hands. The leather was quickly in the net.

"Three up!" chuckled Figgins. "What a game!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was that idiot Grundy!" shrieked Lowther. "I had it for certain when that villain shouldered me off!"

"That fathead——"

"That maniac——"

"Scalp him!"

"Slaughter him!"

The whole Shell team, with the exception of the goalkeeper, pounced upon George Alfred. Grundy roared as their grasp closed on him from all sides.

Bump!

"Yawwwoop!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Yow-woooooooyoop!"

"Drag him off!" yelled Tom Merry. "Lock him up somewhere!"

"Shove him in the dressing-room, and turn the key!" panted Lowther.

"He'll get out of the window and come back!"

"Tie him up!"

"Good egg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat! What an entertainment!" chirruped Blake of the Fourth. "And these Shell duffers think they can beat the Fourth! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I regard this as a wippin' match! Gwunday is a weguhah tewwah!"

"Yank him off!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Leggo! Yooop! Help! You silly asses—— Yawwoop! Grooogh! Oh!"

With a rush the incensed footballers rushed George Alfred off the field for the second time, his arms and legs wildly waving. They rushed him into the pavilion, and he was bumped down on the floor of the dressing-room.

This time they did not mean to give him a chance of coming back.

Monty Lowther produced a whipcord, and Grundy's wrists and ankles were tied as he wriggled on the floor.

Then the footballers crowded out, and the door was locked on the outside, and Tom Merry took away the key. A roaring voice followed them.

"Yah! Rotters! Come and lemme out! Come and lemme loose! I'll wallop you all round! Help! Oh, my hat!"

Unheeding the uproarious demands of George Alfred,

the footballers returned to the field. They found the Fourth-Form team almost in hysterics.

"Oh, cut the cackle, and let's get on!" growled Tom Merry.

Tom's temper had been a little disturbed, which was really not to be wondered at. Grundy of the Shell would have tried the temper of the most angelic football captain.

"Waiting for you," grinned Blake. "Is he coming back?"

"Not unless he can come through a locked door with his feet and hands tied!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The game was resumed, and no more goals were taken till half-time. In the second half Tom Merry succeeded in putting the leather in, and the Shell had the pleasure of breaking their duck.

But it was the only gleam of light. After that they succeeded in packing the goal and defending—a much easier task now that Grundy was not there to help them. But with a "scratch" team and a man short, the task was heavy, and close on the finish Blake succeeded in putting the ball into the net.

Four goals to one was the result of the match.

The Fourth-Formers chirruped gleefully over that result, but the Shell, naturally, were not quite so satisfied. They came off the field, feeling inclined to scalp George Alfred Grundy.

"Might have made it a draw, at least, without him!" growled Thompson. "What the thunder did you put him in for, Tom Merry?"

"Hark at his dulcet tones!" grinned Lowther.

Grundy's voice proceeded from the dressing-room. He was roaring. He had been locked in for more than an hour.

"Will you lemme out? I'll whop you! I'll smash you! Yah!"

Tom Merry unlocked the door.

Grundy was squirming on the floor, vainly struggling with his bonds. He glared at the footballers homicidally. "Oh, you rotters! Lemme loose! I suppose you've lost?"

"Lost!" growled Tom Merry. "Of course!"

"Of course!" jeered Grundy. "What did you expect after shoving me out of the team? I should think all the fellows were fed up with you by this time, Tom Merry!"

"We're fed up with you!" roared Huggins. "Jump on him!"

"Kick him out!"

"Here, I say, hands off! Why, I'll— Yaroooooh!"

Grundy's hands and feet were freed, and he was dragged to his feet. Then as many football boots as could find room were planted upon him from behind, and he went out of the dressing-room like a stone from a catapult.

Bump!

"Dribble him back to the house!" shouted Lowther.

"Oh, crumbs!"

Grundy did not wait to be dribbled. He leaped up, dodged the angry footballers, and fled.

It had been Grundy's first—and last—appearance as a member of Tom Merry's team; but it could not be denied that his first—and last—appearance on the football field had been decidedly striking. He had, in fact, enjoyed quite a remarkable amount of limelight.

But—as he morosely remarked to Gunn and Wilkins—in that rotten team there was really no place for a player like him, and he declared that he would never play for the Form again so long as Tom Merry was captain. And Gunn and Wilkins agreed that undoubtedly he wouldn't.

CHAPTER 5.

Fed Up!

TEA ready?" Manners of the Shell came into the study looking very cheery, with his camera slung on his arm. Manners looked as if he had had a pleasant afternoon.

The aspect of Tom Merry's study was not so cheerful

as usual, and Manners looked at his study-mates in some surprise.

Monty Lowther was sitting in the armchair, with his trouser-leg rolled up, and his sock rolled down, anointing his ankle with embrocation. Tom Merry was laying the tea-table, pausing every now and then to rub his elbow. "You don't look very chippy," remarked Manners.

"Br-r-r-r!"

"I've had a ripping afternoon."

"So have we!" grunted Lowther.

"How did the match go?" asked Manners, remembering that there had been a Form match. While he was photographing, Manners forgot football matches; indeed, when he had his camera in hand, he forgot that there was a war with Germany. "Did you beat the Fourth?"

"Rats! No!"

"You shouldn't have let them beat the Shell," said Manners, with a shake of the head.

"How could we help it when every silly ass. had marched off for the afternoon, and every silly ass who hadn't marched off was crooked?"

"What about Talbot?"

"His uncle wired him."

"And Kangaroo?"

"Another blessed uncle at the last minute——"

"A blessed Dardanelles uncle!" grunted Lowther.

"Well, you have been in bad luck," said Manners.

"If I'd known, I'd have stayed. But I've got some ripping photographs!"

"Bow-wow!"

"A splendid view of Abbotsford Camp, and a snap of the khaki footer match!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Nice sort of cheery greeting, I must say!" remarked Manners. "Have you been getting knocked about by those Fourth-Form kids?"

"No, ass! We played Grundy!"

"Great Scott!"

"And had to chuck him off the field!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lowther got his hoof on his ankle, and I got my elbow banged against his nose," said Tom crossly. "It's hurt my elbow!"

"Ha, ha! What about Grundy's nose?"

"Blow his nose!"

"Well, let's have tea," said Manners. "I'll stay in next time, and we'll win."

"Fathead!" was Tom Merry's ungrateful response.

The Terrible Three sat down to tea, and Talbot of the Shell looked in with a cheery smile on his face.

"Come in!" said Tom. "Just in time."

"Thanks! I will. I hear the match was lost," remarked Talbot, as he came in. "How did you come to let the Fourth beat you?"

"My hat! I suppose every silly ass is going to ask that question!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Nearly all the team left me in the lurch, and I played Grundy. For goodness' sake let it go at that! I'm fed up with it!"

Talbot laughed, and let it go at that. But the subject was not to be dropped. There was a tramp of feet in the passage, and the door was thrown open. Kangaroo and Dane and Glyn looked in—accusingly. They had just come in, and evidently they had heard the result of the Form match.

"What on earth did you let the Fourth beat you for?" Kangaroo inquired.

"A blessed fag-Form!" said Clifton Dane. "Really, you know——"

"Slackers!" said Glyn, with a shake of the head.

Tom Merry glared.

"Ring off!" he shouted. "I'm fed up! Go and eat coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, you chaps!" grinned Kangaroo. "I don't like Tommy's manners!"

And the three Shell fellows went on their way, chuckling.

Five minutes later French of the Shell looked in. French was a New House fellow, and he had come to

make remarks. He did not heed the deadly glare the captain of the Shell turned upon him.

"Nice sort of a muck you've made of it!" he remarked. "Why couldn't you let me know you wanted a man before I started for Abbotsford?"

"Rats!"

"What on earth did you play Grundy for?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Well, if these are School House manners, I don't think much of 'em!" said French. "About as much as I think of School House footer and School House skippers! Playing Grundy, by gum! Wasn't there a blind or lame lunatic you could have found? Wasn't there any howling idiot you could put in? It would have been better!"

"There wasn't!" said Tom. "I'd have played any howling idiot rather than Grundy, but you were out."

"Why, you silly ass!"

"And I don't want any jaw! Buzz off!"

"You silly fathead!"

Whizz!

French closed the door hastily, just in time to escape a jam-tart. He slammed the door, and departed in great wrath. The door opened again a few minutes later, and Crooke, the slacker of the Shell, looked in, grinning.

"I hear you've been playing Grundy!"

"Get out!"

"What nice manners!" said Crooke, with a chuckle.

"I'd have played if you'd asked me. You seem to have had a ripping time with Grundy. The Fourth are cackling over it like a lot of hyenas! Ha, ha, ha—oooooh!"

Crooke was not in time to dodge the jam-tart; it caught him in the eye. He yelled, and grabbed at it.

"Grooh! Ow, you rotter! Yoooh! I'm all sticky! Groooh!"

Slam! Crooke fled, and the door caught half a loaf that was intended for his head. Talbot grinned, and Manners chuckled, and Monty Lowther smiled. Tom Merry breathed hard through his nose.

"I'll start on the next one with a cricket-stump!" growled Tom.

"You'd better!" agreed Manners. "Those tarts cost twopence each, and these are hard times!"

"Oh, rats!"

"That villain Grundy ought to be made an example of," said Monty Lowther. "He's jolly nearly lamed me, shoving me off the ball, you know! Charged me from behind!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it may be funny, but my ankle don't feel funny!" said Lowther. "Really, it was a bit thick playing that silly ass, and it's no wonder the fellows are surprised!"

"Are you going to begin on it?" roared Tom Merry.

"Peace, my child! Don't rag your old pal!" said Lowther soothingly.

"You suggested it yourself, too!"

"Did I? That was only a little joke; but never mind. After all, it wasn't a House match or a School match. These Form matches ain't of much account. Hallo, there's another of 'em!"

Tom Merry looked round for a stump as the door opened. He was more than fed up with the subject, and wasn't inclined to listen to any more inquiries as to why he had played Grundy. But, as it happened, it was the great Grundy himself who looked in.

"I've got just one word to say to you, Tom Merry," said Grundy majestically. "I'm not playing for St. Jim's again so long as the fellows are silly idiots enough to let you remain skipper!"

"You can bet on that!" growled Tom.

"You'd hardly believe how the match was mucked up," said Grundy, appealing to Talbot and Manners. "It was a pretty poor team, but I could have pulled the game out of the fire. All I needed was backing up. These duffers didn't even understand my play, let alone help it on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm done with them!" said Grundy. "A good footballer is wasted in this school. But don't think I'm

going to give up the game on account of misunderstanding and petty jealousy. Nothing of the sort! I'm going to offer my services elsewhere!"

"They'll be jumped at—I don't think!" grinned Manners.

"You've heard of a lunatic asylum where they play footer?" asked Lowther.

Grundy snorted.

"I don't want any of your funny remarks, Lowther. I mean what I say. And, mind this, Tom Merry, once I'm playing for an outside team it will be quite useless to ask me to change my mind. I shall be bound to stick to them. I'm telling you this so that you can't say I didn't give you fair warning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to cackle at myself. If you want to know what I think of you," said Grundy, "I'll tell you. You couldn't captain a team of white rabbits! As for you, Lowther, you play footer like a hen on hot bricks!"

"Why, you—"

"Talbot is a bit better, but not much. As for Manners, his footer would make a cat laugh! But with a rotten skipper the team isn't likely to amount to much, naturally! When the fellows wake up, and sack Tom Merry, I may play for St. Jim's again. I don't say I will, but I might!"

"Oh, go away!" gasped Tom Merry. "You're too funny to live, Grundy! Why don't you ask the editor of 'Chuckles' for a job on the front page?"

"And there's another thing!" roared Grundy. "I was chucked off the field to-day. I owe you a licking for that!"

"Pay up, then!" said Tom, laughing.

Grundy's remarks had somehow had the effect of restoring his good humour.

"That's what I'm going to do," said Grundy. "I'm going to wipe up this study with you, not because I bear malice, you know, but because I want to make it plain that I never stand any rot!"

Grundy rushed in.

Tom Merry jumped up, and met him half-way.

"Mind the tea-things!" yelled Manners.

Trump! Trump! Trump!

Grundy had started to lick the captain of the Shell. He was a tremendous fellow, and more than a match for most of the fellows in his Form. But he had tried Tom Merry before, and it had been a rank failure. It was a still more rank failure this time.

For five minutes the study was a scene of the most terrific excitement.

Lowther dragged the tea-table back, and Talbot kicked the chairs out of the way, and Manners pulled the fender into a corner.

Tom Merry and Grundy were going it hammer and tongs.

But at the end of five minutes George Alfred Grundy lay half in and half out of the doorway, quite finished. Tom Merry was looking a little groggy, but George Alfred Grundy was a wreck.

Wilkins and Gunn came and helped him back to his study. Tom Merry finished tea with a swollen nose and a darkening eye, but he was feeling much better. Licking Grundy was a consolation for the loss of the Form match.

CHAPTER 6.

Grundy Knows What To Do!

"ADVERTISING!" said Grundy.

Grundy made that remark quite suddenly at tea in No. 8 Study a couple of days after the Form match.

Grundy had been looking thoughtful. Wilkins and Gunn noticed it. He was so thoughtful that he hardly touched the sardines or the cake. Indeed, Wilkins and Gunn had nearly finished both by the time Grundy came out of his reverie with that somewhat surprising remark.

"Advertising!" repeated Wilkins, with a stare.

"That's the idea!" said Grundy.

"Oh, that's the idea, is it?" said Wilkins, wondering what on earth Grundy was driving at.

"Yes. Practically anything can be done by advertising

in these days," said Grundy. "It's a great thing. Suppose you make a patent medicine. If it's no good, you advertise it extensively, and sell it by the gallon, you know. Well, I'm going to advertise."

Wilkins put down his teacup and stared at Grundy in great astonishment. He had thought that he was being surprised by anything that G. A. Grundy said or did, but Grundy had succeeded in surprising him again.

"You don't mean to say that you're going to make a patent medicine and advertise it?" ejaculated Wilkins.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Grundy. "Of course I don't. I was only giving you an illustration. Advertising is the thing. You know, it was said a long time ago that a prophet is never honoured in his own country. That's how it is with me."

"But—but you ain't a prophet, are you?" stammered Wilkins.

Grundy laid claim to so many qualities and gifts that Wilkins would not have been really surprised if he had claimed to be a prophet among other things.

"You ass!" said Grundy witheringly. "Who's talking about prophets? What I mean is, I'm a footballer—a splendid footballer, though I say it myself—and I'm not understood or appreciated in my own school."

"Oh, I—I see!"

"So I'm going to advertise," said Grundy. "I'm going to put a notice in the 'Rylcombe Times.'"

"My hat!"

"There must be lots of footer teams in this part of Sussex who'd be glad to have a really good and reliable player," explained Grundy. "Lots of papers put in those notices, you know; it's not a new idea. Fellow wants to join a football club in his district, so he puts a line in the local paper. Lots of fellows do. Well, I'm going to do that, but I shall make it rather a special advertisement. Of course, some club in the neighbourhood will snap me up at once."

"Ahem!"

"Don't you think so, George Wilkins?"

"Ye-es, of—of course. Bound to."

"Then the fellows here will see what they've lost," said Grundy. "Perhaps it will be a club that plays St. Jim's. In that case I should have to play against Tom Merry's team in the matches. I should be sorry, of course, to play against my own school; I'd rather St. Jim's should win matches. But they haven't left me any choice. You admit that?"

"Q-q-q-quite so."

"You see, I can't be expected to chuck footer because there's a lot of fattedness and jealousy about. That would be asking rather a lot. And if I enter into engagements with another club, of course I shall have to give St. Jim's the go-by—for this season, at least. But I've given Tom Merry fair warning, and he can't say there's anything underhand in it."

"Oh!"

Grundy pushed the tea-things aside, and took a pencil and paper and sketched out the advertisement for the "Rylcombe Times."

Wilkins and Gunn watched him in silence. They could not exactly see George Alfred Grundy being "snapped up" by any football club, but they did not argue with him. Grundy always had to be given his head.

"There!" said Grundy, as he finished scrawling. "Look at that! If you can suggest any improvements I shall be glad to hear 'em."

Grundy's tone implied that any improvements to his effort were quite outside the range of possibility. His study-mates read the advertisement, and gasped a little. It was striking, especially so far as concerned the orthography:

"NOTICE TO FOOTBALL CLUBS.

"A Publick School chap is willing to play for any football clubb within a reazonable distince of St. Jim's. Furst-class player, in any position—excellent goal, relyable back, studdy half, but espeshully good at center-forward. Willing to captaine the team. Also willing to koche players. Thurro noledge of the gain. Write or call after half-past fore.—G. A. GRUNDY, School Howse, St. Jim's."

"Well, what do you think of that?" asked Grundy, as Wilkins and Gunn made no remark.

They seemed overcome.

"R-r-ripping!" stammered Wilkins. "But—but what have you put a German word in for?"

"There isn't any German word in that, is there?"

"'Koche.' That looks like a German word."

"What rot!" said Grundy. "Coach is an English word."

"Oh, coach!" said Wilkins. "I—I see! Is coach spelt with a 'k'?"

"Of course it is!"

"Oh, I thought a 'c'—"

"You never could spell, Wilkins! I noticed the other day you spelt 'trouble' without a double 'b.'"

"D-d-d-did I?"

"Yes, you did. I think that advert will do the trick," said Grundy. "I'll take this down to the office on my bike, and it will come out in this week's local rag. Next week I shall be inundated with offers, I expect."

"I—I say, are you going to spell it like that?"

"What's the matter with the spelling?" demanded Grundy warmly. "Yes; I'm going to spell it like that. You can't spell. You're ignorant, George Wilkins."

