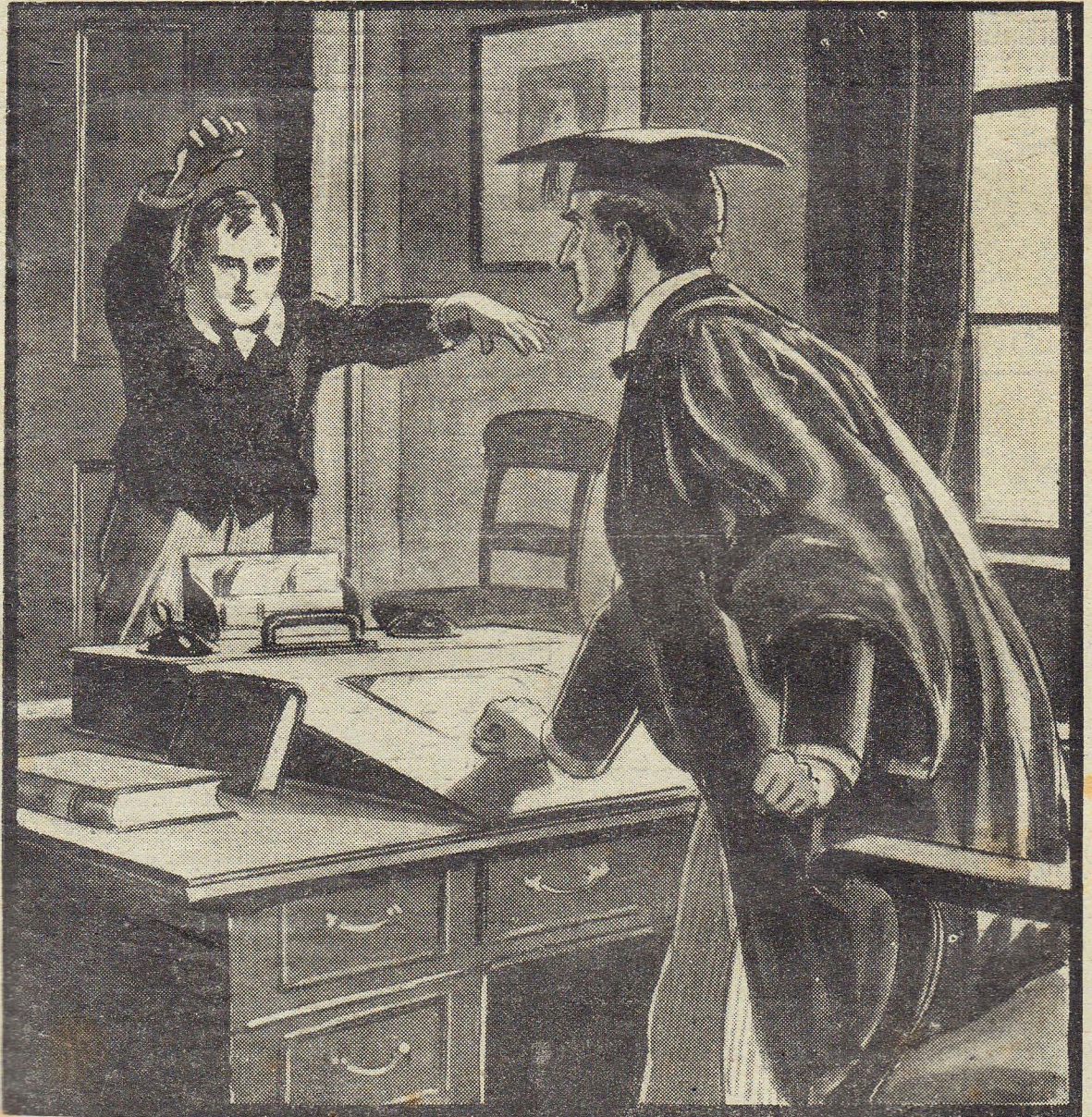
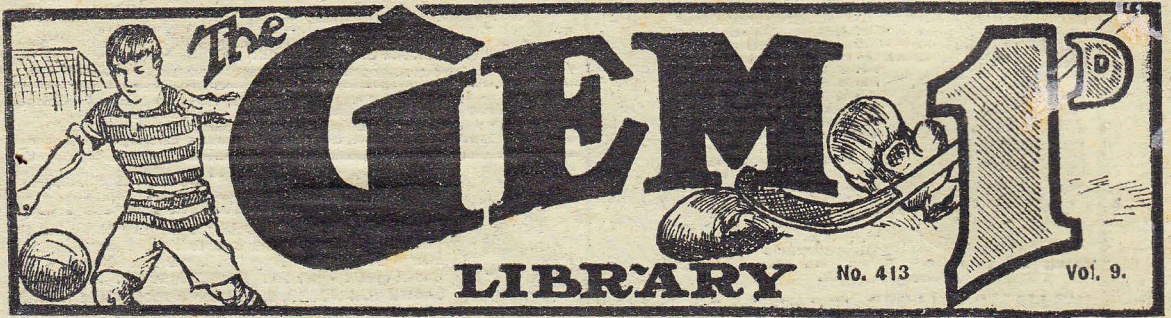


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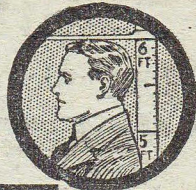


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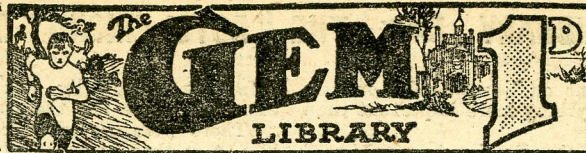
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By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



"Fix your eyes on mine!" thundered Grundy. "I command you." He began to make magic passes across the table, and then Tom Merry understood, for Grundy was trying to hypnotise him. "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 10.)

CHAPTER 1.

Backing up the Empire.

"NO footer this afternoon!"
Monty Lowther made that announcement in Tom Merry's study.

Tom Merry and Manners stared. And Tom Merry replied promptly:

"Rats!"

To which Monty Lowther rejoined cheerfully:

"Same to you, dear boy, and many of 'em!"

"What are you burbling about?" demanded Tom indignantly. "Why, it's lovely weather for footer—for once! And we're going to beat the New House!"

"Not this afternoon," said Lowther, with a shake of the head. "Footer's going to be cut for once."

"Bosh!"

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"Something more important on," explained Lowther. "Fathead! There isn't anything more important than footer!"

"What about backing up the Empire in war-time?" demanded Monty Lowther severely. "Haven't you read any of the speeches of our great statesmen? There's enough of 'em, goodness knows! Somebody has calculated that there's an epoch-making speech made at home for every round of ammunition that's fired at the Front. That shows that our great statesmen are doing their bit! It's up to us to follow their noble example. They call upon us to back up the Empire."

"What the merry dickens—"

"And we're going to do it!" said Lowther. "We can put off footer for once for a patriotic purpose like that."

"If you're not potty, what the dickens are you driving at?" demanded Manners. "How are we going to back up the Empire by cutting footer on a half-holiday?"

"By taking half-crown seats."

"Eh?"

"And getting other chaps to come along and do the same."

"What seats? Where?" shrieked Tom Merry.

"At the Empire."

"Eh? What Empire?"

"The Wayland Empire, of course," said Lowther. "What Empire did you think I meant?"

"You fathead! I thought you were speaking of the British Empire!"

"The British Empire is getting on all right," said Lowther. "In spite of our great statesmen—I mean, of course, because of our great statesmen—the British Empire is all serene! It's the Wayland Empire I'm worrying about."

"Blow the Wayland Empire!" growled Tom Merry. "Catch me cutting a footer match to go to a blessed music-hall!"

"It's an extra special performance!"

"Oh, rats!"

"And the Head approves—"

"Bow-wow!"

"And all takings this afternoon are to go to the Red Cross," said Monty Lowther. "Now, do you understand, you duffer?"

"Oh!" said Tom Merry.

"You see, it's a special matinee in aid of the Red Cross funds," Monty Lowther said. "I've heard it from Grundy. He's going—he's taken three half-guinea seats—you know how he splashes his money about. We can't splash like Grundy, but we're going to do our bit. Half-crowns are our mark!"

"What's the show like?" asked Manners.

"Oh, there's a trick cyclist and a Yankee hypnotist and comic songs and patriotic songs and a trapeze artist and a sketch," said Lowther. "Same old bizney—same old game! 'Tain't the entertainment. It's backing up the Empire, you know!"

"Well, I suppose it is backing up the Empire in a way, to help the Red Cross," said Tom Merry. "But we're fixed to play Figgins & Co. this afternoon!"

"Figgins is going if you do."

"The dickens he is!"

"Study No. 6 are going—Gussy is standing seats all round. Kangaroo is going with his pals. In fact, everybody's doing it!"

"Well, if Figgins & Co. are going, we may as well go," said Tom Merry. "Rotten to spend an afternoon like this indoors—but it's for the good of the cause, I suppose! Sure all the takings are going to the Red Cross?"

"Every red cent."

"Then it's a go."

"Bravo! We'll get over on our bikes—we can go into the half-crown seats in Norfolks," said Lowther. "Grundy and Wilkins and Gunn will have to dress decently for the stalls—that's one of the penalties of belonging to the idle rich. So come and get your bibs and tuckers on."

"Right-ho!"

Tom Merry put his football list into his pocket, and

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Manners regretfully put away his camera, and the Terrible Three left the study.

There were several voices speaking at once in Study No. 6 as they passed, and they paused to look in.

Blake and Herries and Digby were all addressing remarks at once to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth. Their remarks were:

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Duffer!"

"Hallo! Trouble in the family?" asked Tom Merry cheerfully. "Wherefore that lofty frown upon the noble brow of the great Gustavus?"

"Pway, don't be an ass, Tom Mewwy! I insist upon dwessin' respectably when I am goin' to an entahtainment! These boundahs want me to wide ovah to Wayland in twousah-clips."

"That all?" asked Monty Lowther, in astonishment. "Yaas!"

"Jolly cold in this weather!" said Lowther, with a shake of the head. "I should make it trousers, too!"

"You uttah ass! I mean that Blake does not want me to change my clobber! The duffah thinks I can put on twousah-clips, and wide as I am."

"Wide as you are! But you are not very wide—not so wide as Fatty Wynn, anyway!"

"You are perfectly well awah of what I mean, Lowthah, you funnay ass! When I say wide, I mean wide—not wide."

"Clear as mud!" agreed Lowther.

"I am goin' to dwess respectably, and I shall not be more than an hour changin'," said Arthur Augustus. "I am willin' to huwvy. But I uttahly wefuse to wide as I am on those beastlay mudday woads! Besides, Miss Mawie is goin'. Talbot has already started with her, and they are takin' the twain. I am not goin' to let Miss Mawie see me lookin' mudday and slovenly."

"Listen to him!" exclaimed Blake exasperated. "He wants to waste the funds of the study in railway-fares. Of course, we're not allowing it in these hard times. Gussy is going on his bike."

"I am sowwy, Blake, but I am goin' to do nothin' of the sort! The woads are vewy mudday, and Miss Mawie—"

"But Miss Marie won't notice you if Talbot's there," said Digby.

Dig meant this remark to be comforting. But it only earned him a freezing stare from the Honourable Arthur Augustus.

"We'll go and get the bikes out," said Blake. "We shall be ready in five minutes, Gussy!"

"I shall be weady in an hour, Blake."

"You'll miss the first part of the performance," said Manners.

"That is a twifin' considervation, Mannahs. We are weally goin' to back up the Wed Cwoss—not for the show."

"But we want to see the show, as we're paying for it!" howled Blake.

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus quitted the study to end the discussion. He made his way to the dormitory to change. Arthur Augustus was a very obliging fellow. But there were limits. To appear at a matinee in muddy clobber when there was a lady present was past the limit—miles past it. Arthur Augustus was determined.

So was Jack Blake.

"You fellows biking it?" asked Blake.

"Yes, rather! We've no oof to waste in railway-fares!"

"Then you can come along with us, and lend a hand with Gussy," said Blake. "He's going to bike it, too."

"But he's gone to get into his best clobber," ejaculated Tom, "and the roads are really awful, you know, especially the short cut!"

"That's Gussy's look-out. He's going to bike it if we have to tie him on the bike!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three chuckled as they went to their dormitory to change into Norfolks. Grundy and Wilkins and Gunn were there, changing. Grundy of the Shell

had booked half-guinea stalls by telephone. Grundy was rolling in money, and very lavish with it, and, as he said to Wilkins and Gunn, it was a good cause. Wilkins and Gunn, who had no objection whatever to half-guinea stalls, so long as they were not called upon to pay for them, agreed heartily.

The three were getting into their best "bib and tucker" to do honour to the occasion. Grundy had arranged for a trap to drive him over with his friends—George Alfred Grundy did everything in great style. The Terrible Three, who had no spare cash for stalls or traps, were content with the humbler push-bike. It took them about three minutes to change, changing clothes being a much more speedy operation with them than with the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Then they sallied forth and joined Blake & Co. at the bike-shed.

CHAPTER 2.

A Very Enjoyable Spin.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was very busy in the Fourth-Form dormitory.

"Clobber" that was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever was laid out on his bed, and he was peeling off his everyday garments, when Jack Blake came into the dormitory.

"You fellahs goin' on bikes?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Yes."

"Good-bye, then! I shall see you at Wayland."

"You will," agreed Blake. "Come on!"

"I can hardly come in this state, Blake."

"Well, that's so," admitted Blake. "I give you three ticks to get into your clobber!"

"Weally, Blake— Bai Jove! What are you doin' with that squirt, you ass?"

Blake had produced a squirt, and he was taking aim at his elegant chum. Arthur Augustus dodged behind a bed.

"If you squirt that watah ovah me, you ass—"

"It isn't water," said Blake cheerily; "it's red ink!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"And if you're more than three minutes gettin' into your clobber, you get it!" said Blake. "Now, get a move on!"

"You uttah ass!"

"Time's going!" said Blake.

"If you squirt that howwid wed ink at me, you beast—"

"Nearly a minute gone!"

"I pwesume you undahstand that if you ink my clobber I shall give you a feahful thwashin', Blake?" said Arthur Augustus, breathing hard through his nose.

"Will that get the ink off the clobber?" asked Blake.

"Bai Jove!"

"Minute gone! Buck up! I don't want to waste this ink in these hard times," said Blake. "You know what the Prime Minister says about national economy. Don't force me to waste ink, Gussy. If the war lasts fifteen years the last drop of ink may win it—perhaps! Get a move on!"

Arthur Augustus glared at Jack Blake, but he read deadly determination in Blake's eyes. The fate of his best clobber was at stake.

Arthur Augustus feared no foe. He would have faced the most ferocious Hun without a tremor. But damage to his best clobber was a peril before which the most courageous heart might falter.

There was no arguing with a squirt full of red ink. Arthur Augustus did not attempt the impossible. He bundled into his clothes.

It was a lightning change.

If anybody had told Arthur Augustus that he could change in two minutes, Arthur Augustus would have laughed the idea to scorn. But he did it. The beautifully-creased trousers, the natty boots, the elegant Eton jacket and handsome waistcoat, the nobby tie—all of them seemed to jump, as it were, into their places on the person of the Honourable Arthur Augustus. A revolver pointed at his head could not have done it, but a squirt of red ink was another matter.

"Bravo, Gussy!" said Blake admiringly. "You never know what you can do till you come to do it, you know."

"I wegard you as an uttah beast, Blake!"

"Good! Now, where's your cap?"

"I am takin' a toppah."

"Better not."

"I insist upon goin' in a toppah!"

"Well, if you won't be advised, you won't," said Blake.

"Hurry up with the topper! This squirt will go off in a minute!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"March!"

"I wefuse!"

"Then here goes!"

"Stop!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I am goin'!"

"Buck up, then!"

Breathing hard, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy marched out of the dormitory, covered by the squirt. He marched downstairs, and out into the quadrangle.

"I shall be earlay for the twain," he said. "It is uttably useless startin' now, Blake."

"Never mind the train! Come on!"

"I wegard you— Stop, you wottah! I'm goin'!"

Arthur Augustus, pink with wrath, walked down to the gates. Blake followed him cheerily into the road. Outside the school gates there were five juniors waiting, with seven bikes. Arthur Augustus glanced at them.

"Here he is!" said Herries. "Come on, Gussy! Here's your bike! I've got it out for you."

"I am not bikin' this aftahnoon, Hewwies."

"Your mistake—you are!" said Blake. "Jump on!"

"I uttably wefuse to do anythin' of the sort!"

"Oh, jump on, Gussy!" urged Tom Merry. "We shall be late for the matinee at this rate, and we've cut the footer for it, you know."

"I wefuse to jump on!"

"Are you getting on that bike, or are you going to be put on?" roared Blake.

"Wubbish!"

"Collar him!"

"I wefuse to be collahed! Hands off, you wottahs! Yawwooh!"

"Up with him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners and Lowther held the bike. Blake and Herries and Digby laid firm hands upon Arthur Augustus. Wriggling wildly, the swell of St. Jim's was swept off his feet and planted on the bike.

"Oh, you wottahs! Oh, cwumbs!"

"Put your hoofs on the pedals!"

"I wefuse!"

"Stick his hoofs on the pedals, Dig!"

"Here you are!" grinned Dig.

"Now, then, Gussy—start, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wefuse—I uttably wefuse— Oh, you wottahs!"

Arthur Augustus' noble feet were planted forcibly on the pedals. He jerked them off, lunging wildly on the swaying bike.

"Now let go!" chuckled Blake. "If he wants to tumble in the mud—"

"Yawwooh! Hold me, you fatheads! I shall fall *evah* if you let go!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Well, hold him," said Blake. "Hold him till I get on my jigger. Now, then!"

Blake mounted on one side of Arthur Augustus, Digby on the other. They took an arm each of the elegant junior. Lowther obligingly started Arthur Augustus, and the three cyclists rode away together.

"I wefuse to wide with you wottahs!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"Looks to me as if you'll have to!" remarked Blake, as he ground away at the pedals. "If we let go, you'll go down in the mud! But please yourself!"

"This is an outwage!"

"Go hon!"

"I wegard you as uttah beasts!"

"Hear, hear! Kim on!"

Arthur Augustus had to ride. His feet had to go round with the pedals, and he had no choice in the matter. After a knock or two from the revolving pedals, he decided.

And the thought of a fall in the muddy road made him shiver. With his shining silk topper on the back of his head, and his elegant necktie flying out in the breeze, he rode between his devoted chums. His face was crimson

with wrath. Behind the three came Herries and Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, chuckling.

Arthur Augustus pedalled on furiously for a few minutes. Then he put on his back-pedal brake.

The three slowed down.

"Mind, we're not stopping," said Blake. "If you put the brake on, Gussy, we go down—all together. I don't mind if you don't."

Arthur Augustus shuddered. He released the brake at once. There was thick mud along the road—thick and greasy. A skid might have landed the three of them in the ditch, and the consequences would have been simply awful. Blake and Digby might have been prepared to face those awful consequences—not so Arthur Augustus.

He pedalled on again.

There was a shout from behind the cyclists.

"Get out of the way, you muddy bounders!"

A trap came dashing by. It was Grundy's trap, with Grundy and Gunn and Wilkins in it. The cyclists drew aside, and the trap thundered by, casting great splashes of mud upon the wheelers. Grundy and Wilkins and Gunn grinned down on them.

"Hallo! Out mud-collecting?" chortled Grundy.

"Keep clear, you silly ass!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Grundy & Co.

They thundered by close to the cyclists, splashing them with mud, and bowled on merrily down the lane, yelling with laughter.

"Oh, ewikey!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I am mudday already! Look at my twousahs!"

"Oh, blow your trousers!" growled Blake. "I'm muddy, too. I'll scalp that idiot Grundy for this!"

"Look at my hat!"

"Bless your hat!"

"Let go my arms, you wottahs! My hat is blowin' off!"

"Well, you shouldn't come out cycling in a topper!"

"Weally, you beast—"

"Set his hat straight for him, Dig!"

Digby grabbed at the hat, and tilted it over Gussy's forehead. The beautiful nap of that topper was not improved by Dig's hasty grab at it. Neither did it feel comfortable tilted over the eyes. Arthur Augustus breathed wrath and fury as he pedalled on.

The wheelers turned into the short cut, where the mud was thicker and slushier. It was certainly a ride for which one should have put on one's oldest clothes.

Arthur Augustus was clad in his best. But they did not look "best" by the time half a mile had been covered.

As he rode with his arms in the grip of his devoted pals, he could not avoid puddles, and the puddles were innumerable.

"Will you let me go, you feahful beasts?" he gasped at last.

"Only if you promise to ride with us like a good boy," said Blake.

"You wottah! I pwomise!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Honour bright?"

"Yaas, you feahful wuffian!"

"Done!" said Blake.

Arthur Augustus was released, and he grasped his handle-bars. He rode on more comfortably then, but his face was a study. Some of the splashes reached his silk topper. A few splashes did not hurt the caps of the other juniors, but with that shining topper it was a different matter. By the time the party reached Wayland, Arthur Augustus felt as if he had had a mud-bath.

"Here we are!" said Blake, as he jumped off his machine. "Shove the bikes into the station; we'll trot down to the Empire."

"I wefuse to go to the Empiah in this state!"

"Take his arm, Herries!"

"Hewwies, you beast—"

"Take his other arm, Dig. You— We'll look after the bikes."

"I wefuse! Hewwies, I shall strike you! Dig, I shall thwash you! I decline—"

Arthur Augustus was marched off, still declining. Blake and the Terrible Three put up the machines, and followed, grinning. They arrived in great spirits at the

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Wayland Empire—all excepting Arthur Augustus. He was furious.

"This way in," said Blake. "Here's where you take the tickets, Gussy."

"I wefuse to take the tickets, Blake!"

Blake had a pained look.

"Oh, Gussy, after offering to stand treat for the study!" he murmured. "I'm surprised at you. After we've saved your railway fare for you, too. Is there such a thing as gratitude in this world, I wonder?"

"You—you unspeakable wostah! I will take three tickets for you fellahs, but I will not take a ticket for myself."

"But you must, old chap. We can't countenance your trying to dodge in without a ticket. 'Tain't honest."

"You uttah ass, you know I do not mean anythin' of the sort! I am not goin' in!"

"Bow-wow!"

