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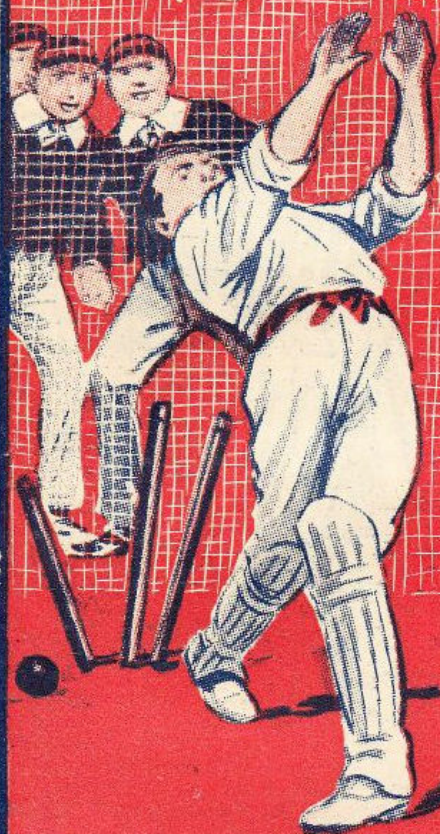
The GEM

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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THE AEROPLANE CAR.



"GRUNDY'S CRICKET MATCH!"

No. 1,116.
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YOU WON'T BE STUMPED FOR A GOOD HEARTY LAUGH—

Grundy's Cricket



George Alfred Grundy of the Shell has a reputation that is second to none when it comes to "mucking-up" anything he may put his hand to. This time, in setting out to show the school what a cricketer he is, Grundy really surpasses himself—and provides St. Jim's with the laugh of the term into the bargain!

CHAPTER 1.

A Wasted Genius!

"WASTED!" said George Alfred Grundy, of the Shell at St. Jim's.

Wilkins yawned. Gunn's eyes turned lazily in the direction of the first eleven practice nets, near which the trio were taking their ease on the grass. What Grundy meant by his cryptic remark, neither Wilkins nor Gunn knew. Nor, apparently, were they desperately anxious to acquire the knowledge.

"Utterly wasted!" said Grundy, with emphasis.

Wilkins and Gunn heard, but heeded not. Possibly the heat of the cloudless July day left them disinclined for conversation.

Grundy snorted.

"Dumb?" he queried, with heavy sarcasm.

Grundy's two followers disposed of that possibility in the next instant.

"Well bowled, sir!"

"Good man, Kildare!"

Grundy sniffed.

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"I don't think much of first eleven cricket," he remarked disparagingly. "Flukey ball, that!"

Wilkins and Gunn looked round and took notice of their leader's existence at last. Grundy's last remark could not be allowed to pass unchallenged.

"Flukey rats!" said Wilkins warmly. "Kildare would have bowled Hammond himself with that ball."

Grundy smiled a superior smile.

"Don't make me tired, Wilkins! What the thump do you know about cricket, anyway?"

Wilkins might with more point have asked that question of Grundy. What George Alfred Grundy didn't know about the great summer game would have filled volumes. But Wilkins nobly forbore. It was as well to give Grundy his head. All the argument in the world would have left unaffected Grundy's opinion that he was a great cricketer.

Grundy sat up.

"Anyway, blow Kildare, and blow the first eleven!" he said. "I was talking about myself."

"For a change," murmured Gunn gently.

"Exactly!" nodded Grundy unsuspectingly. "I was saying that I'm wasted—utterly wasted."

"So you are, old chap!" assented Wilkins.

IF YOU READ THIS FINE COMPLETE STORY OF ST. JIM'S!

Match/ BY MARTIN CLIFFORD



Grundy's heavy frown relaxed a little.

"Glad you agree with me," he said gruffly. "It's not often you show any common sense; but I suppose even you can't help seeing that much. Here am I, the best cricketer in the Lower School bar none, cut out of the junior eleven solely because the skipper happens to be an obstinate fathead who won't listen to reason."

"Ahem!"

"Time and again I've pointed out to Tom Merry that in leaving me out he's wasting a man who's streets ahead of anybody else in the team—including himself. But the obstinate ass still can't see it," said Grundy bitterly.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Gunn, looking profoundly shocked.

"He must be mad—raving mad!" declared Wilkins, shaking his head.

Grundy looked a little dubious.

"Well, hardly that, Wilky. Still, he's a fatheaded sort of chap for a skipper; I haven't a great opinion of Tom Merry. And it's jolly annoying that he should be in a position to bar me from the place I consider I'm entitled to. It gets my goat."

"Hem!"

"Why, the rotter won't even give me a trial! There's net-practice for Junior Eleven Probables and Possibles this afternoon. He hasn't even put my name down for that."

"Disgusting!"

"What's a man to think of a skipper who won't even give a chap a trial at the nets?" demanded Grundy wrathfully.

"Perhaps he knows how you play already," ventured Gunn.

"How can he know? If he knew he'd have to put me in the team!"

Wilkins and Gunn made strange choking noises in their throats. It was sometimes difficult to preserve gravity while Grundy was being unintentionally funny.