"But—"

"I'm a born speller," said Grundy. "Some fellows are. It's nothing to brag of, and I don't brag of it. It just happens that way, that's all—just as it happens that I'm a good, all-round footballer. I notice lots of mistakes in other people's spelling, even in the daily papers. The 'Daily Mail' the other day had 'Kaiser' spelt without a 'y.' I noticed in 'Chuckles' to-day 'circulation' is spelt without a 'k.' I don't understand how such people get their jobs. Spelling comes quite easy. I've always found it so."

"But—but the printer will alter that, I suppose," said Gunn.

"He'll jolly well get ragged if he does," said Grundy. "I shall tell old Tiper that that advertisement is to go in just as I've spelt it, letter for letter. I'm not going to have his bad spelling printed under my name, not if I know it. Old Tiper can't spell for nuts. Why, in last week's 'Rylcombe Times' I saw 'grocer' spelt without a 'w.'"

"Did you, really?" gasped Wilkins.

"Yes, I did; and he spelt 'front' with an 'o.'"

"How the thunder should he have spelt it?"

"With a 'u,' of course! F-r-u-n-t—front," said Grundy. "I should think the pronunciation would tell you that, though, of course, that isn't always a reliable guide in English. F'rinstance, 'shoulder' is pronounced shoulder, but it's spelt s-h-a-u-l-d-e-r."

"I-i-i-is it?"

"Of course it is! Well, I think I'll get off with this advertisement, and catch old Tiper before he closes," said Grundy, rising. "Ta-ta!"

Grundy left the study and went for his bike, and was soon pedalling away briskly to the office of the "Rylcombe Times."

Gunn and Wilkins grinned at one another when he was gone.

"My only hat!" said Wilkins. "If that advertisement comes out in that spelling—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The whole blessed House will yell over it. Let's go and tell the fellows what to expect," chuckled Wilkins.

And they did. And by the time George Alfred Grundy came back from Rylcombe the whole School House was chuckling over his advertisement.

George Alfred understood quite well that he was the subject of the chuckling, but he only snorted disdainfully. On the morrow his advertisement would appear, and then he would be inundated with offers from football clubs anxious to secure such a player; and then, he told Wilkins and Gunn, the silly asses would laugh on the other side of their fatted mouths. There was not the slightest doubt in George Alfred's mind that his valuable services would be snapped up. In other minds there was very considerable doubt.

CHAPTER 7.

Gussy's Idea.

"H A, ha, ha!"
 "He, he, he!"
 "Bai Jove! Ha, ha, ha! I wegard this as vevy funnay, deah boys!"

"Good old Grundy!"

A merry group of juniors stood by the steps of the School House, craning over one another's shoulders to view a copy of the "Rylcombe Times."

Monty Lowther had the local paper open at the advertisement page. In a prominent position on that page appeared Grundy's celebrated advertisement.

Evidently the printer had carried out Grundy's very particular instructions, and had not meddled with the spelling. Mr. Tipper probably did not care how his advertisements were spelt, so long as they were paid for. The advertisement appeared in Grundy's own original orthography, and the St. Jim's fellows simply howled as they read it.

Probably a good many of the local footballers would see it. What the "football clubbs" would think of it could not even be imagined, but it was safe to predict that neither skippers nor secretaries would rush to avail themselves of the services of the advertiser. A fellow who was a "relyable" back, a "studdy" half, an "excellent" goalkeeper, but "espheshully" good at centre-forward, might, as Monty Lowther pointed out, be suspected of being a conceited ass, and no good at all as a footballer. Grundy had forgotten the excellent old adage that self praise is no recommendation. True, he firmly believed that he was stating facts, and that no false modesty ought to be allowed to keep him from stating plain facts. But the readers of the advertisement were likely to draw their own conclusions, all the same.

The advertiser's offer to captain the "teem," too, would probably not recommend him to football skippers. Football skippers, as a rule, were not looking out for offers of that kind.

The really generous offer to "koche" players was, perhaps, more likely to put fellows' backs up than to bring a rush of applicants for coaching.

Therefore the St. Jim's juniors concluded that nobody was likely to write to G. A. Grundy, or to call "after half-past fore."

They grinned and chuckled over that advertisement to their heart's content, and more and more fellows gathered round to see it and hear it read aloud, till half the School House seemed to have gathered round Monty Lowther and his newspaper.

Figgins & Co. spotted the crowd, and came over from the New House to inquire, and joined in the yells of merriment.

"By Jove, this beats the band!" chuckled Figgins.

"We don't spell like that in our House!"

"No fear!" said Kerr, with a shake of the head.

There was a sniff from Blake of the Fourth.

"Admitted you don't spell like Grundy," said Blake.

"You play footer like him, though!"

"Why, you ass—" began Figgins, very wrathful at the suggestion that he played footer like Grundy.

"Hallo! Here he comes!" said Manners.

"See the corn-crushing hero comes," chuckled Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy of the Shell seemed surprised at the sight of the crowd, as he came out of the School House.

"Hallo! Anything in the paper?" he asked.

"Lots," said Monty Lowther. "Something new in advertisements! You remember what Shakespeare says—'Sweet are the uses of advertisement'? I think Shakespeare said 'adversity,' but that's more up-to-date. There's an advertisement here that's worth a guinea a box. Like to hear it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" said Grundy, frowning. "That's my advertisement. Well, you'll see from that that I mean business. I'm sorry to have to take this step. I'm patriotic, and I don't want to deprive my own school of my services, but I've been forced into this by jealousy—I may say a general conspiracy. I leave the responsibility chiefly to Tom Merry."

Tom Merry wiped his eyes.

"I'll try to stagger along under it," he said.

"But when you're playing for Tottenham Hotspur or Manchester United you'll let us come and see you, won't you?" urged Manners.

"And we'd like to see that crowd of skippers and secretaries who are going to call after half-past four," grinned Blake. "We ought to get a brass band, same as we did when Ralton came home from the war."

"Yaas, wathal! Ha, ha, ha!"

"None of your larks with my visitors!" said Grundy severely. "I'm expecting some callers this afternoon. I don't want any larking, I can tell you."

"You're really expecting some callers from that advertisement?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Certainly! Some will write, but some will call, very likely."

"There's going to be a rush, you see," explained Monty Lowther. "This advertisement will set all Sussex in a buzz. If this paper circulated in the North, they'd have to run a special train down from Manchester—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better ask the Housemaster to reserve the visitors' room for you this afternoon, Grundy," advised Blake, "and Toby can be told to put the visitors in a queue in the passage, like a pit crowd at a theatre, you know, and let 'em in one at a time."

Grundy snorted.

"You can cackle!" he remarked.

"Thanks, we will! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll cackle a bit differently when I come here some day with an outside team and lick you on your own ground."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That suggestion simply doubled up the juniors. They roared. Grundy sniffed and walked away with his nose in the air. That Grundy took his own football seriously was a never-ceasing cause of surprise, but that he should expect any result from his advertisement, excepting general merriment, was more surprising still.

But Grundy evidently did, for later in the afternoon Levison of the Fourth heard his asking the Housemaster's permission to use the visitors' room—a permission that Mr. Ralton accorded at once.

Then Grundy interviewed Toby, the page, and instructed him to show at once into the visitors' room any callers who asked for Master G. A. Grundy.

And a little later still Grundy was spotted sitting at the window of that apartment, apparently waiting for the influx of visitors.

Study No. 6 spotted him as they were sauntering in the quadrangle and they burst into a chuckle, which drew a stony glare from George Alfred.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "That uttah ass is weally expectin' callahs to come and secure his services, you know!"

Blake nodded.

"Quite dotty!" he said. "He's refused to go out with Wilkins and Gumm. Told them he would have business on hand this afternoon."

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus halted suddenly in the quad, his eye gleaming behind his eyeglass. "I've got an ideah!"

"Go and bury it," said Blake. "Let's go and get some footer practice."

"Wats! I wepeat that I have an ideah. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Great Scott! Are you understudying an alarm clock?" demanded Herries.

"Weally, Hewvies, I'm not doin' anythin' of the kind. I am laughin' at the wippin' joke I am thinkin' of."

ANSWERS

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OUR COMPANION PAPERS!

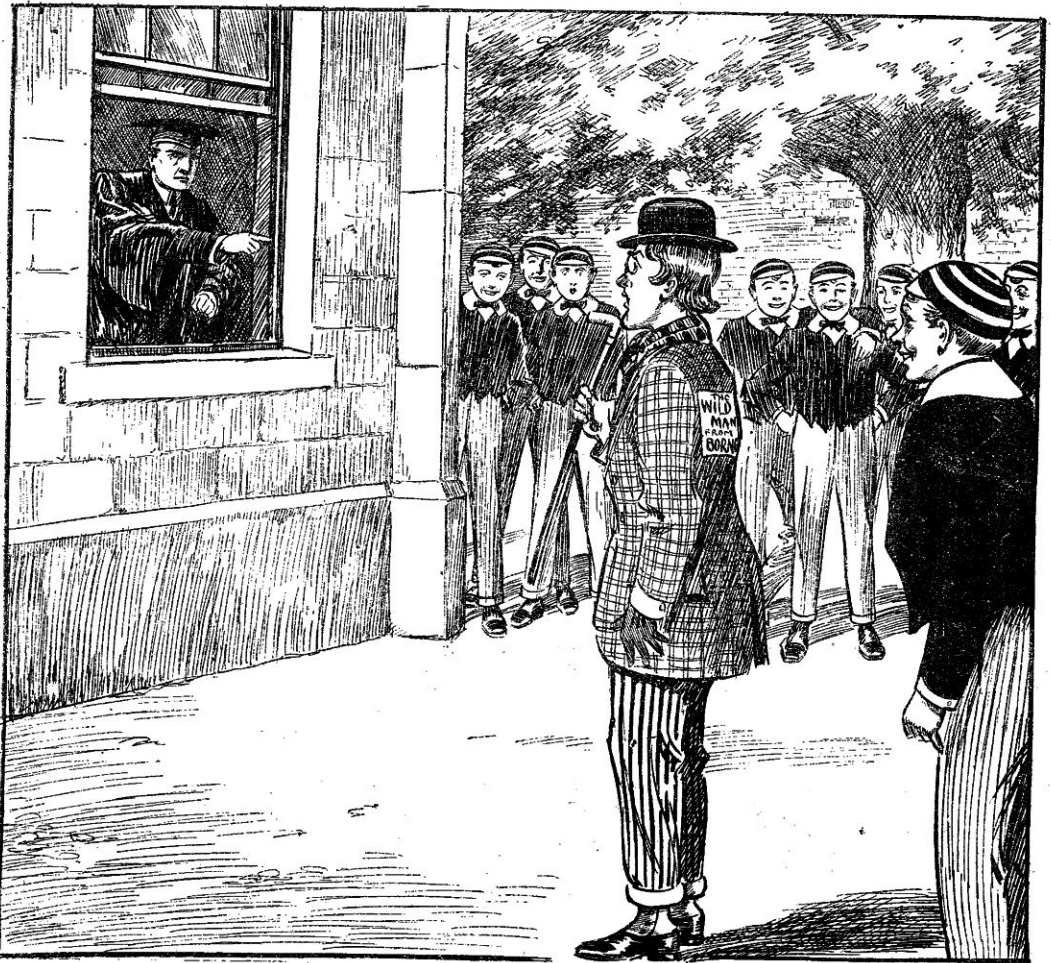
"THE BOYS' FRIEND," Every Monday.

"THE MAGNET," Every Monday.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3D. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.

"CHUCKLES," 1D. Every Saturday, 2



Mr. Railton stood at his study window and his eyes were fixed upon the swell of St. Jim's with a terrifying expression. "Are you insane, boy?" he thundered. "How dare you appear in the quadrangle in that ridiculous fashion? What have you been doing to your face?" (See Chapter 10.)

"Finished?" asked Digby. "If you have we'll get along to the footer."

"Weally, Dig—"

"Come on!" said Blake.

"I wefuse to come on, Blake. I wepeat that I have an ideah—a wippin' joke on Gwunday—the joke of the season!" said Arthur Augustus impressively.

"Grundy's the joke of the season himself," said Blake. "You can't make him any funnier than he is; it's like gilding refined gold, or painting the giddy lily!"

"Yaas, but this is simply wippin'. You see, Gwunday is expectin' a footah captain or secretawty to call and secure his services."

"Well?"

"Well," chuckled Arthur Augustus, "it's wathah a pity to disappoint him. Why not let one call and secure his services?"

"Eh? Nobody would be ass. enough. The advertisement shows anybody that he's a born idiot!"

"Yaas, but I mean a spoof footah captain," explained Arthur Augustus, grinning. "Gwunday is such a howlin' ass that anybody could pull his leg. Suppose I

call on him? You know what a wippin' hand I am at disguis'in' myself—"

"Disguising yourself!"

"Yaas, wathah! Without bwaggin', I think I may say that I am wathah clevah at it, you know. I've had a lot of practice in amateur theatwicals. I can make myself up as a nothah chap, you know, and call on Gwunday as a footah captain, and pull his leg no end, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, I thought you would laugh when I told you the joke," said Arthur Augustus, beaming.

"That's not what I'm laughing at!" howled Blake.

"I'm laughing at you!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You frabjous ass, Grundy would spot you at once!"

"Wubbish!"

"You'd be seen through on the spot, you fathead!" said Herries.

"Wats!"

"Kerr might be able to do it, or Lowther," said Blake. "But you— Oh, my hat! You couldn't

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 401.

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co., By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEDNESDAY: "WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!"

disguise your beautiful accent. You couldn't put false whiskers on your voice, I suppose?"

"You uttah ass—"

"But it isn't a bad idea," said Blake. "You couldn't do it, of course. But Lowther might be able to; he's done a lot of acting. It would be funny."

"I wefuse to have my wippin' ideah bowwowed in this barefaced mannah!"

"Oh, rats! Let's go and see those Shell boudners."

"I wefuse—"

"Come on!" said Blake, chuckling. And he headed at once for Tom Merry's study with Herries and Dig. Arthur Augustus rushed after them. The swell of St. Jim's was simply brimming with indignation at having his great wheeze collared in this high-handed way.

"Blake, you ass, I pwotest! Do you hear me? I will not allow— Stop, you wottahs! I tell you I wefuse— I regard you as uttah boudnahs!"

And Arthur Augustus kept up his remarks, crescendo, in a kind of accompaniment, as Blake and Herries and Digby continued on their way, and they arrived together at Tom Merry's study.

CHAPTER 8.

Levison Helps.

THE Terrible Three were discussing plans for the afternoon when Study No. 6 came in. Tom Merry favoured football, Manners a photographic excursion, and Monty Lowther a "jape" on the New House fellows. The arrival of Blake & Co. interrupted the discussion.

"We've got an idea!" announced Blake.

"It is my ideah, Blake," came Arthur Augustus's voice from the passage.

"That ass Grundy," pursued Blake, unheeding, "is sitting in the visitors' room waiting for visitors. We've thought of a chap getting himself up as a visitor and calling on him, and pulling his leg, you know."

Monty Lowther's eyes sparkled.

"Jolly good idea," he agreed.

"Yaas, wathah; and I'm goin' to do it," said Arthur Augustus warmly. "You fellahs are awah what a wippin' hand I am at disguisn' myself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see anythin' to cackle at. I wefuse—"

"My idea is, that Lowther could take it on, as he's such a dab at theatricals," said Blake. "He's not so good as Kerr, but we don't want those New House boudners to think we can't work a wheeze on our own."

"Why, you ass," said Lowther, "I could knock any New House boudner into a cocked hat in that line!"

"I wefuse to allow you to do it, Lowthah. I am goin' to cawwy out my own ideah myself!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Now, do lie down, Gussy!" urged Blake. "You don't want to spoil a good jape by playing the giddy ox!"

"I insist upon cawwyin' it out myself, Blake, because it requires tact and judgment, and I cannot trust it to anybody else," said Arthur Augustus firmly.

"Bow-wow!"

Monty Lowther jumped up, and made for the "property-box" at once. He was quite keen to carry out that ripping idea. Tom Merry and Manners gave up the thought of football and photography at once. They were "on." How could a half-holiday be better spent than in pulling George Alfred Grundy's egregious leg?

"A sandy wig and a red face," suggested Blake. "Disguise yourself as a good-looking chap if you can!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wepeat, you fellahs—"

"Gussy, old man," said Blake, "you're making us iired. Run away and play!"

"I wepeat that I insist—"

"Go and take Towser for a run," suggested Herries.

"I wefuse to take Towseah for a wun!"

"Go and buy a new fancy waistcoat, then," said Dig.

"I decline to do anythin' of the sort."

"Great Scott! Haven't you a strait-jacket you can put him into for a bit?" exclaimed Manners.

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OUR COMPANION "THE BOYS' FRIEND," "THE MAGNET,"

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.

"CHUCKLES," 1d. Every Saturday, 2

"Mannah, you ass—"
"Lend a hand, Gussy, and don't jaw!" urged Blake, "You see, you couldn't do it; you are an ass, you know, and Grundy would spot you at once. Listen to the advice of your uncle. Cheess it!"

"I pwotest—"

"Well, there's no objection to that," said Blake. "But protest and get it over, and then dry up."

Slam!

Arthur Augustus, in a state of great indignation, retired from the study, and closed the door after him with a terrific concussion. Blake chuckled.

"We'll soothe Gussy afterwards," he remarked. "Let's get on with japing Grundy now."

The chums of the School House set to work, all lending Monty Lowther a helping hand. It was not difficult business to Lowther, who was an adept in making up, and quite a leading light in the Junior Dramatic Club.

With a sandy wig and a reddened complexion, a stiff collar, a red-tie, and a suit of check clothes, Monty Lowther's appearance was greatly changed.