Arthur Augustus, breathing hard, took three tickets. Blake promptly took a fourth, and his three chums marched Arthur Augustus in. Exasperated as the swell of St. Jim's was, he did not care to start a rough-and-tumble in the theatre vestibule. He resigned himself to his fate, and marched in. The seven juniors found seats all in a row, and sat down.

"In good time," said Blake. "The orchestra's only tuning up—unless that's a bit of Debussy's music. We've saved you from missing the show, Gussy."

"Pway don't speak to me, Blake. I wegard you as a wottah!"

"Hallo!" Grundy of the Snell looked round in the stalls, several rows in advance of Tom Merry & Co. "My hat! What a slovenly gang! Dash it all, D'Arcy, you might wash your face when you're going to a theatre!"

"Is my face mudday, Blake?"

"Only a splash or two," said Blake. "There's a daub on your nose, and another under your eye, and one on your chin. Nothing to speak of."

Arthur Augustus jerked out his handkerchief and a pocket-mirror, and began to rub. His face was crimson when he had finished. By that time the entertainment was beginning.

CHAPTER 3.

Grundy Has a New Idea!

"NOT much of a show, so far," remarked George Alfred Grundy, with a yawn, when the third item of the programme came to an end.

"Oh, 'tain't so bad," said Wilkins.

"These seats are jolly comfy, anyway. Better than crowding back there with those blessed fags!"

"Next item, Dr. Huuk," said Gunn, reading from the programme. "Dr. Cornelius K. Huuk, American hypnotist. Some spoof rot, I suppose."

"Hypnotist—eh?" said Grundy. "I'm rather interested in hypnotism."

"Spoof, I expect," said Gunn.

"Oh, I don't know," remarked Grundy thoughtfully. "Of course, this fellow may be a spoofer, as he's a Yankee. But I believe in hypnotism myself. It's the power of the eye, you know, and a strong will and personality over a weaker personality. A fellow like me—"

"Like you?" said Wilkins.

"Yes, a fellow like me would make a good hypnotist, I should say. I've got an iron will."

"And a wooden head!" murmured Wilkins.

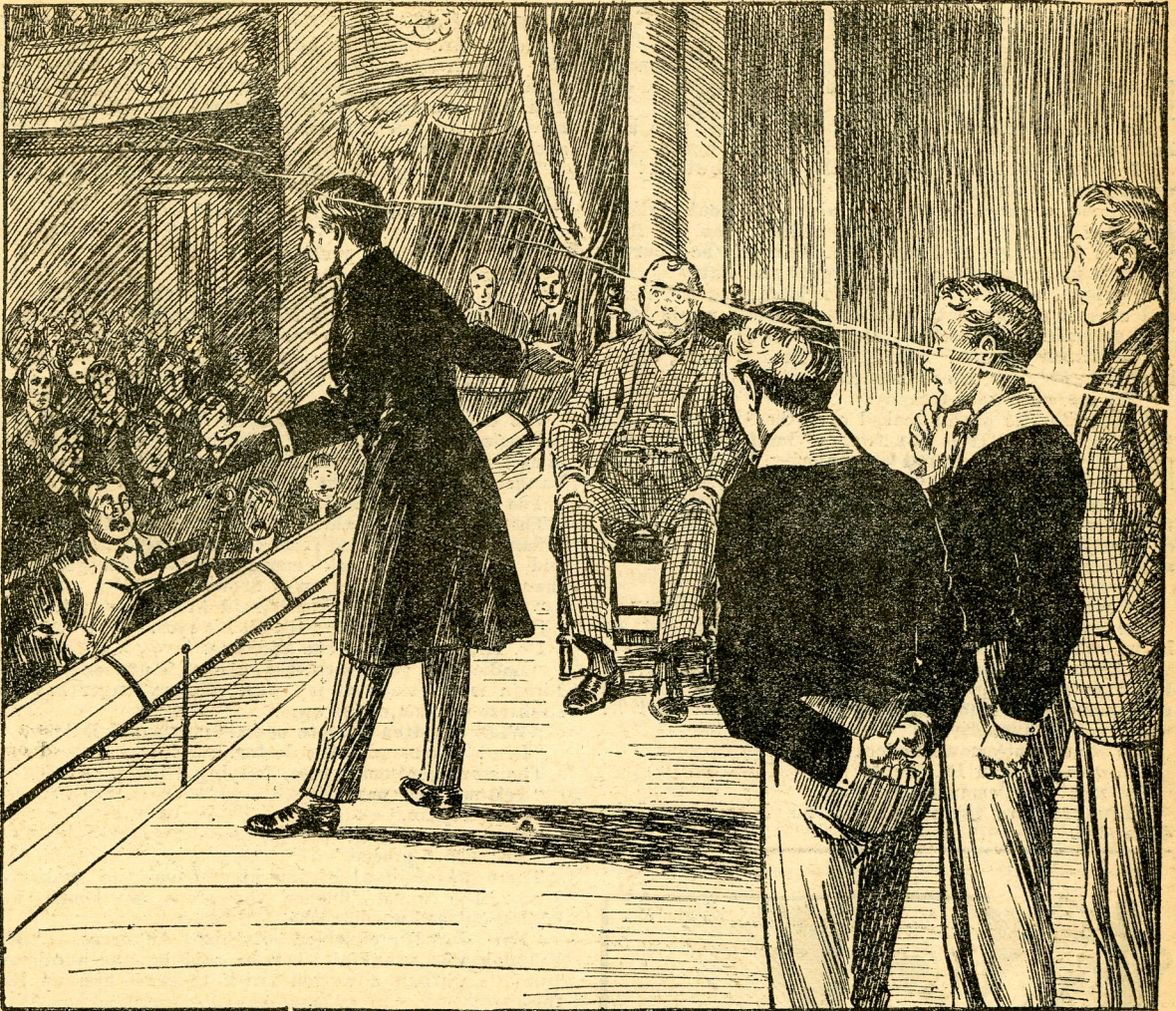
"What did you say, Wilkins?"

"I say it's very likely, Grundy, old chap. I shouldn't wonder if you'd make a first-rate hypnotist," said Wilkins, remembering that Grundy had paid for the seats.

"You have to look a fellow steadily in the face, and quell him," said Grundy thoughtfully. "Sort of terror of your glance, you know."

"Well, I dare say you could frighten a chap by looking him in the face," remarked Gunn.

Grundy nodded thoughtfully, and Wilkins, for some reason, chuckled. The St. Jim's juniors turned their



Dr. Hunk turned to the audience. "Ladies and gentlemen, the 'fluence is now on. Colonel Pipkin is the slave of my will, and he no longer has the slightest volition of his own." "What a wotten state to be in," murmured D'Arcy. (See Chapter 3.)

attention to the stage. Dr. Cornelius K. Hunk had appeared.

He was a little thin man, in a tight black frock-coat that made him look thinner. His features were sharp and pointed, his nose long and beaklike, his chin almost conical, his forehead bumpy. On the tip of his chin was a little grey beard, somewhat like that worn by a billy-goat. His eyes were deep-set and very sharp. When he spoke it was with a nasal twang, which betrayed that he hailed from the land where the wooden nutmegs are made.

He strutted rather than walked on the stage, every movement of his skinny and ungainly person showing what a very high opinion he entertained of himself.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "That chap is a wegulah boundah, deah boys. I wondah who his tailah is? Look at the knees of his twousahs, bai Jove!"

The doctor—if he was a doctor, as the programme declared—was accompanied by a little negro in Oriental costume. The little black was promptly placed under the weird influence of the hypnotist, by means of a steady stare and certain curious passes of the hands. Dr. Hunk's skinny hand waved rhythmically before his grinning black face, and the grin died away, and the little black assumed a sleepy expression.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Dr. Hunk, "Pompey is now under the 'fluence, I guess. Pomp!"

"Yes, massa!" said the assistant, in a sleepy voice.

"Your name is Lord Kitchener, Pomp."

"Yes, massa."

"Now, Pomp, what's your name?"

"Lord Kitchener, massa."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "That is vewy remarkable. Fancy makin' that little black boundah believe that he is Lord Kitchenah!"

"Yes, if he does," grinned Monty Lowther. "I fancy it's spoof, my innocent Gustavus."

"Oh, bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"

The doctor proceeded to put the hypnotised black through several absurd tricks. He gave him a cushion, assuring him that it was a pumpkin, and Pomp proceeded to attempt to eat it. He told Pomp that there was a chair behind him, and Pomp sat down, and bumped on the stage, amid loud laughter from the audience. He told Pomp that he was a cat, and Pomp mewed dismally.

Then the doctor turned to the audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen, in order to demonstrate that there is no deception, I shall be glad if a gentleman will step out of the audience and allow me to put the 'fluence on him. No harm will be done."

There was a buzz.

"By gum," said Grundy, "I'm going in for that! I'll jolly soon see whether he's spoofing or not!"

Up jumped Grundy of the Shell. Grundy had no objection to coming into the public eye; in fact, he rather liked it.

Lowther jerked at Arthur Augustus' sleeve.

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NEXT WEDNESDAY: "THE BOUNDER OF ST. JIM'S!"

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

"Go it, Gussy!"
 "Weally, Lowthah, it is wathah widiculous."
 "Rats! Isn't it a D'Arcy's place to lead?" demanded Lowther. "It would be ripping to see you trying to eat your hat, and to tie yourself into a sailor's knot."
 The juniors chuckled, and Arthur Augustus, who had half risen, planted himself firmly in his seat again. "I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort, Lowthah! I wegard you as an ass!"

But there were plenty of takers, without Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Grundy of the Shell was the first to reach the stage, and next came Kerr of the Fourth, who was in the audience with Figgins and Fatty Wyan. Mr. Griggs, a local "nut" of Wayland, was the next, and a stout old gentleman followed. There would have been several more, but the "doctor" waved his hand.

"Gentlemen, many thanks! But time is short, and I have time only for one experiment."

"Fry me, sir!" said Grundy.
 "Ahem!" The doctor looked over the four applicants for hypnotism. "It is a matter of indifference to me, personally, so I will decide by seniority. Which of you is the eldest?"

It was rather a superfluous question, as two of the fellows were junior schoolboys, and another a young man of twenty-five. Evidently the stout gentleman, who looked about sixty, was the eldest.

The doctor made him a sign to come forward. All eyes were on the doctor and the stout gentleman. The hypnotising of Pompey had been comic, but as he was the hypnotist's assistant, there was no evidence that the whole affair was not prearranged. But if Dr. Hunk succeeded in hypnotising a stranger, selected at random from the audience, it was evident that he was a potent hypnotist.

The stout gentleman was looking a little nervous. "Now—" began Dr. Hunk.

The stout gentleman interrupted. "You are sure there will be no harm done?" he demanded.

"None at all," smiled the doctor. "Reassure yourself, my dear sir. None at all. I simply place you under the 'fluence—you become the slave of my will—then, with a few passes, I restore you to your ordinary state. You will remember nothing of what has passed. Have no fear! If you feel nervous, pray retire, and allow another gentleman to take your place."

"Oh, no, I'll go through with it now," said the stout gentleman.

"Very good! Your name, please?"
 "Colonel Pipkin."

"Ah! A military gentleman?"
 "Retired, sir."

"Very good! Now, Colonel Pipkin, pray seat yourself here! Thank you! Now look me straight in the eyes! Exactly! Fix your eyes upon mine! Thank you!"

Dr. Hunk fixed his keen, twinkling eyes upon those of the retired colonel, and began to make passes with his thin claw-like hands.

The expression on the colonel's face was dogged and determined. He looked as if he had resolved to nerve himself to the utmost, and to defy the "influence" the Yankee hypnotist sought to put him under.

The audience watched with keen interest. There was quite a thrill of excitement as the dogged, defiant expression faded from the stout gentleman's face, and a bewildered look came there, which gradually changed into an expression of drowsiness.

"Bai Jove! It's workin'!" said Arthur Augustus. Grundy was watching with all his eyes.

Dr. Hunk turned to the audience. "Ladies and gentlemen, the 'fluence is now on! Colonel Pipkin is the slave of my will. He no longer has the slightest volition of his own!"

"What a wotten state to be in!" murmured D'Arcy. "Rise!" commanded the doctor.

The stout gentleman rose, swaying a little. "Tell me your name!"

"Silas Pipkin."
 "You are a colonel?"
 "No; I'm a grocer."

There was a howl of laughter from the audience. Under the weird 'fluence the stout gentleman was letting out awkward truths.

"Bai Jove!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "The boundah was swankin' when he said he was a colonel. But it's wathah a wotten twick to show him up like this!"

"Oh! You are a grocer, are you?" said the doctor. "Do you ever put sand in your sugar?"

"Only in war-time."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now listen to me!" said the doctor. "Your name is Winston Churchill. Got that?"

"Yes."
 "What's your name?"

"Winston Churchill," came the unhesitating reply. There was a murmur of applause. Evidently the stout gentleman was completely under the 'fluence.

CHAPTER 4.
 The Hypnotist.

TOM MERRY & Co. were watching the peculiar scene with keen interest now. But their interest was nothing compared to that of George Alfred Grundy. Grundy's eyes were simply glued upon Mr. Pipkin and the doctor. Deep thoughts were working in George Alfred's powerful brain.

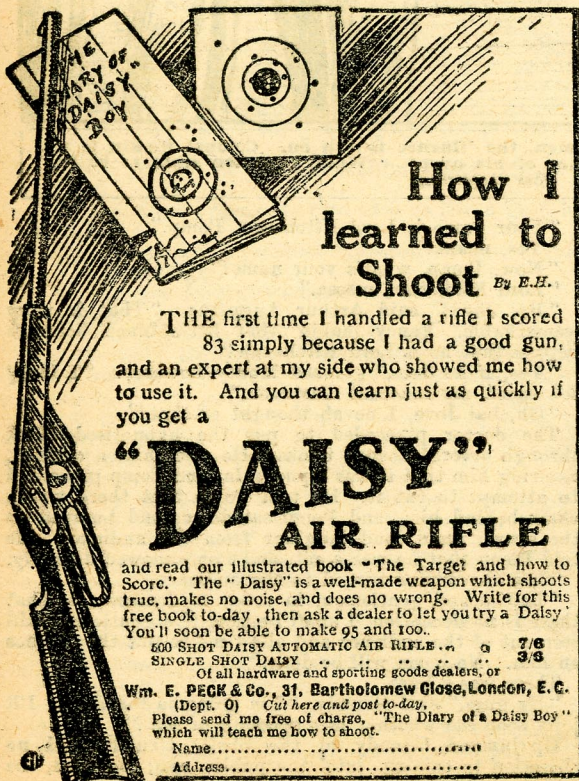
"Looks the real thing—what?" he whispered to Wilkins.

Grundy and Kerr and Mr. Griggs had now returned to their places.

"It does, by Jove!" admitted Wilkins. "The old Johnny doesn't know his own name!" said Gunn, with a low whistle. "Blessed if I'd go through anything like that! Might let out something you want to keep dark!"

The doctor glanced triumphantly at the audience. He had made an impression. But he was not finished yet.

"Now, Mr. Churchill, as you've been in the Cabinet, you can tell us some State secrets," he said.



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"Ha, ha, ha!"

The stout gentleman looked puzzled.

"Why did you send the Naval Brigade to Antwerp?" demanded the doctor.

"I don't know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I guess nobody knows!" remarked the doctor, and there was a fresh burst of laughter. "Now, sir, you are a frog. Got that?"

"Yes."

"What are you?"

"A frog," said the stout gentleman submissively.

"Jump!"

The stout gentleman proceeded to jump, amid shouts of laughter.

"Stop!" commanded the doctor.

The stout gentleman stopped.

"Now, sir, you are a schoolboy, and I am your master. Twice one?"

"Two," said the stout gentleman.

"Twice two?"

"Four."

"Twice a hundred and forty-six?"

The stout gentleman hesitated.

"You cannot do that simple sum? Go into the corner, and stand upon your head!"

The stout gentleman went into a corner, and proceeded very clumsily to stand upon his head. He rolled over on the stage with a bump.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! That's wathah wuff!"

The stout gentleman sat dazedly. Dr. Hunk proceeded to make the magic passes before his face, this time backwards. The effect was electrical. The stout gentleman seemed to awaken as from a deep dream. He gazed around him.

"Wha-at has happened? Have I—I fallen down?" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Pipkin scrambled to his feet. He looked very angry.

"Have you made me go through ridiculous antics?" he shouted. "I protest! You have no right, sir, to play such tricks upon a colonel in his Majesty's Army!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The audience yelled with merriment. After Mr. Pipkin's confession while under the influence, his lofty attitude struck them as very funny. The doctor made soothing gestures.

"No harm done, sir—no harm at all! You have talked a little freely, that is all. You undertook this test, sir, of your own free will. I appeal to the ladies and gentlemen in front!"

"Bravo!"

"Quite right!"

The stout gentleman frowned majestically, and came off the stage, looking very disturbed. He did not go back to his seat, but left the theatre at once.

Then Dr. Hunk made his bow to the audience, and retired amid loud applause.

"By gum!" said Grundy. "That was ripping! He's a jolly good hypnotist. The genuine thing, no mistake about that! Bravo!"

George Alfred Grundy hardly noticed the turns that followed. His thoughts were elsewhere. In the middle of the trick-cycling act Grundy astonished Wilkins by suddenly waving his hands before his face. Wilkins stared at him.

"Hallo! What's the game?" he demanded.

"You don't feel anything coming on?" asked Grundy anxiously.

"Eh?"

"Sort of sleepy?"

"Sleepy? No! What the thunder are you driving at?" Grundy looked disappointed.

"I suppose I haven't got it right!" he said. "All serene! I was only trying the doctor's passes on you!"

"Oh! Blessed if I didn't think you'd gone mad!" said Wilkins.

Grundy grunted, and relapsed into silence, with wrinkled brows. He was evidently trying to recall the

exact passes the American doctor had used to reduce his victims to the hypnotic state.

When the entertainment was over the juniors rose to go, and Grundy paused suddenly.

"Gunn, old man——"

"Hallo!" said Gunn. "Dropped something?"

"No, no! Look me in the eyes!"

"L-l-look you in the—the eyes?" stuttered Gunn.

"Yes. Keep still!" Grundy waved his large hands before Gunn's face, and Gunn jumped back in alarm.

"What are you punching at me for, you silly ass?" he demanded.

"Oh, you crass idiot!" said Grundy. "I wasn't punching at you. I was trying the passes. I think I've got 'em right. Stand still!"

"Rats!" said Gunn promptly. "Don't play the giddy ax!"

And Gunn followed Wilkins. Grundy snorted and followed him. George Alfred was evidently thoroughly taken with the idea of becoming a hypnotist, being, as he had explained, peculiarly qualified by nature for the part, owing to his iron will and powerful personality. Somehow his study-mates did not seem enthusiastic about it. But that was just like Wilkins and Gunn. Grundy had a real regard for his two faithful chums, but he often felt that his brains were thrown away in No. 8 Study.

"Pway don't twead on my feet, Gwunday!" remonstrated Arthur Augustus, as the burly Shell fellow pushed into him in the departing crowd. Grundy was so deep in thought that he hardly saw where he was going.

"Oh, rats!" said Grundy. "I think I've got it."

"Eh?"

"Stand still a minute, D'Arcy!" Grundy was eager to experiment. He drew the astonished swell of St. Jim's aside from the crowd. "Stand there for a minute! Look me in the eyes!"

"Wha-a-at?"

Grundy made rapid passes with his large hands. Arthur Augustus regarded him with astonishment and alarm. He had often suspected Grundy of being very nearly off his rocker. The conviction came into his mind now that Grundy was quite off it. He stood rooted to the floor.

Grundy's eyes gleamed with excitement. He quite misunderstood. He supposed that the Fourth-Former was yielding to the 'fluence.

"Now," he said, "your name's Winston Churchill!"

"Bai Jove! He's quite mad!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"What's your name?" demanded Grundy magisterially.

"You know my name perfectly well, Gwunday!"

"Tell me your name! I command you!"

"I wufese to be commanded by a Shell boundah, Gwunday!"

"Will you tell me your name?" shrieked Grundy.

"Gweat Scott! He's gettin' dangewous!" gasped the alarmed D'Arcy. "It's all wight, Gwunday—all sewene, deah boy! I'll tell you my name like anythin'! D'Arcy!"

Grundy looked deeply disappointed.

"D'Arcy?" he repeated. "Not Winston Churchill?"

"I am sowwy, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, fully convinced that Grundy had taken leave of his senses, and humouring him. "My name happens to be D'Arcy!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Grundy, in disgust.

He stepped back, and Arthur Augustus, glad to escape from the dangerous proximity of a lunatic, dashed after his friends.

"Hallo! Where have you been?" demanded Blake, as the swell of St. Jim's joined the party outside the theatre. "Thought you were lost."

"Gwunday!" gasped D'Arcy. "He's mad!"

"Pooh! That's nothing new."

"But he is maddah than evah, deah boy! He cornahed me in the theatah, and told me my name was Winston Churchill!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not a laughin' mattah, deah boys! Gwunday ought to be placed undah westwaint befoah he does some damage! He is quite wocky in the cwumpet!"

Grundy came out with Wilkins and Gunn. He paused a moment to speak to Tom Merry. The juniors regarded him curiously, and D'Arcy backed away.

"Just a word with you, Merry!" said Grundy.

"Go ahead!" said Tom.

"I've been left out of the footer ever since I've been at St. Jim's—"

"Great Scott! You're not going to begin on that now, are you?" exclaimed Tom, in astonishment. "I want to get home to tea."

"Humah him, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus in a stage whisper. "You have to humah lunatics, you know. He may become violent."

"I've got only a word to say," said Grundy. "I've told you before that I never stand any rot! I'm not only going into the junior team, but I'm going to captain it!"

"Are you, by Jove?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Yes. I've decided!"

"I haven't a say in the matter, I suppose!" grinned the captain of the Shell.

"Under the circumstances, I consider that I am justified in not allowing you a say in the matter!" said Grundy. "However, I'm going to give you a chance! Think over it! Put me in the team, and I'll let you off!"

"Let me off?" said Tom, bewildered.

"Yes. I don't want to be hard on you, but if you keep up that ridiculous jealousy, and keep me out of the footer, I shall have no resource but to put my foot down! Then I shall make you retire from the team altogether!"

"Mum-mum-make me retire from the team?" stammered Tom Merry.

"Yes. I mean it!" said Grundy darkly. "Think it over!"

Grundy strode on without waiting for a reply, followed by Wilkins and Gunn, who were looking astonished, as well they might. Tom Merry gazed after him like a fellow in a dream.