"W-what are you going to do about it, then, old chap?" asked Wilkins, composing himself after an effort.

"I'm not going to take it lying down, anyway—that's certain!" said Grundy, with decision. "I'm going to see Tom Merry and demand, as a matter of common justice, a trial at the nets this afternoon."

"What happens if he refuses?" asked Wilkins, with interest.

"In that case, I shall bash him!" answered the great man of the Shell, without hesitation. "What's more, I shall keep on bashing him until he gives way."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Once he promises me a trial at the nets, my place in the junior eleven follows as a matter of course," went on Grundy calmly. "Public opinion will force Merry's hand on that point."

"P-public opinion?"

"Exactly. When the fellows see how I shape in a proper trial, they'll insist on my being included in the team against the Nomads next Wednesday, and Tom Merry will have to give way. See?"

"Oh!"

"So, if only I can get Merry to agree to a trial at the nets, everything will be merry and bright."

George Alfred Grundy rose to his feet.

"Going?" asked Gunn.

Grundy nodded.

"I'm going to see Tom Merry now. You chaps coming along?"

Wilkins and Gunn looked at each other rather meaningfully.

"Hem! If you don't mind, old man—"

"We'd like to, of course, old chap, but—"

Grundy snorted.

"Lazy slackers! Want to root here in the grass, I suppose! Well, you're coming with me, anyway. Get up!"

"Look here—"

But Grundy was not to be argued with. He bore down on his recumbent henchmen and raised his foot as though he fully intended to use it. Wilkins and Gunn were quite prepared to dispute the point in words, but they felt no inclination to argue with Grundy's big boot. They jumped to their feet with surprising suddenness. And the three went back to the School House together.

Drawing near the entrance to the House, Wilkins and Gunn perceived, with some misgiving, that Tom Merry was standing at the top of the steps chatting with a group of School House juniors.

Wilkins coughed.

"Hem! Grundy, old chap—"

"Well?" growled Grundy.

"Don't you think it would be better if you left the job to Gunny or me? I'll talk to Tom Merry like a Dutch uncle, if you like—"

"Talk to him like a born idiot, you mean!" retorted Grundy.

"Better not start a scrap, anyway!" advised Gunn. "He's got rather a crowd round him, you know, old man. There's Blake and Herries and Lowther—"

"Think they're going to make any difference to what I do?" asked Grundy contemptuously. "The more there are to hear what I'm going to say, the better I'll like it. Come on!"

Wilkins and Gunn came on, feeling decidedly unenthusiastic.

Grundy, looking like a lion seeking what he might devour, mounted the School House steps. Wilkins and Gunn reluctantly followed.

Grundy barged into the group, making a beeline for the skipper of the Shell.

"Hallo, hallo! Dear old Grundy!" called out Monty Lowther. "Mind your feet, chaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No cheek, Lowther!" growled Grundy, turning rather red. Grundy was a little sensitive on the subject of his feet. "I want a word with you, Tom Merry!"

"Two if you like, old bean," responded Tom Merry cheerfully.

"It's about the cricket."

"Get ready to laugh, chaps," said Lowther. "Grundy's going to talk about cricket."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy snorted, but manfully repressed the desire to slaughter the humorous Lowther in view of the greater importance of the business on hand.

"You've posted a list for net-practice this afternoon," he growled.

"Guilty!" acknowledged Tom Merry.

"The team for next Wednesday is going to be picked from the fellows you've listed," said Grundy, frowning portentously.

"Right on the wicket!"

"My name's not on the list."

"Well, no."

"So it follows that I'm not in the team, eh?" growled Grundy.

"Hem! I hadn't thought of including you, certainly," confessed Tom Merry.

Grundy breathed hard through his nose.

"And you call yourself a skipper—skipper of the junior eleven of St. Jim's?" he said in measured tones.

"But, my dear old bean—" began Tom Merry patiently. Grundy snorted.

"I haven't come here to chew the rag! I'm going to put a plain question to you, and I shall expect a plain answer. You know jolly well you haven't seen me play this season—"

"True, O king!" admitted Tom Merry, with a smile.

"So for all you know you may be barring the best man in the School House—which is exactly what you are doing, as a matter of fact," added Grundy.

"Um!"

Grundy braced himself up, ready for the assault.

"Now I'll put the question to you. What I do depends on how you answer it."

"Fire away!" said Tom Merry, quite undisturbed by Grundy's increasingly warlike demeanour.

"Are you going to add my name to that list for a trial this afternoon?" No humming and hawing. Just a plain "yes" or "no."

Tom Merry eyed the great man of the Shell thoughtfully. Grundy's truculent appearance rather amused him, and guessing what was mapped out in the event of his giving a negative answer, the skipper of the Shell felt strongly inclined to give it if only to teach Grundy that his methods were not in the best of taste.

But Tom Merry was nothing if not fair-minded, and he had to admit to himself that to exclude a man from the team before he had had a chance of judging his merits was hardly the thing. The chances that Grundy's cricket had improved up to junior eleven standard were, to say the least of it, remote. But there was, of course, that remote possibility to be considered. On second thoughts, Tom Merry decided that the fair thing to do was to give Grundy his trial.