Then he added artistic touches, giving his mouth a slightly elongated appearance, and his upper lip a dusky shade that hinted of an incipient moustache, and tinting his eyebrows and eyelashes.

The juniors watched him in great admiration. They hardly knew Lowther themselves at the end of ten minutes. It was pretty certain that George Alfred Grundy would not know him.

Meanwhile, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had retired to Study No. 6 in a state of great wrath. It was not merely the borrowing of his great wheeze that exasperated him. He had no faith in anyone else's powers to carry out the jape successfully, and he felt that Lowther would make a "muck" of it. The ripping idea would be wholly wasted, through not being left in the able hands of Arthur Augustus. Naturally, that was very exasperating.

"Hallo, what's the trouble?" asked Levison of the Fourth, meeting Arthur Augustus in the Fourth-Form passage.

"I have been tweeked with gwoos diswespect," said Arthur Augustus. "But I am jollay well goin' to show those boudnahs that I'm not goin' to be left out of my own ideah. You can come in and help me if you like, Levison. You are a wathah clevah beggah at theatricals."

"Theatricals!" said Levison, with a yawn. Levison was on his way to his study for a smoke, and he did not feel inclined to waste time on theatricals. Amateur theatricals seemed tame to the black sheep of the Fourth.

"Yaas; it's a jape, you know," said Arthur Augustus. "A jape on that ass Gwunday. He is waitin' for a visitah, and I'm goin' to visit him in disguise, and pull his leg, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Levison.

"Wippin' joke—what?"

"Simply a scream!" grinned Levison. "I'll help you with pleasure!"

He followed Arthur Augustus into Study No. 6, quite keen to lend a helping hand. As a rule, Arthur Augustus did not care much for the black sheep of the Fourth. But just now he was indignant and exasperated, and it was a relief to find somebody, at least, who would back him up. So he was very benevolent to Levison.

"Thank you vewy much, Levison!" he said graciously. "I shall be glad of your help. That ass Lowthah is goin' to do it, but I am suah that he will muck it up. Those Shell boudnahs haven't my bwains, you know!"

"They haven't!" grinned Levison.

"I've got lots of things here," said D'Arcy, opening a box. "Pway help me to select a weally wippin' disguise. I know you know all about it."

"Rely on me," said Levison heartily.

Levison proceeded to make a selection. Arthur Augustus changed his clothes, and Levison helped him to make up.

"This wig is simply ripping—"

"It's wathah big," said Arthur Augustus doubtfully. The wig was one used by the amateur actors for the character of Hamlet.

"That makes it all the better as a disguise," explained Levison. "You'll look a rather long-haired chap, but lots of chaps wear their hair rather long, you know. Grundy would never suspect it was you."

"Pewwaps you are right, Levison."

"Oh, yes, rather. There, that looks ripping! Now, I should suggest a muffler instead of a collar—this one with crimson stripes—"

"That looks wathah stwikin'!"

"Yes; but as it isn't like anything you usually wear, it will be first-rate as a disguise."

"Yaas, quite so. I never thought of that."

"Now, about your face?" said Levison. "Your handsome Greek nose would be known anywhere—"

"You are wathah flattewin', deah boy."

"Not at all. Better redder it at the end, it will look like sunburn, you know, and quite distinct from your usual appearance."

"Vewy good."

"Better make your eyebrows very dark—"

"Bai Jove! You are makin' them quite black," said Arthur Augustus, blinking in the glass. "That gives me wathah a foweign look."

"Yes, but as you don't usually look foreign, that's all the better for the disguise."

"Yaas, I—I suppose so," said Arthur Augustus unsuspiciously.

"Now a bluish shade on your chin, as if you had a beard coming—"

"Isn't that wathah ovahdoin' it, Levison?"

"I think not. You see the idea is to make you look quite distinct from your usual appearance. Splendid!"

Arthur Augustus looked in the glass again and nodded. "Is it all right behind?" he asked. "I can't see the back of my head."

"I'll attend to that."

Levison did attend to that. He was busy for some minutes. It did not occur to the unsuspecting D'Arcy that Levison was bent upon pulling his leg and not Grundy's. Unseen by the swell of St. Jim's Levison pinned a card on his back, and scratched on it in large letters with a pencil:

"THE WILD MAN FROM BORNEO!"

"There, that's all right," said Levison, with owl-like seriousness. "I don't think that can be bettered. It's taken rather a time, but it was worth it."

"Thank you very much, Levison."

"Not at all."

Arthur Augustus, after a final look in the glass, quitted the study on his mission. Levison controlled his feelings till the swell of St. Jim's was gone. Then he rolled in the armchair and yelled.

CHAPTER 9.

Two Of Them!

"GENELMAN to see you, Master Grundy."

There was a suppressed grin on Toby's face as he opened the door of the visitors' room with that announcement. Perhaps Toby was aware that the "Genelman" had come from the Shell passage, and not from outside St. Jim's.

Grundy jumped up at once. He had been waiting a long time, and no visitors had materialised so far. He was very glad indeed to receive a caller at last.

Toby showed in the visitor. He was a short, somewhat stout fellow, looking about eighteen, but hardly tall enough for his age. His complexion was very ruddy, his hair sandy, and his eyebrows reddish. His clothes were of a somewhat loud check pattern. Under that exterior, few would have dreamed of recognising the somewhat elegant and fastidious Montague Lowther of the Shell.

"Mr. Grundy?" the visitor asked, in a deep bass voice, not at all like the tones of the humorist of the Shell.

"That's right," said Grundy eagerly. "Very glad to

see you. You've come about my advertisement in the 'Rylcombe Times'?"

"Exactly. I have the paper here," said the visitor. "You are the first-class player described here?"

"Just so!" assented Grundy.

"A reliable back, a steady half, a good goal, and a specially good centre-forward?"

"Yes, I think I can lay claim to all that," said Grundy modestly. "I'm not a chap to blow my own trumpet, you know. But facts speak for themselves."

"Ahem! Yes, of course. Might a chap inquire why you are not playing for your school, with all those qualifications?"

"It's a case of jealousy," explained Grundy. "You see, at Redclyffe—my old school—we played football, played it, you know. Here they don't play much of a game—not in my style at all. I played for St. Jim's the other day, and our skipper mucked up the match. I simply hadn't a chance. I've decided not to play for St. Jim's any more till general changes are made. A player of my class can't fool about with a lot of bungling fags."

"Oh, my hat! I—I mean, quite so," stuttered the visitor. "Your play is quite above their heads, I suppose."

"You've hit it."

"And you're willing to place your services at the disposal of the Oakshott Ramblers?"

Grundy's eyes sparkled. He had heard of the Ramblers, a well-known local team at a place some miles from St. Jim's.

"Quite willing," he replied. "That's not a school team, is it?"

"No; an amateur team, average age about eighteen," said the visitor. "But a player of your class would find himself quite at home in an older team."

"Oh, certainly," said Grundy. "In fact, it would suit me better. Fag teams are not quite up to my weight, really. I mentioned it to Kildare—he's our school captain—that my right place was in the first eleven, among the seniors, you know. He acted in an utterly ill-bred manner. I shall certainly never mention it to him again. I'll play for the Ramblers with pleasure."

"Good!"

"I suppose you're the secretary?" asked Grundy.

"I've come here to see you as the secretary," said the visitor. "When could you go over and see our skipper? You'd have to see him. I dare say you've heard his name—Charley Clincher—"

"I've seen it in the local paper reports," said Grundy. "I'll bike over to-day and see him if you like. He lives at Oakshott, I believe?"

"Yes, Briar Cottage, Oakshott. He will simply jump at getting a chap like you in his team. You mentioned in your advertisement that you were willing to captain the team. You'll mention that to him?"

"Certainly."

"Just tell him that you understand that the Ramblers haven't had much luck so far this season, owing to want of a good skipper, and that you're going to take the job off his hands. He will welcome you like a long-lost brother."

"I shall be glad, of course. Hallo!"

Grundy paused as the door opened, to admit another visitor.

He stared blankly at the extraordinary figure that came in.

At the first glance it looked like an unshaven young man of about twenty-one, with long hair, a glaring, crimson-striped muffler, jet-black eyebrows, and a very red nose.

At the second glance it was evidently Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form, got up as if for the purpose of giving a comic turn in a circus.

Solomon in all his glory was certainly never arrayed like the swell of St. Jim's at that moment.

Grundy stood rooted to the floor with astonishment. The Oakshott secretary—if he was the Oakshott secretary—stood aglance.

"Good-aftahnnoon!" said the extraordinary object.

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"Great Scott!" ejaculated Grundy.
 "Oh, my hat!" murmured his companion. "That silly villain, he's mucked up the whole game now!"
 "You are Mastah Gwunday, I presume?"
 "Wha-a-at?"
 "You are the chap who advertised in the 'Wylcombe Times'?"

"M-m-my word! Is he dotty?" murmured Grundy.
 "I have called in answer to that advertisement," continued the latest visitor. "I desiah to secure your services, Gwunday."

"Eh?"
 "I twust that nobody has been beforehand with me," said the new visitor, with a glance of great disfavour at the other visitor. "I twust, Gwunday, that you will accede to my request."

"You silly ass!" roared Grundy. "What are you got up like that for, and what's the game?"
 "Weally, Gwunday—"

"He's the potty!" gasped Grundy. "Get out D'Arcy, you silly ass! Do you hear? Get out, or I'll jolly well boot you out!"

"Gweat Scott!" The new visitor simply jumped as Grundy called him by name. "You—you are awah—weally, you know, I—I—"

"Do you think anybody wouldn't know you, you ass?" roared Grundy. "Did you think you could take me in?"

"Bai Jove! Lowthah, you wottah, you have given me away!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, with burning indignation. "I wegard that as wotten."

"Lowther!" yelled Grundy.
 He looked round the room for Lowther. He noted—he could not help noting—that D'Arcy's eye was fixed accusingly upon the secretary from Oakshott.

Grundy almost staggered.
 His brain was not a quick one, and he was never given to suspecting when his leg was being pulled. But D'Arcy's disguise gave him the clue to Lowther's; and the fact that D'Arcy called the Oakshott visitor "Lowther" could not leave even George Alfred Grundy in doubt of his identity.

"Lowther!" Grundy repeated, with a gasp. "Lowther! Oh, my hat!"

"Lowthah, you ass—"
 "D'Arcy, you silly idiot—"

"I wufuse to be called a silly idiot, Lowthah! You had no wight to come heah cawwain' out my wheeze. And you had less wight still to warn Gwunday that I was confin'."

"You thumping ass, I didn't warn him!" howled Lowther.

"Then how did he know me?" demanded Arthur Augustus incredulously.

"Oh, you fathead!"
 "So there's a pair of you?" shouted Grundy. "You swindling rotters! I'll teach you to try to jape me!"

"Bai Jove! Hold on! Yawwooh!"
 "Hands off!" yelled the unfortunate Lowther.

Grundy rushed at them, hitting out furiously.

There was a yell of laughter from the passage, where several juniors threw the door open to look in.

Lowther and D'Arcy were fairly driven through the doorway under Grundy's terrific attack.

Buap! Crash!
 Lowther sprawled in the passage, with Arthur Augustus sprawling over him. Grundy stood in the doorway and brandished his fists.

"Now, you rotters, come and have some more—"

"Yow-wow-ow!"
 "Gwooh!"

Slam! Grundy closed the door on his visitors. Arthur Augustus and Monty Lowther sorted themselves out, and sat

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up on the floor, gasping, and the juniors in the passage yelled with laughter. They could not help it. The jape had not ended as designed, certainly; but the ending seemed funny to all but the two unfortunate japers directly concerned.

CHAPTER 10.
 Not a Success!

TOM MERRY wiped his eyes.
 "Oh, my hat!" he gasped. "Gussy, old man, you'll be the death of me!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
 "Rather a failure, Monty, old chap," said Manners.

"That silly ass!" panted Lowther. "I was getting on swimmingly when that idiot came in and gave the whole game away. Grundy hadn't a suspicion, the fathead! But that born idiot—"

"I am convinced that Lowthah must have given the game away," said Arthur Augustus. "Othahwise, it would have been quite impos for that ass Gwunday to have wegcognised me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You ass!" shrieked Blake. "You're got up like a funny man in a circus. Look at that card on your back!"

"The wild man from Borneo!" chuckled Digby.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you're got up for the part!" howled Herries. "If there ever was a wild man from Borneo, you look just like him!"

"A c-c-card on my b-b-back!" stuttered Arthur Augustus, grabbing wildly over his shoulder. "Oh, gweat Scott! That wascal Levison—"

"Did Levison make you up?" shrieked Tom Merry.
 "Yaas! I thought it was vevy obligin' of him—"

"Ha, ha! He was pulling your leg all the time, you fathead," said Blake, almost weeping. "You look as if you've escaped from a cinema."

"Bai Jove! I shall look for Levison, and give him a feahful thwashin'!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther staggered to his feet. He was feeling hurt, and in a decidedly bad temper. His great jape had been utterly "mucked up," and the crowd of juniors were laughing at him instead of at Grundy. That was not in the programme.

He shook his fist at Arthur Augustus, and limped away. D'Arcy groped for his eyeglass, and jammed it in his eye, and blinked at the hilarious juniors.

"I can see nothin' whatevah to laugh at in this," he said severely. "The jape has not come off aftah all, owing to that ass Lowthah. I wegard you as asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Arthur Augustus walked away, with a sniff, leaving the juniors howling. He went in search of Levison.

He found that dheerful young gentleman in his study, talking to Mellish. Both of them were laughing loudly, evidently enjoying the joke.

They shrieked as D'Arcy came in, in his extraordinary guise.

"There he is! The wild man from Borneo!" gasped Mellish. "Look at his nose! Look at his hair!!"

"And his muffer!" yelled Levison.
 "And his chivvy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Levison, you uttah wottah—"
 "Oh, my hat!" gasped Levison.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You have been playin' a wotten twick on me, when I was undah the impression that you were helpin' me!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"Go hon!" said Levison.
 "And I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Here, keep off!"
 Levison dodged round the table as Arthur Augustus charged at him.

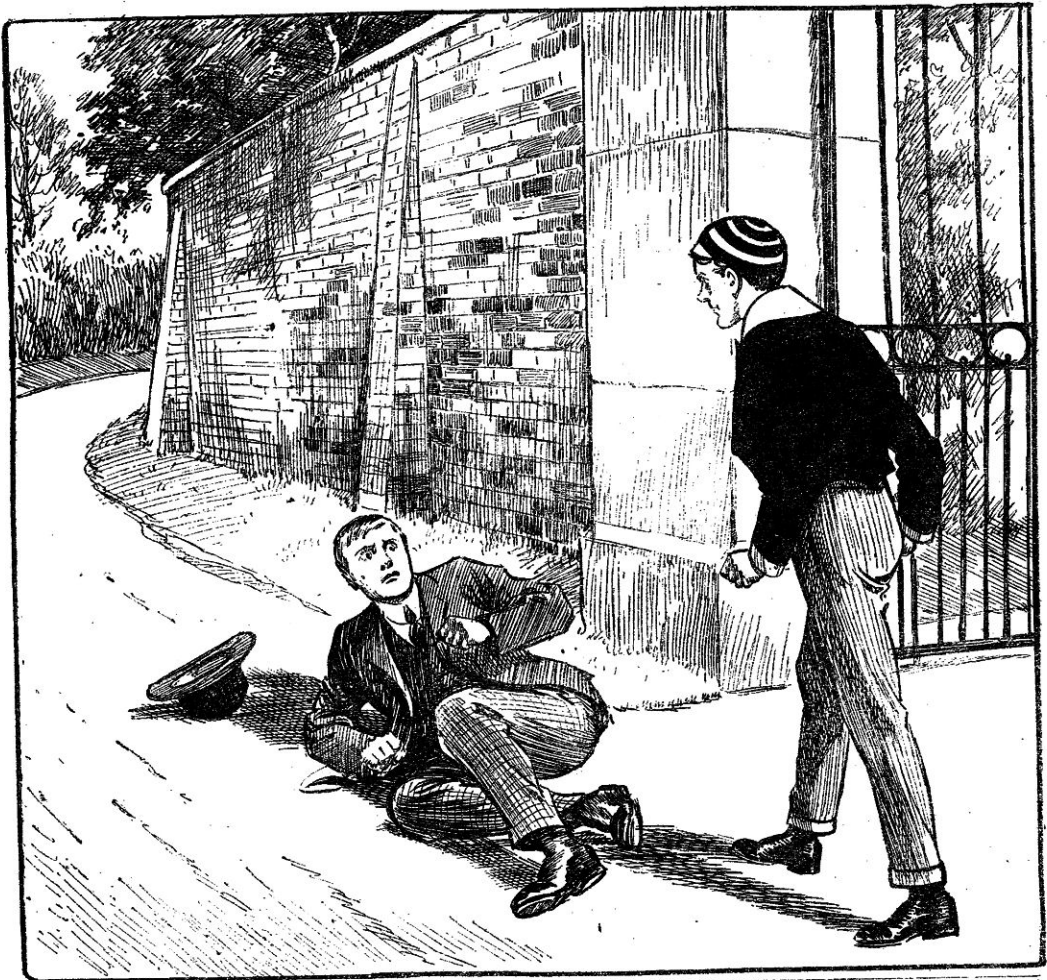
FOR NEXT WEEK :

"WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!"

Another Splendid, Long, Complete Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

—By—
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order in Advance.
 PRICE ONE PENNY.



The Oakshott skipper sat in the dusty road, and Grundy brandished his fists over him. "Now get up and have some more!" roared Grundy. "I'll show you whether you can pull my leg! Gerrup, you rotter!"
(See Chapter 12.)