"Is he dotty?" he ejaculated.

"Mad as a hatah, deah boy!"

"Must be potty!" said Blake, in wonder. "Dash it all! Wilkins and Gunn ought to get him home as soon as possible! He ought to see a doctor!"

In utter astonishment, the chums of St. Jim's left the theatre, and went for their bikes. Grundy's remarkable words had more than astounded them. What on earth those dark and mysterious words could mean they could not imagine, unless they meant that Grundy was out of his senses.

Arthur Augustus was quite concerned. Everybody rather liked Grundy, though he was well known to be every imaginable kind of an ass. He was high-handed, and he had a surprisingly good opinion of himself, and he was a first-class duffer. He was the despair of his Form-master, and a standing joke on the playing-fields. But he was good-hearted and good-natured, and always ready to lend a fellow a hand, or to lend him money. Arthur Augustus was not surprised that it had come to this, but he was really concerned.

He repeated "Poor old Gwunday!" several times during the ride home. And he was so concerned about poor old Grundy's mental state that he even forgot the mud that splashed on his unfortunate clobber.

CHAPTER 5. Dangerous!

GRUNDY paused in the old High Street of Wayland, and Wilkins and Gunn paused, too, regarding him anxiously. His words to Tom Merry had astonished and alarmed them, and Grundy's manner, too, seemed queer. Several times they had seen him smile sardonically, without apparent reason. Once or twice he had burst into a chuckle, and Wilkins and Gunn could see nothing to chuckle about.

Wilkins had more than once confided to Gunn his opinion that Grundy would finish up in a home for idiots. But he had never thought of a lunatic asylum. But now it really appeared to him that a lunatic asylum was nearer the mark.

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"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Grundy.

"Wha-a-at's the joke, old chap?" asked Wilkins, with a sidelong, alarmed look at Gunn.

"You heard what I said to Tom Merry?" grinned Grundy.

"Ye-e-es. You were joking, of course!"

"No jolly fear!" said Grundy emphatically. "I meant every word!"

"D-d-did you?"

"You fellows know what sort of a fellow I am?" said Grundy.

"We do!" said Wilkins.

"We does!" murmured Gunn.

"Yet Tom Merry keeps me out of the team. I don't like to say anything rotten about a chap, but it's jealousy, you know. I don't say Tom Merry is really quite conscious of it, for he's a good chap. But there it is. He don't want a better player to get into the limelight. That's why I'm kept out of the matches."

"Ye-e-es, we know why you're kept out of the matches, old fellow," murmured Wilkins. "You'd get such a heap of goals—for the other side!" he added to himself.

"I'm not standing it any longer!" said Grundy. "Now I've got the power in my hands I'm going to use it! Mind, it's not that I want to shove myself forward in any way! I'm not a conceited chap!"

"You're not!" ejaculated Wilkins, in astonishment.

"No!" roared Grundy.

"I—I meantersay, of course not!" said Wilkins hastily.

"It's because the school needs a good player in the junior team. We lose matches sometimes. I think I can say, with confidence, that if I were in the team no matches would be lost!"

"By the other side, you mean?" asked Gunn.

"If you're going to be funny, William Gunn—"

"Nunno! Nunno! Sorry I spoke!" gasped Gunn. "Under the circumstances, I consider I am justified in taking the captaincy into my own hands!" said Grundy. "That's what I'm going to do!"

"B-b-but how?" stammered Wilkins.

"The power's in my hands, and I'm quite justified in using it. Don't you think so?" demanded Grundy.

"Ye-e-es. Of course. But—"

"I've made up my mind," said Grundy; "I thought it out while we were in the theatre. I feel it's my duty, for the sake of the school."

Wilkins gave Gunn a hopeless look. Grundy was so evidently in deadly earnest, that it was impossible to suppose that he was joking. The only possible conclusion was that he was insane.

"I say, it's past tea-time, old chap," said Wilkins. "Let's get home. The trap's waiting, too."

"Tea! Blow tea! I've no time for tea!"

"But the trap!"

"Hang the trap!"

"I—I say, it costs money, you know!"

"Money!" Grundy chuckled. "What does that matter? Why, if I chose to be dishonest, I could be a millionaire. I could walk into the bank yonder, and make the manager hand me out all the money there is in the bank."

"C-c-could you?" gasped Wilkins.

"Certainly. Not this evening, perhaps, but next week, at the latest. Not that I am going to do anything of the kind, of course. Even with irresistible power in my hands, I shall always be careful to use it with strict honour and integrity."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Later on," said Grundy, "you'll be astonished."

Wilkins and Gunn were astonished now. They could not possibly be more astonished later on than they were now.

"Look here, come home," said Gunn. "You haven't been drinking, have you?"

"Drinking! What do you mean?" demanded Grundy angrily.

"Nun-nun-nothing," gasped Gunn—"nothing at all! But let's go home to tea, there's a good chap!"

"You can go home to tea," said Grundy; "I've got business here."

"Bub—hub—business?"

"Yes. I'll tell you afterwards, no time now. You run along! I shall be back by calling-over, I expect."

"I say, if you're not, Railton will rag you, you know." Grundy laughed.

"Railton! Who cares for Railton?"

"Well, he's our Housemaster, you know!"

"Housemaster be blowed! Next week, I'll make Railton crawl at my feet, if I like."

"You'll mum-mum-make Railton crawl at your f-f-feet?" stammered Wilkins.

"Yes, if I like—and the Head, too!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"You buzz off," said Grundy, "I'm busy now! Good-bye for the present!"

"Here, I say!" Wilkins caught Grundy's arm as he was striding away. "Grundy, old chap"—Wilkins was almost fearful in his earnestness—"do come home! You're not safe here by yourself."

"Let go, you ass!"

"I'm not going to let go!" said Wilkins. "You're not going to stay out alone in that state! Take his arm, Gunney!"

"You silly asses! What are you up to?" roared Grundy, as his alarmed chums grasped him by either arm. "Leggo! Do you hear!"

"Come home, old fellow—"

"Will you let me go?" bellowed Grundy.

"No, we won't!" said Wilkins desperately. "We're your pals, and we're going to look after you. Come on!"

"Yes, come on, Grundy— Yarook!"

Grundy struggled violently. His fist came into Gunn's chest, and Gunn sat down on the pavement. Then Grundy grasped Wilkins, and bumped him down beside Gunn.

"You silly asses!" he said witheringly. "If you weren't pals of mine, I'd jolly well crack your heads together! Shut up and go home!"

Grundy strode away. Wilkins and Gunn sat on the pavement, and looked at one another hopelessly.

"We've done our best!" gasped Wilkins. "Let's get home, Gunney! I—I wonder whether we'd better tell Railton?"

"Who'd have thought it would come to this!" groaned Gunn. "I—I hoped he was only spoofing at first. But he's mad—stark, staring, raving mad! Violent, too!"

The two Shell fellows, greatly distressed, and very uneasy about what might happen to Grundy, returned to the trap, and drove home to St. Jim's. They were in a state of alarm and disquietude. Anything might happen to a fellow in Grundy's mental state. They hoped—though it was a faint hope—that when he reappeared at St. Jim's he would be in his normal senses.

Grundy's chums looked so worried and troubled when they came into the School House that their looks attracted attention at once. Tom Merry & Co., as a matter of fact, were waiting for them, and they bore down on Wilkins and Gunn at once.

"Hasn't Grundy come in with you?" asked Tom.

"Bai Jove! Where's Gwunday?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"He's staying at Wayland," groaned Wilkins. "He's potty!"

"Yaas, wathah, I noticed that!"

"You shouldn't have left him there by himself," said Blake anxiously. "I can't help thinking he's a bit queer in the head."

"A bit queer?" said Gunn. "He's stark mad—almost raving! He pitched into us because we wanted to bring him home. He's as mad as a hatter. He said if Railton ragged him for missing call-over, he would make Railton crawl at his feet."

"And the Head, too!" gasped Wilkins.

"Great Scott!"

"Crawl at his feet!" ejaculated Manners.

"Crawl at his feet, bai Jove! That's pwoof, deah boys!"

"What on earth's come over him?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "He was always a silly ass, but I never thought he was potty."

"It's come on suddenly," said Wilkins. "But there's no doubt about it. He says he has irresistible power in his hands."

"Great pip!"

"He's going to become a skipper of the junior eleven," said Wilkins hopelessly.

"Oh, scissors!"

"He said, if he liked he could go into the bank and make the manager give him all the money there."

"Great Kitchener!"

"He says he's got business in Wayland. I only hope he won't chuck himself under a railway-train, or anything like that. We tried to get him home, and he became fearfully violent."

"Raging!" said Gunn.

"Bai Jove! The Housemastah ought to be told," said Arthur Augustus. "The poor chap ought to be placed undah westwaint."

"Sure he wasn't spoofing, and pulling your leg?" asked Monty Lowther.

"He was in dead earnest. I know that. He's mad—as mad as the Kaiser, or jolly nearly!"

"Well, my hat! What cau he be up to now?"

"Goodness knows! Perhaps the police will notice him, and take him in charge. I hope so, before he does some damage."

Tom Merry wrinkled his brows.

"If he's really potty, the Housemaster ought to know," he said. "But he may be playing some fatheaded joke. We'll wait for him to come in, and keep an eye on him. Poor old Grundy!"

"He was a decent chap in his way," said Wilkins. "He couldn't help being an idiot. I'm awfully sorry it's come to this. We shall miss him when he's taken away to Colney Hatch. It's really rotten!"

Wilkins and Gunn went to their study for tea; but, to their credit be it said, their appetites were actually impaired by their anxiety for George Alfred Grundy. Now they came to think of it, and compared notes, they could remember many little circumstances, not much noted at the time, which ought to have warned them that this was coming. Grundy's fixed belief that he could play football, for instance—and the way he played it—and circumstances like that. Yet, now that it had come, it took them by surprise, and fairly knocked them into a heap.

CHAPTER 6.

Taking the Stranger In.

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY, little dreaming of the anxious perturbation of mind he was causing in the School House at St. Jim's, was proceeding, meanwhile, about his business in Wayland. While his chums were anxiously pondering upon his probable fate, Grundy was ascending the stairs of a shabby lodging-house in River Street, in Wayland. He reached a door numbered 24, and knocked.

"Come in!" came a voice from the interior.

Grundy opened the door. He stepped into a little bed-sitting room. A little skinny gentleman with a goatee beard rose from a rickety armchair to greet him, and took a pipe from his mouth. It was the hypnotist of the Wayland Empire—Dr. Cornelius K. Hunk. He looked slightly surprised at the sight of the Shell fellow of St. Jim's.

"Excuse me!" said Grundy. "I've called on business."

"Sartainly!" said the doctor. "Take a seat!"

Grundy took a seat. He took it at a respectful distance from the doctor. The American gentleman was smoking, and he accompanied his smoking with incessant expectoration, in the Transatlantic manner. The immediate neighbourhood of the American gentleman was not pleasant.

"I saw your show at the Empire this afternoon, sir," said Grundy. "It was great!"

Dr. Hunk smiled genially.

"I guess I've knocked them with my show," he remarked. "Nothin' of the kind seen in this benighted town like that before, I reckon."

"It was tremendous," said Grundy. "I asked them at the stage-door for your address, sir. They gave it to me. You don't mind my calling?"

"Not at all. What can I do for you?"

"Do you ever take pupils?"

"Pupils!"

"Yes—to teach hypnotism."

Dr. Hunk stared at Grundy blankly for a moment. But he was not taken at a loss. The American gentleman was always open to do business—or probably to "do" anybody. He nodded quickly.

"Sartainly!" he replied.

Grundy brightened up.

"That's why I've called," he said. "I want to learn your methods. I could see that the whole thing was really genuine. Can it be taught?"

"Yep!"

"And you'll teach me?"

"I guess so, if you can pony up the spondulics."

"The—what?"

"My fees," explained the doctor, "are rather high. Hypnotism is a rare art. Very careful instruction is necessary. Of course, everybody ain't fitted to learn it. But you, I should say, are the very galoot. Mind, hypnotists are born, not made. It can't be taught to anybody who isn't fitted by Nature for the part."

"Just what I thought," said Grundy eagerly. "It struck me while I was watching you at the Empire. A hypnotist needs a strong personality—"

"Yep!"

"And an iron will—"

"Correct."

"And an unbending determination?"

"Sure!"

"Then I think I'm the very chap," said Grundy. "What do you think?"

"I should have to put you to the test, young gentleman," said the doctor, eyeing George Alfred Grundy very narrowly.

"You want to put me under the 'fluence?"

"Nunno!" said the doctor hastily. "What I mean is, a galoot can't be a hypnotist, unless—unless he has such a strong will that he can resist the influence himself. See? If you can resist the hypnotic influence, you are out out for a hypnotist. Not otherwise. If you can't resist it, I should simply be wasting my time, and your money, in teaching you."

"Oh!" said Grundy, a little dismayed. "Then if you can put the 'fluence on me, I'm no good as a hypnotist myself?"

"Correct!"

"It's a question, then, whether my personality is powerful enough to resist?" said Grundy thoughtfully.

"That's it, in a nutshell. If your personality is strong enough to resist the influence, then it's strong enough to put the influence on others. Then it becomes simply a matter of teaching you the passes."

"I—I see."

"I think you're the right sort," continued the doctor. "You have, what we call in the profession, the hypnotic eye!"

"Have I really?" ejaculated Grundy, greatly flattered.

"Yep. Of course, as you are a stranger to me, I know nothing of your characteristics, but I should say that you are a young gentleman with an iron will, a strong personality, and an unbending determination. Is that correct?"

"That's me exactly!" said the delighted Grundy.

"Then I guess it's a cinch," said Dr. Hunk. "But we'll put it to the test. Stand up!"

Grundy stood up. The doctor removed his pipe, spat on the floor, and looked Grundy straight in the eyes.

"Now, summon up all your will-power to resist," said the doctor. "Exert every ounce of your—your personality. Say to yourself that you will not yield to the 'fluence. Stick to it. Now!"

Dr. Hunk proceeded to make mysterious passes before Grundy's face, with his skinny, claw-like hands. The Shell fellow stood like a rock. He summoned up all his determination to resist the influence. To his unbounded delight, he found that he resisted it with perfect ease. The steady stare of the doctor's eyes, the weird waving of his bony hands, had not the slightest effect upon him.

"Feel it comin' on?" asked the doctor, at last.

Grundy shook his head.

"Not the slightest!"

"By hokey!" exclaimed the doctor, in great admiration.

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"You're a splendid subject—simply splendid! Gad! What a—a personality! What a will! Young gentleman, if you take up hypnotism seriously, you will become greater—I say, greater—than I am myself. Your power over others will be unlimited."

"By gum!" said Grundy.

"Let me try again. Fix your eyes on mine. Now, do you feel a sensation of drowsiness creeping over you?"

"No."

"You do not feel a—a feeling of floating into space?"

"Not a bit of it."

"Splendid!" exclaimed the doctor. "Magnificent! Sit down, sir! Pray allow me to shake you by the hand. You are the first pupil, sir, I have had who has shown such marvellous powers of resistance. You must have an iron will."

"I think I have," said Grundy. "Then you'll teach me the passes?"

"Sartainly! One moment, though. It must be understood that if I pass on my own marvellous powers to you, you will not start in opposition to me," said Dr. Hunk very seriously. "Mind, I do not conceal that you will be able to equal my show if you choose—perhaps excel it. But you must promise not to give any public performance for the space of six months. By that time my tour will be completed, and I shall have returned to the Yewnted States. After that you will be free to do as you please. Is it a go?"

"Certainly!" said Grundy, at once. "I wasn't thinking of giving any public performance. I want to become a hypnotist for private reasons of my own. I promise."

"Good enough! Now about terms. I usually charge one guinea a lesson—"

Grundy's face fell a little. He had plenty of money, certainly; but guinea lessons would put a heavy strain on his finances. His expression did not escape the eagle eye of the American gentleman.

"That is my usual charge," continued the doctor calmly. "But when I come upon a specially promising pupil, there are other considerations. You, sir, would do me honour as a pupil. To you, my charges would be reduced by one-half."

"I say, that's awfully good of you!" said Grundy gratefully. "If you could manage it at half-a-guinea a time—"

The doctor waved his hand airily.

"Money is little to me," he said. "Consider the power in my hands! With my hypnotic power, I could force Rothschild to hand me a cheque for a million dollars, if—if I chose. I guess, sir, that it's a fortunate thing that I was brought up on lines of the strictest integrity; fortunate for the world at large, sir. The same power will be in your hands, when—when your lessons are completed. Naturally, I rely upon you to follow my example, and use your power only for—for noble purposes."

"That's exactly what I want to do," said Grundy. "I'm thinking chiefly of the good of the school I belong to. I want to influence fellows for their own good, and for the general good."

The doctor coughed.

"A very noble purpose," he said; "very noble indeed! You are a young gentleman after my own heart!"

"How many lessons do you think I should need, sir?"

"That depends on your progress. I am in Wayland for a week. By the end of that time, I have no doubt, you will have made great progress. Perhaps you will have fully developed your latent powers. If not, I shall leave you complete instructions for subsequent practice, at—at a nominal charge."

"Could you give me the first lesson now?" asked Grundy eagerly.

"Sartainly!"

"I'm ready!"

Dr. Hunk proceeded to impart his valuable instruction. In the Form-room at St. Jim's, Grundy was not an apt pupil. He had sometimes made Mr. Linton feel as if life was not worth living. But his keeness to learn now was remarkable.

He imitated the mysterious passes with sedulous care, and for ten minutes he was very busy.

"Splendid!" exclaimed the doctor, at last. "You are



"My dear fellows!" exclaimed Skimpole. "Pray do not quarrel—my dear Grundy—Gore, my dear fellow—allow me—pray help me to separate them, Talbot. Oh, crumbs! Yow-ow-ow-ow!" (See Chapter 10.)

making progress already. That is the first lesson. Keep on practising those passes. It is a good idea to practise upon a dog or a cat, as—as more amenable to the fluence than human beings. But, of course, Rome was not built in a day. But you are a born hypnotist; not the slightest doubt about that. Half-a-guinea, please!"

Grundy handed over a ten-shilling note and a sixpence very cheerfully. Never had he paid out money more cheerfully. And never, probably, had the worthy doctor made it so easily.

"I can give you your next lesson to-morrow at the same hour," said the doctor. "Let me see, your name is—"

"Grundy—George Alfred Grundy!"

"I am delighted to make your acquaintance, Master Grundy! This is a great pleasure to me! Good-evening!"

The doctor shook hands very heartily with George Alfred Grundy. Grundy departed as if he were walking on air. When the door had closed upon him the doctor winked one eye at the ceiling, and smiled.

"Waal, I swow!" he ejaculated. Then he resumed his pipe and his expectorating in great contentment. Grundy walked home to St. Jim's in great spirits. The

tremendous power he was shortly to wield dazzled him. The captaincy of the junior eleven was in his grasp; indeed, he could have made himself Head of St. Jim's if he had liked—after a few more lessons! It was tremendous, almost unnerving! But Grundy was a good-hearted fellow, and he resolved manfully that he would never, never use his tremendous powers for any but the very noblest purposes.

**CHAPTER 7.
Not a Lunatic!**

"HERE he is!"

It was quite a chorus. Grundy looked surprised. He had reached the gates of St. Jim's, fortunately, before locking up. He found a dozen fellows, at least, waiting for him there.

"So you've got back!" said Tom Merry.

"Eh? Yes, of course!" said Grundy.

"How are you feeling, old chap?"

"Feeling?" said Grundy, in astonishment. "Feeling all right! What are you getting at?"

"By guna! He doesn't look mad now!" said Herries.

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"Might be quite sane by the look of him," said Blake, after a critical survey of George Alfred. "Perhaps it's passed off."

"Poor old Gwunday!"

George Alfred stared at the juniors, and his brows knitted. He could only suppose that it was a rag. He was quite unaware of the fears and doubts entertained by the juniors concerning his mental state.

"Oh, don't be funny!" he said. "You can't pull my leg, you know! You fellows had better mind your eye! How would you like me to make you duck your heads in the fountain—what?"

"Bai Jove!"

"I could if I liked," said Grundy darkly. "I could make you start punching one another's noses if I liked. My power is irresistible!"

"He's beginning again!"

"There he goes!"

"Better tell Railton!"

"He wants a strait waistcoat!"

Grundy snorted, and strode away across the dusky quadrangle. The juniors looked after him, and looked at one another.

"Well, he's fairly off his rocker!" said Tom Merry. "No doubt at all about that. But he seems calm now."

"Suppose he gets violent?" said Digby uneasily.

"Then we shall have to collar him and hold him down, and call the Housemaster," said Tom. "But give him a chance. It seems to me to be more idiocy than madness, upon the whole."

"Sort of wandering in his mind," agreed Lowther. "What can have put these queer ideas into his head, I wonder?"

"Goodness knows!"

The juniors followed George Alfred to the School House. Grundy went up directly to his study.

Wilkins and Gunn were there, and they had finished tea, and were beginning their preparation. They exchanged a quick glance as Grundy came in, and smiled at him feebly. They had agreed that, so long as Grundy did not become violent, he was to be humoured, and, if possible, persuaded out of his curious hallucinations. But Wilkins kept a cricket-stump near him, and Gunn picked up the poker in a careless sort of way. They meant to be prepared for all eventualities. It was no joke to be shut up in a study with a lunatic.

"Had tea?" asked Grundy cheerily, in quite his old manner.

"Yes. But we've left you some," said Wilkins, reassured a little. "I'll get it out for you, old man."

"Thanks! I'm jolly sharp set."

Wilkins and Gunn proceeded to get the provisions out of the study cupboard. Grundy threw himself into the armchair. He was tired.

"Wilkins!" he rapped out suddenly.

"Ye-es," said Wilkins, with a start.

"What the dickens are you doing with that cricket-stump?"

"This—er—cricket-stump?" stammered Wilkins.

"Yes. Not going to play cricket at this time of the year, I suppose?" said Grundy sarcastically.

"Nunno!"

"And what in thunder are you carrying the poker about for, Gunney?"

"The—the poker?"

"Yes. What's the little game? Have you fellows gone potty?"

Wilkins and Gunn exchanged a hopeless glance. They knew that it was a proof of insanity to suspect insanity in others. Grundy was evidently far gone.

"The—the fact is—" stammered Gunn.

"Yes, that's it," said Wilkins hesitatingly. "The—the fact is—exactly—"

"Are you trying to be funny?" asked the puzzled Grundy.