"All right, then, old bean—yes," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you mean that? You mean I'm going to have a trial this afternoon?" stammered Grundy.

Tom Merry nodded.

"I must admit I haven't seen you play since last year, Grundy. I'll give you a try-out and see how you shape. Good enough?"

"Oh, sus-sus-certainly! I may as well tell you, now you've done the decent thing, Tom Merry, that if you'd said 'no'—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I was going to bash you! Of course, I shan't do that now—"

"Thank you, Grundy," said Tom Merry meekly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then I'll turn up at the nets this afternoon," said Grundy, considerably mollified.

"Welcome as the flowers in May," grinned the skipper of the Shell.

"Good! Come on, chaps!"

And George Alfred Grundy, followed by Wilkins and Gunn, showing obvious signs of relief, went into the House, feeling quite cheerful now that there was a prospect that his wasted genius as a cricketer was going to be wasted no longer.

CHAPTER 2.

Not a Success!

"PLAYED, Fatty!" Tom Merry called out cheerily, as Fatty Wynn of the New House "spread-eagled" the wicket of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Net-practice was in full swing, and the Little Side nets were all occupied by eager aspirants for junior eleven honours. Tom Merry was watching points with a keen eye. It was his intention later on in the day to select his team for the forthcoming match with the Nomads—an important game which would take a lot of winning—and Tom was anxious to see how the "probables" were shaping.

"Shall I cawwy on, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus. "I am wathah anxious to twy Fatty's bowlin' again. I don't quite undahstand pwecisely how that happened!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Naturally you don't!" chuckled Figgins, the long-legged leader of the New House juniors.

"Weally, Figgay—"

"Carry on for a few minutes, Gussy: after that, I want to give Grundy a trial," said Tom Merry. "Which reminds me. Where is the bounder?"

"Here I am!" said Grundy rather breathlessly, making his appearance at that moment. "Sorry I'm late. I stopped to punch young Jameson's head for checking me. Asked me the price of duck's eggs—me, you know."

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get your pads on then, Grundy, and take D'Arcy's place when you're ready!" said Tom Merry briskly.

Grundy nodded, and hastened to make his preparations.

The great man of the Shell wore a very determined expression on his rugged countenance now that the testing time had come. Not that there was any need to worry, from his point of view. Grundy was quite confident of his ability as a cricketer. In the realm of cricket, Hobbs, Hendren, and Hammond had nothing on George Alfred Grundy—in his own opinion. The fact that he was alone in that opinion simply made him all the more certain that he was right.

But he had a feeling that to gain a place in the junior eleven that was opposing the Nomads he would have to give an outstanding display—something that would really clinch the matter. Grundy had made up his mind that he would rise to the occasion, and open the eyes of Tom Merry and the rest of the Doubting Thomases, hence his determined look.

"Ready!" he called out, having strapped on his pads.

"All sewene, deah boy!"

The swell of the Fourth, still wearing a slightly puzzled expression on his noble face at the thought of that spread-eagled wicket, quitted the net, and Grundy took his place. Tom Merry strolled over again to watch the newcomer, and Fatty Wynn, who was smiling in a way which Grundy found distinctly irritating, picked up the ball.

"Fit, Grundy?"

"What-ho!" said Grundy.

"Play!"

The bowling champion of the New House sent down an easy lob; the good-natured Fatty had no wish to be hard on a recognised "dud."

Almost any fellow at the nets just then could have made mince-meat of that ball. But Grundy's cricket was rather different from the cricket of other fellows. His method seemed to be to close his eyes and swing his bat with terrific force in a circle, without regard to such minor considerations as the position of the ball.

Click!

"How's that?"

"Out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

George Alfred Grundy blinked at the disarranged stumps rather dizzily.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Cricket—a la Grundy!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quite an accident, of course!" remarked Grundy, recovering his composure.

"Oh, quite!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Try again, old bean!" grinned Tom Merry. "Remember, you're supposed to be defending your wicket. This isn't baseball, you know!"

Grundy snorted.

"No cheek, Tom Merry! I fancy I can teach you more about this game than you can teach me!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"No harm in fancying!"

"Carry on, Wynn!" grunted Grundy, having set up the stumps again.

Fatty Wynn carried on. Without troubling to take his usual preliminary run, he sent down another lob.

Grundy changed his methods. Instead of using his bat to describe circles in the air, he held it in front of his wicket and waited.

The ball spun towards him. Grundy stepped back.

Crash!

"What the thump—"

"Oh, my hat! How's that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy stared at the wrecked wicket in astonishment.

"How the dickens did that happen?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You did it yourself, old bean!"

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as wathah funnay!"

Apparently the other fellows also regarded it as rather funny. Everybody who had witnessed the wrecking of Grundy's wicket with his own bat was roaring. Play at the other nets had temporarily stopped. Grundy as a cricketer was a spectacle not to be missed.

Grundy's face was a study as the truth dawned on him.

"Mean to say I knocked over my own wicket?" he gasped.