Arthur Augustus was enraged, and he was hitting out. Mellish was in the way—Levison dodging round him. There was a terrific yell from Mellish as he caught D'Arcy's right with his eye, and his left with his chin.

"Oh, crumbs! Yah! Oh!"

Mellish rolled on the study carpet, and Levison, yelling with laughter, bolted from the study.

"You silly chump!" shrieked Mellish. "Oh, my eye!"

"You feahful ass!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "What did you get in the way for? You have barked my knuckles with your chin, you howlin' ass!"

"Oh, dear! Ow! Oh!"

Arthur Augustus sped in pursuit of Levison. Mellish sat up and yelled remarks after him.

Levison was sprinting down the passage, and he descended the stairs by way of the banisters. Arthur Augustus was not to be denied. He caught sight of the fugitive streaking out into the quadrangle, and sped down the stairs and along the hall after him. In his excitement it did not occur to him that it was somewhat

imprudent to venture into the public gaze in his peculiar get-up, neither did he guess that Levison was purposely leading him out into the quad.

There was a yell from the fellows in the quad as Arthur Augustus appeared in sight.

"Gussy!" shrieked Blake. "Get in, you ass! Get out of sight! Oh, my hat!"

"The wild man from Borneo!" yelled Wilkins. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"D'Arcy!"

It was a voice of thunder from Mr. Railton's study window. Arthur Augustus came to a sudden halt. The School House master was standing at the open window, and his eyes were fixed upon the swell of St. Jim's with a terrifying expression.

"Yaas, sir!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Are you insane, boy?" thundered the Housemaster. "How dare you appear in the quadrangle in that ridiculous fashion? What have you been doing to your face?"

"Oh, cwumbs! I—I forgot—I—I—"

"Come here."

Arthur Augustus approached the Housemaster's window, and stood there under the stern eyes of Mr. Railton, quailing. He was only too keenly conscious at that moment of his ridiculous appearance.

"You will kindly explain, D'Arcy, why you are figured in this extraordinary manner."

"It—it—it was a joke, sir!" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"I quite fail to see the joke. I regard it as utterly absurd. Go in and clean your face at once, and remove that ridiculous wig, and take five hundred lines!"

"Oh, deah!"

Arthur Augustus limped into the School House and disappeared.

Vengeance upon Levison had to wait. But vengeance, as it happened, was on Levison's track in another form. He was chuckling over Arthur Augustus's discomfiture, when Grundy of the Shell bore down on him in the quad. It was tea-time now, and Grundy had given up, at last, expecting a visitor. The advertisement apparently required more time to produce its due effect upon the football "clubbs" of the neighbourhood.

"Oh, here you are!" said Grundy. "I understand that you helped D'Arcy in playing a rotten jape on me."

"I was only pulling his leg, you know," said Levison, backing away in alarm. "Simply a joke on the duffer, you know—not on you. Yaroooh!"

Levison was not given time to get any further with his explanation. Grundy of the Shell seized him by the collar, and proceeded to dust up the ground with him.

"There!" said Grundy, glaring down at the furious and breathless Levison, as he lay gasping in the grass. "Now you won't be in such a hurry to help jape me again, I fancy. There's some more where that came from, when you feel inclined to be funny again."

And Grundy stalked away.

Levison sat and rubbed his nose and eye, and ground his teeth. George Alfred Grundy was rather too big for Levison to lick.

"Yow!" mumbled Levison. "The rotter—— Ow! I'll mah him sit up for that—— Yow-wow-wow!"

CHAPTER 11.

Monty Lowther to the Rescue!

GOOD Little Georgie was a nice boy!" Monty Lowther made that statement in the study a few days later. Tom Merry and Manners regarded him inquiringly.

"Off your rocker?" asked Manners.

"Not at all. You remember the time old Lathom was down on the chaps for reading 'The Boys' Friend.'"

"He's changed all that since the editor came here, and he's seen the paper and read it," said Tom Merry. "I hear that he's giving volumes of 'The Boys' Friend' as prizes to kids in the Fourth now."

"Blake's got one," said Manners. "I wish old Linton would take the tip. We could do with some in the Shell."

"Do let a chap speak," said Lowther. "You remember the time he was down on the 'Green 'Un,' and he gave out good little books for good little boys to read? Young Reilly showed me his one. It was the history of 'Good Little Georgie, Who Loved His Kind Teacher, and Always Helped His Schoolfellows.'"

"Well!" said Tom, puzzled.

"He was a nice boy," said Lowther. "When a schoolmate, who had been rude to him, was disappointed about getting a present, Little Georgie gave him his new marbles."

"You silly ass——"

"I've always considered that quite ripping of Georgie," said Lowther calmly; "and as I'm a nice boy, too, I'm going to follow Georgie's footsteps."

"I suppose you mean it's a wheeze," said Tom, after a moment's thought. "What's the idea? Up against the New House? It's time we made Figgins & Co. sit up again, or they will forget that we're cock-house of St. Jim's."

"Never mind Figgins & Co. I'm thinking about Grundy."

"Oh, blow Grundy!" said Tom Merry and Manners together, quite heartily. "We're fed up with Grundy."

"That's where little Georgie has the pull over you," said Lowther. "Little Georgie never got fed up. He was always willing to be a little prig at a moment's notice. Now, I've been thinking what Little Georgie would do. Grundy has been advertising for a distinguished post as an amateur footballer. Marvellous to relate, he hasn't had any answers, excepting the calls that were made on him last Saturday—Gussy and myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grundy can't quite make it out. I feel for him," said Lowther. "When a chap spends two bob on an advertisement, he naturally wants an answer. Now, my idea is that Grundy didn't word his advertisement correctly."

"He didn't spell it correctly, at all events," grinned Manners.

"Under the circumstances, Little Georgie would turn it over in his mind, and he would say to himself, 'My dear schoolmate Grundy has been disappointed. He has not received any answers to his advertisement. I must rectify this. I must put in another advertisement for dear Grundy which will bring him lots of answers, and then he will be happy.'"

"What the merry dickens——"

"That's what Little Georgie would say to himself," said Lowther firmly. "And he would put in an advertisement for his dear schoolmate, and pay for it out of his own pocket-money. He wouldn't mention it to Grundy, because he is so modest. He would simply overwhelm his dear schoolmate with obligations, without saying a word."

"Dotty!" said Manners.

"I'm going to follow in Georgie's footsteps," said Lowther. "Now, look at this advertisement that I've drawn up for Grundy. I'm sure it will bring him lots of answers. He'll have the visitors'-room simply crammed."

Monty Lowther had been scribbling upon a sheet of impot paper. He pushed it across the study table, and Tom Merry and Manners looked at it in considerable astonishment. Their astonishment increased as they read the advertisement Monty Lowther had drawn up—for his dear schoolmate.

"You ass!" gasped Manners.

"You fathead!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

Monty Lowther looked pained.

"Isn't that advertisement likely to bring a lot of answers?" he asked.

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"And isn't that what our dear schoolfellow wants?"

"Yes. Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three chuckled in chorus over the advertisement. It ran:

"WANTED—Lessons in English orthography, by a backward youth. Apply, personally, to G. A. Grundy, School House, St. Jim's."

"WANTED—Instruction in the game of football, by a youth totally ignorant of the game. Apply, personally, G. A. Grundy, School House, St. Jim's."

"WANTED—Lessons in manners and deportment, by a youth whose training has been neglected. Apply, personally, G. A. Grundy, School House, St. Jim's."

Monty Lowther seemed very pleased with that advertisement. Certainly there was no doubt that, if it appeared in the columns of the "Rylcombe Times," there would be plenty of answers. Grundy would not go begging this time.

"Just think how happy Grundy will be, with visitors pouring in to apply personally!" said Lowther. "Last Saturday he sat in the visitors'-room alone in his glory, and nobody came but Gussy and myself. The fellows have been chipping Grundy no end about it. They won't be able to chip him next Saturday, with visitors rolling in in their millions."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Just time to bike down to Rylcombe and get this advertisement in," said Lowther. "Grundy's repeating his advertisement this week, I hear. He can't make out why he had no answers from last week's, and he's going to give the football clubs of Sussex another chance. So he will be expecting visitors—he expects a lot of

things, you know. My dear friends, how happy we ought to be to be able to make our schoolfellow happy at the small expenditure of two shillings."

"You ass!" gasped Tom Merry. "It's too bad."
"I owe Grundy a bruise on the ankle, as well as a jape that didn't come off," argued Lowther. "And he lost the Form match for us. Besides, he wants all these things, doesn't he? Lessons in spelling, lessons in football, lessons in manners and deportment—he wants them all badly."

"Ha, ha! Yes."
"Then let's bike down and see Mr. Tiper."
"But, I say—"
"No time for 'buts,' or the printer's will be closed," said Lowther briskly, jumping up. "Come on!"

"Yes; but—"
"Oh, come on, and don't jaw, old chap."
Monty Lowther left the study, and his chums followed him rather doubtfully. The humorist of the Shell was not to be denied. Monty Lowther had an overpowering sense of humour, and when he was on the track of a jape, it was useless to argue with him.

Grundy was chatting with Wilkins and Gunn on the steps of the School House as the Terrible Three came out. Lowther paused to speak to him.

"Had any answers yet?" he asked affably.
Grundy frowned.
"As it happens, no," he replied. "My advertisement must have been passed over, somehow. However, it appears again this week."

"Then there'll be a rush!" suggested Manners.
"You'll see what you'll see," replied Grundy. "I fancy I shall prove to you that some people can appreciate a good footballer better than you can."

"I shouldn't wonder if Grundy gets some callers," said Lowther. "I'm sure I wish you luck, Grundy. I hope you'll get a crowd."
Grundy snorted.

"I don't want any more of your rotten practical jokes," he said. "You couldn't take me in, anyway. I spotted you at once."

"You jolly well wouldn't have spotted me, if that ass D'Arcy hadn't given it away!" exclaimed Lowther warmly.

"Rats! You couldn't jape me for toffee!" said Grundy disdainfully. "My dear chap, you haven't the brains."
"Why, you ass—"

"You couldn't jape a white rabbit!" said Grundy. "Try your next jape on a kid in the Second Form. You might bring it off then."

"I'll jolly well show you whether I can jape you or not, you ass!" exclaimed Monty Lowther warmly. "I'll jolly well—"

"Oh, bow-wow! You try it again, and I'll boot you out, same as I did before," grinned Grundy. "Pretty picture you looked! Ha, ha, ha."

Tom Merry and Manners dragged Lowther away for there would probably have been a scrap on the steps of the House. Monty Lowther was breathing indignation.

"The silly ass!" he ejaculated. "Can't jape him for toffee, can't I? Why, he was born to have his leg pulled. I'll jolly well show him. Wait till this advertisement comes out—"

"Look here, old chap—"
"Oh, rats! It's up to me now!" said Lowther. "He's challenged me, hasn't he? Let's get down to Tiper's."

And Monty Lowther, deaf to argument, wheeled out his bicycle. The Terrible Three rode down to Rylcombe, and the advertisement was duly handed in to Mr. Tiper.

Monty Lowther was grinning gleefully as he rode back to St. Jim's. It remained to be seen whether he could jape Grundy or not. He fancied he could, and that the result of his advertisement would more than keep up his reputation as a humorist.

CHAPTER 12.

A Tip on the Telephone.

"CLINCHER will be here at six."
Levison of the Fourth pricked up his ears. It was Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, who made the remark, and he was speaking to Darrel of the Sixth. The two seniors were discussing a visit from Charley Clincher, the captain of the Oakshott Ramblers. There had been some talk of a fixture between Oakshott Ramblers and the St. Jim's First Eleven. From the remark made by the captain of St. Jim's, Levison had no difficulty in guessing that the Ramblers' skipper was coming over to the school to see Kildare about the fixture.

Levison sauntered away with a thoughtful wrinkle on his brow. He spent some time in reflection under the elms in the quad, chuckling softly. Then he strolled away towards the New House.

Figgins & Co. were in the Hall, and they looked at Levison as he came in.

"Pax!" said Levison. He was not looking for a House rag. "Where's your Housemaster?"

"Gone out," said Figgins. "He's with the Head, I believe."

"Oh, good!"
"What do you want with Mr. Ratcliff?" asked Kerr.

"Nothing. I want to use his telephone, that's all."
"My hat!"

Figgins & Co. stared after Levison as he slipped into Mr. Ratcliff's study. There were few fellows who would have had the nerve to borrow Mr. Ratcliff's telephone without asking his permission. But Levison of the Fourth was never at a loss for nerve.

He entered the study coolly, closed the door, and rang up the exchange. As he sat at the telephone, he kept one eye on the study window, to spot Mr. Ratcliff if he came back from the Head's house. With perfect coolness he asked for a number. The number he asked for was that of the telephone in the prefects' room in the School House.

BZZZZZZ!
The telephone bell rang in the prefects' room in the School House. Langton of the Sixth was in the room, talking football to Kildare, who had just come in.

"Hallo, there's the 'phone!" said Langton.
Kildare nodded, and crossed to the telephone and took up the receiver.

"Hallo!"
"Is that School House, St. Jim's?" came an inquiry over the wire.

"Yes."
"Can I speak to Grundy of the Shell?"

"Well, yes, I suppose so. Hold the wire."
"Thanks!"

"Somebody wants to speak to Grundy," said Kildare, looking round. "Blessed cheek of these fags, but it may be important. I suppose he can speak."

On important occasions the juniors were allowed to use that telephone; but it was very unusual for a junior to be rung up. But Kildare was good-natured. He put down the receiver without ringing off, and looked out of the prefects' room. A fag was passing, and Kildare called to him to fetch Grundy.

George Alfred Grundy came very quickly. He was very curious to know who wanted him on the telephone, and he guessed that it was an answer to his advertisement at last.

"Somebody wants to speak to you," said Kildare. "You can go to the telephone."

Kildare and Darrel strolled out of the room as Grundy took up the receiver. Greatly elated, Grundy started his conversation over the wires.

"Hallo!"
"Hallo! Is that Grundy?"

"Yes."
"G. A. Grundy, who had an advertisement in the 'Rylcombe Times'?"

"That's it," said Grundy, his elation increasing. "You've seen the advertisement—what?"

"Yes. I'm Clincher—Charley Clincher. I dare say you've heard my name."

"Oh, yes, rather! Skipper of the Oakshott Ramblers?"
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 401.

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!"

"That's it. If your offer's still open, I'd like to bag you for my team."

"Right-oh!"

"Will you be in if I come over to see you? I can get to St. Jim's at six o'clock."

"Certainly."

"Then I'll come. I want to have a talk with you, and ask your advice about a match that's coming off on Saturday."

"I'll be delighted to help you in any way," said Grundy. "I'm quite at your service. I'll play for you with pleasure."

"Done, then! As I don't know you by sight, you might wait at the school gates for me, and meet me at six."

"I'll be there."

"Just one word more—you've got a chap at your school named Lowther, I think?"

"Yes," said Grundy, in astonishment. "Monty Lowther. He's in my Form."

"Is he a practical joker sort of chap?"

"Yes—a regular silly ass."

"That's the chap, then. Has he ever played such a trick as disguising himself as somebody, and paying a call, and that kind of thing?"

"Yes; he played a fool trick like that on me last Saturday, making out that he was secretary of your club."

"Then there's no mistake about it. I got to hear of this, but I hardly believed it; but, after what you've said, I've no doubt about it. That chap Lowther, or a friend of his, I'm not sure which, will be playing just such another trick to-day. He's going to call at St. Jim's got up as me."

"My hat!"

"I thought I'd warn you, so that you can spot him."

"I'll spot him right enough," said Grundy. "I'm glad you gave me the tip. I'll jolly well hammer him."

"He's going to come there calling himself Charley Clincher—got up to look like me, you know. If he thinks you've spotted him, most likely he'll ask for somebody else instead of you—Kildare, perhaps. As you don't know me by sight, I'll let you know who I am as soon as I see you, and then you'll know whether you're speaking to the right party. You wait at the gate, and as soon as you see me—or a chap you think is me—just say, 'Good-afternoon, Charley! Will you lend me tuppence?' You see, that's a password, and it will show you if it's the right party you're speaking to. If the chap doesn't know it, it will show that he's the practical joker, and you can deal with him."

Grundy chuckled.

"What a jolly good idea!" he exclaimed. "Depend on me, Clincher. I dare say I should spot him, anyway. I'm pretty keen, but that will make it a cert. But how did you get on to it?"

"Oh, this chap Lowther has been around here, in—in Oakshott, getting to know what I look like. To make up like me, you know. And I found out—Hallo, I've got to go. Good-bye!"

The telephone rang off.

Grundy hung up the receiver, and walked away grinning. He was in high feather. Not only had he received an offer from the skipper of the Oakshott Ramblers, but that skipper was taking the trouble to come over specially to see him, and had warned him of an intended jape by Monty Lowther. If he met that japer passing himself off as Charley Clincher, Grundy knew how to deal with him.

Grundy was smiling so widely as he left the prefect's room and strolled out into the quad, that a good many fellows noticed it. The Terrible Three spotted him, and inquired.

"Had an offer from Tottenham Hotspur?" asked Monty Lowther.

Grundy glared at him. The warning he had received over the telephone was fresh in his mind.

"So you're at it again!" he exclaimed.

"Eh?"

"Let me catch you at it, that's all!" said Grundy. And he stalked away.

Monty Lowther rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

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OUR COMPANION "THE BOYS' FRIEND," "THE MAGNET," "THE BOYS' FRIEND," "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," 1D,
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"He can't have got on to my advertisement—it's not out yet," he said. "What was he driving at, you chaps?"

"Give it up," said Tom Merry.