"Nunno! I—I don't feel funny, I assure you!"

"Rather the reverse!" mumbled Gunn.

"Well, what are you doing with that poker?"

"I—I was going to—to stir the fire!"

"Well, stir it, then, and don't be an ass!" said Grundy irritably. "Put the poker in the fender, can't you?"

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"Ye-es. Certainly!"

Gunn stirred the fire, and put down the poker—as far as possible from Grundy. Wilkins slipped the cricket-stump under his arm. He was determined not to part with it. He felt that he might need it at any moment now.

"Pile in, Grundy!" said Wilkins. "You must be hungry! Had a—a—a nice walk?"

"I've had a jolly long and muddy walk," said Grundy. "I had to walk home from Wayland. But it's all right. Everything's going beautifully. Come here a minute, Wilkins!"

"Eh? What for?"

"Sit on that chair, facing me, will you?"

"Oh, scissors!"

"Can't you do as I ask you, you ass?"

"Ye-es. All right!"

Grundy was showing signs of excitement again. Wilkins dropped into the chair facing him, still with the cricket-stump handy. He would not have relinquished it at that moment for untold gold.

"Look me in the eyes!"

"Ye-es. Stir the fire, Gunney, old chap!"

Gunn understood that skilful hint. He promptly repossessed himself of the poker, and stood in readiness. But Grundy was not heeding him. He fixed his eyes upon the startled orbs of Wilkins, and waved his large hands in the air before the alarmed face of his study-mate. Wilkins watched him as if frozen. At any moment now he expected Grundy to spring upon him like a tiger. But the cricket-stump and the poker were ready.

"Do you feel a sort of drowsiness coming on, Wilkins?" asked Grundy.

"Nunno!"

"Sure?"

"Yes, quite sure!"

"Not a sort of sensation of floating in space?"

"Oh, crumbs! No!"

Grundy snorted impatiently.

"Then I suppose I want some more practice. Hang it! Look here, you're not to summon up all the strength of your personality, you know."

"Not to—to which?"

"You're not to exert every ounce of your will-power, or anything of that kind."

"Nunno! Certainly not!"

Grundy continued to make weird passes.

"Now do you feel drowsy?"

"No!"

"Or floating into space?"

"No!"

"Oh, you're a rotten subject!" said Grundy irritably. "You come here, Gunn! Don't bring that poker, you fathead! What on earth do you keep on carrying the poker about for? Sit there! Look me in the eyes!"

"Oh, this is awful!" groaned Gunn. "I—I can't stand it, Wilky! I'm off!"

"Where are you going?" roared Grundy, as Gunn made for the door. "Go back, you ass! Sit down! I'm going to put the 'fluence on!"

"The—the what?"

"The 'fluence! What the dickens did you think I was doing?"

Gunn stared at Grundy blankly.

"The—the—the 'fluence?" he stuttered.

"Of course! I'm a hypnotist!"

"A—a—a what?" yelled Gunn and Wilkins together.

"A hypnotist! Like that Yankee chap we saw at the Empire to-day. I'm going to him for lessons, and learning the passes. He says I'm a born hypnotist, so he's letting me have the lessons extra cheap—only half-a-guinea a time. I've had the first lesson this afternoon. In a short time I shall be irresistible—monarch of all I survey, you know! I'm going to practise on you chaps!"

"Oh, my hat! Then—then you're not mad!" gasped Wilkins.

"Mad!" ejaculated Grundy.

"We—we thought you were mad, of course," said Gunn. "You've been talking out of your hat just like a madman, you know."

"Why, you silly asses——"

"A hypnotist!" shrieked Wilkins. "Oh, my hat! I'm jolly glad you're not mad, Grundy, old man, but—— Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gunn.

Grundy jumped up wrathfully.

"You silly, cackling asses! What are you gurgling about? I'm a born hypnotist, I tell you. With my iron will and strong personality and unbending determination, I'm exactly fitted for it. Dr. Hunk said so."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to hypnotise Tom Merry, and make him retire from the junior eleven in my favour. I'll hypnotise the whole footer committee if necessary. And if I ever have any more rot from Railton, I'll hypnotise him, and make him cane himself, by gum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"

But Wilkins and Gunn were in no condition to explain what they were cackling at. The poker and the stump had crashed to the floor, and Wilkins and Gunn were doubled up with mirth. The stump and the poker were not needed after all. Grundy wasn't mad. He was only playing the "giddy ox," as usual. He was famous for it—and he was only going a little further this time, that was all. The idea of Grundy hypnotising the junior football committee doubled up his study-mates. They rocked and shrieked.

Grundy glared at them in great wrath. There was, so far as he could see, nothing whatever to laugh at. Indeed, such tremendous power, carrying with it a tremendous responsibility, was a very serious matter. How the situation could possibly appear comic to Wilkins and Gunn was a mystery. But it did! There was no doubt about that. They were shrieking like hyenas.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! Oh, my ribs! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grundy, old man—ha, ha, ha!—don't! You're too funny to live, Grundy! Ha, ha, ha!"

That was too much. Grundy made a jump for the cricket-stump. Wilkins and Gunn rushed out of the study, still shrieking.

CHAPTER 8. Grundy's Latest.

"WESCUE, deah boys!"

"Pile in!"

"Rescue!"

In the Shell passage Tom Merry & Co. had gathered. They were very uneasy as to what might be happening in No. 8. They were ready at a moment's notice to rush to the rescue of Wilkins and Gunn.

When the study door was flung open, and the two Shell fellows staggered forth shrieking and gasping, with Grundy after them with a cricket-stump brandished in his hand, they naturally thought that the hour had come.

There was a rush to the rescue at once.

Grundy was seized on all sides, the stump wrenched away, and he was pinned against the wall in the grip of a dozen hands.

"Got him!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Hold him!" panted Tom Merry.

"Mind he doesn't get away."

"Call Railton."

"Leggo!" roared Grundy furiously. "Wharrer you at? What's this game?"

"Hold him! Pin him!"

"Hang on like anythin', deah boys!"

"Call Railton, somebody!"

"Don't call Railton!" yelled Wilkins, as two or three juniors were cutting away down the passage to summon the School House master. "It's all right!"

"Right as rain!" gasped Gunn. "He's not mad! Only fatheded. It's all right!"

"Not mad!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Nunno—I mean, not madder than usual."

"Mad!" yelled Grundy. "I'll show you whether I'm mad or not. Lemme go! You silly cuckoos. Leggo! Yow!"

"If he's not mad, what does it mean, then?" demanded Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you duffahs, I am convinced that he is vewy mad. Hold him till the Housemastah comes. He must see a doctah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It's all right!" shrieked Wilkins. "Only Grundy playing the giddy ox. He's taking up hypnotism."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Hypnotism!"

The juniors released Grundy, in sheer astonishment. Grundy set his collar straight, and smoothed his ruffled hair and snorted. Grundy and Wilkins leaned feebly on the wall. They were gasping.

"Yes—hypnotism!" moaned Wilkins. "Like that Yankee spoofer at the Empire. Grundy thinks he can hypnotise."

"Oh, cwumbs!"

"He's going to hypnotise everybody, from Lord Kitchener downwards," gasped Gunn. "He could make himself King of the Cannibal Islands if he liked. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's going to hypnotise the football committee——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And—and everybody—Railton and the Head, and the Board of Governors, too, perhaps—put 'em all under the giddy 'fluence——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The passage rang with merriment. It was a relief to know that George Alfred was not, after all, mad. But the announcement that he was starting in life as a hypnotist took the School House by storm. The juniors howled and wept with merriment.

"You can cackle!" roared the wrathful Grundy.

"Thanks—we will!" gasped Blake. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Oh, you funnay ass, Gwundy! You were twyin' to hypnotise me, I suppose, and I thought you were pottay. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle! You'll cackle another way when I put the 'fluence on you!" roared Grundy. "I'm a born hypnotist——"

"A born idiot, you mean," grinned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dr. Hunk told me so himself. He says I shall be a better hypnotist than he is!" said Grundy crushingly.

"Well, that might not be very difficult!" chuckled Lowther. "He can't hypnotise worth a cent. He's a spoofer!"

"He's been paying that Yankee swindler money for lessons!" gasped Wilkins. "The man ought to be locked up for swindling him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He wasn't swindling me, you fathead!" yelled Grundy. "Do I look like a fellow to be swindled. He knew me at a glance as a born hypnotist; he said so. That's why he took me as a pupil at half-price. And he proved it."

"Proved it!" exclaimed Tom Merry, wiping his eyes.

"Did he prove that he was a hypnotist?"

"He proved that at the Empire. You saw him hypnotise the nigger——"

"Spoofer, you ass!" roared Lowther.

"What about that fat chap, Pipkin, then?" demanded Grundy. "You saw him put the 'fluence on Pipkin—a perfect stranger, and make him believe that he was Winston Churchill."

"Spoofer! Oh, you duffer!" said Lowther. "The man was put in the audience ready. That's why the spoofer selected him."

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Tom Merry, with a nod. "Now I come to think of it, it's jolly likely."

"What utter rot!" said Grundy contemptuously. "If you fellows can't believe the evidence of your own eyes, it's no good talking to you. Besides, the doctor proved that I was a hypnotist, when I called on him."

"Did he put the 'fluence on you?" demanded Manners.

"If he did, that's a proof that he can do it, of course."

"Of course he didn't. He proved that I was a hypnotist myself, by my power to resist the 'fluence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy's statement had the effect of doubling up the juniors again. Grundy's power to resist a non-existent 'fluence proved, to his satisfaction, that he was a born hypnotist. He was not likely to prove it to the satisfaction of anybody else. Grundy was not likely to believe that the cunning Yankee had deliberately taken him in and swindled him. He was quite satisfied that there did not exist in the wide world a man keen enough to take him in.

Grundy stared angrily at the howling juniors. It was evident that he would never be taken seriously as a hypnotist—until he put the 'fluence on somebody. Grundy snorted, and went back into his study and slammed the door.

He left Tom Merry & Co. weeping.

"Well, this takes the cake!" gasped Monty Lowther. "I thought I knew every kind of an idiot Grundy was. But he's always surprising us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Within ten minutes all the Lower School knew of George Alfred Grundy's new departure, and the news was greeted with howls of laughter on all sides.

That Grundy was almost every conceivable kind of a fathead was already known to all St. Jim's; but this, as Figgins remarked, put the lid on. Grundy had out-Grundied himself, so to speak.

When Wilkins and Gunn came back into No. 8 to get on with their preparation, they tried to look serious, but it was difficult.

Grundy greeted them with a portentous frown. He was annoyed and exasperated.

"Finished your cackle?" he asked sarcastically.

"Ha, ha! I mean yes!" said Wilkins.

"Well, now you can clear out," said Grundy.

"Eh! What?"

"Clear out," said Grundy firmly. "I'm not having cackling idiots in my study—fellows who cast doubt on my word, too. I give you one minute to get your stuff out of my study."

"Your study!" shouted Wilkins. "Why, it was my study before you came here."

"No good jawing—you're going." Grundy rose and pushed back his cuffs. "You can go quietly, or you can scrap first. I don't mind."

"Oh, my hat!" said Gunn.

Grundy was always a high-handed fellow. He had a terrific drive, and he was always ready to bestow it upon anybody who contradicted his sovereign will. And Grundy was evidently very ratty now. He meant business.

"L-l-look here," said Wilkins. "We're not going to be turned out of our own study. Don't be an ass."

"Where will you have it?" asked Grundy.

Wilkins dodged round the table.

"Look here—"

"I'm not having fellows in my study who don't back me up. Why, you silly idiots," said Grundy, with ineffable scorn, "when I've had a bit more practice with the doctor, I shall be cock of the school. This study will be top study. I'll make the prefects kow-tow to us, and the Housemaster, too, by Jove. That's what you're missing. We shall be jolly well able to do as we like. I'll hypnotise the Form-master, and make him excuse us prep. I'll put the 'fluence on the Head whenever we want an extra holiday."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's what you're missing," roared Grundy. "And now you can jolly well miss it. Out you go!"

"I—I say," stammered Wilkins, closing one eye at Gunn, "on the whole, Grundy, I—I think it's a jolly good idea. Of course, you ought to know whether you're a born idiot—I mean hypnotist—or not. We'll take your word for it."

"Certainly," said Gunn, taking his cue from Wilkins. "After all, why

couldn't Grundy be a hypnotist? I dare say he can hypnotise as well as he can play footer."

"Quite as well," said Wilkins, with sincere conviction.

Grundy's face relaxed.

"Well, if you're going to take it sensibly, all right," he said. "I don't want to be rusty. If we three stick together, we shall be monarchs of all we survey. We can run the whole blessed School House just as we please—when I've had a bit more practice. I'm going to have a jolly good time, I can tell you, and I don't want to leave my pals out of it."

"Thanks!" gasped Wilkins.

"Awfully good of you, Grundy," said Gunn in a suffocated voice.

And harmony having been restored in No. 8, the three sat down to their preparation, which was only interrupted from time to time by surreptitious attempts on the part of Grundy to put the 'fluence on his study-mates—attempts which had no success whatever.

CHAPTER 9.

Success at Last.

DURING the next few days, Grundy of the Shell was very busy.

All the Lower School had cackled joyously over Grundy's new departure, and for a day or two many humorous inquiries were made as to how he was getting on. But interest in the matter "petered out," and Grundy the hypnotist ceased to enjoy the limelight.

But Grundy was still going strong.

Every day, after lessons, he cycled over to Wayland to visit the estimable Dr. Hunk at his lodgings for a new lesson. Every visit to Dr. Hunk cost him ten shillings and sixpence. Naturally, the worthy doctor could afford to pull his leg ten minutes daily at that price.

Grundy had plenty of money, but half-guinea lessons came expensive. However, an urgent letter to Uncle Grundy brought him a handsome remittance, which found its way by instalments into the pockets of the astute American gentleman.

Every evening Grundy practised in the study. Wilkins and Gunn, for the sake of peace and quietness, allowed him to practise on them at first. But, naturally, they were soon fed up with it, and they began to have pressing engagements, which kept them away from the study.

Then Grundy practised before the looking-glass, getting the hypnotic passes into perfect working order. He was satisfied with the progress he was making. Besides, he had the doctor's professional assurance that

he was getting on famously. At every visit to Wayland the good doctor expressed unbounded admiration. He even allowed Grundy to put the 'fluence on him, and yielded to it helplessly. Grundy told him his name was George Washington, and then asked him what his name was, and Dr. Hunk dreamily replied that his name was George Washington—which was by no means a suitable name for Dr. Hunk.

That clear and indubitable proof of his progress delighted Grundy. If he could hypnotise a professional hypnotist, certainly his powers must be simply unlimited over others. He came back to St. Jim's chirping with glee. He insisted upon putting Wilkins to the test; but, to his disappointment, Wilkins did not yield to the 'fluence as Dr. Hunk had done. More practice with those mystic passes was evidently necessary.

Wilkins and Gunn being fed up, Grundy fell into the way of tipping fags sixpences to go under the 'fluence. The fags accepted the sixpences wil-

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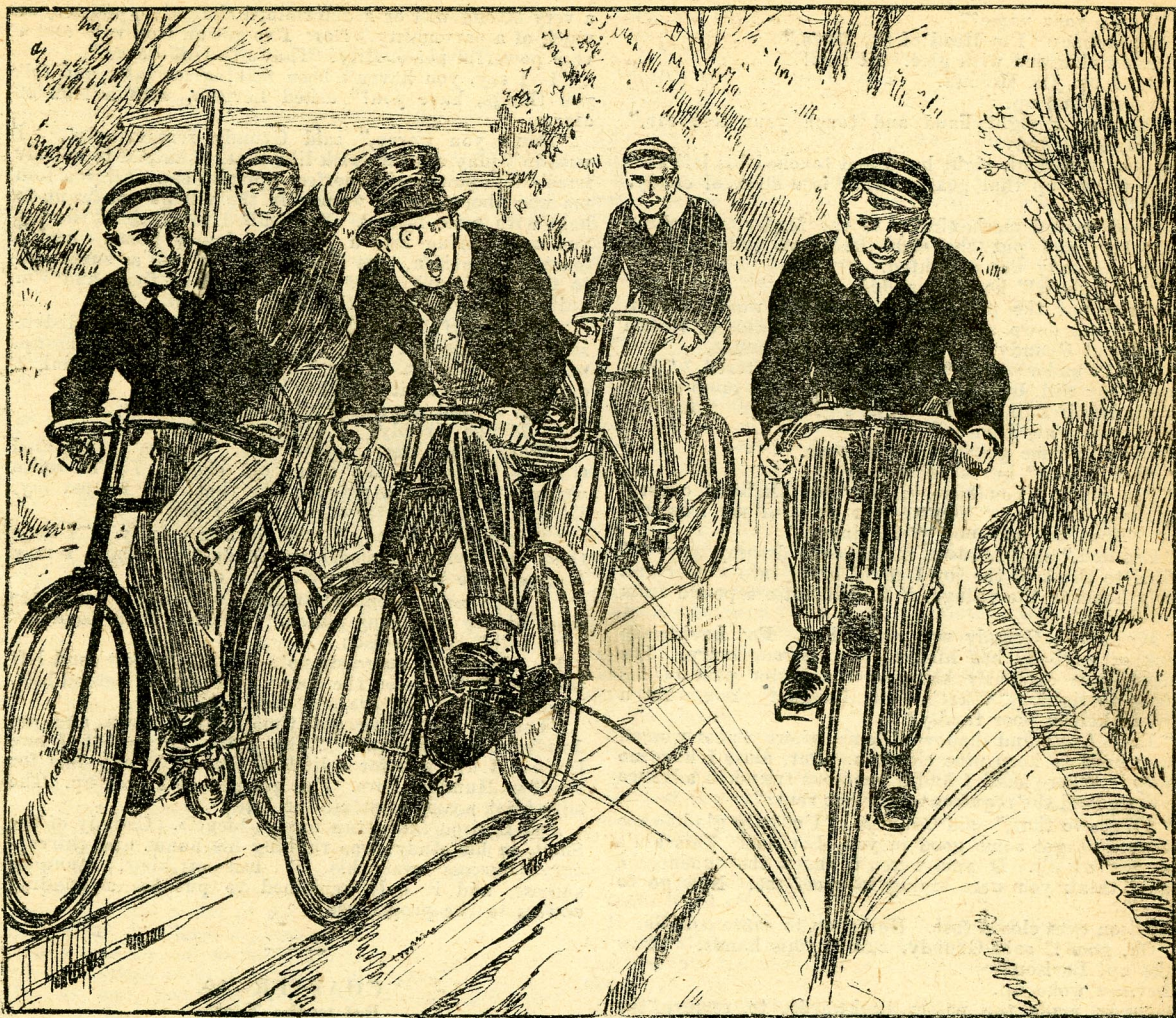
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"Set his hat straight for him, Dig." Digby grabbed at the hat, and tilted it over Gussy's forehead, causing him to breathe wrath and fury as he pedalled on. (See Chapter 2.)

lingly enough, and grinned cheerfully while he was trying to put the 'fluence on. But somehow the 'fluence never got on.

It really seemed that St. Jim's fellows were somehow immune from hypnotic influences, just as if they had been inoculated for it, as Grundy remarked discontentedly.

But George Alfred was a sticker. "Nil desperandum" was his motto. And at last came amazing success.

It came by means of Levison of the Fourth.

Levison, the black sheep of the School House, had had bad luck with his favourite geegees. Levison was in want of tin, and he had cast about in his mind for methods of raising tin, and cast about in vain. Then he thought of Grundy.

Grundy was making passes before the looking-glass in his study, when Ernest Levison looked in.

He glanced round, and pointed to the door. Grundy did not like Levison, and he never had any hesitation in making known his likes and dislikes.

"Cut!" he said laconically.

"Sorry to interrupt," said Levison, stepping in. "I'm awfully interested in hypnotism, Grundy. I wondered whether I was a good subject. I thought perhaps you'd like to put the 'fluence on me."

Grundy smiled genially.

"Come in, old chap!" he said. "I'm glad to see that you've got more sense than the others. Sit down. Like a tart?"

"Thanks," said Levison, helping himself. Grundy's study was a land of plenty, but Levison had never had

the run of it before. "By the way, I wonder whether you could lend me a quid to—to buy a book on hypnotism."

"You don't need a book," said Grundy. "I can tell you all about it, if you're interested in the subject."

"Oh!"

"Sit there!" said Grundy. "Now fix your eyes on mine, Levison. Gaze at me."

Levison gazed at him.

Grundy proceeded to make passes before his face. For some moments Levison looked quite normal, and then his eyelids drooped sleepily.

Grundy's heart beat faster. That sleepy look coming over Levison's sharp, shrewd face was a sign that the 'fluence was working at last. Grundy's big hands waved like the sails of a windmill.

"Levison."

Grundy's voice almost trembled with eagerness.

"Yes," said Levison dreamily.

"Do you feel a drowsy feeling coming on?"

"Yes."

"A sort of sensation of floating into space?"

"Yes."

Grundy nearly shouted "Hurray!" But he kept himself well in hand. He felt that it was a critical moment. Success was dawning at last, after so many efforts. He went on making passes, faster and faster, till his arms ached. Levison's eyes closed.

"Levison, your name is Dr. Holmes."

"Yes," murmured Levison.

"What's your name?"

"Dr. Holmes. I'm Head of St. Jim's."

Grundy chuckled with glee. At last!

"Stand up, Dr. Holmes."

Levison stood up.

"Raise your right hand and touch your left ear,"

commanded Grundy.

Levison raised his right hand and touched his left ear.

"Now take up that poker. That is a stick of candy. Eat it."

Levison moved mechanically to the fender, picked up the poker, and put the end—the clean end—into his mouth. Grundy was delighted.

"Put it down!" he commanded.

Levison put the poker down. At the word of command he sat down again. His eyes, half-closed, looked dreamily at Grundy. Grundy rubbed his hands.

"Right under the 'fluence!" he muttered. "The slave of my will, by gad! I could make him jump out of the window if I liked! Hallo, he's grinning! What are you grinning at, Levison?"

Levison became grave again at once.

"Must I tell?" he asked dreamily.

"You must! You have to obey my slightest order," explained Grundy. "You are the slave of my iron will now. Now, tell me why you grinned."

"I smiled," said Levison, in the same dreamy way—"I smiled to think of the joy I could bring into a poor and lonely home in the village, if I could raise a pound from somewhere."