"Just that!" chortled Monty Lowther.

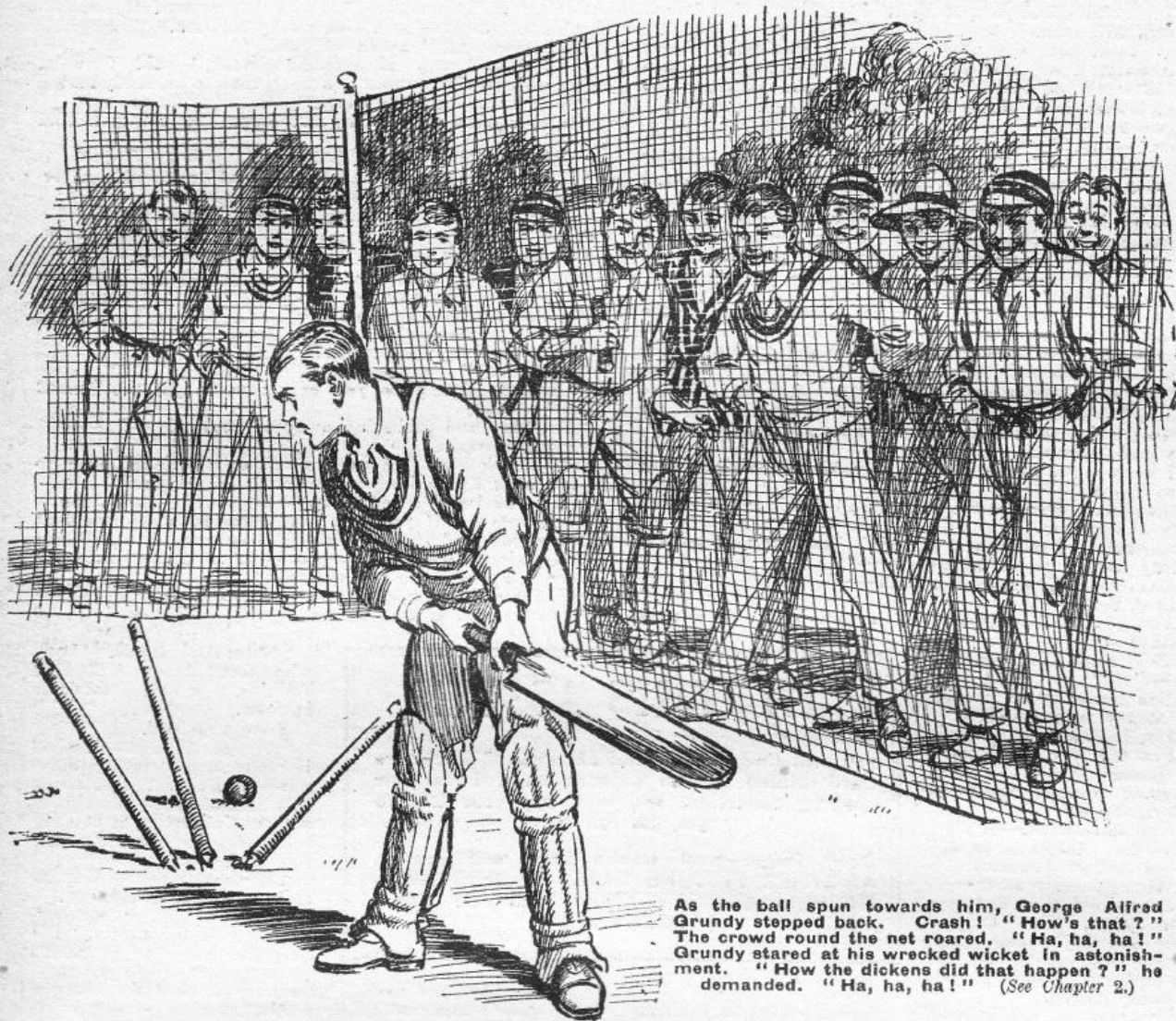
Grundy savagely set about putting up the stumps again. "No need to cackle, anyway, you grinning idiots!" he snorted. "That was just bad luck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I haven't got the hang of the pitch yet, that's what it is!" declared Grundy. "Nothing whatever to laugh at!"

"Oh crickey! Isn't there?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



As the ball spun towards him, George Alfred Grundy stepped back. Crash! "How's that?" The crowd round the net roared. "Ha, ha, ha!" Grundy stared at his wrecked wicket in astonishment. "How the dickens did that happen?" he demanded. "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 2.)

For the third time George Alfred Grundy took his stand, and this time there was a glint in his eyes that had not been there before.

"Anyway, it was a rotten, footling sort of ball you gave me, Wynn!" he said, glaring at Fatty Wynn, whose plump frame was doubled up with mirth.

Fatty Wynn straightened up again at that.

"Eh, what?"

"A rotten, footling ball!" repeated Grundy. "Why can't you give me something worth playing to? I don't think much of your bowling—pretty so-so, in my opinion; but you can do better than that. Buck up your ideas, Wynn, and I'll show you what I can do to real bowling."