And Monty Lowther had to give it up, too. Evidently Grundy of the Shell was suspicious; but Lowther, as it happened, was quite innocent this time.

Levison of the Fourth came out of the New House and passed Grundy in the quadrangle. He smiled as he passed him, and noted that Grundy was taking up a position at the school gateway.

But Grundy had no eyes for Levison.

He adored the stone pillar of the gateway with his bulky person, and waited for the Oakshott captain to arrive. The password that had been arranged over the telephone made it all secure. If "Charley Clincher" did not recognise that password, he would be an impostor—Monty Lowther, or some other practical joker got up for the occasion. Then Grundy would know what to do. He clenched his big fists in anticipation.

Six o'clock rang out from the tower, and Grundy watched the road anxiously. A sturdy fellow came walking briskly up to the school gates. Grundy watched him keenly. He guessed easily enough that this was Charley Clincher, or the practical joker he had been warned about. The password would soon settle all that.

"Charley Clincher?" Grundy asked, as the stranger came in.

The visitor nodded.

"Good-afternoon, Charley!" said Grundy.

The visitor stared. He was a fellow of about eighteen, and his manner indicated that he had a good opinion of himself. For a junior to greet him as "Charley"—a junior he had never seen before—was surprising. He stared blankly at Grundy.

"What?" he ejaculated.

"Good-afternoon, Charley!" repeated Grundy. "Will you lend me twopenny?"

"My only hat!"

"You heard me?" said Grundy.

"Yes, I heard you! Who are you? Are you dotty? My hat!" yelled Clincher suddenly, as Grundy hit out.

He had not recognised the password, that was evident. Therefore, he was the practical joker passing himself off as Charley Clincher—that was clear to Grundy's mind. And Grundy dealt with him promptly and efficaciously. He let out his right, and it caught Charley Clincher on the point of the chin.

Bump!

"Yoooop!"

The Oakshott skipper sat in the dusty road, and Grundy brandished his fists over him.

"Now get up and have some more!" roared Grundy. "I'll show you whether you can pull my leg! Gerrup, you rotter!"

CHAPTER 13.

Quite a Mistake!

WHAT the thunder—"
Kildare of the Sixth came racing down to the gates.

He had caught sight of Charley Clincher from the House, and was starting to meet him when the dramatic scene occurred. Kildare could scarcely believe his eyes as he saw Grundy of the Shell knock the Oakshott captain into a heap in the road.

He simply tore upon the scene, and grasped the warlike Grundy by the shoulder, and dragged him back.

"Grundy! Are you mad? What—"

"Yow-ow-ow!" came from Charley Clincher, as he nursed his chin. "Yow-wow!"

"Lemme go, Kildare!" exclaimed Grundy, struggling. "I'm going to lick him!"

"It's Charley Clincher!" exclaimed Kildare, tightening his grip on Grundy. "You cheeky, mad young villain!" "Tain't Charley Clincher!" yelled Grundy. "It's Monty Lowther!"

"What!"

"He's got up like that to pull my leg!"
 "You silly ass!" roared Kildare, shaking Grundy till his teeth rattled. "I'll lick you black and blue for this! Clincher, old chap, I'm sorry—this silly young idiot is dotty, I verily believe!"

The Oakshott captain staggered to his feet, still nursing his chin.

He was astounded, and he was angry. Certainly he had not received a courteous greeting on his first visit to St. Jim's.

"What—what's the game?" he gasped. "What did that young lunatic land out at me for? Is he mad?"

"I think he must be," said Kildare. "He'll get the kicking of his life for this!"

"I tell you he's an impostor!" roared Grundy. "Clincher rang me up on the telephone, and gave me the tip. This ain't the real Clincher!"

"You young fathead!" shouted Kildare. "I know Clincher well enough! Somebody has been japing you on the telephone!"

"Wha-a-at!"
 "Oh, my hat!" said the Oakshott captain.

"Rot!" howled Grundy. "You know I was rung up, Kildare, you sent for me. It was Clincher speaking. He said he'd seen my advertisement, and wanted me to play for the Ramblers."

"You—you dummy!"

"And he warned me that a practical joker, most likely Lowther, was coming along, got up to look like him—same as he did last Saturday. Yow-ow-ow! Leave off shaking me, Kildare, you silly ass!"

"You see how it is, Clincher," said Kildare apologetically. "This fellow is half daft!"

"What?" ejaculated Grundy.

"The kids pull his leg no end, because he's such a fool!" said Kildare. "Some joker has telephoned him to make him play the giddy ox like this! I'm awfully sorry you've been the victim. I'll teach him to be more

careful next time. Come on, old fellow! I hope you're not hurt much!"

The Oakshott skipper grunted, dusted his clothes, and came in. Grundy was marched off to the School House with Kildare's finger and thumb firmly fixed upon his ear.

A grinning crowd watched him go. It was a humiliating position for the great Grundy; but there was no help for it.

It had dawned upon Grundy's powerful brain at last that he had been japed, and that the practical joker was not the fellow who had come to the school calling himself Charley Clincher, but the fellow who had spoken on the telephone and arranged that precious password.

But that knowledge came too late. Kildare marched him into his study, and selected a cane.

"Sit down, Clincher—I sha'n't be long with this young idiot!" remarked the captain of St. Jim's.

Clincher burst into a laugh.

"Let him off," he said. "He seems to be a born idiot. I don't mind. Kick him out, and let him go!"

Kildare paused.

"But he hit you," he exclaimed.

"Well, it was a mistake."

"Of—of course it was!" stammered Grundy. "I—I've been taken in! Some awful beast was telling me whoppers on the telephone!"

Clincher grinned.

"If you hadn't been a born idiot you wouldn't have been taken in like that," he said. "Let him off, Kildare; it was a mistake."

"Well, as you ask it," said Kildare, putting down the cane; and he added briefly to Grundy: "Cut!"

But Grundy was not in a hurry to cut.

"I say, Clincher, I'm awfully sorry!" he exclaimed. "I had no idea, you know."

"That's all right—cut!"

"And—and it wasn't you who spoke to me at all on the wire?"

"You young ass—no!"

"And—and you haven't seen my advertisement in the 'Rylcombe Times'?"

"Ha, ha, ha! So you're that chap!" roared Clincher.

"Yes, I've seen that! Why doesn't your headmaster send you to a home for idiots?"

"Why, I—I— Look here, Clincher, I'm willing to play for your team."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to laugh at!" said Grundy. "I tell you—keep off, Kildare—let my ear alone, will you? My hat!—why—yaroooh!"

Kildare led Grundy to the door by the ear, twirled him into the passage, and planted a heavy boot behind him. George Alfred Grundy departed in a great hurry, and in a state of great wrath, and the door slammed after him.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Grundy, picking himself up, and rubbing his ear. "The fellow must be a silly ass, after all. If he's seen my advertisement, why don't he ask me to play in his team? Blessed if I see anything to cackle at myself!"

And Grundy went to his study to pour the story into the sympathetic ears of Wilkins and Gunn. Wilkins and Gunn tried hard to be sympathetic, but they had to yell.

"Oh, you frajvous ass!" gasped Wilkins. "You ought to have guessed—"

"How was I to guess?" hooted Grundy. "How could I tell that some silly idiot at Oakshott would ring me up for a rotten joke?"

"Ha, ha!" yelled Gunn. "Oh, you duffer!—you weren't rung up from Oakshott; it was some japer here using one of the school telephones!"

Grundy jumped. That thought had not yet occurred to his mighty intellect.

"Lowther!" he yelled.

"Very likely! Ha, ha, ha!" Grundy whipped out of the room and rushed along to Tom Merry's study. The Terrible Three were sitting down to tea when Grundy came in like a whirlwind.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 401.

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

How I learned to Shoot By E.H.

THE first time I handled a rifle I scored 83 simply because I had a good gun, and an expert at my side who showed me how to use it. And you can learn just as quickly if you get a

"DAISY" AIR RIFLE

and read our illustrated book "The Target and how to Score." The "Daisy" is a well-made weapon which shoots true, makes no noise, and does no wrong. Write for this free book to-day, then ask a dealer to let you try a "Daisy" You'll soon be able to make 95 and 100.

800 SHOT DAISY AUTOMATIC AIR RIFLE... 7/6
 SINGLE SHOT DAISY... 3/6

Of all hardware and sporting goods dealers, or
Wm. E. PECK & Co., 31, Bartholomew Close, London, E. C.
 (Dept. O) *Cut here and post to-day.*
 Please send me free of charge, "The Diary of a Daisy Boy" which will teach me how to shoot.
 Name.....
 Address.....

"Lowther, you rotter—"
 "Hallo!" exclaimed Lowther, jumping up.
 "I'll teach you to play tricks on me on the telephone!"
 "Here, keep off! Oh, crumb's!"
 Lowther went down in a heap under Grundy's heavy weight. Tom Merry and Manners seized the burly Shell fellow and dragged him off.
 "Lemme get at him!" roared Grundy. "He's been telephoning me!"
 "You frabjous ass!" shrieked Lowther. "I haven't!"
 "Eh? You haven't? Who did, then?"
 "How should I know, you shrieking ass? Anybody who knew what a blithering idiot you were! Jump on him!"
 "I—I say, if I've made a mistake, I'm sorry!"
 "We'll make you sorrier, you dangerous lunatic!"
 Bump! Bump! Splash! Squash!
 Grundy struggled for the door. But before he escaped from Tom Merry's study he had the tea down his neck and the butter in his hair and the jam on his face. He staggered back into his own study, and sank down into a chair, gasping.
 "It—it wasn't Lowther!" he gasped. "Who do you think it was, you chaps? What are you cackling at?"
 But Gunn and Wilkins could not reply; they were in hysterics.

CHAPTER 14.
 Callers At Last.

HERE'S bound to be somebody this afternoon," said Grundy.
 Morning lessons were over on Saturday, the day following the publication of the weekly "Rylcombe Times." Grundy spoke confidently to his chums; he was fully expecting "somebody" that afternoon.

The previous week's advertisement had brought no answers. But Grundy had paid for two weeks' insertions, and he had no doubt that the second time the advertisement would "do the trick." That rush of football captains and secretaries might yet come off, and overwhelm with confusion the grinning duffers who maintained that any footer captain who knew his business wouldn't touch Grundy with a barge-pole.

Gunn and Wilkins smiled assent to Grundy's remark. It was quite useless to disagree with Grundy.

"And I'll tell you what," added Grundy. "You fellows can wait in the visitors'-room with me, and we'll play dominoes while we're waiting."

Had G. A. Grundy a secret foreboding that his afternoon would be spent in vain waiting, as on the previous occasion? It really looked like it. Gunn closed one eye to Wilkins, and Wilkins winked at the elms in the quad.

"Oh, we'll stay with you!" said Gunn.
 "Till tea-time," said Wilkins generously.

And after dinner the chums of No. 8 Study were installed in the visitors'-room, which Grundy had permission to use once more for his many callers. They played dominoes while they waited, and Wilkins and Gunn anticipated playing dominoes the whole of the afternoon, unless they were interrupted by some japer like Monty Lowther or Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

But as it happened Wilkins and Gunn were wrong, and Grundy was right; there were callers. About three o'clock Toby opened the door, and showed in a gentleman in a black frock-coat, who carried a little black bag in one hand, and a rusty silk hat in the other, and an umbrella under his arm.

"Genelman to see Master Grundy," said Toby.
 Grundy looked in surprise at his visitor. It was not the kind of visitor he had expected. This gentleman of at least sixty, with a grey beard and gold-rimmed glasses, could hardly belong to a youthful football club.

"Hem!" coughed the visitor. "Master Grundy?"
 "That's me!" said Grundy, promptly and ungrammatically.

"You are the young gentleman who advertised in the 'Rylcombe Times'?"

"Yes," said Grundy.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 40L.
 OUR COMPANION "THE BOYS' FRIEND," "THE MAGNET," "THE BOYS' FRIEND" "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," 1D.
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"Very good. I have called in answer to your advertisement."

"The dooce you have!" murmured Grundy, while Wilkins and Gunn stared.

"I am Professor Pooter," explained the visitor. "I shall be very pleased to undertake your instruction."

"Mum-mum-my instruction!" ejaculated Grundy.

"Certainly. I understand that you are backward in spelling."

"Eh?"

"I have brought my books with me," said the professor, opening his black bag. "I shall be pleased to give you some instruction at once, and if you are satisfied I will then discuss terms. What Form are you in here, Master Grundy?"

"The Shell. But—"

"Ah, I suppose you have been placed in the Shell because you are too old for a lower Form, although your attainments would not justify it," said the professor. "But that is easily remedied. Place yourself in my hands, and I will undertake to make you spell with exactitude and without fail. First of all, let us see how far you are advanced."

"B-b-but—"

"You can spell, of course, such easy words as cat, dog, horse—"

Wilkins and Gunn chuckled. Grundy began to glare.

"Look here, what are you getting at?" he demanded.

"Let us take horse," said Mr. Pooter, looking slightly surprised at Grundy's excited manner. "How do you spell horse?"

"Do you think I can't spell horse?" demanded the amazed Grundy. "H A U S E, of course!"

Another chuckle from Wilkins and Gunn. They found this more entertaining than dominoes. The professor coughed.

"Ahem! That is not quite right," he said. "I see that we shall have to begin at the beginning. Now, cat."

"What?"

"Cat!"

"What on earth do you mean—cat?" roared Grundy.

"Spell cat!"

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

There was a chuckle from the passage. Grundy glared towards the door. He could guess that there were juniors outside enjoying the scene.

"So this is another jape, is it?" he roared. "I suppose you're Monty Lowther in a new rig. I'll jolly soon have that beard off!"

"Wha-a-at!"

Grundy rushed at the professor, grabbed hold of the grey beard, and tugged. He fully expected the beard to come off and reveal the features of Monty Lowther of the Shell. But the beard held fast, and there was a feishish yell from Professor Pooter.

"Yowwwwwww! Let go! Oh! Help! Oh!"

"Why, it—it's growin'!" gasped Grundy. "Tain't a false beard at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Help! The boy is mad!" shrieked the professor.

"Great Scott!"

Grundy, in his amazement, let go the beard. Professor Pooter, crimson with pain and wrath, whirled his umbrella into the air, and smote the Shell fellow across the head, with a smite that nearly broke the umbrella.

Grundy staggered back with a roar.

Professor Pooter streaked for the door. He had had enough of Grundy. Fully convinced that he had to do with an insane person, the alarmed professor rushed out of the visitors'-room into a crowd of juniors in the passage.

"Hallo, what's wrong?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Let me pass! The boy is mad—mad—dangerous—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wum like anythin', old fellow!" shrieked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The professor ran. He disappeared out of the School House in record time. Grundy of the Shell, rubbing his head, glared at the hilarious crowd in the passage, and slammed the door.

"Now, what does that mean?" Grundy demanded of

his chums. "The old villain has nearly busted my napper with his brology. What d'd he come here for?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Blessed if I know!" gasped Gunn. "Pr'aps he thought from your advertisement that you needed lessons in spelling. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why should he think so, you ass? Calling himself a professor, and he can't even spell horse!" hooted Grundy.

Wilkins and Gunn suppressed their chuckles under Grundy's glaring eye, and they sat down to their dominoes again. Grundy still rubbing his head occasionally. In the passage outside there was quite a gathering, and the gathering seemed to be a merry one. Monty Lowther's improvement on Grundy's advertisement was known to all the fellows by this time, with the exception of Grundy & Co. They wondered if there would be any more visitors, and what George Alfred would do with them.

There were more. The dominoes were interrupted again as the door was opened by Toby, who showed in a young man this time. The young man was of powerful build, and he wore a spotted muffler and a cap, which he did not remove. He certainly looked as if he might be a footballer, and Grundy greeted him quite cheerfully.

"Good-afternoon!" he said. "You've called to see me?"

"If you're the advertiser in the 'Rylcombe Times,' I 'ave," said the young man. "You're G. A. Grundy?"

"That's right."

"Schoolboy—wot?"

"I am in the Shell here," said Grundy.

"And you want to take up football?"

"Exactly," said Grundy, feeling that the right man had come at last. "You've read the advertisement?"

"I 'ave," said the young man, "all of them. I've come about the football. You look as if you could play if taught. My name is Pottle. Professional last winter, but the club's dissolved owing to the war. All gone to the front 'cepting me, and I can't go—weak 'eart. I've got plenty of time on my 'ands, and I shall be glad to take you in tow. What you payin'?"

"Payin'?" repeated Grundy.

"Yes. You don't expect to be taught for nothin', I suppose?" said Mr. Pottle, with a stare.

"Taught!" said Grundy.

"Yes; that's wot you want, ain't it?"

"Certainly not!" said Grundy. "I'm looking for a football club to join. I know the game from beginning to end. I'm the best junior footballer in this school; in fact, I think I may say the best, seniors included."

"My word!" ejaculated Mr. Pottle. "My word! Ain't I come 'ere in answer to your blooming advertisement? Now you don't want no lessons! My word! You'll 'and me a 'arf-crown for the time I've wasted."

"Rats!"

"A 'arf-crown!" shouted Mr. Pottle.

"Bosh!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wilkins. "There's going to be a circus. Grundy, old man, give him half-a-crown."

"I'm jolly well not going to do anything of the sort," said Grundy. "Like his cheek to come here to give me lessons! As if I want lessons in footer—me, you know! You clear off, Pottle!"

Instead of clearing off, Mr. Pottle pushed back a pair of somewhat dirty cuffs, and spat on his hands.

"Will you 'and me that 'arf-crown?" he inquired.

"I'll hand you a thick ear if you bother me!" said Grundy.

"Then 'ere goes!"

Mr. Pottle was justly exasperated. He did not mean to have that long walk for nothing. He went for Grundy.