"My hat!" Grundy was astonished. For Levison to think of anybody but himself was extraordinary. The 'fluence was evidently bringing the better part of his nature to light. "What's that, Levison? You want a quid to help a poor family?"

"Yes. A sad and shadowed home, where a poor woman works hard to keep nine children. But, alas, I have no money! Where shall I find a generous friend to advance me the pound she requires to pay her rent?"

"I'll see to that," said Grundy. "I'm jolly glad to see that you've got some good in you, Levison! This ain't like you at all. If you weren't under the 'fluence, I should think you were trying to spoof me. Now go to sleep."

Levison eyes closed fast. He began to snore a little.

"Oh, good!" said Grundy, rubbing his hands. "Now wake up, Levison!"

Levison woke up.

Grundy made the passes backwards, to remove the 'fluence. Levison watched him, and suddenly stood up and shook himself.

"Where am I?" he gasped.

Grundy chuckled.

"You're in my study. It's all right, old chap. You've been under the 'fluence."

"Under the 'fluence!" ejaculated Levison.

"Yes, rather. The slave of my will!"

"I—I don't remember," said Levison confusedly. "I remember sitting down in that chair, and you made some passes, and then— It's all blank!"

"Exactly!" agreed Grundy. "I made you think the poker was a stick of candy, and you tried to eat it."

"Did I?" ejaculated Levison.

"You did. I made you think you were Dr. Holmes, too."

"Great Scott!"

"You're a good subject," said Grundy. "You haven't

a very strong will or a determined character, you see, or much of a personality. Now, I've got an iron will and a very powerful personality. That's the difference."

"I—I say, you haven't been making me talk, and tell you things, have you?" asked Levison, with a look of alarm.

"Don't you worry," said Grundy reassuringly. "I wouldn't play a mean trick like that. I intend to use my irresistible power with perfect uprightness. All you told me was about a poor woman in the village you want to help with some money. You smiled to think of the joy you could bring into a poor and lonely home. And I must say, Levison, that I'm pleased, as well as surprised, to find you thinking of poor people like that, and I'm quite willing to stand the quid you want."

"You're awfully good!" said Levison, his eyes glistening. "I could cut down on my bike before locking-up, and—and hand it to her to pay her rent. I think I ought to tell you it's for her rent."

"You've told me already," grinned Grundy.

"Told you already? I don't remember—"

"When you were under the 'fluence," explained Grundy. "Here's the quid, old chap. You're quite welcome to it for a purpose like that, and I must say, Levison, I think better of you than I did."

"Thank you, Grundy!" said Levison meekly. "I hope that, my trying to model my conduct on yours, I may become more worthy of your good opinion."

"I hope so," assented Grundy, who never could see when his leg was being pulled. "Stick to that, Levison."

"I will!" said Levison.

He slipped the currency note into his pocket, and left the study. He closed the door very carefully behind him. Then he closed one eye and chortled.

"Lemme see! I've got time to cut down and see Joliffe," he murmured. "That's the fifteen bob I owe him—and five bob for a little flutter on Bonny Boy for the Two Hundred Sovs. I've got time if I buck up. The silly idiot nearly kept me too late!"

And Levison fairly ran for his bicycle. Grundy of the Shell, in his study, was rubbing his hands and chirruping. Success was his at last—striking, stunning success, and it only remained to put his astounding powers to the proper use!

CHAPTER 10.

Put to the Test!

TOM MERRY was alone in his study.

Manners and Lowther had finished their prep, and gone along to Study No. 6, and Tom was writing out fifty lines that he owed Mr. Linton, at a great rate. Virgil was racing off his pen, when there was a tap at the door, and it opened.

Grundy of the Shell looked in with an agreeable smile. Tom waved his pen at him.

"Hook it!" he said.

"I've got something rather important—"

"Busy!"

"This won't wait," said Grundy, coming into the study—"it's a bit too important to wait!"

"I've got my lines to do!" roared the captain of the Shell. "Don't bother now! Why, what the dickens are you up to?"

Grundy was turning the key in the lock.

"Now we sha'n't be interrupted," he remarked.

Tom Merry stared at him blankly. He wondered for a moment whether Grundy was mad, after all, and not merely a champion ass. Grundy came up to the study table and stared at Tom across it.

"Fix your eyes on mine!" he said.

"Eh?"

"Fix your eyes on mine!" thundered Grundy. "I command you!"

"You command me?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Yes. Obey!"

"Obey you?" stuttered Tom.

"Certainly!"

Grundy began to make the magic passes across the table, and then Tom understood. Grundy was trying to hypnotise him. He burst into a roar.

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"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, you funny ass!"

Grundy did not reply. His hands waved away at a terrific rate. If there was any 'fluence in those rapid passes, certainly Tom Merry ought to have surrendered on the spot. But he didn't. He roared.

"Don't you feel a drowsy feeling coming on?" asked Grundy anxiously.

"Ha, ha, ha! No."

"A sort of sensation of floating away into space?"

Tom Merry shrieked.

"Oh, don't! Ha, ha, ha! Don't be so funny, Grundy, you're giving me a pain!"

"That's jolly odd!" said Grundy, puzzled. "I've just done it on Levison, and he went off at once, right under the 'fluence."

"Ha, ha, ha! Pulling your leg, more likely."

"Tain't so jolly easy to pull my leg!" said Grundy disdainfully. "I suppose you've got a bit stronger will than Levison, or perhaps a more powerful personality. Still, I'm going to put the 'fluence on. It's the House match to-morrow, and that was put off from last week, and I'm going to play. Fix your eyes on mine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door-handle was tried, and then a voice was heard.

"Tom Mewwy, you ass, haven't you finished your lines? The chestnuts are goin' fast. What's the door locked for?"

"I'm being hypnotised!" shrieked Tom Merry. "Grundy's hypnotising me—he's putting the giddy 'fluence on!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"You don't seem any good as a subject," growled Grundy. "Perhaps I want a bit more practice, after all."

"You do—lots!" chortled Tom Merry.

Grundy snorted, and unlocked the door. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stepped into the study. He turned his eyeglass upon Grundy.

"You uttah ass, Gwunday—"

"You fix your eyes on mine!" commanded Grundy.

"Gweat Scott! Don't wave your sillay hands at me like that, you widiculous ass!"

Grundy was making passes again. On the football-ground Grundy always muffed a pass. Perhaps his ill-luck was sticking to him now that the passes he favoured were of the hypnotic variety. He certainly seemed to be muffing them—at all events, they had no perceptible effect whatever upon the swell of St. Jim's.

"Don't you feel a sort of drowsy feeling coming on?" asked Grundy, in almost a pleading voice.

"You evass ass, of course I don't!"

"Or a sensation of floating away into space?"

"Ha, ha, ha! You fwightful duffah, I don't feel anythin' of the sort!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I only feel that a widiculous ass is playin' the giddy ox!"

"I must have got the passes wrong somehow," said Grundy, somewhat discouraged. "It worked all right with old Hunk, and again with Levison. Yes, you can cackle, you silly chumps. You wait till I get the 'fluence on you, that's all!"

Grundy stamped out of the study, leaving Tom Merry and D'Arcy yelling. He slammed the door after him, and knocked at the next door, and went in. Talbot and Gore and Skimpole were in that study, at their preparation.

"Hallo, Grundy!" said Talbot. "What's the joke? The fellows in the next study seem to be enjoying themselves."

"Oh, never mind those cackling duffers," said Grundy. "Fix your eyes on mine, Talbot."

"Certainly," said Talbot with a chuckle.

He guessed what was coming. Gore and Skimpole looked on in wonder as Grundy began the hypnotic passes.

"Well, of all the blithering idiots!" commented Gore. "Why don't your people have you shoved into an asylum, Grundy?"

"What very extraordinary proceedings," said Skimpole. "Is that a new form of gymnastic drill, my dear Grundy?"

Grundy did not heed. His eyes were fixed upon Talbot's handsome, smiling face.

"Feel sort of drowsy?" he asked.

"No."

"Or a sensation of floating away into space?"

"Not in the least."

"You don't feel the 'fluence creeping over you?"

"Not the slightest."

"Oh, you're a rotten subject," growled Grundy. "I'll try you, Gore. You haven't much of a personality."

"Haven't I?" growled Gore.

"Fix your eyes on mine."

"Go and eat coke," said Gore, "and don't wag your silly paws at me, or I'll jolly well rap them with this ruler."

But Grundy, unheeding the ruler, proceeded to make weird passes. Gore kept his word. Crack! Grundy uttered a fiendish yell, and the magic passes suddenly ceased, as the ruler rapped on his knuckles. He sucked his knuckles and glared at Gore like a Hun.

"Grooogh! Oh, yow! You silly beast—yoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gore. "Try again! I'll keep it up as long as you do."

Grundy did not try again. He made a rush at Gore instead of a hypnotic pass. He seized the burly Shell fellow and dragged him out of his chair. His many disappointments had tried his temper, and the rap on his knuckles was the last straw. In a twinkling the two Shell fellows were rolling on the carpet, punching one another with terrific punches.

"Yow! Take that, you rotter! Yoop!"

"Yaroooh! Take that! Grooh!"

"My dear fellows," exclaimed Skimpole, "pray do not quarrel! My dear Grundy—Gore, my dear fellow, allow me—pray help me to separate them, Talbot! Oh, crumbs! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Getting between two angry and excited combatants was a dangerous pastime. The peace-making Skimmy received Grundy's celebrated drive in the ribs, and at the same time Gore's fist crashed under his chin. Skimpole crumpled up on the floor, roaring, and groping wildly for his glasses.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Bai Jove, what's the mattah?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Tom Merry looked in. Gore and Grundy were rolling over Skimpole, punching one another and punching poor Skimmy, who was in the way. Talbot was yelling.

"Ha, ha, ha! It's Grundy hypnotising, you chaps. Lend me a hand, will you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and Talbot and Arthur Augustus seized the combatants, and wrenched them apart. Grundy was bundled into the passage. Gore panted, and mopped his nose.

"Lemme gerrat him!" roared Grundy.

"Let him come in, if he wants any more," bellowed Gore. "I'll give him hypnotism. I'll put the 'fluence on him, the silly ass! Ow, my nose!"

"Keep your idiot quiet while we drag our idiot away, Talbot," said Tom Merry.

"Right-ho! Ha, ha, ha!"

Talbot closed the door, and kept Gore in the study. Tom Merry and D'Arcy rushed Grundy down the passage. Kangaroo and Glyn came to lend a hand. George Alfred, struggling wildly and in a very untidy state, was pitched bodily into his study. Wilkins and Gunn were working at the table, when Grundy collided with it, and sent it flying. Books and papers and an inkpot mixed together on the floor, and Wilkins and Gunn bounded to their feet in great wrath.

"What the thunder—"

"There's your tame lunatic," gasped Tom Merry. "Better put a strait jacket on him, or tie him up. He's getting dangerous."

The door slammed, and Grundy sat up. Wilkins and Gunn looked at him as if they would eat him.

"What on earth have you been up to?" snapped Wilkins.

"Groogh! I—I've been hypnotising," stammered Grundy. "Somehow, it didn't work. I don't know why. I'd swear I had the passes all right. Grooh! But it's coming—ow—it's coming all right. Grooh-hhoooh!"

In Study No. 6, over the baked chestnuts, Tom Merry & Co. chuckled over Grundy's latest essay in hypnotism, and its painful results. But Grundy was not doing any chuckling. He was suffering from the painful results.

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CHAPTER 11.

Sticking to It!

THE next day was the date of the postponed House match. It had been put off the previous Wednesday, as already recorded, to allow the juniors to "back up the Empire," as Monty Lowther expressed it. That day Tom Merry & Co. were thinking chiefly of football. Grundy of the Shell was thinking of football too—and of hypnotism, as a step to footer—as a means to an end. Grundy felt that he had to play in that match.

Tom Merry had proved an extremely unfavourable subject. He simply declined to come under the 'fluence. Doubtless that would come later—unless all George Alfred's half-guinea lessons were to be wasted. But, so far, Grundy had to confess, the junior captain of St. Jim's was not amenable to his influence. Without the 'fluence, Tom Merry certainly would not step down and resign the captaincy to Grundy.

But something had to be done.

Remembering Dr. Hunk's valuable advice, Grundy had done some hypnotic practice on the lower animals. He had tried Mrs. Mimms' cat—and the cat scratched him and fled. He had tried Herries' bulldog; and, but for the fact that Towser was kept upon a strong chain, Grundy would have had painful reasons for repenting his attempt. So he gave up cats and dogs in disgust. Fags of the Third and Second were still willing to come under the 'fluence at sixpence a time. But, though Grundy made magic passes till his arms ached, and parted with unnumbered sixpences, not a single fag yielded to the 'fluence. It was useless to tell Wally D'Arcy that he was Lord Kitchener. When asked his name, Wally immediately replied, "Walter Adolphus D'Arcy." It was simply no good telling Curly Gibson that a poker was a stick of candy. Curly was willing to believe it was—for sixpence. But nothing would induce him to attempt to eat it. Joe Frayne, who was a very obliging little chap, took pity on Grundy, and admitted that he experienced the drowsy feeling, and a sensation of floating away into space, but when he was commanded to dip his head into the fountain, the 'fluence came off quite suddenly.

"There are some fellows who are subjects, and some who ain't subjects," Grundy told Wilkins and Gunn. "That must be it. For instance, old Hunk couldn't hypnotise me, but he hypnotised that man Pipkin as easy as falling off a form, as you saw yourselves."

"Well, I've thought about that," said Gunn. "Very likely that fat fellow was one of the gang, you know—employed to have the 'fluence put on him."

"That's suspicious, Gunn. It shows a rather low mind to be suspicious," said Grundy crushingly.

"Oh, does it?" said Gunn, rather nettled. "Well, my opinion is that that Yankee is an impostor and a swindler, and I believe all hypnotists are, and you can put that in your pipe and smoke it."

"It wasn't only the Yankee," said Grundy. "Of course, I wouldn't exactly trust a Yankee without any evidence. But there was Levison; I hypnotised him!"

"He was pulling your leg," said Wilkins.

"If you think a fellow like Levison could take in a fellow like me, Wilkins, I can only say it shows what an ass you are."

"Oh!" said Wilkins.

"The question is, what's going to be done?" said Grundy. "It's the House match this afternoon. Now, I'm determined to play in it; not for my own sake, as I've told you before, but because I think it's rotten that the best footballer in the Lower School should be left out, owing to petty jealousy on the part of the footer committee. Now, I've tried Tom Merry and Talbot and D'Arcy, and they didn't come under the 'fluence. Then I tried Kangaroo, but he didn't go under, and Blake didn't. It's jolly odd, you know, for I'm sure I had all the passes correct, just as Dr. Hunk told me. The only thing is to go through the whole School House eleven, and among the lot I'm bound to find one who'll go under the 'fluence. Don't you think so?"

"Ahem!"

"You see, among eleven chaps there must be one good subject," said Grundy. "Hallo, here's Manners. Manners, old fellow."

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"Hallo!" said Manners, stopping.

"Are you in the House eleven this afternoon?"

"No; I'm going out with my camera."

"Oh, rotten!" said Grundy. "You'd be a good subject—a rather weak-minded chap like you."

"What!" roared Manners.

"Go and eat coke!" said Grundy crossly.

He walked away in search of a member of the School House junior eleven, leaving Manners staring after him wrathfully, and Wilkins and Gunn grinning.

Grundy was in a determined humour. Since the magic 'fluence could not make Tom Merry resign the captaincy in his favour, Grundy's idea was to put the 'fluence on a common or garden member of the team, and, having made the unfortunate subject the slave of his will, to make him step out of the eleven, leaving a vacant place for the great Grundy. But all the members of the eleven that he had tried, so far, had only chortled, instead of coming under the 'fluence according to programme. But Grundy prided himself upon being a stickler.

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther were chatting by the football ground, where some of the fellows were punting a ball about. Grundy bore down on them. He tapped Monty Lowther on the shoulder.

"Hallo!" said Lowther cheerily. "Have you made Railton crawl at your feet yet, old chap? Have you made the Head flog himself under the 'fluence?"

"I dare say I could if I liked!" said Grundy. "Fix your eyes on mine, Lowther."

"What with?"

"Eh?"

"Got any gum or sticking-plaster about you?" asked Lowther. The humorist of the Shell asked the question with perfect gravity. Grundy, whose sense of humour was not highly developed, looked puzzled.

"I don't mean exactly fix them on mine, of course," he said. "What I mean is, look me straight in the eyes."

"Oh, I see! You don't want me to mingle mine eyebrows with thine?" asked Lowther seriously.

"No, no! Just look me straight in the eyes. That's right." And Grundy started the magic passes under Lowther's nose. Lowther regarded his large hands, as they waved, with some curiosity.

"Soap and water," he said.

"Eh—what do you mean—soap and water?"

"Aren't you showing me your hands to ask my advice about them?" said Lowther, in surprise. "Very grubby, I must say. Soap and water, dear boy. I should recommend the water hot. And plenty of soap."

"I'm making the passes, you thundering ass! Now, do you feel a drowsy feeling coming on?"

Monty Lowther closed one eye at Tom Merry, who was chuckling.

"Drowsy isn't the word," he said sleepily. "It's a sort of floating away into space."

"Oh, good!" said Grundy. "That's right. It's the 'fluence. Now, you're a member of the eleven, Lowther."

"Yes, my lord."

"You've got to get out of the eleven this afternoon."

"Yes, my lord."

"I'm going to take your place."

"Yes, my lord."

"By gum, it's working like a charm!" said Grundy. "Look at that, Tom Merry. How'd you like to be in that state—the hypnotic trance?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at, you ass! Now, I've got it right I'll put the 'fluence on you, too. Fix your eyes on mine!" thundered Grundy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lowther closed his eye at Tom again. The captain of the Shell suddenly ceased to laugh. His eyes half closed.

"Got him!" chirruped Grundy. "Got the pair of them. Tom Merry!"

"Yes, my lord!" murmured Tom.

"You're resigning the captaincy of the team into my hands this afternoon."

"To hear is to obey, my lord."

"What the thump is the name of this game?" exclaimed Jack Blake, coming up with two or three juniors.

Grundy looked at them with lofty, disdainful scorn. "They're under the 'fluence," he said. "I've got it right at last. Better mind your p's and q's, or I'll put you all under it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll jolly soon show you," said Grundy. "Now, then, Merry and Lowther, raise your right hands, clenched."

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther raised their right hands, clenched.

"Now, punch each other's noses!" said Grundy triumphantly.

"I don't think," murmured Blake.

"Do you hear me?" thundered Grundy. "Punch away! Ow—ow—yaroooh!—not my nose, you silly fat-heads! Yarooooop!"

The two hypnotised juniors had punched, according to order; but whether there was something wrong with the 'fluence, or whatever might be the reason, it was Grundy they punched instead of one another. Grundy sat down with great force, and a loud yell. Then they grasped him, and went on punching, while Blake & Co. howled with laughter.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Grundy. "Chuckit—stoppit—leave off—yooop!"

"Can't, while the 'fluence is on," said Lowther. "You commanded us to punch, my lord, and we're bound to go on punching while the 'fluence lasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Yooop!"

Grundy struggled wildly to escape. He tore himself away at last.

"You silly asses! Oh, dear! Keep off!" yelled Grundy, as the hypnotised juniors rushed at him. "Keep away! Oh, crumbs!"

Grundy fairly ran for it. He did not stop till he was half-way across the quad. Then he looked back, panting. Tom Merry and Lowther—without a trace of the 'fluence now—were yelling with laughter. Grundy shook his fist at them.

"Hallo!" said Wilkins cheerily, as he joined him. 'Fluence going on all right, Grundy— Why, you ass—ow-ow-ow!"

Wilkins sat down in the grass as he received a shove from indignant Grundy, and George Alfred strode away with knitted brows.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Wilkins.

Grundy strode away to his study. Gunn was there, and he looked curiously at George Alfred's frowning face.

"Got that place in the eleven?" he asked affably.

"So you're going to be funny, too, are you?" howled Grundy.

"Eh—what? Here, you keep off! Oh, my hat!"

Gunn dodged round the table and fled for his life. Grundy slammed the door after him. Then he kicked a chair across the study. After all his visits to Dr. Hunk—after all his painstaking practice—after all his hopes of stunning success—the House match was to be played that afternoon, after all, without his assistance. It was enough to make any fellow wild.

CHAPTER 12.

Grundy Gets His Money's Worth.

"MASTER GRUNDY!"
Toby, the page, looked into Grundy's study. Grundy turned upon him with a snort. He was feeling fed up with everything and everybody.

"Get out, blow you!"

"Suttlingly, Master Grundy!" said Toby, in alarm.

"But Mr. Railton—"

"Blow Railton!"

"Oh!" said Toby. "Well, I can't blow a 'ousemaster, Master Grundy. You better go and blow him yourself. He wants you in his study."

"Oh, rats!"

Toby retired, with a shrug of the shoulders. He had delivered his message, and that was all his business. It rested with Grundy whether he would obey the summons, or "blow" the Housemaster.

Grundy knitted his brows. He had still a lingering hope of putting some member of the junior eleven under the 'fluence, and there was no time to be wasted, as the match would be starting soon. What the dickens did Railton want? Was it because his lines were left undone, or because he had given Frayne of the Third a thick ear, or because of Gore's swollen nose, or Crooke's black eye? Crooke had earned that black eye certainly, but Housemasters did not approve of black eyes. Crooke had said that Grundy was a silly ass, who had been spoofed by a swindling Yankee, and Grundy's celebrated drive had done the rest.

"I'm jolly well not going!" growled Grundy. "There's Digby; he hasn't got much of a personality. I might get him under the 'fluence and shift him out of the eleven. Blow Railton! I suppose I'd better go."

It was really more judicious to go. Grundy went.

Mr. Railton was looking very severe when Grundy came in. He looked quite sternly at the hero of the Shell.

"Grundy," he said, "I have sent for you upon a very serious matter. I have heard most extraordinary reports about you."

"Have you, sir?" said Grundy. "Perhaps you could see me later about it, sir. I'm rather pressed for time just now."

Mr. Railton's eyes opened wide. Certainly Grundy was the only fellow at St. Jim's who would have thought of stating that he was rather pressed for time when he was summoned into the presence of his Housemaster.

"Boy," thundered Mr. Railton, "are you out of your senses?"

"Nummo, sir!"