"Well, my hat!" said Fatty Wynn. Considering that he had given Grundy a couple of simple lobs out of pure kindness of heart, Grundy's ideas of his bowling seemed decidedly misplaced. Fatty Wynn picked up the ball again.

"Really mean that, Grundy?" he asked.

"Of course I do! Give me something with a bit of life in it. Make it as fast and tricky as you like—not that you can do much, I admit!"

"A really fast one?" asked Fatty Wynn, beginning to grin again.

"The faster the better!"

"Well, I'll do my best," grinned Fatty. "Of course, I admit I'm not quite up to your standard of batting—"

"Not in the same street!" agreed Grundy.

"But I'll do my best!" said Fatty, walking back a few paces this time.

A grinning crowd of cricketers gathered round the net, deeply interested to know what Grundy would do with one of Fatty's "specials." Grundy bestowed a lofty look on them, by no means displeased at having an audience now that he was going to receive a ball really worthy of him.

"Play!" called out Fatty Wynn.

Grundy braced himself up for his great effort.

Fatty Wynn took a short run, then "let rip." Grundy

didn't see the ball. That, of course, was a foregone conclusion, but it didn't stop Grundy from making a mighty effort to send it whizzing away to the farthest corner of Little Side.

Crash!

Grundy failed even to observe that his wicket was already down. All his attention was concentrated on making one terrific swipe at the spot where he thought the ball might be. Putting all his beef into it, he swung round the bat. He didn't hit the ball—which was not surprising, since that round red object was already reposing at the back of the net. But he did succeed in hitting something. Somehow—Grundy never quite knew how—the bat left his hands completely, and flew through the air at a tangent.

Crack!

"Yawooooooogh!"

"What the thump—"

"Where the dickens—"

"Yawooooop! Whpooooop! Gwoooogh!"

For an instant the onlookers didn't quite realise what had happened. Then they saw where the bat had landed, and there was a yell—a yell that was quite different in tone from the agonised sounds that were proceeding from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, ye gods and little fishes!"

"Look what you've done to Gussy, Grundy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whoooooop! Gwoooooogh!"

"Hurt, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry, almost sobbing with laughter.

"Gwoooooogh!"

Really it was an unnecessary question. Only a cranium of cast iron could have received the full weight of Grundy's bat on it without feeling hurt, and though unkind persons had occasionally suggested that D'Arcy's head was a trifle

wooden, nobody had yet put forward the theory that it was made of cast iron.

The swell of the Fourth was undoubtedly hurt. Fortunately, it was not serious, and Arthur Augustus was able to stand on his feet again and take notice, so to speak, though in a rather dizzy fashion.

"Gwoooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Ow! What happened, deah boys? Gwoogh!"

Grundy tramped down from the wicket and retrieved his bat.

"Lucky it's not damaged," he remarked, examining it for possible injuries. "Look here, Gussy, what the thump made you stand in my way like that? If you hadn't put me off my stroke—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'd have slogged that ball over the other side of the School House!" said Grundy with conviction.

The juniors could only blink at the great man of the Shell for a moment.

"Well, if you don't walk off with the entire giddy biscuit factory!" breathed Fatty Wynn at last. "Mean to say you've got the cheek to tell us you even saw the ball?"

Grundy frowned.

"I hope you're not insinuating I couldn't have done what I say, Wynn."

"You didn't even see the blessed ball, I tell you!" roared Fatty indignantly.

"Oh, rats! I tell you if it hadn't been for that tailor's dummy putting me off my stroke—"

"Bai Jove! You feahful wottah—"

"Look here—"

"You howwid wuffian! You fwightful dangewous maniac—"

"You stood in front of me—"

"You hurled your wotten bat at my nappah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Peace, my infants!" interposed Tom Merry.

"Grundy didn't mean it, Gussy. He can't help being a homicidal lunatic—"

"Well, that's true!" agreed Arthur Augustus.

"Why, you silly asses—"

"I think we'd better consider your trial finished now, Grundy," said Tom.

"Can't risk having all my best men brained, you know."

Grundy glared.

"I've warned you before that I don't want any cheek from you, Tom Merry! Better choose your words more carefully. As to the trial, if you call three balls—all of them mucked up by other people—a fair trial of my merits, all I can say is I jolly well disagree with you."

"Disagree till the cows come home if you like, old bean. The trial's over!"

"And I tell you the trial's not over!" snorted Grundy.

"Matter of fact, it's only just beginning."

Tom Merry made an impatient gesture.

"I can't waste all the afternoon over you, Grundy. You're holding up the practice. I must ask you to buzz off."

"You can beg and pray of me to buzz off!" roared Grundy.

"I stay here to practice, and anyone who tries to stop me gets jolly well bashed! See!"

Tom's answer was brief and to the point.

"Bash away!" he said.

Grundy's big fist shot out, but it only succeeded in smiting the empty air. An instant later he was swept off his feet, grasped on all sides by willing hands, and transported swiftly and none too gently off Little Side.

Bump!

Grundy's anatomy and an asphalted path collided violently. The collision occurred once, twice, and thrice.