Grundy put up his hands at once.

There was a wild and whirling hammering and punching and trampling for a couple of minutes. The young man from Wayland was too much for G. A. Grundy, however, big as George Alfred was. Grundy was knocked right and left, and he wound up under the table.

Mr. Pottle turned a ferocious glare upon Wilkins and Gunn, who backed away in alarm. Then he pulled down his cuffs and strode out.

He bestowed another glare upon the swarm of yelling juniors in the passage. He seemed inclined to give them

some of what he had given Grundy. But his face relaxed as Monty Lowther pressed a half-crown into his hand.

"Thank you kindly, sir!" he said, and he walked away quite satisfied.

"I think he earned that," Monty Lowther remarked. "He's given Grundy a lesson; not the kind that was advertised for, but a pretty good one, all the same."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy had crawled out from under the table. He was feeling far from happy. He sank down in a chair and gasped.

"Must be a lot of lunatics about this neighbourhood," he mumbled. "Fancy two lunatics coming here like that! Oh, my nose!"

"Let's cut, and not see any more of them, if they come," suggested Wilkins.

"Oh, rot!"

And they waited for the next.

CHAPTER 15.

Enough for Grundy!

"LADY to see Master Grundy!"

Grundy simply jumped, as Toby opened the door with that announcement.

"A—a—a lady!" gasped Grundy.

Grundy had heard of advanced women, of Suffragettes, and of determined seekers after votes. But he had never heard of lady footballers.

A young lady came into the visitors'-room—a young lady of somewhat powerful build, with a determined jaw.

"Master Grundy?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am," said Grundy.

"I have called in answer to your advertisement."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wilkins.

"Mum-mum-my advertisement?" said Grundy.

"Yes. I am Miss Hooper."

"M-m-miss Hooper!"

"I hope you will find me suitable," said Miss Hooper, with a sweet smile. "I shall be very pleased to do my best with you."

"But—but you ain't a footballer, are you?" gasped Grundy.

Miss Hooper stared.

"Are you joking?" she asked. "Of course I am not a footballer. I play croquet."

"Crook-crook-croquet!" ejaculated Grundy.

"Yes. Croquet is very useful as a graceful exercise. Do you play croquet?"

"Eh! I wouldn't be found dead playing croquet," said the amazed Grundy.

"That is a somewhat inelegant expression. I understand that your training has been neglected, Master Grundy."

"What!"

"I shall be very pleased to give you instruction in manners and deportment."

"Will you, by gad?"

"In the first place, you must not use such expressions," said Miss Hooper. "The statement in the advertisement was evidently quite correct. I shall teach you some graceful exercises in the first place, which will, I hope, remove the—shall I say *gaucherie*?—of your manner."

"Look here!" roared Grundy. "If you think there's anything wrong with my manners, it's jolly bad-mannered to tell me so."

"Goodness gracious!"

"When I want to be taught manners, I'll ask. Until then, I wish you a good-afternoon, ma'am. If you were a man, I'd say something else, I can tell you."

"You do not want lessons in deportment?" exclaimed Miss Hooper.

"No, I don't!"

"Or in manners?"

"No!" roared Grundy.

"You certainly need them," said Miss Hooper. "I have never seen anybody who needs them more than you do!"

"Why, I—I—"

"If you do not require my services, why did you bring me here?" exclaimed Miss Hooper, her jaw growing squarer. "Do you think I have whole afternoons to waste, applying personally, for nothing?"

(Continued on page 27.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 401.

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEDNESDAY: "WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!"

A Cash Prize for Every Contributor to this Page.



Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE.

HOIST WITH HIS OWN PETARD.

The clever young man was walking up and down the platform of a railway-station intent on finding an empty carriage in the express, which was almost due to start, but he searched in vain.

Assuming an official air, therefore, he walked up to the last carriage, and cried in a stertorian voice:

"All change here! This carriage isn't going!"
There were exclamations of annoyance as the people hastily secured their luggage and packed themselves away in other parts of the train.

With a serene smile the young man settled himself comfortably in the empty carriage.

"Ah!" he murmured. "It's a grand thing for me I was born clever! I wish they'd hurry up and start!"

Presently the station-master put his head through the window of the carriage occupied by the clever young man, and said:

"I suppose you're the smart individual who told the people this carriage wasn't going?"

"Yes," said the clever one, with a benign smile.

"Well," said the station-master, grinning, "it isn't! The porter heard your information to the passengers, and, thinking that you were a director, uncoupled the carriage."—Sent in by H. Lambert, S. Shields.

NOT TO BE PUT UPON.

"I tell you I won't have this room!" protested the old lady to the boy in buttons who was conducting her. "I ain't going to pay my money for a cupboard with a measly little folding bed in it! If you think that just because I'm from the country—"

Profoundly disgusted, the boy cut her short.
"Get in, madam—get in!" he ordered. "This ain't your room; it's the lift!"—Sent in by R. V. Amor, Richmond, Surrey.

THE RIGHT "SPIRIT."

Drunkon Sailor (who is lounging in a horse-trough, to policeman who comes on the scene): "All right, offsher. Never mind me. Shave—hic—the women and children—hic—first."—Sent in by Ernest Livett, Stroatham, S.W.

NOT TO BE CAUGHT.

Among the merry birthday party was a gentleman who claimed to know something of phrenology, and he offered to read the bumps of anyone present.

As most of the company were known to him, it was decided to blindfold him before he began operations.

The first subject selected was rather a bald-headed person. Running his digits over the cranium that was devoid of "thatch," the phrenologist quietly remarked:

"Na, na; ye needna trye tae do me wi' a melon."—Sent in by Jackson Brown, Perth, N.B.

A WAITING GAME.

"Hallo, Bob!" called little Harry, over the garden fence. "Is your brother Tom in?"
"Of course he is. Don't you see his shirt hanging on the clothes-line?"—Sent in by V. Cadwallader, Bristol.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 401.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE BOYS' FRIEND," Every Monday.

As the "GEM" Storyette Competition has proved so popular, it has been decided to run this novel feature in conjunction with our new Companion Paper,

THE BOYS' FRIEND, 1d., Published every Monday,

in order to give more of our readers a chance of winning one of our useful Money Prizes. If you know a really funny joke, or a short, interesting paragraph, send it along (on a post-card) before you forget it, and address it to: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND and GEM, Gough House, Gough Square, Fleet Street, E.C. Look out for your Prize Storyette in next week's GEM or BOYS' FRIEND.

AN EPIGRAMMATIC SENTENCE.

"That wasn't a bad epigram on the magistrate's part," said the somewhat educated tramp who had been convicted of vagrancy.

"What did he say?" asked the tramp's pal.

"Seven days," was the reply.

"Well, that ain't no epigram, is it?" queried the other incredulously.

"I'm sure it is," replied the first speaker. "I asked a parson what an epigram was once, and he said 'It's a short sentence that sounds light but gives you plenty to think about.'"

—Sent in by E. H. Roberts, Evesham, Worc.

ANOTHER LABOUR-SAVING DEVICE.

For the fourth successive night the hotel porter took the pitcher from the fair guest, who had come all the way downstairs from the fifth floor, and filled it for her with hot water.

"Excuse me, madam," he said, "but you have only to ring your bell and the buttons will come up to your room to do this for you. You will thus be saved any further trouble."

"My bell!" gasped the lady. "I haven't a bell in my room."

"The bell is beside your bed."

"What! That the bell? Why, the buttons told me it was the fire-alarm, and that I wasn't to touch it on any account."

—Sent in by C. Holden, Warrington, Lancs.

A SUSTAINING BITE.

"The worst winter I can remember was when we were besieged," said the old soldier. "We only had one bite a day for two weeks, and that was horseflesh."

"I remember," said his companion, "living for a month on one bite, and that was out of my own leg."

"Impossible, you old cannibal! Do you expect me to believe that?" roared the soldier.

"It's true, whether you care to believe it or not," calmly asserted the other. "A dog did the biting, and the compensation kept me like a lord for four weeks."—Sent in by J. Pollock, S. Tottenham.

NOT LIKELY.

Mr. Simkins had been staying in the country for a fortnight, and as he trudged from the station towards his suburban residence he was surprised to see the signs of a funeral outside the mayor's house.

"Who's dead, my lad?" he inquired of a small boy.

"I expect it's the bloke wot's under those flowers," answered the cheeky urchin irreverently.

Falling in an attempt to box the boy's ears, Mr. Simkins turned to a man who had just left the house, and repeated his question.

"It's the mayor," was the reply.

"The mayor!" gasped Simkins. "Good gracious! And is he dead?"

"Well, you feeble idiot," snapped the man witheringly, "do you think he's having a blessed rehearsal?"—Sent in by A. Ellery, Dinnington, near Rotherham.

"THE MAGNET," Every Monday.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.

"CHUCKLES," 1d. Every Saturday, 2

Our Grand New Adventure Serial.**UNDER THE DRAGON.**

- A -

great new story of thrilling
adventure in the Far East.

BY

PETER BAYNE.

The previous instalments told how:—

NORRIS BRENT, a young Englishman, agrees to accompany his unworthy cousin, GUY MELVILLE, on an exploration tour in China for a rare plant only to be found in that part of the world. Misfortune dogs their footsteps, and a crisis is reached when the Chinese pack-carriers, who are with them, mutiny. Stranded in a wild, inhospitable land, there is nothing for it but to return to civilisation, and the cousins, together with YEN HOW, Norris Brent's faithful servant, set out on the weary journey.

The little band is overcome by thirst, and Melville, refusing to share his water with the others, pushes onward through the desert, leaving his companions to their fate. Fortunately, however, Yen How lights upon an oasis, and the danger is averted.

Norris Brent returns to England with Yen How, and Guy Melville pretends to be pleased at seeing his cousin again. He informs him that, owing to the death of an uncle, he is owner of the estate, Eagle's Cliff, and offers Brent a position thereon, which he accepts.

One day Yen How surprises his master by informing him that MING YUNG, a Chinese mandarin, and his ward, SILVER PEARL, whose acquaintance Brent had previously made in China, are staying at Eagle's Nest.

Brent discovers that Ming Yung has come to Eagle's Nest in order to experiment with an invention with which he hopes to gain world-wide power.

Guy Melville, for some sinister reason, still desires his cousin's death, and secures the assistance of a gipsy, KARL MARROK, to assist him in his foul purpose.

Brent finds a ruby of great value, which Ming Yung gains possession of.

Ming Yung, in a fit of temper, uses his invention to destroy a yacht belonging to one of Melville's guests, and is consequently forced to make a hurried return to China with his ward.

Brent and Yen How secrete themselves on the ship carrying the fugitives; but Brent is discovered, and thrown overboard.

Yen How dives into the water after his master, and they are both eventually washed ashore on to a small island.

Discovering that the island is tenanted by Chinese pirates, Yen How suggests a plan to steal one of their boats.

(Now go on with the story.)

**In the Night Watches—Held at Bay—The Ship of Fire
—Out on the Deep.**

Norris Brent stared hard at his companion.

"Great Scott!" he said. "It's a bold suggestion, but a rattling fine one, and we'll act on it! Yet we must go slow, for one false move would ruin everything, and bring about our own destruction in no time."

"You speak true," Yen How agreed, "and for the present we can only stay this side and keep watch. Then, when the **foast** is over, and they all fall asleep, our chance will come to seize the junk."

From their hidden post of observation, the comrades watched

what was happening on the beach with the deepest interest and curiosity.

It was a strange, barbaric spectacle. Snatching at the food served out to them, the pirates greedily devoured it, washing it down with long draughts of fiery wine, of which there was a seemingly endless supply.

Excited by the liquor, they sang, danced, and capered like men in a state of frenzied madness. The deafening din was added to by the reckless discharge of firearms, which were fired and whirled aloft with savage glee, the bullets flying in every direction. This scene of wild excess lasted for a considerable time, and was only ended by the utter exhaustion of those taking part in it.

Peace and quietude gradually succeeded to the uproar, and the pirates, lying where they had fallen on the sand, were speedily overtaken by deep and heavy sleep. Soon the sound of snoring on an extensive scale was wafted to the comrades. "That like chorus of bull frogs," chuckled Yen How. "Long may it last! It means good luck for us. Think we ought to make a start now?"

"Come on," Brent answered, stepping from the edge of the palm-grove into the open. "We shall never have a better opportunity than the one we have now."

Reaching the beach, they cautiously made their way in the direction of the two junks. To do this it was not necessary to go near the sleeping pirates, or to expose themselves to the possible observation of any sentry who might be keeping watch. A slight detour brought them to a point from which there was a short approach to the smallest junk, the one on which Yen How believed that the Chinese who had been taken prisoners were stowed away.

"More better my go first to look see," he remarked, as he and his comrade crept into the dark shadow of the vessel. "Suppose any pirate on board my have better chance to deal with him than you. He think me one of his own kind."

"Go on, then," said Brent, "and take care of yourself. Don't keep me waiting, or I shall fear that something is wrong, and come on board at once."

Catching hold of the grooved side of the junk, Yen How climbed up it with the ease of a cat, and dropped noiselessly from the broad gangway on to the deck. Two or three sailors, fast asleep, were lying at the foot of the mast. Appropriating the knives and revolvers fastened in their belts, he went on to an open hatchway.

Descending a short ladder, Yen How found himself in a narrow corridor traversing the whole length of the vessel below deck. A few quick glances showed him that opening out from the corridor on either side were several compartments occupied by Chinese, most of whom appeared to be asleep.

The air, owing to overcrowding and the lack of ventilation, was scarcely breathable. There was a subdued murmur of voices in one of the rooms, and Yen How, looking through the opening, perceived the shadowy figures of three natives seated in a group. Seeing him watching them, the men instantly ceased speaking.

"Don't be afraid of me," said Yen How in a low tone of voice, "for I wish to be your friend. The pirates who captured you are my enemies as well as yours."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 401.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY: **"WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!"**

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD

There was silence for a few moments. "Before we believe you," then one of the three Chinamen ventured to remark, "we must know more about you. What has brought you here?"

"A desire to benefit both you and myself," Yen How answered. "There is a friend of mine, a white sahib, who is in this with me. We've been watching what has taken place on the beach for some hours past and what we saw convinced us that we had to do with pirates who captured the junk you are on at sea and then brought it to this island."

"That is true," the Chinaman admitted. "There are nearly a hundred of us on board. A fortnight ago we left Colombo, and everything went well on the voyage until yesterday, when we were attacked and captured by these pirates. They've not only stripped us of all our money and valuables—may the Evil One send his consuming fire upon them for it—but they are also going to hold us to ransom."

At this moment Brent appeared, for, becoming impatient, he had followed Yen How on board. He heard the last sentence uttered, and, as his knowledge of Chinese was considerable, understood the meaning of it.

"They won't hold you much longer," he said, when Yen How had told the others who he was. "A great chance to escape has come if you're only bold enough to take it. The pirates are all asleep, drugged and stupefied into unconsciousness by the quantities of fermented liquor they've been drinking, so we've little to fear from them. Now, I've thought out a plan by which you may regain both your money and your liberty, but you must be guided by me and my comrade, or the whole thing will end in failure."

The resolute and fearless boating of the speaker made an instant impression upon the captive Chinamen, who at once agreed to acknowledge him as their leader in the forthcoming enterprise.

This promise having been made to him, Brent immediately assumed command, with his accustomed energy. Between twenty and thirty Chinese were swiftly and silently summoned from other compartments of the junk, instructed in what they would have to do, and assembled on deck.

There the three pirates who had fallen asleep while supposed to be on duty were bound, gagged, and taken ashore. They were placed on the sandy beach near their companions in lawlessness, who snored and slumbered on, little dreaming of the dismay that would overwhelm them upon awakening.

The firearms and other weapons that they had so carelessly cast aside were gathered together and taken on board the junk, as well as large quantities of stores and jars of fresh water. To the intense delight of the Chinese led by Norris Brent, a rapid but effective search of the vessel used by the pirates resulted in the discovery of most of the money stolen from them.

This was removed, together with other property of which they had been dispossessed, and throughout it all nothing occurred to interfere with the work that Brent and his followers were engaged in. Swiftly and noiselessly they moved to and fro between the junks, a silent, active little army, under the command of a solitary English lad who had fired them with some of his own courage and daring.

"That about finishes it," said Brent at last. "All we have to do now is to wait until the tide is high enough to float our ship into deep water. Then it will be northward-ho for the China coast again!"

Yen How waved his arm towards the sleeping pirates on the beach.

"One thing you forget," he said. "What shall you do with them? Suppose you leave them here they wake up, find the number two junk gone, and set sail after it? Their ship is verry fast. Soon catch up with us. More better we shoot all of them before they can open their eyes to look see what thing we are doing."

This cool proposal elicited from Norris Brent an indignantly amused laugh.

"You bloodthirsty brute!" he exclaimed. "I suppose you're voicing the wish of your other compatriots as well as your own? Well," he added, as Yen How grinned and nodded his head, "you tell them from me that nothing of the sort is to be done, and that the first one to disobey my command in the matter will pay a heavy penalty."

"As you will," said Yen How, nothing abashed; "but my tell you that to spare those men is a foolish business. What thing you do when you find a nest of sleeping serpents? You stamp them out. You ought to do the same thing with these pirates. They more dangerous than any number of serpents my tell you."

As Brent was compelled to admit, there was a deal of truth in these remarks. To leave the pirates free to follow him and those whom he had rescued would be sheer folly. True, he had taken the precaution of disarming them; but that circumstance would only inspire them with a greater longing for revenge, and in their swift-sailing junk they

would inevitably overtake the less speedy vessel, even though that one might have a start of several hours to its advantage. The prospect of a furious fight at sea with such foes was not an alluring one. Unarmed though they might be, the pirates would undoubtedly attack with the reckless desperation of men whose whole lives had been spent in a gamble with death.