"I think you must be. Now, listen to me, Grundy. It appears that you have taken up some ridiculous nonsense which you call hypnotism. You have made the acquaintance of a very questionable character in Wayland, a foreigner with a far from good reputation, as I understand, and you have visited him in River Street—a low quarter which is out of bounds for boys of this school. You appear to have made yourself the laughing-stock of the House by your absurd attempts at hypnotism, and to have committed assault and battery upon certain boys who regarded your absurdities with just ridicule. The matter has become the talk of the school, Grundy, and it has reached my ears. I have therefore inquired into it."

"I don't see anything absurd in it, sir," said Grundy. "The fact is, I'm a born hypnotist. With my iron will and powerful personality—"

"Don't talk nonsense, Grundy!"

"That isn't nonsense, sir. Dr. Hunk himself said so. He took me as a pupil at half-fees because I was such a ripping hypnotist."

"You have been paying that foreigner money?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Certainly, sir, for the lessons!"

"How much have you paid him in all?"

"Only two guineas and a half, so far, sir. I'm going to have another lesson to-day."

"You have thrown away such a sum of money, Grundy. Cannot you see that the man is a mere swindler?"

"Oh, no, sir; not at all, sir. The fact is, I've hypnotised several chaps already—one of them Levison of the Fourth, and made him try to eat the poker, sir!"

"Utter nonsense! Levison must have been deceiving you. You are a very simple boy, Grundy."

"Me simple!" ejaculated Grundy, in astonishment. "Not at all, sir. When I was at Redclyffe, I can tell you they thought me the deepest chap in the school. And here, sir, there isn't a chap who's up to me for real braininess. I—"

"Grundy, kindly understand that I forbid you to go to River Street again, or to hold any kind of communication with this disreputable character, Hunk."

Grundy looked utterly dismayed.

"But—but I haven't had all my lessons, sir!" he exclaimed. "And Hunk leaves Wayland to-night, and before he goes he's going to give me written instructions for keeping on my practice. He's only going to charge me two pounds, sir, for a set of complete instructions."

"If you pay a single shilling to that man, Grundy, I

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shall request the Head to flog you for wilful disobedience to my orders!"

"But—but I must, sir. I'm getting on splendidly, and with a few more lessons it will be all right. I assure you, sir, I'm only going to use my irresistible powers for good purposes."

"You utterly stupid boy!" exclaimed the Housemaster. "Grundy, you will be detained within gates this afternoon. If you hold any kind of communication with that unscrupulous swindler, you will be flogged!"

Grundy breathed hard. The hypnotism was getting on famously, but it had to be acknowledged that more lessons were required. On the very threshold of success he was to be cut off from the fountain-head of knowledge. It was not, of course, to be stood for a single moment. But a Housemaster's word was law—there was the rub. Grundy did not want to be detained or flogged. Evidently there was only one thing to be done. All was lost, unless Mr. Railton could be put under the 'fluence!

That was the only resource.

It was a risky proceeding, certainly. But desperate diseases required desperate remedies. It was neck or nothing now.

Grundy fixed his eyes upon Mr. Railton's. He began to make passes. The Housemaster looked at him in utter astonishment, as well he might.

Grundy's large hands waved at him across the writing-table. For the moment Mr. Railton thought the junior had gone out of his senses. He stared at him blankly.

His silence encouraged Grundy. It seemed as if the 'fluence was beginning to work. Otherwise, why did the Housemaster sit there, quite still, with that blank expression on his face?

Grundy kept on.

Mr. Railton found his voice at last.

"Boy! What are you doing? Are you insane?" he gasped.

"Do you feel rather drowsy, sir?" asked Grundy anxiously.

"What!"

"A sort of sensation of floating into space?" asked Grundy.

"Bless my soul! The boy is mad!"

"Close your eyes!" commanded Grundy.

"Wha-a-at!"

"Close your eyes, I command you! Now, Mr. Railton, that ruler is a stick of candy. Eat it!"

"Good heavens!"

"Obey!" thundered Grundy.

"Is—is this an extraordinary trick, or are you really insane?" gasped the Housemaster. "I must telephone for the doctor at once. Grundy, go to your study, and remain there till Dr. Short comes." Then a new and illuminating thought flashed into the Housemaster's mind. "Grundy, is it possible that you imagine that you are hypnotising me?"

Grundy's magic passes ceased suddenly.

"D-d-don't you feel the 'fluence?" he stammered.

"The 'fluence! The what? Boy, you dare to—to attempt to play your absurd tricks on me, your Housemaster!" Mr. Railton was almost purple. "I have never heard of such astounding impertinence! There shall be no repetition of it. I see that stern measures are required in your case, Grundy. Hold out your hand!"

Mr. Railton's cane sang in the air.

"Hold out your hand!" he thundered.

"Oh, crumbs!"

It was evident that the 'fluence was not on. As Grundy hesitated to hold out his hand, the cane came down across his shoulders with a resounding thwack. Grundy roared.

"Now hold out your hand! Do you hear?"

Grundy's hand came out at last. Swish! Another

wild roar from Grundy. Mr. Railton was putting his beef into it.

"Now the other hand!" Swish! "Now the other again!" Swish!

"Yow-ow-ow! Oh, my hat! Yow!"

"You ridiculous, impertinent boy!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "If I were not convinced, Grundy, that you are more stupid than impertinent, I should request the Head to administer a public flogging. You will take five hundred lines, and be detained for two half-holidays. You may go. Stay one moment!"

Mr. Railton touched the bell.

"Toby, find Master Levison, and send him here!"

"Yessir."

"As you persist in your absurdity, Grundy, I will make one more attempt to show you that you have been deceived by an unscrupulous charlatan."

"Yow-ow-ow!" said Grundy, rubbing his hands.

Levison of the Fourth entered the study. Levison was looking a little uneasy, wondering which of his many delinquencies had come to light.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Levison meekly.

"Yes, Levison. It appears that Grundy fancies that he hypnotised you. Kindly tell me the truth of the matter."

"Go it, Levison!" mumbled Grundy. "Tell him how I put the 'fluence on, and made you think the poker was a stick of candy! Ow!"

Levison grinned. He was not likely to tell Mr. Railton a yarn of that kind. He had too much respect for the Housemaster's cane.

"Tell me the truth, Levison."

"Certainly, sir," said Levison. "Grundy is such an ass, you know. He simply goes about begging to have his leg pulled. He was so keen on hypnotising somebody that I thought I'd spoof him—ahem!—I mean pull his leg, sir. Of course, he never hypnotised me. He couldn't hypnotise a stone image. It was only a joke on Grundy, sir."

"I was quite aware of that," said Mr. Railton.

"You hear, Grundy?"

"You spoofing worm!" yelled Grundy furiously.

"Why, I—I'll smash you—"

"Grundy! How dare you threaten Levison in my presence? If you touch Levison, I shall have you flogged. Levison, you may go. You should not play such jokes on Grundy, though the boy's utter stupidity is perhaps an excuse."

Levison departed, grinning. Grundy was the picture of dismay. His house of cards had tumbled down.

Even George Alfred Grundy had to admit to himself that the 'fluence he had exercised was a thing of the imagination only.

The dismay in his face touched the Housemaster a little.

"I presume, Grundy, that you can see now that you have been deceived," said Mr. Railton, more kindly.

"I—I suppose so, sir," stammered Grundy. "That Yankee swindler me, I—I suppose. The other fellows said he was a swindler, but I—I didn't think so. I—I shouldn't wonder if he was only spoofing when he let me put the 'fluence on him, like that worm Levison. Oh, dear!"

"Then let there be no more of this nonsense," said the Housemaster. "You may go, Grundy."

"Yes, sir," mumbled Grundy.

The unhappy hypnotist left the study. He came out of the School House rubbing his hands. Wilkins and Gunn eyed him in the quadrangle, but did not approach. But Grundy bore down on them. On the football-ground, the House match was in progress. But Grundy did not even look towards the footballers.

"You fellows coming with me?" he asked.

"That depends," said Wilkins sourly. "I'm fed-up with you, Grundy. You're not going to shove me about like a sack of coke, I can tell you!"

"I'm sorry!" said Grundy. "I've been taken in. Me, you know—taken in! That cad Levison was spoofing me. I never put any 'fluence on him at all. I've tried it on Railton—"

"Great Scott!"

ANSWERS

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THE GREATEST SURPRISE OF MODERN TIMES! WATCH "THE BOYS' FRIEND."

"And it didn't work——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I've been licked and lined and gated——"

"Serve you jolly well right," said Gunn. "What the thump did you expect? Playing tricks on old Bailton! My hat!"

"You come along with me," said Grundy. "I'm going to see that Yankee. I'm going to give him a hiding."

"Jolly good idea!" said Wilkins heartily. "We'll come with pleasure!"

"Yes, rather!" said Gunn, with equal heartiness.

Grundy, in his wrath, had forgotten that River Street was out of bounds. He was feeling in need of vengeance, and he wanted it at once. He—the great George Alfred—had been spoofed and swindled! He had to acknowledge it. What was wanted now was the Grundy drive—with the Yankee doctor's long nose as its objective.

Grundy hardly spoke a word during the ride to Wayland. But he thought the more. He was simmering when he arrived at the Yankee hypnotist's lodging.

Dr. Hunk was expecting him, for the lesson. He had the written instructions all ready, for Grundy's further practice, to be handed to Grundy for the nominal price of two pounds. But those two pounds were never to be paid!

"Good-afternoon, Master Grundy!" said the doctor, as the burly Shell fellow came in, followed by Wilkins and Gunn.

"Good-afternoon!" said Grundy grimly. "I've brought these chaps to see how I can put the 'fluence on, Dr. Hunk. I'm going to show them how genuine it is."

"Ahem!" said the doctor, eyeing Wilkins and Gunn rather dubiously. "Just now, I guess I'm rather squeezed for time."

But Grundy was already making passes, with his eyes fixed on the doctor. Wilkins and Gunn looked on.

The estimable Hunk was in a difficulty. If he resisted the 'fluence, it was an acknowledgment that he had been deceiving Grundy. If he yielded to it, he had doubts about deceiving the two witnesses as well as Grundy. However, there was nothing else to be done, so he decided to yield to it. He assumed a drowsy expression.

"Fairly under it, you see," said Grundy, with the same grimness of expression. "Now, Dr. Hunk, your name's Lord Kitchener. Now, what is your name?"

"Lord Kitchener," said Dr. Hunk dreamily.

"Spoof!" said Wilkins.

"Now, you're the slave of my will," said Grundy. "Open the window."

Dr. Hunk rose to his feet, and opened the window. Certainly he looked as if he were under the 'fluence.

"Now jump out!" said Grundy.

Perhaps Grundy had a faint, lingering hope that the 'fluence was a real thing, and he was prepared to rush forward and rescue the doctor, if he obeyed the command. But obeying that command was about the last thing that was in the doctor's mind. To jump out of a window, and

land upon a pavement fifty feet below, was not quite good enough for Cornelius K. Hunk.

He did not move.

"Jump out!" roared Grundy, convinced at last.

Wilkins chuckled.

"I don't think!" he remarked.

"Got a pin, Wilky?"

"Here you are."

"Stick it into him. He won't feel it, being under the 'fluence."

"Hyer, you keep off!" yelled Dr. Hunk, as Wilkins willingly made for him, pin in hand. "I guess this hyer joke has gone far enough, by thunder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gunn. "Where's the giddy 'fluence now?"

"There isn't any 'fluence," said Grundy. "I was just showing him up. He's swindled me—the Yankee rotter! Now, you skinny specimen, you've bagged my cash, and taken me in! Now you're going through it!"

Grundy rushed at the hypnotist.

For the next few minutes, the scene in Dr. Hunk's apartment resembled pandemonium. Chairs and table went flying, trunks and boxes were kicked over, and in the midst of the wreckage, Grundy had Dr. Hunk's head in chancery, and was pounding away—as if he mistook it for a punch-ball. The yells of the unhappy Yankee rang far and wide. Grundy was getting the full value of his two guineas and a half.

"Here, chuck it!" howled Wilkins, dragging Grundy off at last. "You ain't allowed to kill Yankees. Come along!"

"Well, perhaps he's had enough," panted Grundy.

"Ha, ha! He looks like it! Come on!"

Grundy & Co. departed, leaving the doctor sprawling amid his overturned furniture, gasping for breath, and clapping his nose and blinking his eyes. Undoubtedly he looked as if he had had enough. He probably felt as if he had had too much.

Tom Merry & Co. came off the football-field. The House match had ended in a draw; perhaps owing to the absence of Grundy from the School House team. They met Grundy & Co. coming in.

"How's the 'fluence getting on?" asked Tom Merry cheerily.

Grundy snorted, and stalked away without replying.

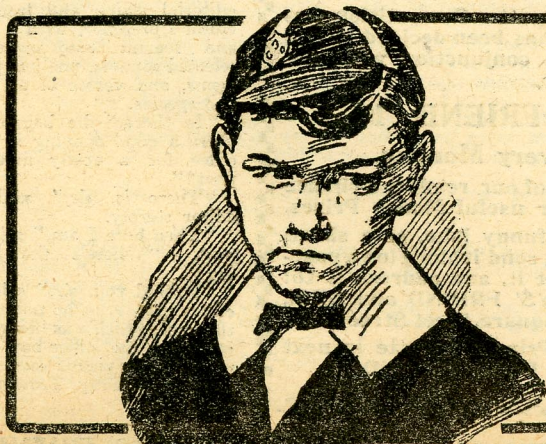
"The 'fluence is off—quite off!" chuckled Wilkins. "Grundy's chucked it. Goodness knows it was time! He's bowled out old Hunk and nearly slaughtered him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared over the description of Grundy's parting interview with the worthy Dr. Hunk. Never again did George Alfred attempt to put on the 'fluence. The last had been heard of Grundy the Hypnotist.

THE END.

(Another grand story of Tom Merry & Co. next Wednesday. Order early.)



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POOR FELLOW!

Tramp: "Yes, lady, of the fifty years that I have lived I have spent sixteen years in bed."

Lady (handing him a shilling): "How terrible! Weak back, I suppose?"

Tramp (pocketing the coin): "No, lady; sleeping eight hours a day is a regular habit of mine!"—Sent in by Raymond Brook, Deal.

THE TRUE ECONOMIST.

A farmer from the Highlands on a recent visit to Glasgow dropped into a restaurant in one of the principal streets for dinner. Having found a seat at one of the tables, he ordered a three-course meal.

Presently he called to the waiter:

"Hey, my mon, come here!"

Thinking that something very serious was wrong, the waiter promptly rushed forward.

"What's the matter, sir?" he asked meekly.

"What are the two spoons for?" queried the farmer.

"The large one is for soup, and the small one for pudding," said the surprised waiter.

"Tak' awa' that little one," was the unexpected command.

"I've as big a mouth for pudding as I have for soup."—Sent in by T. A. Pratt, Sheffield.

A TIMELY INTERVENTION.

"Bow-wow!" growled the dog.

"Ow-ow-ow!" yelled the butcher's boy.

There was a scramble and a scuffle. But human wit was not equal to canine grit, and in a trice the butcher's boy was pinned against the wall.

"Help!" he cried desperately.

Help came. It came in the bulky shape of the dog's owner, who hurried out of the house to the scene of the battle.

"Naughty, naughty little Tower! Down, down!" she exclaimed angrily; and the dog retreated. Then, turning to the terrified boy, she added: "I do hope he hasn't bitten you!"

"No; I've kept him off by giving him your steak," replied the boy. "But you're just in time to save the suet!"—Sent in by Charles Innocent, Heeley, Sheffield.

SAVED HIS FACE.

A young Irish officer, who had just recently obtained his commission, took a stroll round the rifle-butts.

Noticing that the raw recruits, who were at firing practice, missed the bullseye by a considerable margin, he took up a rifle, and exclaimed:

"I'll show you how to shoot straight!"

Taking careful aim, he fired; but the bullet went very wide of its mark.

Dismayed by the result, the Irishman's ready wit came to his assistance, and he remarked:

"That's how you shoot."

Taking special care with his next shot, he managed to score a "bull," and triumphantly exclaimed:

"There, that's how I shoot!"—Sent in by Thomas Scott, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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A POSER.

Teacher: "Now, boys! I have taught you all there is to know about the long measure, and I want any boy who is doubtful on any point to question me concerning it."

Pupil: "P-please, sir, how many policeman's feet does it take to make a Scotland Yard?"—Sent in by R. Lacey, Colyton, Devon.

AN AMUSING REQUEST.

Salesman (explaining all about puttees to young man who has just taken a commission in the Army): "You will find it best to wind them up each night directly you take them off."

Young Man (formerly a jeweller's assistant): "Er—er—I see. But haven't you any 'eight-day' ones?"—Sent in by Jack Brereton, Mumbles, near Swansea.

PERHAPS NOT!

"Papa," said little Willie, "I planted a pip in the garden to-day. Do you think an apple-tree will grow?"

"Yes, sonny; if you have patience."

"Are you sure, papa?" persisted the small boy.

"Yes, Willie; of course! Stop worrying!" said papa, getting irritable.

"But, papa," piped Willie, "it was an orange pip!"—Sent in by Miss Nora Harris, Ramsgate.

UNABASHED.

On Christmas Day a man called upon his neighbour, who owed him a sum of money, that had been long outstanding, and found him busy carving a fine plump turkey.

"Well, Mr. Tite, when are you going to settle that little debt that you owe me?" asked the caller.

"I should very much like to, my dear sir," murmured Mr. Tite, "but I find it impossible. I am cleaned out—ruined! I haven't a farthing!"

"Then I must say," remarked the creditor, "that a man who is unable to pay his debts has no right to be eating a turkey like that."

"Alas!" exclaimed the debtor, as he held his napkin to his eyes. "I couldn't afford its keep!"—Sent in by Miss W. Ransom, Denmark Hill, S.E.

"THE EVER-OPEN DOOR."

The poet was desperate. He must have been, or he would never have risked going to see the editor. But, desperate as he was, he stumbled up the editorial stairs, and into the editor's presence, with a large and fearful assortment of selected sonnets, poetical phantasms, and verses of all sorts and species.

"Is there," he began—"is there a good opening in your office for a really first-class poet?"

"There is, sir," said the editor sternly.

"Then here I am," said the poet. "Where's the opening?"

"Behind you, sir," said the editor grimly, as he pointed to the door, which was being held open by the office-boy, who ushered the visitor out.—Sent in by S. H. Bray, Trowbridge, Wilts.

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,

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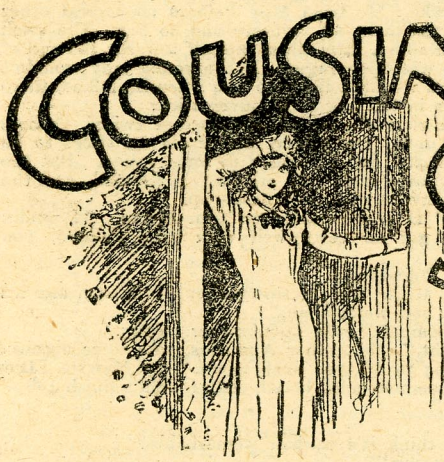
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A Magnificent Serial Story dealing with the adventures of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's and their Girl Chum. Specially published at the earnest request of readers of the "Gem" Library.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The Previous Instalments told how:—

ETHEL CLEVELAND, a pretty English girl, and cousin to ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, the swell of St. Jim's, goes to St. Freda's to continue her education.

On the first day of her arrival at the school, she is attracted by the personality of DOLORES PELHAM, a high-spirited girl of Spanish descent. Subsequently, Ethel saves Dolores from disgrace, and the two girls become firm friends.

One afternoon D'Arcy drives his cousin and Dolores over to St. Jim's to witness a football match between the School House and New House.

Owing to Dolores acting contrary to her friend's wishes, a slight misunderstanding arises between the two girls.

After the match preparations are made for entertaining the girls to tea in Tom Merry's study.

While D'Arcy is busy making toast, Monty Lowther robs him of his clean handkerchief, and places his own—with which Tom Merry has been dusting the study—in its place. (Now read on.)

The Guests Arrive.

The swell of St. Jim's had not the slightest suspicion of the change made in the handkerchiefs. He was thinking only of his rumpled jacket and his dusty trousers. He glared at Lowther with great wrath.

"You uttah ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy made a step towards the humorist of the Shell. Monty Lowther retreated through the doorway, laughing.

"Here, don't forget that toast!" exclaimed Manners, as D'Arcy made a movement to pursue Lowther down the passage.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"You'll be late with it for tea."

"Oh, vevy well! I will give Lowthah a feahful thwashin' anothah time," said Arthur Augustus. And he returned to his occupation.

The swell of St. Jim's made round after round of toast. His face was steadily growing to a beetroot colour from the heat of the fire, but he stuck manfully to his task, and the pile of toast on the plate on the fender grew and grew.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry and Manners laid the cloth and set out the crockery—rather a cracked and varied array of crockery. Tom Merry eyed it with a very doubtful expression.

"Nip along the passages, and see what you can get, Manners, old man!" he exclaimed.

"Right you are!" grinned Manners.

And he went. He returned in about five minutes laden with various crockery-ware; he also had a large Delft jug containing a bunch of big roses.

"By Jove, that's nice!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I never thought of having flowers in the study; but it will look ripping. Where did you get them?"

"Borrowed 'em from Kildare's study."

"Kildare there?"

"No."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I hope Kildare won't miss them," he said.

"Oh, he's not the chap to cut up rusty before girls!" said

Manners easily. "Afterwards, it won't matter. Look here, we shall want some chairs."

"Get 'em from somewhere."

"Good!"

Manners departed. There was the sound of a soft voice in the passage. D'Arcy jumped up off the fender, very hot and perspiring.

"Bai Jove, the gals, you know!"

Tea in Tom Merry's Study.

Cousin Ethel and Dolores came along the Shell passage, escorted by quite a little crowd of juniors. They arrived at the doorway of Tom Merry's study. The study really looked very cosy, freshly dusted as it was, with a bright fire burning and the tea-table laid, glowing with crockery of every colour and pattern. Tom Merry met his visitors with a cheerful grin, and D'Arcy with a blush. The blush was caused by the heat of the fire during the toast-making operations.

"Please come in," said Tom Merry. "I'm afraid you will find it a little crowded."

"Oh, no!" said Ethel.

"Not at all," declared Dolores.

Her black eyes took in the whole study at one glance, and she wondered in her mind why Cousin Ethel chose to have tea in that poky little room—for so Dolores mentally characterised Tom Merry's study—instead of in the big, airy room in the Head's house.