After that, Grundy was abandoned. And on consideration he decided not to insist on practising on Little Side after all.

CHAPTER 3.

Grundy's Brainwave!

"WHY not?"

Grundy asked that question after prep. in Study No. 3.

Wilkins and Gunn sat up and took notice. Since the unfortunate events on Little Side that afternoon, Grundy had been unusually silent and preoccupied. By all appearances, his mighty brain had been wrestling with a tremendous problem. The satisfied tone in which he gave

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utterance to the question "Why not?" seemed to indicate that he had arrived at a satisfactory solution.

"Why not what?" asked Wilkins.

"No reason why it shouldn't work," said Grundy, apparently speaking more to himself than to his study-mates.

"Why what shouldn't work?" demanded Gunn.

"With a chap with brains and organising ability behind it—"

"Behind what?" roared Wilkins.

"A chap like myself, in short," went on Grundy cheerfully, "it would probably be a howling success."

"What would be a howling success?" hooted Gunn.

"Eh?"

Grundy seemed to wake up out of a daydream.

"Mean to say you two fatheads haven't got the idea yet?" he asked in surprise.

Wilkins and Gunn glared.

"You silly ass—"

"You burbling jabberwock!"

"Eh, what?"

"How the thump do you expect us to get the blessed idea—"

"Burbling and jabbering away to yourself—"

Grundy frowned.

"No cheek now. If you haven't enough intelligence to follow what I'm talking about, that's not my fault, is it?"

"But you haven't told us anything yet!" yelled Gunn.

"Oh, rats! If you had the brains of a bunny-rabbit between you you'd have got the idea by now. Still, I'll put it in plainer language, as you seem so dense," said the leader of Study No. 3 considerably.

Wilkins and Gunn grunted and listened.

"It's the idea of the term—a regular brainwave, in fact," explained Grundy.

"Naturally it is. Look who thought of it!" said Wilkins, with sardonic humour.

Grundy nodded.

"Just so, Wilky! Dashed if you don't seem quite sensible at times! But about this idea of mine—it's simply a corker. Putting it briefly, the wheeze is to start a new junior eleven."

"A what?" yelled Wilkins and Gunn simultaneously.

"A new junior eleven," repeated Grundy firmly. "It's just the very thing that's wanted at St. Jim's just now;

in fact, it has been wanted for a long time. The wonder is that I didn't think of it before this."

"But—"

"What the thump—"

"Tom Merry has had his own way too long—far too long, in my opinion. It's high time somebody showed him he's not the little tin god he imagines himself to be."

"But—"

"A—a new junior eleven—"

"That's what I said," nodded Grundy. "An entirely new team composed of men who have never been given a fair trial by the Old Gang—that's the stunt! An eleven that will knock spots off Tom Merry's mouldy old team and very soon be recognised as the official junior eleven of St. Jim's—as soon as I've licked 'em into shape, of course!"

"Oh!"

Wilkins and Gunn looked at each other, and their faces broke into an involuntary grin.

"You mean you want to run an eleven of your own—that the idea?" asked Gunn.

"Grundy's Cricket Team," murmured Wilkins; and he and Gunn, as if moved by some common impulse, suddenly roared:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The look on Grundy's face at that untimely burst of laughter ought to have petrified Wilkins and Gunn. Fortunately, Wilkins and Gunn were sufficiently hardened to survive it.

"You—you sniggering idiots!" roared Grundy.

Wilkins and Gunn, with an heroic effort, managed to conquer their mirth.

"Hem!"

"What the thump is there to laugh at?" demanded Grundy fiercely.

"Hem! N-nothing, old chap!"

"We—we weren't really laughing at all, old chap!"

"Blessed if I can understand you fellows. You giggle away like a couple of blessed hysterical schoolgirls!" snorted Grundy. "Of course, if you think there's anything funny in the idea of my running a cricket team—"

He rose and rolled back his cuffs in a very businesslike

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manner. Wilkins and Gunn eyed that proceeding rather anxiously.

"Nunno! Nothing of the kind!" gasped Wilkins hastily.

"Quite a brilliant wheeze, I think!" Gunn managed to blurt out.

Grundy looked a little placated.

"Well, I'm glad you think that, anyway," he remarked, resuming his seat again. "Sit down and don't be such asses while I'm talking on such a serious subject."

"Hem!"

"I want you chaps to help me in this scheme," said Grundy, casting a critical eye over his two retainers. "I might tell you, to begin with, that I don't think much of your cricket—"

"Oh!"

"But still, you're not altogether novices at the game, and after all I don't expect to pick up a lot of talent. I shall be the backbone of the team, anyway," said Grundy, as if that settled it. "The point is, you'll be the first two members of the new eleven. That leaves me eight more to enrol. Now, my idea is to post up a notice at once—"

"Half a minute!" interrupted Wilkins. "Did I hear you say you were putting me down as a member of this—this new team?"

"Quite right."

"Well, you can jolly well cross my name out at once, then. I'm expecting to be selected for the Junior Eleven against the Nomads next Wednesday—"

George Alfred grinned.