He knew that he could rely on Yen How, who was not only brave, but a splendid marksman, but he gravely doubted whether the rest of the Chinese would be of much use when called upon to put themselves to a severe test.

"Yen How," he said, a sudden smile lighting up his face. "I've thought of a far better plan than yours, and a much simpler one, too. We can't make use of the larger junk. It requires a trained and experienced crew to manage. That being so, we'll set fire to it and leave the pirates stranded on the island. They won't starve, and they'll be unable to do any more mischief for a mighty long time to come, as directly we touch land again we can give information to the authorities, who will promptly send a cruiser here to capture the rogues."

Yen How's little, black eyes twinkled with delight. "Velly good!" he declared. "You beat me every time. My word! How them pirates dance and sing when they see their ship in flames!"

The tide was now coming in fast, and several of the Chinese, armed with long and heavy bamboo poles, worked with might and main to push their junk off into deep water. While this was being done, Brent waded through the shallow water to the pirate ship.

Clambering on board, he made his way to a deep hold astern, in which he had before noticed a quantity of greasy cotton and other material of a highly inflammable nature. Scattering it all the stuff here and there, he quickly had fires started in half a dozen different places. It was amazing to see with what greedy avidity the flames seized on the old and thickly-tarred timbers, and by the time his task was ended Brent knew that the junk was doomed to swift and utter destruction.

As he gained the deck, clouds of smoke were already pouring up from below. Running to the side, he was about to lower himself into the water, when a sudden outburst of fierce cries startled him. A glance along the beach showed him that some of the pirates had been aroused from their sleep, to discover that their ship was on fire.

Catching sight of Brent, some of them, yelling fearsomely, rushed across the sands to the junk. Pausing no longer, the lad sprang overboard. An incoming wave swept him off his feet and carried him shoreward.

Shrieking with furious glee, the pirates dashed forward with outstretched hands to seize him. Rolling over to escape the clutch of their long fingers, he scrambled to his feet and plunged back into the sea.

A fusillade of pebbles and pieces of rock hissed all around him. He was struck several times. Now the water was waist-deep, and he started to swim, heading for the junk, from whose deck Yen How and the other Chinese were anxiously following his every movement.

She was out in the deep sea now, and a dozen pair of hands gripped the hoisting rope of her huge sail, which hung athwart the base of the towering mast in great, heavy folds of brown canvas.

Looking back, Brent saw that his foes were following him. He swam on faster than ever. Now he was but two or three yards from the junk. The loose end of a long rope whistled in the air and splashed in the water. Seizing it, he held tightly on, and a few moments later was on deck amongst his friends.

"You almost caught that time," said Yen How, grinning cheerily. "The pirate men no like to lose you. It makes them savage as tigers."

The sail went up with a rush, and the junk, swinging round to the movement of her helm, moved slowly out into the open sea. A terrible cry of rage came from the shore. Then the hubbub suddenly died down.

"Hallo!" said Brent. "What are they doing now? The dickens! They're actually going to follow us!"

Hidden by rolling smoke clouds a few minutes before, the pirate junk had now become visible to the eye again. Her sails were being hoisted, and she was moving through the starlit sea, slowly but with ever-increasing speed.

This is what had happened. Mad with fury, the pirates had leapt on board, battened down the hatches in which the fires that Norris Brent had kindled were raging, and started in pursuit of the runaway vessel.

Relying upon the superior speed of their craft, they hoped to overtake and board the other before they were in any serious danger from the conflagration. It was a desperate risk to take, but one that they believed promised success, and it



Brent scrambled to his feet and plunged back into the sea. A fusillade of pebbles and pieces of rock hissed all around him. He was struck several times. Now the water was waist deep, and he started to swim, heading for the junk. (See page 24.)

soon began to look as if there was every justification for their confidence.

The distance between the two vessels was steadily but surely diminished. Brent and Yen How opened fire with their rifles; but the pirates were cunning, and refused to expose themselves to the danger of the leaden hail that swept over their deck.

Smoke continued to curl up through the cracks in the woodwork, and it had a peculiar reddish tinge that cast a vivid glare over the masts and sails.

"Their feet must be getting tender with the heat," said Brent. "Underneath the deck it must be like a furnace. Look there!"

A sheet of flame had shot up from the pursuing junk. It was gone in a moment, but clouds of sparks followed it, and a crimson tongue of fire devoured the wood surrounding the crack through which the flame had forced a way with appalling rapidity.

Again there came a burst of flame. It caught the sail, which flared up; but buckets of water were flung over the burning canvas, and the fire was extinguished.

"They'll catch us now," said Yen How darkly. "More better we keep on firing to the end."

On came the pirate junk, smoke and flame belching from her deck in great spurts that threw a sinister light far across the ocean. She drew so near to the escaping vessel that a man might have sprung from one to the other of them.

Turning to his steersman, Brent uttered a quick command. It was promptly obeyed, and the bow of the vessel swung round on to a fresh course, which it followed until danger again threatened in the same manner as before.

These tactics succeeded in their purpose. Then the end came with startling rapidity. The deck of the outlaw craft was blown up by the tremendous pressure of the heat beneath it. A raging sea of flame immediately enveloped the ship from stem to stern.

Those of her wretched crew who were not burnt alive

flung themselves overboard. Some of these were drowned, and others succeeded in swimming back to the island, where they endured a miserable existence until they were taken off some weeks later by a British cruiser that had been sent from Singapore to look for them.

From the deck of the escaping ship Norris Brent and his companions silently watched the doomed junk burn down to the water's edge. Then a vast cloud of white smoke rose up and passed away, and all that was left of the once proud rover of the deep was a blackened, fire-gutted shell that drifted aimlessly to and fro with the ocean currents.

"So much for the pirates," said Brent at last. "It's about time, Yen How, that we turned in somewhere for a snooze. We must be up again by daylight to set the course for China. Glad to think you'll soon set foot on your native soil again?" Yen How puckered up his brow and looked wise.

"It would please me more better," he answered, "supposing, my know that we were never to see Ming Yung again."

Brent laughed and turned away.

"You can take it from me," he said, "that we shall see him again, so lose no time in making up your mind to that, Yen How."

The Travellers—In the Roar of the Storm—Familiar Voices.

In the ruined Chinese temple that crowned the summit of a high hill two white men were seeking rest after a long, hard day of travel across wild and rugged country.

They had hoped to strike some native village before night-fall, but their hope was disappointed, and they were compelled to take shelter for the night beneath the roof of the old temple. This retreat, poor though it was, at least protected them from the wind that was blowing outside with furious violence.

Standing as it did in a grove of trees, the temple did not

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NEXT WEDNESDAY: "WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!"

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

feel the full force of the hurricane, else it had been flattened to the ground; but as it was, its crumbling walls seemed to shake and tremble to their very foundations.

Worn out by fatigue, and undisturbed by the storm raging without, one of the travellers, wrapped in a long sleeping-bag that protected his body from the damp chill of the broken stone flooring, was stretched out in a dreamless slumber.

The pale and sickly light of a lantern placed on a camp-stool fell across his face. He was dark and swarthy as a gypsy, and his expression, even though he slept, was sinister and evil in the extreme.

The man was Karl Marrok. His companion, Guy Melville, sat and watched the other with a sullen, brooding gaze. He took it as a personal grievance that Marrok should be able to rest so calmly while he remained wide awake. The roaring of the wind made him restless and nervous.

"Curse the noise!" he muttered. "It's getting worse. This rickety old shanty will never hold up against such a gale. We oughtn't to have stopped here. It would have been better to have pitched our camp at the foot of the hill. There we should have been safe."

The thundering crash of a branch snapped from a tree and hurled against the roof of the building made him cry out and spring to his feet. White and craven, he quivered with unmanly fear. Glancing down at Marrok, he saw that the other had not stirred a muscle, and an unreasoning anger took possession of him.

"Wake up!" he shouted, bending over the sleeper, and shaking him violently by the shoulder. "Do you hear me? Wake up!"

Thus admonished, Marrok opened his eyes, and stared into the pale, terrified face of his companion. Then he yawned and shrugged his shoulders.

"Anything the matter?" he inquired. "You look as though you'd seen a regiment of ghosts."

Melville impatiently shook his head.

"It's the noise of the wind," he said. "I can't sleep for it. Instead of lying there, you might have some consideration and sit up and keep me company. It's not turned midnight yet."

Marrok uttered a short, hard laugh. His look was far from being a pleasant one.

"Then there are four or five hours to go before daylight," he remarked, "so I'll make the most of them. And you take care not to disturb me again," he added, with a sudden fierce snarl, "unless you've proper cause to! I might turn you out into the storm, else, or shoot you, one of the two!"

Soon he was asleep again. There was a fearless calm about his behaviour that drove the other almost to madness. Like all men of weak and cowardly character, Guy Melville hated those who showed courage and bravery that he did not himself possess.

Yet it was largely because he knew that he might rely upon him in the hour of greatest danger that he had brought Karl Marrok with him into this far part of the world.

The flight of Ming Yung with the red ruby was the reason that had led him to undertake the journey. His passionate desire to regain possession of the priceless gem that had been his for so brief a space of time worked in his system like some ravaging fever.

Never for a moment had he hesitated as to what he should do. Directly he was certain in his own mind that Ming Yung had gone away, taking the great ruby with him, he vowed, with many an oath, to follow the yellow wizard and wrest from him the treasure that he was ready to sell his immortal soul for at whatever cost of hardship and danger.

Finding out where Ming Yung had gone to, he had followed him to China, his sole companion being Karl Marrok. Had he been able to read the secret thoughts of the other, he would never have engaged him to share in the enterprise.

For Marrok meant to have the red ruby for himself alone. He had planned exactly what to do. While the hunt after Ming Yung was in progress, he was ready enough to assist his associate in striving to make it successful, but he looked forward with cool confidence to the day when he, with the ruby safe in his possession, would part company with Guy Melville for ever.

Frequently Melville was disturbed and made ill at ease by vague doubts and misgivings concerning the individual whom he had chosen to accompany him on his dangerous quest, and his former suspicions returned to him with greatly-increased strength as he watched Marrok resume his interrupted sleep. "The insolent hound!" he muttered angrily. "He wouldn't dare to threaten me if we were in England, but out here he shows himself in his true light, and I must beware of him!"

His thoughts flew back to Eagle's Nest, the noble, stately home so far away across the seas, and a sudden rush of futile regret that he had ever left it took hold of him. But this feeling was of short duration.

He remembered the red ruby, conjured up the vision of it as he had gloated over it on the night when it was so mysteriously taken from the library at Eagle's Nest, and the memory fired his blood afresh.

"It shall be mine before long now," he said, his eyes flashing. "Then I will return home again, forget the past, and—"

He came to an abrupt pause, and started violently, for the sound of someone pounding at the door came to his ears. It was faint, owing to the noise of the storm, but distinctly audible. Who could this midnight visitant be? Melville shook with fear as this question flashed across his mind.

He had a strong impulse to rouse Marrok, but restrained it, fearing what the other might do should it turn out to be a false alarm. Again the knocking sounded above the roaring of the gale.

Then all at once the door was thrown open. In rushed the wind, and the light of the lantern went out. The door was almost immediately closed again. With chattering teeth and violently-beating heart, Melville stood motionless in the darkness, the victim of a score of conflicting fears.

He had seen no one, and he did not know whether anyone had entered the building, so quickly had the gust of wind extinguished the light of the lantern. Yet he felt sure that someone, or something, had come in.

"What a plaguey nuisance!" said a voice, in tones of good-natured complaint. "I've gone and lost the only box of matches that was left to me. Have you any?"

"No have got," came the answer. "My use the last one I had to light camp-fire with. That volly had luck for us both!"

His fears were now forgotten by Guy Melville, swept from his mind by the suddenly-acquired knowledge of an amazing fact. He had recognised the voices of the two who had spoken.

His cousin, Norris Brent, and Yen How the Chinaman were in the temple, not ten yards away from him.

What should he do? There was no time to hesitate one way or the other. Setting his teeth, he bent down with the intention of awakening Karl Marrok. To his surprise, the other moved directly his hand touched him.

"Who is it?" whispered the gypsy. "I heard voices directly after I woke up."

"Norris Brent and his Chinese servant," came the scarcely audible reply. "They've not seen us. We should have no trouble in dealing with them. Why are they here?"

"For the same reason, I take it, that we are," was Melville's whispered response. "They want the red ruby."

In the darkness Karl Marrok put out his hand and felt about for his revolver, which he had placed on the floor at his side before going to sleep.

Shots in the Dark—Mysterious Foes—In the Scrub.

"The light we saw in here," said Norris Brent, "must have been left burning by someone who went away again, for we seem to be the only persons about the place. It's a pity the wind blew it out. But we'll do down in the dark, close our peppers, and soon forget our troubles."

"My think so, too," Yen How responded cheerfully. "The song tell us that any old port is welcome in a storm, and that velly true. We can lie down right here, and take our nap."

But while Yen How said one thing, he did another. Raising himself on tiptoe, he put his lips close to his companion's ear.

"Two men close to us!" he whispered. "More better we leave this place mighty quick. We have walked into a trap."

His sharp eyes, that were able to see in the dark almost as well as those of a cat, had seen Melville and Karl Marrok. He did not know who the two men were. They appeared but dim and shadowy figures to his sight, but he was sure that they were living human beings, and that he and Brent were in deadly peril.

Treading quickly and soundlessly, the comrades moved away from the spot. It did not occur to Brent that Yen How might be mistaken. The other, as he well understood, would not blunder in such a matter of vital importance. Unknown enemies were lurking in the temple, and it behoved him and his comrade to escape at once into the open.

As they reached the door two shots rang out in quick succession. Becoming suspicious, Karl Marrok had opened fire with his revolver. Hearing the door slam he realised that he and Melville had been outwitted, and a savage cure broke from his lips.

"After them!" he cried fiercely, darting across the temple. "If they escape us now we shall never see them again."

Rushing out into the open, he and Melville looked eagerly round in search of the fugitives. It was mucky overhead,

but there was plenty of starlight, and objects a long distance off were visible to the eye.

"There they go!" shouted Melville excitedly. "See them? Just disappearing over the brow of the hill."

Brent and Yen How came to a great belt of bush scrub, into which they dived, knowing that this natural cover would shelter them for as long as they liked to stay there. For the rest of the night they remained closely hidden.

Venturing out into the open at daylight, Brent made a cautious reconnaissance. He could see no one, but a bullet sang by his head almost at once, warning him that his foes had not abandoned the pursuit.

As he dodged down and looked quickly round he saw a tiny cloud of smoke dispersing at a point not many yards away. The shot that so narrowly missed him had been fired from there.

"Hang it all!" he muttered angrily, as he darted under cover again. "One never realises the worth of a revolver until a time like this. Our friends are still watching for us," he remarked aloud to Yen How, who came hurrying to meet him, "and one of them did his best to wing me."

"My hear the shot fired," said Yen How, a curiously reflective look in his face, "and it makes me think velly hard. What for these men follow us up so? They must have a mighty big reason for doing it."

"Guess they're Chinese robbers," rejoined Brent, "who believe that simply because we are travellers we must have plenty of money."

Yen How shook his head.

"Robber men go about in big bands," he said, "and so it could not be any of them. Another thing my tell you. Velly few Chinamen will go inside a deserted temple at night, for fear the ghosts and evil spirits should come and take them."

Brent looked a little startled for he had not thought of this, although he knew it to be perfectly true.

"Yet they must be Chinese," he said impatiently. "There are no white people in these parts. Only wish they were. It would do me good to see a British face once more!"

Yen How did not speak, although a queer smile crossed his lips. He was not so sure himself that white men could not be found in the locality at very short notice.

The comrades had a little food with them, and, after making a scanty meal, they set off once more through the scrub, heading across a wide and barren valley. Deep gullies and huge rocks impeded the way, and swarms of red insects settled on the fugitives, biting and stinging them until they were almost frantic.

Had it been possible to do so, both of them would have gone out into the open and taken the risk of being shot rather than endure such torment. But they were now a long way into the scrub, which was thick and high, and it extended from end to end of the valley without a single break.

"We must push on," said Brent, "for with the sun coming up this valley we will be sizzling with the heat before long, and I'd rather have a bullet in me than be roasted alive!"

Yen How at this moment sniffed vigorously.

"Something is burning," he said, looking round.

Smoke and sparks ascended from the scrub, which had been set alight not far behind the comrades, who knew thereby that they were still being tracked down by their unknown foes.

"The fire won't overtake us," Brent declared vigorously.

"The wind's gone down. There's scarcely a breeze. And if the smoke only rids us of some of these insects our enemies will have rendered us a fine service."

As Brent anticipated, the fire did not overtake him and his companion. As a matter of fact, they were never in danger from it, and were soon out of earshot of the crackling of the flames.

Pushing on as hurriedly as they were able to, they came to a pile of boulders crowning the top of a rising knoll of ground, where there was only a thin growth of bush covering the hard, unfruitful soil.

"Look here," said Brent, "this is where we stay for a while! A breathing spell is what we want before making a spurt to reach that stream down yonder and cross it. No doubt we'll have to swim to the far side, and as the water is dashing along like a mountain torrent, we'll need all our strength to make the passage."

The comrades crouched down behind the rocks. After a few moments had gone by Brent raised his head, and looked back across the valley.

About fifteen yards away a man was standing up in the scrub. It was Brent's cousin, Guy Melville!

(Another grand, long instalment of this splendid serial story next Wednesday. Order your copy early.)

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!"

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

GRUNDY'S GREAT GAME!

(Continued from page 21.)