But a gentle smile remained on Dolores' red lips while she was making these mental criticisms, and no one—excepting, perhaps, Kerr—had any idea of what she was thinking. More than once there had been an odd expression in Kerr's eyes as he glanced at the Spanish girl.

"We've got rather a decent spread this time," Tom Merry remarked, with a smile, "and Gussy has made heaps of toast."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"How hot you look, Arthur!" Ethel exclaimed, with a smile.

"Bai Jove, yaas!"

And Arthur Augustus took out his handkerchief and wiped his warm brow.

Then there was a shriek of laughter in the study.

D'Arcy had wiped a trail of grime all across his aristocratic features, and the change in his aspect was simply startling.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I entirely fail to see what you duffahs are cacklin' at."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look in the glass!" gasped Cousin Ethel.

"Bai Jove, Ethel—"

"Look in the glass—"

Arthur Augustus obeyed. Then he gave a jump.

"Gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Some feahful ass has put the wong handkerchief in my pocket!" gasped D'Arcy. "Bai Jove, I'll give the wottah a feahful thwashin'!"

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

The two girls were laughing as heartily as anybody. D'Arcy

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gave one more look into the glass, and then rushed from the study.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, dear!" gasped Figgins. "I know Gussy will be the death of me! I wonder who played that little jape on him?"

"I wonder!" said Monty Lowther, who had come into the study with the crowd. "It was rough on poor old Gussy. Hallo! What's that?"

There was a wild trampling and crashing in the passage, and Manners came tearing up, with a chair under each arm, and dashed into the study with his prizes.

After him came Hancock and Jones minor at top speed.

"Stop him!" yelled Hancock.

"Stop him!" roared Jones. "We'll— Oh!"

They halted in the doorway at the sight of the two girls, and blushed.

"Oh, sorry!" gasped both of them, and fled.

Manners panted, and set down the chairs.

"Got 'em!" he gasped.

"Enough now?" asked Blake.

"Yes, if you two chaps sit on the window-ledge."

"Good! We can do that."

Cousin Ethel was placed in the best chair, and Dolores in the next best, at the tea-table. The armchair had been slung out into the passage to give more room. The juniors seated themselves round the table, or about the room, or at the window. There were ten boys and two girls in all, and the party was large for the size of the study. But it was no use quarrelling with the accommodation.

Arthur Augustus came in, with his face freshly washed, and clean as a new pin, looking newly swept and garnished, so to speak. A general grin greeted his reappearance, and he replied to it with a lofty stare through his eyeglass.

"You don't mind sitting on the coal-locker, do you, Gussy?" said Monty Lowther.

"Oh! I—I mean, not at all, dear boy!"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Here's your chair, Gussy, next to Miss Pelham. Sit down, old son."

"Thank you vewy much, Tom Mewwy!"

Tom Merry had arranged D'Arcy's place next to Dolores. D'Arcy was the greatest lady's man at St. Jim's, and he knew Dolores better than the other fellows. And Ethel was quite satisfied with Figgins looking after her. Tom Merry thought his arrangement rather diplomatic.

The tea was made, and its pleasant scent pervaded the study. Cousin Ethel poured out the tea.

There was a cheerful fire of chatter round the tea-table. Football was naturally the topic, and for some time it was hardly noticed that Dolores was very silent.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was entertaining her with an account of the goals he would have kicked if it hadn't happened that he didn't kick them. He observed at last that Dolores was replying only in monosyllables, and toying with her teaspoon.

"Anothah cup of tea, deah gal?" he asked.

"No, thank you!"

"May I pass you the cake?"

"Thank you, no."

"Speakin' of cake," said D'Arcy, "weminds me of a wathah good stowy. There was a fellow named Wobinson—I forget whether his name was Wobinson or Wadcliff; but it doesn't weally mattah—and he had a cake on his birthday. It was a vewy large cake, with plums, you know. Are you fond of plum-cake, Miss Pelham?"

"No," said Miss Pelham.

"It is vewy nice," said D'Arcy. "Well, this fellow Wadcliff, or Wobinson—I forget which; but it is not weally material to the stowy—had a plum-cake on his birthday. He had a few fwriends—"

"Pass the watercress, D'Arcy."

"Certainly, deah boy!"

"And the salt."

"Here you are."

"Oh, Gussy can't kick for toffee!" Fatty Wynn was saying. "Why, if he'd put the ball at me like—like a New House chap, I should have had to play it over the bar."

"Weally, Wynn—"

"That would have been a corner for you, though," added Fatty Wynn reflectively. "I don't suppose it would have been much use to you chaps."

"Oh, wats!"

"Cheese it, Fatty!" grinned Figgins. "Order! Pass the sugar!"

Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and gave Fatty Wynn a withering glance, which was quite wasted upon Wynn, who was just then beaming in great delight upon the cake. D'Arcy turned back to Dolores.

"I was tellin' you about my fw friend Wobinson," he remarked.

"Were you?" said Dolores.

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"Yaas, wathah! About a birthday cake, you know."

"Indeed!"

D'Arcy was discouraged.

He did not pursue the story of Robinson, or Radcliff, and the birthday cake. He tried Miss Pelham on several other topics, but found them all uninteresting to her. The swell of St. Jim's became a little silent himself towards the end of the meal. He was discouraged. If the young lady wouldn't talk herself, and wouldn't listen to him when he talked, there were difficulties in the way of a conversation.

Cousin Ethel glanced at her friend once or twice. Dolores coloured once under her glance, and made an effort to be cheerful and chatty, and succeeded to some extent. But the tea was nearly over now, and ere long it finished, and the crowded company in the study broke up.

"Bai Jove!" D'Arcy confided to Tom Merry. "I weally don't think I get on vewy well with Miss Pelham, you know."

"No?" said Tom Merry.

"No. I was tellin' her the stowy about Wobinson and his birthday cake, you wemembah."

"Yes, I remember," said Tom, rather hastily.

"It's all wight," said Arthur Augustus, with some dignity.

"I wasn't going to tell you ovah again, Tom Mewwy. But Miss Pelham seemed quite bored, and I didn't finish tellin' her the stowy."

"Go hon!"

"Don't you think it's wathah wemarkable?"

"Simply amazing!"

And D'Arcy adjusted his monocle, and gave the hero of the Shell a very dubious glance. But after that D'Arcy did not inflict very much of his society upon Dolores Pelham.

"I want anothah chap to come with me in the twap when I dwive the gals home," he said to Blake, a little later.

"Would you like to come, deah boy? I have a pass fwom Kildare for two, on purpose."

Blake grunted.

"Of course, I'd like to come," he said.

"Then come, deah boy."

Blake shook his head.

"No," he said heroically. "Take Figgins."

D'Arcy started.

"Figgins?"

"Yes, Figgins!"

"Bai Jove! Do you think Figgy is wathah stwuck with Miss Pelham, pewwaps?" said D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! It's barely poss that she might have pweferrred sittin' beside Figgy at tea," said D'Arcy slowly. "She was awf'ly bored with me, you know. It seems odd that anybody should pwefere Figgy; but there's no accountin' for tastes, is there?"

"Not at all," said Blake.

"If you'd like to let Figgy come instead of you, Blake, I'll take him."

"Do!" said Blake.

"Vewy well."

And while the girls were gone into the Head's house for their coats and hats, D'Arcy approached Figgins, who was standing chatting with Kerr and Wynn, with a somewhat lugubrious expression upon his honest face.

"Figgins, old man!"

"Hallo!" said Figgins, rather gruffly.

"I was wonderin' if you'd care to come in the twap to St. Fweda's," said D'Arcy. "Blake thinks you might like to."

Figgins jumped.

"Mo!" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Oh, I say, Gussy, this is awf'ly decent of you!" Figgins exclaimed.

"Not at all, deah boy. I shall be dwivin', you know, and there ought to be somebody to talk to the gals, of course. I'm sure you'll like to have a dwive with Miss Pelham," said D'Arcy humorously.

"Miss Pelham," said Figgins vaguely. "Oh, yes, of course, I'll come with pleasure, Gussy, and I think it's vewy decent of you."

"Not at all, deah boy!"

And Figgins dashed off for his coat and cap.

Off-Side.

"Quite weady, deah gals?"

Cousin Ethel and Dolores came out of the Head's house, wrapped in their coats for the drive home to St. Freda's. Both of them looked vewy charming, and many of the fellows gathered round envied D'Arcy and Figgins that drive.

Figgins came racing up with his coat on.

"Right!" he gasped. "Here I am!"

Dolores looked at him.

"Are you coming?" she said.

"Ye-es," said Figgins, his enthusiasm considerably dashed by Miss Pelham's tone. "Gussy has asked me, and—"

"We shall be glad," said Cousin Ethel.

"Why, of course," said Dolores, with a charming smile.

And Figgins recovered again.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "Figgins will talk to you while I dwive, you know. I'll let you dwive comin' back, Figgy; but while the acies are in the twap I think we had better take ewery care."

Figgins laughed. He didn't want to drive—far from it.

"All right, old kid," he said.

"Quite weady, deah gals?"

"Quite," said Cousin Ethel.

The juniors gathered round. There were many good-byes to be said. Ethel had said good-bye to Mrs. Holmes and the Head; but there were quite a crowd of juniors in the quad to see her off.

"Good-bye, Cousin Ethel!"

"Good-bye!" said Ethel brightly. "And thank you all so much for the pleasant afternoon we have had."

"It's you that's made it pleasant, Cousin Ethel," said Tom Merry.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the Shell fellow.

"Bai Jove Tom Mewwy," regard that as a weally graceful remark!" he said. "You do not often expwess yourself so well."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, if you pass it, it's all right, Gussy," he said.

"Yaas, wathah! You see—"

"Good-bye again!" said Cousin Ethel.

She waved her hand from the trap. Dolores did not wave her hand. Perhaps she thought she did not know the juniors of St. Jim's well enough.

D'Arcy took the ribbons, and the trap moved off through the dusk, the lamps gleaming out ahead as he drove away.

Tom Merry and his chums looked after them as they went. When the gleaming lights of the trap were lost in the darkness of the road, the juniors turned back to the house.

"What a ripping girl Cousin Ethel is!" Tom Merry remarked.

"Yes, rather!" said Blake. "How do you like her friend?"

Tom Merry paused for a moment before replying.

"Well, any friend of Cousin Ethel's must be nice," he said at last.

And Blake nodded, and it dropped at that.

Dolores—little thinking, and still less caring, what impression she had made upon the St. Jim's fellows—sat in the cushioned seat, with her coat about her, and the thick rug over her knees, for the night was cold. All Arthur Augustus' attention was given to the horse, for the country road was almost pitchy dark, and he had to think wholly of his duties as a driver. Figgins was left to entertain the two girls during the drive—a thing that was difficult for Figgins to do. For though Figgins, in his big, honest heart, regarded all girls with a feeling akin to veneration, and worshipped Cousin Ethel in particular, still, that did not help him as a conversationalist. In fact, Figgins, like many fellows who can do things, did not excel as a talker. He felt it incumbent to talk now, however, and he manfully did his best.

"Jolly game, wasn't it?" said he.

Cousin Ethel smiled in the darkness. She knew that Figgins would talk, and she knew that he would talk football, because it was the subject that interested him of all others, and he generally imagined all the rest of the world to be as keenly interested in it as himself. But Ethel knew what the mention of football would mean to Dolores, already bored to death with the afternoon's game and the talk about it.

"Yes," said Ethel slowly, thinking of some means to change the talk to a subject more agreeable to Dolores.

"You'd like to come over and see another match?"

Figgins said eagerly.

"I would," said Ethel, "certainly!"

"How good! We can easily arrange it," said Figgins. "Miss Pelham is fond of seeing a good game, too, I suppose?" he added, as an afterthought.

If it had been light enough he would have seen Miss Pelham's lip curl; but, luckily, it was too dark.

"Oh, yes!" said Dolores.

Ethel made a movement. She did not like to hear Dolores say so. She knew that Dolores disliked the mere mention of the subject. Yet politeness called for some remark; and Ethel would not judge her friend harshly.

"You like to see the fellows play footer?" Figgins asked.

"I have very seldom enjoyed anything so much," said Dolores.

"How good!" exclaimed Figgins, in his honest, unsuspecting way. "It will be such a pleasure to us, Miss Pelham, if you will come over with Cousin Ethel next time."

"Oh, I shall surely come if Ethel will bring me," said Dolores softly. "I think St. Jim's is a grand old place. I love it!"

Figgins was feeling very happy. He felt that he had not liked Miss Pelham hitherto as much as she deserved. She was evidently a nice girl now, and quite worthy to be a friend of Cousin Ethel's.

Ethel was silent.

To her candid mind every one of Dolores' remarks was unpleasant; she knew that they could not be sincere. But she could not very well hint as much to Figgins.

So she said nothing. She would not become a party to a game in which Figgins was to be made a fool of.

That was evidently Dolores' object. It amused her wilful, wayward spirit to take this advantage of Figgy's unsuspectingness.

"And the boys are all so nice," said Dolores deliberately.

"Especially that nice boy with the handsome blue eyes. What was his name?"

"Tom Merry?"

"Oh, no! Are his eyes blue?"

"Why, they're as blue as the sky!" said Figgins, in astonishment.

"Are they really?" said Dolores carelessly. "No, I mean the good-looking boy who was standing near us, and did not play."

Figgins wrinkled his brow.

"A School House boy?" he asked.

"He had a carnation in his cap!"

"Why, that was Mellish!"

"What a pretty name!" said Dolores.

Still Ethel did not speak. She knew Mellish well—Mellish, the fellow who was called the cad of the Fourth at St. Jim's.

Dolores had not exchanged two words with him, and certainly had a peculiar taste if she considered him handsome. But Dolores had noticed that there was no love lost between Mellish and Figgins. That was why she was praising Mellish now. Figgins would never have dreamed of it. That a girl could deliberately try to ruffle his temper by praising a fellow he disliked would never have occurred to Figgins as possible. Why should Dolores want to ruffle his temper, as far as that went?"

"I dare say it's a pretty name," said Figgins very briefly.

"Is he a friend of yours?" asked Dolores.

"Well, you see, he's a School House chap."

"But you have friends in the School House?"

"Oh, yes!"

Dolores laughed.

"But you do not like Mellish, I see. Of course, it is not because he is so good-looking; I am sure that wouldn't influence you."

"Blessed if I can see that he's good-looking," said Figgins. "I've never heard anybody say so before. Why, stand him beside Tom Merry, or Blake, or Kerr, he'd look nothing!"

Dolores laughed again.

"Not that his good looks matter, of course," Figgins added.

"Why don't you like him?" asked Dolores.

"I—I haven't said that I don't, Miss Pelham."

"But you don't?"

"Well, no, I don't."

Ethel could not touch Dolores' hand, as she wanted to, without Figgins knowing that she was giving her friend a signal. That would never have done.

"But why?" said Dolores.

"Oh, we don't get on!" said Figgins, who was not to be drawn, however cleverly, into talking about even a fellow he disliked behind his back. "Fellows don't get on sometimes, you know, Miss Pelham."

"Never mind," said Miss Pelham. "Tell me about football."

Figgins laughed in his good-natured way.

"That's rather a big order," he said. "What shall I tell you?"

"About the game—how it is played," said Dolores.

"Ethel was explaining to me, but I did not follow very clearly. I should like to hear the rules of the game, especially the—off-side rule."

Now, if there was a subject Figgins was great upon, it was the off-side rule. He wanted much less than that to start him. He forthwith launched into a disquisition upon football in general, and the off-side rule in particular. He waxed eloquent upon that subject, and did not notice how very silent Cousin Ethel was.

Dolores made just sufficient remarks to keep Figgins in full tide. Figgins, in the innocence of his heart, imagined that Ethel and Dolores were both as intensely interested in the topic as he was himself. Ethel, indeed, would have been; she liked to hear Figgins talk footer. But she knew that Dolores was only drawing Figgins out, and she knew

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how difficult Dolores found it to stifle her yawns, even while she was amusing herself at Figgins' expense in this way. What was the matter with Dolores? Cousin Ethel felt miserably that this was the least pleasant day she had ever spent in company with the St. Jim's juniors.

She was growing angry—angry with Dolores, angry with herself, angry with Figgins. She was indignant upon Figgins' account, and she was angry that he could not see that Dolores was only drawing him out, and yet she liked him all the better for not being able to see it. Mellish would have seen it at once.

There was an exclamation from the gloom where D'Arcy sat.

"Bai Jove! Here we are!"

And the trap stopped before the gates of St. Freda's.

Figgins Wonders.

Figgins jumped down to ring the bell, and the old porter of St. Freda's came to the gates. He was an old soldier, with a wooden leg, and although he still carried himself with some military erectness, his movements were very slow, and Figgins rang three times before he appeared at the gates. A lantern glimmered through the bars into the dark road and upon the glimmering horse and harness.

"It is all right, corporal," said Cousin Ethel. "You know us."

"All right, miss," said Corporal Brick. "Wait a minute, young sir!"

And the corporal fumbled for the keys and opened the gates. D'Arcy drove in, and Figgins swung himself up behind.

"That drive's jolly soon over," he said.

He addressed Cousin Ethel, but it was Dolores who replied. Ethel did not move her lips.

"Yes," said Dolores. "It was much quicker returning than going—I mean, it seemed so. Thank you so much!"

"Nothing to thank me for," said Figgins. "Nothing I enjoy so much as a good jaw about footer, you know. It's a grand game!"

And Figgins would probably have started off again, but just then the trap drew up before the house, and the door was opened. Figgins and D'Arcy jumped down, and assisted the girls to alight. Miss Penfold was standing in the lighted doorway. The boys lifted their hats to her.

"I twust we are not late, deah madam?" said Arthur Augustus. "We have bwrought home the young ladies safe and sound."

Miss Penfold smiled.

"No, you are not late," she said. "Come in, Ethel. Dear me, how pale you look! Was it very cold in the trap?"

"Oh, no!" said Ethel quickly.

Figgins glanced at her hastily. Now that they were standing in the lighted hall he could see that Cousin Ethel was a little pale.

His look of eager alarm melted Ethel's heart.

"I am all right, Figgins," she said. "Come in, Dolores. Good-night, Arthur! Thank you both so much for seeing us home!"

"Yes, indeed!" said Dolores.

"Bai Jove, you know, the pleasuah was all on our side," said D'Arcy, in his most stately way. "It will be vevy dull dwivin' back."

"Yes, rather!" said Figgins. "Good-night, Ethel! Good-night, Miss Pelham!" He shook hands with the girls.

"Good-night, Miss Penfold!"

The juniors moved to the doorway again. Figgins had some slight hope that Cousin Ethel would follow him to the door for one good-bye more. But she did not move, remaining very close to Miss Penfold.

The juniors clambered into the trap, and D'Arcy drove off.

"That was a wippin' dwive here, Figgins," he remarked.

"The horse wequired all my attention, so I wasn't able to help you."

"That's all right, Gussy."

"I twust you did not bore the gals too much?"

"Eh? Oh, we had a jolly talk!" said Figgins. "Miss Pelham is awfully interested in football!"

"Wats!"

"What?"

"I—I mean, she is, is she?" said D'Arcy, busying himself with the reins. "Quite a slip of the tongue on my part, deah boy. Gee up, there—gee up!"

"We had a ripping talk!" said Figgins, rather warmly.

"Vevy good, deah boy."

And Arthur Augustus did not pursue the subject.

"I thought Cousin Ethel looked a little tired when we left her," said Figgins, after a long pause.

D'Arcy winked at the dark trees along the lane.

"Did she weally, deah boy?"

"I thought so."

"Well, pewwaps she was tired."

"Yet she didn't look tired when we started."

"When you started talkin' footah, do you mean?"

"No!" said Figgins sharply. "When we started from St. Jim's!"

D'Arcy chuckled softly.

"Pewwaps somethin' has tired her sense," he remarked.

"Oh, shut up!" said Figgins crossly.

"Certainly, deah boy."

And the drive continued in silence for some time after that. But presently Figgins broke the silence.

"I say, Gussy!"

"Yaas, deah boy."

"I know Cousin Ethel likes talking footer; we've talked it lots of times, and she talks as much as I do, or more."

"That's all wight, then."

"I remember she didn't say much this time, as it happens."

"No?"

"But perhaps she was tired."

"Vevy likely," assented D'Arcy.

"Miss Pelham was very interested."

"Good!"

"She doesn't seem to know much about footer, but she's eager to learn, and she likes the idea of coming over to St. Jim's for another footer match."

"Yaas; I shouldn't wonder."

Figgins made an irritable movement.

"Look here, Gussy, what are you getting at?"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"What are you thinking about?"

"Suppah!" said Arthur Augustus candidly. "I am gettin' wathah hungvay. This keen air gives a chap an appetite, you know."

"Oh!" said Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah!"

The trap rattled on, D'Arcy driving in silence, and Figgins sitting under the rug without speaking. It was Figgins who spoke first again.

"Miss Pelham is a ripping girl, Gussy!"

"All gals are wippin', deah boy!"

"Well, yes; but some are more ripping than others! Miss Pelham is very nice—not so nice as Cousin Ethel, of course; but that's impossible."

"Quite imposs!" agreed D'Arcy. "Cousin Ethel is a stunnah!"

"Yes; isn't she? Besides," said Figgins argumentatively, "Miss Pelham is Ethel's friend, and so she must be nice."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"All the same—"

"Yaas?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Another long silence. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy devoted his attention to the horse. Figgins sat with his hands in his pockets, and with a thoughtful frown corrugating his rugged brows.

"Look here, Gussy—" he exclaimed at last.

"Yaas, deah boy?"

"Is it possible—" Figgins paused.

"Yaas?"

"Is it possible—"

"Well?"

"Is it possible—"

"Weally, Figgins, that depends upon what you are talkin' about, you know!" said D'Arcy, with great patience.

"Pewwaps you might explain a little furthah."

"It isn't possible that I've offended Cousin Ethel in any way, is it?"

"Bai Jove! Why should you think so, deah boy?"

"I don't know."

"Then don't think it," said D'Arcy. "Cousin Ethel knows you're always putting your foot in it, you know, if you've been clumsy. To be quite fwank with you, Figgins, I've often wondahed how gals can stand you, but Ethel seems to stand you all wight. I shouldn't wowwy."

Dolores is Sorry.

"Oh, I'm not worrying!" said Figgins.

"That's all wight, then."

The trap rattled on. Figgins sat silent this time till the lights of St. Jim's loomed up in the gloom ahead. Then he spoke.

"I wonder—"

"Yaas, Figgay?"