"Better get ready for a disappointment, then, Wilky. Matter of fact, you're not down."

Wilkins stared.

"What the thump do you know about it? The list isn't posted up yet."

"No; but I've seen Tom Merry, and he told me." Grundy chuckled. "I thought you'd have some fatheaded objection to raise, so I just made sure how things stood."

"And Tom Merry told you I wasn't playing next Wednesday?" asked Wilkins, beginning to look a little blue.

"Just that!"

"Then the silly ass has given someone else my place!" exclaimed Wilkins wrathfully.

"Looks like it!"

"What about me?" asked Gunn. "I did rather well in the House match last week. Mean to say he hasn't given me a chance?"

"Not a bit of it!"

Wilkins and Gunn looked at each other with expressions that were the reverse of joyful. Both of them had been building up rather high hopes of a place in the junior eleven on the following Wednesday. Wilkins had already figured in the chosen team for a minor match, and Gunn had improved a lot on his last season's form. It was rather a blow to hear that they were not selected after all.

"Well, Tom Merry's an ass!" remarked Wilkins.

"Absolutely!" sniffed Gunn.

Grundy nodded.

"Exactly what I've been trying to drum into you all this term. The fact that he hasn't put me in the junior eleven proves it, although you duffers have been too dense to see it before."

"After the show I gave against the Fifth—" said Gunn mournfully.

"After the way I played a fortnight ago—" said Wilkins bitterly.

"Don't gas!" said Grundy. "No need to weep and wail about not being in Tom Merry's mouldy eleven now! They won't cut much ice as soon as I get going, I can tell you. You ought to be jolly grateful that I'm giving an opportunity to a couple of duds like you. Stop moaning, and listen to me. I've put you down as the two first members of my team. See?"

"Blow your blessed team!" snapped Wilkins.

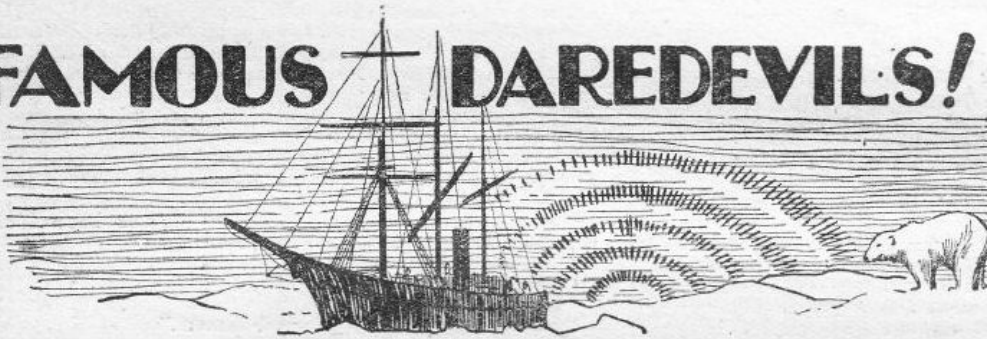
"And you, too!" added Gunn recklessly.

Grundy stared.

"Are you absolutely potty?" he inquired. "Don't you

(Continued on the next page.)

FAMOUS DAREDEVILS!



The exploits of national heroes and daredevils are always a source of enjoyment to the adventure-loving boy, and here, in this new series of articles, our contributor chronicles the amazing lives of men who have thrilled the world!

SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON, C.V.O.

NEARBY the little whaling station of Grytviken in South Georgia is a rough-hewn cairn; piled rocks surmounted by a wooden cross. It was erected by the small band of brave men who set out with Sir Ernest Shackleton in the good ship "Quest," in an endeavour to reach the South Pole. Thus they paid a lasting tribute to the memory of the famous British explorer who was one of the greatest daredevils the world has ever known.

"By Endurance I Conquer."

That was the inscription on the family coat-of-arms. Shackleton lived up to it. Never was there greater endurance than his; nor greater courage, determination and strength of purpose.

His ambition was to be the first man to reach the South Pole. He never achieved that ambition, but he advanced within a hundred miles of his goal in the January of 1909, when, after inconceivable hardships and privations, he and his three brave comrades, Wild, Adams, and Marshall, planted the Union Jack on a wind-swept, snow-covered plateau in the name of King Edward the Seventh. Thirteen years later he set out in the Quest, again to try to reach the South Pole, but died ere he could achieve his purpose.

Right from his early days Shackleton endured hardships of the severest kind. Directly he left school he was apprenticed to the sea and had to be licked into shape like any other landlubber aboard ship for the first time.

The sea made a man of him, brought out all those fine qualities which he had inherited from his sturdy ancestors, one of whom, 'tis said, was Sir Martin Frobisher, the famous Arctic explorer of the sixteenth century.

But all the time the great, white wastes were calling to him; the "lure of little voices," as he himself has said, was in his ears; and in 1901, after repeated requests, he was granted the post of junior officer on the Discovery, for the National Antarctic Expedition.

It was the first step on the ladder of success; that ladder which was to bring him fame on the topmost rung, and make his name a household word throughout Britain and the world.