"I didn't bring you here," howled Grundy, "and I didn't want to see you! I suppose you've been put up to this."

"What!"

"I've spotted you!" howled Grundy wrathfully. "It is Monty Lowther this time—got up as a girl, by gad! No woman could have feet that size."

"What!" shrieked Miss Hooper.

"I jolly well know you," shouted Grundy; "and I'll have that wig off—"

The young lady's feet certainly were large, and perhaps justified Grundy's suspicion. But if he had been a little less excited, perhaps he would have thought twice before catching at Miss Hooper's hair. However, he did catch at it; and, as he fully expected, it came off in his hand!

"By gum, it is a wig!" exclaimed Wilkins.

"Tain't Lowther, though!" gasped Gunn. "Oh, Grundy, old man, you've done it this time!" Grundy stood rooted to the floor.

There was a wig in his hand—a curly wig. But the head that was revealed by the removal of the wig was not the head of Monty Lowther. It was a head adorned with a little fringe of grey hair; and Miss Hooper had suddenly turned from a young lady into a middle-aged one!

"Oh, crumbs!" stuttered Grundy.

Miss Hooper shrieked. The juniors in the doorway shrieked, too, with merriment. They had never dreamed of this; it was the climax. That a lady who wore a wig to conceal the sparseness of her hair should visit Grundy was not surprising—in answer to Monty Lowther's advertisement! But that Grundy should pull her wig off—that took the bi-cuit!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, Gvunday, you wude boundah!"

"Oh, Grundy!"

Miss Hooper made a jump at Grundy. She clutched the wig with one hand, and with the other bestowed a tremendous box on Grundy's ear, that sent him staggering. Then she fled.

Grundy sat on the floor and gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Merry & Co. "Grundy, you've done it this time."

"It—it—it was a woman, after all!" gasped Grundy. "I—I thought it was that beast Lowther got up! Oh, my hat! Oh, my ear! Oh, dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wonder what the next caller will be like?" grinned Wilkins.

Grundy scrambled up.

"Great Scott! There's not going to be a next. I'm off!"

And Grundy fled, followed by a yell of laughter.

There were several more callers that afternoon; but Toby had to report to them that Master Grundy could not see them.

Master Grundy was fed up.

The extraordinary result of his advertisement astounded Grundy; and he was surprised, too, at the way the whole School House howled over it. It was not till he saw a copy of the "Rylcombe Times" that he was enlightened. Then he understood why the callers had come to teach him spelling and football and manners. And even Grundy had to admit that Monty Lowther had been eminently successful in pulling his leg. But, as he told Wilkins and Gunn, it would be all right; there would be plenty of answers yet to his genuine advertisement. He waited for them. But evidently he was not so successful an advertiser as Monty Lowther. Probably he is still waiting.

THE END.

(Next Wednesday's magnificent, long, complete story of St. Jim's is entitled "WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!" by Martin Clifford. Order your copy now, and thus ensure several hours of delightful entertainment.)

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THIS WEEK'S CHAT



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For Next Wednesday:

"WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!"

By **Martin Clifford.**

From the expressive title of next week's grand story of the stalwarts of St. Jim's, it will be seen that Dick Julian, the handsome, even-tempered Jewish junior, is again in the limelight. A prize is awarded by the "Weekly Snap," a photographic paper, and most of the fellows speedily become ardent slaves of the camera. Manners is, of course, a hot favourite, but he is unlucky enough to fall foul of Levison, who, with his usual reckless resource, contrives to weave a plot which shall land the photographer of the Shell into grave trouble. At the eleventh hour, Dick Julian is able to clear up the amazing mystery, and the corridors of St. Jim's resound with the ringing cry:

"WELL PLAYED, JULIAN!"

A NAVAL OFFICER HONOURS THE "GEM."

It is very pleasing to record instances of the wonderful and widespread popularity enjoyed by our champion little paper. This week a loyal Liverpool reader sends me the following interesting note, telling how a young naval officer recalled with satisfaction the hours of pleasure he had derived from the "Gem" Library in the past.

59, Russell Road, Sefton Park, Liverpool.

"Dear Editor,—I met with a great surprise this morning. I was coming home from school on the car, when a British naval officer sat down beside me. I happened to be reading 'The St. Jim's Volunteers,' and when he saw that I was reading the 'Gem,' he asked me how Tom Merry was getting on. I was surprised at first, but gradually we became chummy, and were talking about the good old 'Gem' as fast as we could. It turned out that he had been a reader of the paper up to two years ago, and when he had first started reading it the charge had been one halfpenny. I let him look through 'The St. Jim's Volunteers,' and he said that it was just as good as the 'Gem' yarns he read in the past, if not a little better. However, dear Editor, I must close now, as it is half-past ten, and I must get off to bed. So wishing you every success for the future,—I remain, a staunch Gemite,

"HAROLD LEESE."

Shades of Jellicoe! But praise from one of our gallant sea-dogs is praise indeed! I often feel sorry for poor old Sir Francis Drake. He had no "Gem" to read after his game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe. But I suppose he took it smiling, for it's a way they have in the Navy.

"TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

An Urgent Call To My Chums.

No. 1 of "Tom Merry's Weekly" is now in course of preparation. A few weeks more, and it will be on sale throughout the kingdom. It may not be out of place, therefore, for me to remind my Gemite chums that it is absolutely necessary for them to rally round and see that the popular little journal has an enormous sale.

Those of you who are prepared to be a bit self-sacrificing can purchase half a dozen copies of No. 1—they will only cost three-pence—and distribute them to non-readers in your district. In this way we hope to build up a colossal circula-

tion, and to secure for the "Weekly" the reputation of being the brightest and best weekly halfpenny journal in the world!

Do not forget, budding authors and poets, that I am prepared to pay handsomely for all the contributions accepted. There is a clear field for everybody, so forge ahead, and show what British boys can do when their enthusiasm is fired.

"The Greyfriars Herald" will also be published shortly, and very keen will be the competition between Magnetics and Gemites to see which paper obtains the highest circulation. Those whose sympathies are warmest for the St. Jim's journal, therefore, should put their shoulders to the wheel, and make a stunning, glorious, unparalleled success of

"TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Charles James (Melbourne).—I do not deem it desirable to send Tom Merry & Co. to remote parts of the world. I think their adventures in and around St. Jim's are quite as entertaining as they would be in the Cannibal Islands. Thanks for your cheery letter!

N. A. D. R. (Edinburgh).—I much appreciate your kind promise of support. Down with the grumblers!

An Australian Gemite (North Sydney).—Digby's Christian names are Robert Arthur. I will persuade Mr. Clifford to bring Australia into the limelight a little more.

T. Herbert (Christchurch).—Many thanks for your letter and loyalty! Some remarks on the subject of the Cherry-Merry boxing contest will appear on this page shortly.

"Little One" (Mount Dennis).—I am sorry to hear of your affliction, and you have my heartfelt wishes for a swift recovery!

Miss C. Hume (Enfield).—More will be heard of Cousin Ethel shortly.

Driver L. Carter (81007, R.H.A., No. 13 Camp, 2nd General Base, Le Havre, France) will be glad to receive a few back numbers of the "Gem" from a fellow-reader at home.

J. P. Jayne (Thornton Heath) takes exception to the fact that in certain "Replies in Brief" I have referred to a reader as "sonny." I fail to see anything reprehensible in such a word, which has been employed with the very best of motives; but as I have ample testimony that Master Jayne is a very ardent and sincere reader of the "Gem" Library, I will have pleasure in complying with his request, and the opprobrious term shall not appear again.

"Bruiser" (Sheffield).—Your devotion to the old paper does you credit. But what a nickname! We shall have to appoint you as understudy to our Fighting Editor.

William Haselden (Liverpool).—Many thanks for your letter. It touches upon so many points that I find it impossible to give you a reply on this page. Pray excuse!

J. C. (Gorton).—Mr. Raitton has resumed his duties. Yes, the St. Jim's Fire Brigade is still in full swing.

John L. Mercer (Manchester).—Yours is a good suggestion, and I shall act upon it if a favourable opportunity should arise.

"A Sunderland Chum."—I will convey to Mr. Clifford your remarks on the subject of D'Arcy.

H. M. (Clacton-on-Sea).—Thank you very much for the excellent work you are doing on behalf of the companion papers!

Your Editor

A SPECIAL PAGE FOR "GEM" ENTHUSIASTS.

I have pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of helpful correspondence from the following readers:

- "A Reader" (Manchester).
 A. H. (Warrington).
 "An Old Gemite" (Manchester).
 "A Girl Chum" (Dublin).
 "A Suffolk Girl Reader."
 "A Staunch Reader" (Manchester).
 "A Loyal Reader" (Dublin).
 "An Old Reader" (Acton Green).
 A. B. (City).
 "A South African Reader" (Transvaal).
 "A Popular Reader" (West Hendon).
 A. P. M. and J. H. (Wigton).
 "A Constant Reader" (Darlington).
 "A Bath Bun" (Bath).
 "A Loyal Girl Reader" (Bath).
 "A Manchester Chum."
 A. S. H. (Liverpool).
 "A Loyal Barnsley Reader."
 "A Watford Reader."
 Austiner, L. (Napier).
 "A Talbotite."
 "A Middy" (Newcastle).
 Brown, A., and Chums (Hersham).
 Bryant, W. E. (Pontycymer).
 "Bermondsey."
 Brackley, Drummer Billy (France).
 Beaufoy, Hubert (Coventry).
 Boucher, R. (Guernsey).
 Beasley, J. (Birmingham).
 Browne, C. (Gateshead-on-Tyne).
 Cruishank, Yvonne (Bloomsbury).
 Castle, A. (Folkestone).
 Crewe, William, and Chums (Devon).
 "Contented" (Southampton).
 Collier, Jack (Clapham).
 Cushion, Arthur (Ilford).
 Dudley, W. M. (Salisbury).
 "Delighted in Bernard Glyn" (Old Trafford).
 Duncombe, Linda (St. Andrew).
 D. B. (Edgware).
 Edward, Fred (Wanganui).
 Finney, Private F. (France).
 F. S. D. (Manchester).
 Feltham, Albert (Aldershot).
 Forward, Edwin (Battersea).
 F. A. (Walthamstow).
 Guard, Joseph (Plymouth).
 Greener, J. (Prudhoe-on-Tyne).
 Gaywood, E. (Deal).
 G. R. J. (Hampton Wick).
 Grace and Doris (Transvaal, S.A.).
 "Hope Bank" (Blackpool).
 H. C. (Clapham Common).
 Hart, Hayden (Bristol).
 Harold (Aldershot).
 Hawkins, Ewen (Rotherhithe).
 Hunt, Anne (Montreal).
 H. H. L. (Luton).
 Heard, George (Plymouth).
 "Indignant" (Australia).
 Inley, H. (Smethwick).
 "Inquirer" (Melbourne).
 "Ideas" (St. Helens).
 "Indignant Reader" (South Shields).
 Jordan, H. G. (Birmingham).
 "Jacko."
 Jacobs, H. (Mile End Road).
 Jonas, Sophia (Victoria Park).
 Jones, Lewis (Worcester).
 Jenkins, Jack (Wattford).
 Kennelner, W. (Kapnnda, S. Australia).
 K. C. (Glasgow).
 Keoun, Annie U. (Dublin).
 "Kookaburra" (S. Australia).
 King, W. (Upper Tooting).
 "Kensington Gemite."
 K. P. S. E.
 Kemp, Kate (Bayswater Road).
 Lohie, John (London).
 L. D. J.
 "Loyal Girl Reader" (Mottingham).
 "Loyal" (Ireland).
 Levy, Ben (London).
 Muir, W. (Whiteinch).
 "Most Satisfied" (Kentish Town).
 Murray, Lawrence (Teddington).
 M. K. M. (Stepps).
 Mills, E. (East Ham).
 McA., J.
 McNab, W. (Glasgow).
 Mabel H. (Kilburn).
 Maclean, A. S. L. (Spittal).
 "Member 1 of the Trio" (Manchester).
 "Member 2 of the Trio" (Manchester).
 McCullough, Walter (Rothwell).
 Marjorie B. (Clifton).
 M. E. J. (Highbury).
 Madge (Hammersmith).
 McLeod, Norman (Woolwich).
 Mayne, Amy (Liverpool).
 M. H. (Mansfield).
 McKay (Cape Town, S.A.).
 "New Recruit" (Hadleigh).
 Norton (Brighton).
 "New Zealander."
 Newbery, Rereta (Norbiton).
 "Nob."
 O'Sullivan, Patrick (U.S.A.).
 Oakley, R. A. (Weymouth).
 "Old Reader."
 Oakley, G. (Birmingham).
 O'Mara, Private J. (France).
 "Prince" (Dublin).
 Pariser, Connie and Cyril (Manchester).
 Percival, W. (Leeds).
 "Pro Patria."
 Pitt, D. Muriel (Warrington).
 P. B. (Brondebury).
 "Patriotic" (Cleckheaton).
 Porte, John (Herne Hill).
 Parkes, H. (Islington).
 Ponter, Hilda (Lower Edmonton).
 Pearson, C. H. (Bow).
 "Patriotic" (Stockport).
 Paull, B. J. (Port Pirie, S. Australia).
 Phipps, G. S. (Karalee, W. Australia).
 Pittam, H. (Northampton).
 Robinson, Lewis (New Zealand).
 Reid, T. (West Australia).
 R. N. R. (Southend-on-Sea).
 Read, Cyril V. (Sheffield).
 Rawkins, R. W. (Shepherd's Bush).
 R. G. (Greenock).
 R. G. G. (Yeovil).
 Randerson, Harold (Hull).
 Roberts, Charles (Plaiستow).
 R. C. L.
 Scott, Percy E. (Acton Green).
 Steyn, B. J. (Vriededorp).
 Steven, James S., and Chum.
 Stokes, V. (Nottingham).
 Siminon, B. D. N. (Ramsgate).
 Shackleton, A. (Natal, S.A.).
 Smith, L. (Walthamstow).
 Steele, N. J. (Clapham).
 "Sea Scout" (Goole).
 Smith, F. H. (Battersea).
 Stephens, H. (Sheffield).
 Stokes, E. (Manchester).
 Stanley, Frank (Greenheys).
 Smith, Charles (Edinburgh).
 "Sunbeam" (Birmingham).
 "Submarine" (Northampton).
 Stratton, A. M. (Glasgow).
 "Scotch Canuck" (Canada).
 Sharp, C. (Poplar).
 "Satisfied" (S. Wigston).
 "Suggestive" (Birmingham).
 Stewart, L. (New South Wales).
 Smith, Hilda E. (Seven Kings).
 Smith, Private Arthur (Edinburgh).
 S. M. (Clapham Junction).
 Sienna, B. G. (Johannesburg, S.A.).
 "Two Loyal Readers" (Stoke Newington).
 "Three Bradford Chums."
 "Tipperary" (Plaiستow).
 "Three Staunch Chums" (Walsall).
 "Two Birmingham Tomboys."

ASTONISHING CASH PRIZE OFFER BY ANSWERS.

2 "FIRSTS" OF £250 EACH | 2 "SECONDS" OF £25 EACH | 2 "THIRDS" OF £10 EACH

5 Prizes of £5 each; 10 Prizes of £1 each; 100 Prizes 5/- each; 300 Prizes of 2/6 each. And 2,000 "Presentation Coupons," each of which entitles the winner to FOUR FREE EFFORTS in a subsequent competition.

The above magnificent prizes are offered this week for

NEWSIMPLETS

The easiest and best skill competition ever invented.

THE WAY TO MAKE NEWSIMPLETS

and to win big money is as follows:

First take one of the examples given below, or any One Word or TWO or THREE CONSECUTIVE Words in this week's ANSWERS or ANSWERS' LIBRARY, and then think out a phrase of not more than four words which has some relation to the example or the words chosen.

One of the words of the phrase must contain one of the letters in the example. The other words may contain any letters whether they are in the example or not.

FOR INSTANCE:

EXAMPLE—Our Doubles week: NEWSIMPLET: Prizes for all.

EXAMPLE—Admiral von Tirpitz: NEWSIMPLET: Has most wonderful whiskers.

When you have constructed your Newsimplets write them in the Coupon on this page, enclose a postal order for sixpence, and send it addressed to ANSWERS Newsimplets No. 1, G.P.O., Box 651, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C., so as to reach that address not later than Wednesday, October 20th.

REMEMBER ALL BIG PRIZES ARE DOUBLED THIS WEEK.

THERE ARE 2 FIRSTS OF £250 EACH, 2 SECONDS OF £25 EACH,

And 2417 Other Prizes. You MUST win one of these.

EXAMPLES YOU MAY USE (SEE ABOVE).

Our Doubles week	They tell us	Awkward corner	Preparing for winter	No one denied that
Back to the land	Out of pocket expenses	Looking upwards	The greatest hero	Father Time
It's exciting when	Every time a winner	Our tame poet	Unloudedly true	Our rulers
Gloomy outlook	If we hesitate	All rafter unprepared	Lost opportunity	Brilliant repartee
No time lost	At the front door	Suspicious lights	In his wife's name	My boy's ambition
Germany will regret	Not at all nice	The right note	Arguing the point	The enemy retires

COUPON.

P.O. No. 1 Newsimplets Competition in accordance with the rules and conditions announced in "Answers" dated October 20th, and agree to accept the published decision as final and finally binding.

Closing Date, Wednesday, Oct. 20th, No. 1.

SIGNED: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 EXAMPLE: Page. Column. Line.
 NEWSIMPLET (This space need not be filled in Example is taken from list.)
 (Not more than four words may be used. Send the whole coupon, even if only one example is used.)
 EXAMPLE: Page. Column. Line.

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LITTLE REX The English Boy Actor;

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