"I wonder—" repeated Figgins, and then he paused once more.

"Weally, Figgins, go on, you know! You wonder what?"
"Oh, nothing!"

And that was the end of Figgins' conversational efforts for that night. Arthur Augustus never discovered what it was that Figgins wondered.

Cousin Ethel went up to her own room. Dolores was watching her with a curious expression in her big, dark eyes—an expression that Ethel did not see, for she did not look at the Spanish girl. There was a very quiet expression upon Ethel's face, and the Spanish girl did not speak to her then.

Ethel had anticipated a very happy afternoon at St. Jim's and a happy drive home in the evening, and then a pleasant talk with Dolores about the events of the day before going to bed.

She came down from her cubicle a little later, hoping that she would not meet Dolores. Such was the outcome of her anticipations. She looked into the school-room, which the girls used as a common-room after lessons.

There was a big fire blazing in the broad, open grate at the end—a wood fire, with great logs crackling and sending forth a blaze of light and heat. Round it the girls were gathered, for the evening was very cold. The sound of laughter and pleasant voices came to Ethel as she looked in.

But Ethel, usually so cheery in society, was not in the mood for talk just then, and for the questioning she knew she would receive from her friends about her excursion to St. Jim's. She drew back without entering the room, and the gleam of a fire in one of the class-rooms caught her eye as she passed the open door. The room was empty, the fire dying in the grate. Its silence and gloom were a contrast to the merry scene she had looked upon a few moments before, but they suited Ethel better. She went quietly into the room, pushed the door to without latching it, and sat down in a low chair by the fire. She was glad of the silence and the solitude for the time.

She sat in a low chair, her hands clasping her knees, looking into the fire, which leaped and glimmered at intervals as it sank lower. Sombre shadows lay on the walls save when the blaze came, and when it came it danced in fantastic shapes on the walls and ceiling.

Ethel was lost in thought.

Suddenly, as she sat without stirring, two arms were thrown about her neck from behind. She started.

A cheek, wet with tears, was laid against her own, and the arms held her tighter.

Dolores' soft voice was murmuring in her ears:

"Ethel, I'm so sorry—I'm so sorry! Forgive me, Ethel dear! I'm so sorry!"

Ethel did not speak.

She was too surprised to do so for a moment. It was Dolores, and the wayward Spanish girl was in another of her changing moods.

Her hair was falling about Ethel's face as the Spanish girl threw herself upon her knees at the British girl's side. Her arms were still about Ethel's neck, her wet, dark cheek pressed to Ethel's fair skin.

"Tell me you forgive me, Ethel! I'm so sorry!"

She did not say what she was sorry for. She knew that Ethel knew.

Ethel was still silent.

"I was a cad!" went on Dolores. "I—I did not mean to be, but—but I was! I am often like that, Ethel; you have not seen the evil side of me yet. Did I not tell you once that you would be sorry you had made a friend of me?"

"You did, Dolores."

"And you are sorry now?"

Ethel was silent.

"But—but I know I did wrong!" said Dolores, in her soft tones, strangely like a little child pleading for pardon, although she was so much older than Ethel in other ways. "I know it was mean, Ethel, but—but it was me!"

Ethel could not help smiling.

"I'm sorry, too, Dolores. You know you should not have acted as you did."

"Oh, yes; I know it, Ethel! It was ungrateful, it was cruel and caddish! I know I am a bad girl—a bad girl. But anyone here could have told you that before, Ethel, if you would have listened to them."

"Why did you do it, Dolores?"

"I don't know."

"But—but—"

"But I was always so," said Dolores. "I cannot help it; it pleases me to make people do what they don't want to do, and to make fun of them secretly, and—and— But I know you will think it very wicked."

"It is wicked!" said Ethel. "It was taking a mean advantage of Figgins to treat him as you did. If you don't like him—"

"But I do!"

"You do?" asked Ethel, in astonishment.

"Si, si," said Dolores. "Of course, I do! Isn't he a nice boy, and so brave and strong? I might even like him more than would please you, my Ethel!"

"Don't talk nonsense, Dolores!" said Ethel sharply.

The Spanish girl laughed softly.

"Never mind Figgins," she said. "But—but I am so sorry you are angry with me, Ethel. Why are you so patient with me? I am always worse when people are patient with me. If you had been harder—"

"Is that your idea of friendship, Dolores?"

"Oh, you are too good and sweet for me!" said Dolores, kissing her cheek. "I am wilful and hard-hearted, but—but I don't want you to be angry with me, Ethel. I don't care for any of the others; but I want you to like me, Ethel. Won't you pardon me?"

"Yes," said Ethel, half-smiling.

The dancing flame from the fire shot up and showed the smile upon her fair face. The Spanish girl laughed happily.

"My dear, dear Ethel; and how wicked I was! But it is all over now, and I will never be like that again, never! What a happy afternoon we had, Ethel!"

"Did we?" said Ethel.

Dolores laughed again and hugged her.

"You are a little angel to forgive me," she said. "I would never have forgiven you in any place, never. But you are ever so much better than I am. Ethel, Miss Penfold knows that, and she thinks that your friendship may make me a better girl, Ethel. She has not said so, of course, but I have seen it in her face."

"Nonsense," said Ethel.

"But she does think so; and she is right. And I shall never be a better girl," said Dolores. "I am as my nature is—as you have seen it to-day. But I shall never be ungrateful to you again."

"I'm so sorry."

"Well, there is no more to be said about it, then," said Ethel brightly. "Let us forget it all. Dear me! There is the supper-bell!"

"Oh, never mind supper!" said Dolores.

But Ethel rose.

"Come, Dolores, we have had a long leave to-day, and we cannot return Miss Penfold's kindness by being troublesome for nothing."

Dolores made a pettish gesture, but the next moment she was all softness again.

"You are right, Ethel, quite right, and I am wrong, as usual. Let us go."

And the two girls left the class-room, meeting in the passage a stream of girls going towards the supper-room.

Claire Pomfret looked at them.

"Did you have a good time to-day, Ethel?" she asked.

"Oh, splendid!" said Dolores, before Ethel could reply.

"Ethel was an angel, and I—"

"And you weren't," said Milly Pratt.

Dolores laughed and nodded.

"Quite right; and I wasn't," she said. "Come on, Ethel, or we shall be late."

Ethel's face was bright enough at the supper-table. Her kind heart could never harbour resentment long. And certainly Dolores had expressed contrition enough; but how long the contrite spirit would last was another question.

With Dolores' wayward and passionate nature, faults and contrition were likely to follow upon one another's heels, and a friend who bore with her failings was likely to be called upon to bear a great deal.

But Ethel did not think of that now. She was naturally inclined to look upon the bright side of everything, and to make the best of everyone, especially among her friends.

When the girls went to bed that night, Dolores insisted upon brushing Ethel's hair—the long, fair hair that was so beautiful and so great a contrast to her own. She bent over Ethel as the English girl's fair face lay upon the pillow.

"Quite forgiven, Ethel?" she said softly.

Ethel smiled.

"Quite, Dolores. Good-night, dear!"

"Good-night," said Dolores softly.

And the Spanish girl went to her own cubicle. But when Miss Tyrrell had put the lights out in the lower dormitory, Dolores did not sleep. Neither did sleep come readily to Ethel. Long after the lights were out, and the voices had died away, Ethel heard a sound in the next cubicle; and, anxious for Dolores, she slipped from her bed and looked into the next apartment. A glimmer of light from the dormitory windows fell into the cubicle and showed her a slim, white form kneeling beside the bed. It was Dolores.

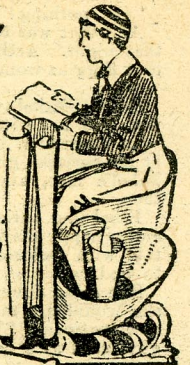
The words she was murmuring Ethel did not know; but she knew that Dolores was murmuring a prayer, there alone in the deep silence of the night, and she crept back silently to her own bed, her own eyelids wet.

(Another long instalment of this splendid school serial in next Wednesday's "Gem." Order your copy in advance.)



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"THE BOUNDER OF ST. JIM'S!"

By *Patia Clifford.*

In next Wednesday's grand, long, complete story of the stalwarts of St. Jim's we are introduced to Bagley Trimble, a fat, revolting customer, who was formerly associated in a slight degree with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. To the great disgust of Jack Blake & Co., the new arrival is planted in No. 6 Study, and there is a great deal of commotion in consequence. Master Trimble's ways are so oily, and he is such a fluent fibber, that even the protection of the great Gussy avails him nothing, and the new recruit to the ranks of the Fourth proves himself to be, without a doubt,

"THE BOUNDER OF ST. JIM'S!"

A GRAVE WRONG RIGHTED.

In the issue of the "Gem" Library entitled "The Great Sports Tournament" I had occasion to mention the names of several cads who had sneered at this journal. Among them was Albert V. Smith, of Wolverhampton.

It has since been discovered I am responsible for a serious mistake. Albert V. Smith, so far from being the outsider I classed him as, is one of my most loyal readers, and it is a thousand pities that his name should inadvertently have got among those of the grumblers. I reserve a special drawer in my sanctum for anonymous offensive letters, and in a busy moment—there is no lack of them at this office!—my chum's epistle must have been thrust into the drawer, with the result that his name appeared side by side with cads of the Malpas type.

I have written a personal letter to Albert V. Smith expressing my apology in the matter, but I feel that this is not sufficient. My chum's good name may have suffered in consequence of the affair, and I feel that it is "up to" me, as one who always urges his readers to play the game, to make a public statement freely exonerating Master Smith from all blame in connection with the affair. I sincerely hope he will pardon the blunder, and ever strive to keep the flag of the good old "Gem" flying in Wolverhampton.

CONCERNING "SCHOOL AND SPORT."

I wish to thank the following readers for the letters of enthusiastic approval which they sent me in connection with the above story:

G. T. Julian (Lee, S.E.), J. Marrison Hardie (Glasgow), Walter Wood (Liverpool), Albert W., Agnes P. (Wandsworth), H. C. (Walthamstow), J. T. K. (Belfast), "Automatic" (Scarborough), "Roberta" (Sheffield), B. A. M. (South Norwood), Ronald B. (Swansea), A. M. (King's Lynn), Stanley Harvey (Camberwell), W. H. (Wigan), and Ivor Griffith.

The success of "School and Sport"—the joint production of Frank Richards and Martin Clifford—was unique, and so many nice things were said about the story that I could fill a whole number of the "Gem" with generous tributes.

There were a few criticisms, however. This is only to be expected, for the story which is beyond criticism remains to be written. The greatest grievance seems to be that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, was seldom in the limelight, and took a back seat throughout the sports.

This is not really surprising when one considers that the story dealt with the heroes of six different schools. It would be quite impossible to give a hundred characters a good show under such circumstances. Then, again, Gussy, although

he may be a very amusing sort of fellow, is emphatically not the leading sportsman at St. Jim's. Tom Merry, Talbot, Jack Blake, and several others are infinitely superior to D'Arcy on the playing-fields, and I don't think the story suffered because of the omission. It sold out almost at once, and a huge reprint order had to be executed. Those of my chums who were suffering from financial tightness during December, and were therefore unable to purchase the great threepenny book, may still obtain it from their newsagents. It is a story which should undoubtedly be in every home. One never knows when such a masterpiece will appear again.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

The following British Tommies would be extremely grateful for copies of the companion papers:

14606 Private F. Kelly, 84th Field Company, Royal Engineers, British Expeditionary Force, France; Miss Edith Bickerstaff, 51, Boswell Street, Sefton Park, Liverpool (for friends at the Front); and 1504 Private Hugh Boyle, D Company, 19th Durham Light Infantry, No. 11 Camp, near Bulford, Wilts.

Home and away matches required by the Kenmuir Football Club (average age 15). Apply S. Michael, 40, Fisher Street, or John Sutherland, junr., 102, Montrose Street, Glasgow.

Away matches required by a Merton football club (average age 15). Must be within a six-miles radius of the district. Apply H. C. Woodley, 58, Warren Road, Merton, Surrey.

"Soldier-Lover."—Many thanks for your interesting letter.

"A Loyal Gemite" (Co. Durham).—I much admire the sportsmanlike tone of your letter.

E. Watson (Victoria, Australia).—I entirely disagree with you when you say there has recently been a falling-off in the quality of the "Gem" stories. They were never better than at present. I can only presume that your liver was out of order when you wrote your letter.

"A Pommy Reader" (Claremont, West Australia).—The name of the controlling editor of the companion papers is H. A. Hinton. I see no reason why you should seek to doubt this statement.

"Not Satisfied" (Drumguth).—It is very silly of you to take exception to the fact that Greyfriars won Lieutenant Howell's cup in "School and Sport." Did not St. Jim's have a look-in in "The Great Sports Tournament"? You strike me as being the sort of fellow who would get on his hind-legs about anything. If you dislike the companion papers, you know your remedy. Leave them alone.

H. C. Grover (Southgate).—Gussy's manner of speaking is sheer affectation. Your request will be inserted next Wednesday.

"An Old Reader" (Newcastle-on-Tyne).—When a reader of the "Gem" sends spare copies of the companion papers to Tommies in the trenches it is, of course, understood that he—or she—pays postage. That's where the "good turn" comes in.

If Miss Winifred Findlay and Miss Mamie Vallence, of Glasgow, will send me their full address I shall have pleasure in giving them a personal reply to their letter.

E. J. W. (Chiswick).—I appreciate your kind remarks, and hope you enjoyed the story in question.

"England" (near Manchester).—I cannot tell you from what town the character you mention hails. I am sure we shall all be heartily glad when the sword is sheathed and the Hun is brought face to face with his Day of Reckoning.

"Amos" (High Holborn).—I entirely disagree with your remark that boy and girl friendships are impossible.

Matthew W. (Glasgow).—Many thanks for your splendid letter of appreciation.

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REPLIES IN BRIEF—continued.

F. G. (Croydon).—Your only remedy is to persuade your mother and father to peruse a copy of the "Gem." No fair-minded parent would debar a boy from reading the Tom Merry stories, which boast a world-wide popularity, and are particularly acceptable in the British trenches. Good luck to you!

Will Gemites wishing to dispose of spare copies kindly send them to Miss Doris Hunt, 45, Hall Road, Barking Road, East Ham, whose father is with the Grand Fleet, and is about to start a book club on board?

J. F. (Manchester).—Look out for an important announcement on my Chat Page next Wednesday concerning "Tom Merry's Weekly."

"A Loyal Gemite" (Gravesend).—Sorry I cannot oblige you with photographs of the St. Jim's heroes. The football group, as you know, appeared in "School and Sport." Best wishes!

R. W.—The serial in question appeared many years ago in the "Boys' Friend." It is long since out of print.

T. Crowther (Birmingham).—I don't think a page dealing with natural history would be approved of by the majority of Gemites.

H. R. R. (Ormskirk).—You mentioned an enclosure in your letter to me, but I failed to find it in the envelope. Perhaps you overlooked it.

Dorothy H. (Brookhurst, Hants).—Very many thanks for your letter! I hope you enjoyed "School and Sport" in spite of its belated arrival.

Samuel D. (Glasgow).—I shouldn't advise you to read your "Gem" in office hours, however fascinating the story might be. No fellow should waste his employer's time. Glad to hear you are a member of the "Boys' Friend" Anti-German League, which still continues to flourish right royally.

"Kilkenny Cat."—For unavoidable reasons the suggested change in the "Penny Popular" will not come about for a month or so. The idea is, not to discard the Tom Merry story, but to combine the adventures of the St. Jim's stalwarts with those of the boys of Greyfriars.

F. H. and A. M. (Middlesbrough).—Very many thanks for your continued support, and for obtaining thirty new readers for the "Greyfriars Herald."

Valen Jones.—Many thanks for your excellent sketch of Breezy Ben and Dismal Dutchy.

Harold D. B. (Cheshire).—The story concerning the sports for Lord Eastwood's Cup was entitled "Sportsmen All!" and appeared last July in the "Magnet" Library.

Gladys Owen and Minnie Watkins (Ebbw Vale).—I am very much obliged to you for the splendid work you are doing on behalf of this journal.

Mabel M. P. (Ighbury).—No, the "Gem" Library has never been published in volume form, so your friend is wrong and you are right. Readers usually have copies bound at their own expense. Best wishes.

L. M. N. (Bridlington).—The characters you mention are quite insignificant, and play only a small part in our stories.

Alonzo W. (London, S.E.).—I would refer you to my comments concerning "School and Sport" which appear in this issue.

G. Lee (Redhill).—Send your spare copies of the "Gem" to Miss Doris Hunt, whose address appears above.

Evelyn C. (Southsea).—Cousin Ethel is devoted to George Figgins more than to any other St. Jim's junior.

Stewart J. W.—I know of no reader possessing a complete set of "Gems" and "Magnets" who is willing to part with them.

A. B. S. (Moston).—Do not worry about your stature. Nature will fix things up for you.

Joseph M. (Leeds).—Your pronunciation of Lord Mauleverer's name is correct, and your chum's is not. Go up one!

"Bon Am." (Holborn).—I am much indebted to you for your splendid letter. As Phyllis Howell made such a pronounced hit in "School and Sport," I shall have pleasure in persuading Mr. Frank Richards to introduce her in future "Magnet" stories. Very best wishes!

"Vic" (Norbury).—Many thanks for your loyal promise of support in connection with the "Greyfriars Herald."

N. D. (Aldershot).—That's right! Keep the flag of the "Gem" gaily fluttering in your famous military town.

F. B. (Skegness).—I do not care to predict the possible result of an encounter between Blake and Figgins. Your war poem is like the curate's egg—good in parts. Persevere, and you will soon attain the standard required for publication.

C. G. and H. S. D.—With so many famous stalwarts taking part in "The Great Sports Tournament," it is not altogether surprising that Tom Merry won little else besides the boxing contest. Thank you for your appreciative letter.

S. F. F. (Chelmsford).—Many thanks for your staunch promise of support in connection with the companion papers!

H. R. Hinton (Glenholm).—I was interested to hear from a namesake of mine. Messrs. W. & G. Foyle, Charing Cross Road, London, S.W., will be pleased to supply the books you mention.

Doris Wood (Sydney, N.S.W.).—The Greyfriars caps are dark blue in colour.

Stewart Paterson (Glasgow).—I was much interested in your literary society, but fear I am unable to make the concession you name.

R. N. (Doncaster).—See my comments in this week's Chat. "Waldemar" (Newcastle-on-Tyne).—You will doubtless have seen by now the result of the competition in question.

George H. (Southampton).—Glad to hear you were successful in reforming your cousin. I hope he will realise that it is an unsportsmanlike action to send offensive letters to the editor of a boys' paper.

W. H. (Finsbury Park).—I was much interested to hear of your miniature library. It is a splendid scheme in every way, and I wish it all success.

Louis C. (Southampton).—Quite a number of fellows have raised an objection to the portrait of Harry Wharton in the "Greyfriars Herald." Personally, I fail to see anything ruffianly about it. Harry may be looking a little serious, but think of the responsibility which rests on his shoulders.

Herbert H. (Tottenham).—Watch the future announcements on my Chat Page.

Eva A. (Adelaide).—Thank you for your cheery postcard. The answer to your query is in the negative.

"A Loyal Gemite" (Twickenham).—I will certainly endeavour to do as you suggest.

"Two Loyal Readers" (South).—Tom Merry and Jack Blake have had several "scrap" in the past, and Tommy has invariably won.

"Monty" (Manchester).—The replies to your questions are as follows: (1) Mark Linley is the better boxer of the two. (2) Kildare and Wingate are both valiant fighting-men, and were they to meet in the ring the honour might go either way. (3) I should say Harry Wharton. (4) In my opinion Redfern would beat Squiff, Bolsover would overcome Gore, Harry Noble would trounce Tom Brown, and the other contests, viz., Figgins v. Nugent, Koumi Rao v. Hurree Singh, and Blake v. Bull, would be of a very even nature. Glad to hear you like "The Pride of the Ring" in the "Greyfriars Herald." You appear to be a very enthusiastic follower of the noble art of self-defence.

A. P. M. (Cumberland).—To publish the adventures of Frank Courtenay & Co. each week in the "Penny Popular" would necessitate the discontinuance of the Tom Merry story—and that wouldn't do at all.

C. H. (Bexley Heath).—Many thanks for your letter. I will endeavour to carry out your kind suggestions.

N. L. (East Dulwich).—Hope you enjoyed "School and Sport."

G. E. J. (Bristol).—Glad you liked the autograph. Your good wishes are cordially reciprocated.

C. P. (Rhonda).—Thanks for your suggestion, but I do not think it advisable to shift Tom Merry & Co. into the backwoods of America.

"Fighting Nobby" (Penge).—I feel certain that the anonymous cad who wrote to my Leyton girl-chum would have a sorry time of it if he came within smiting distance of yourself. Best wishes.

"Two Followers of Talbot" (Portsmouth).—Several readers expressed themselves as being "fed-up" with Talbot, so I instructed Martin Clifford to give him a rest for a few weeks.

H. Harris (Birmingham).—Fatty Wynn turns the scale at something like twelve stone.

N. E. L. (Sandgate).—The original contest between Bob Chery and Tom Merry was of a purely friendly nature, and the Greyfriars hero won. Since that time, however, Tom Merry has regained his lost laurels.

Leslie W. (Melbourne).—Sorry, but I have not the space to do as you suggest.

Eric W. J. (Forest Gate).—If you buy an article for ten shillings and sell it for a sovereign, you get 100 per cent. profit, so you are wrong and your chums are right.

Frank D. (Hull).—Yes, the good old "Gem" will come out with some startling wheezes when the war is over.

"Tom" (Reading).—I don't think Tom Merry and his chums would mind reading about themselves a little bit. Would you?"

George R. (Co. Durham).—I am delighted to hear of your brother's promotion, and wish him every success.

G. M. H. (Scarborough).—Such a story as you suggest has already appeared in the "Gem" Library.

Gunner L. Carrington (R.F.A.).—Thank you for your straightspoken letter denouncing the cads who are so fond of running down the "Gem." I should feel sorry for them if they ever came within smiting distance of you.

Clarice M. (Hull).—Many thanks for your loyal communication.

Arthur D. (Liverpool).—I quite agree with you, dear boy.

Your Editor

YOU CAN WIN ONE OF THESE GRAND TUCK HAMPERS!



SEE TO-DAY'S ISSUE OF

“THE GREYFRIARS HERALD” $\frac{1}{2}$ D.