On October 29th, 1908, Shackleton, now an experienced Antarctic explorer, left his temporary base at Cape Royds, and set out for the South Pole, in company with three men, Wild, Marshall, and Adams.

Of the hardships, trials, tribulations, difficulties and dangers which had to be

overcome, reams could be written. For days and weeks they carried their lives in their hands, as they pushed resolutely onward towards their goal. Nor was their ultimate retreat anything but a frenzied race with death.

Blizzards blinded them, great glaciers and ice ridges barred their path, their ponies slipped and stumbled on the ice, or fell down crevices and were killed.

Never could they be sure of the treacherous

surface upon which they trod. Any moment they might unwittingly plunge their feet into a soft patch of snow, bridging a chasm, and plunge hundreds of feet to their deaths.

They suffered continually from frost-bite and snow-blindness. Their slow progress was even more snail-like than Shackleton had anticipated, and food soon began to run short.

But they won through to the great plateau, a hundred miles from the Pole. There they planted the British flag in the name of the King, for Shackleton knew they could go no further. The provisions had run too short. He dared not advance lest he should never return to civilisation with the valuable scientific information which he had gained.

So he turned homewards, back to New Zealand and everlasting fame. His was a glorious failure. By that pioneer exploration into the great, white wastes where no man had ever trod before, he placed his name in the illustrious company of Cook, Wilkes, Ross, and Scott.

All honour to the memory of a great daredevil and a gallant gentleman, Sir Ernest Shackleton!

(Next week's article deals with William Larkins, the famous steeple-jack.)

realise that I'm offering you places in an eleven that'll wipe Tom Merry's crowd off the map as soon as it's on its feet?"

"Rats!"

"You'll have the benefit of my coaching——"

"Oh, don't be funny!"

"You'll get the chance of playing against really good teams," explained Grundy patiently. "You'll have all expenses paid when we play away——"

"Oh!"

Wilkins and Gunn suddenly became surprisingly respectful.

"Feeds at my expense while we're training——"

"Ahem!"

"Celebration banquets when we win——"

"Old chap——"

"In fact, there's no reason why we shouldn't make it a regular social club, so as to sort of cement us together," said Grundy.

Wilkins and Gunn began to smile.

"On consideration, old chap——"

"Thinking it over, you know——"

"Thought you'd come round when I explained it to you!" remarked Grundy. "What you chaps Jack is imagination. You need everything explained in detail before you can understand what a chap's getting at."

Wilkins and Gunn, for once, were inclined to agree with their leader. Certainly, Grundy's detailed explanations had effected a considerable alteration in their attitude towards the proposed new cricket team.

"Well, now you've told us all about it, I can see what a ripping wheeze it really is, old man," remarked Gunn.

"A real corker, by Jove!" said Wilkins cordially.

Grundy looked quite pleased. He was under the pleasant delusion that it was the prospect of being coached and trained by George Alfred Grundy that had eventually decided his followers. The possibility that they had been influenced in any way by the free feeds and inexpensive country trips did not enter Grundy's unsuspecting head.

"Then I can put you down as the first two members of Grundy's Cricket Team?" he asked.

"What-ho!" responded Wilkins and Gunn simultaneously.

The nucleus of the team that was intended to stagger St. Jim's had been formed!

CHAPTER 4.

Grundy's Cricket Team!

"GRUNDY'S Cricket Team!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Financed and managed——"

"Trained and captained—with a 'k'——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By George Alfred Grundy! Oh, my giddy aunt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Shell passage was in a roar. The Fourth passage was in a roar. Fellows in the Common-room were shrieking.

George Alfred Grundy had on numerous occasions provided St. Jim's with a good laugh. But never before had St. Jim's seen Grundy in such a funny light as they saw him now.

Grundy had wasted no time. Within five minutes of Wilkins' and Gunn's enrolment, he had posted up an announcement in the Hall. Written in Grundy's unmistakable style, it had attracted immediate attention.

"NOTISS!

"It has been decided to form a new Junior Cricket Team. The said Team will be financed, managed, and captained by GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY. Applicants for membership are advised to apply early at Study No. 3 Shell Passage.

"G. A. GRUNDY.

"Captain and Manager."

The news of Grundy's staggering new venture spread like wildfire, bringing interested crowds from all quarters. The Shell and the Fourth turned up almost to a man, and departed, shrieking. Fags from the Third and Second Forms swarmed on the scene and returned to their quarters in ecstasies of mirth. The Fifth lounged up to the notice-board and chortled. Even the lordly Sixth had representatives among the visitors to Grundy's remarkable notice.

That Grundy should have the "neck" to start a cricket team of his own after his truly painful exhibition at the nets that afternoon struck the juniors as particularly funny. The humorous remarks that were made concerning Grundy and Grundy's cricket by the crowd that surged round the notice-board would have made Grundy's untidy hair curl, had he heard them. Fortunately for his peace of mind, Grundy was in Study No. 3, waiting for the recruits to roll in.

The hilarious welcome that Grundy's announcement had received did not augur well for the future of Grundy's cricket team. The idea generally held was that it had been laughed out of court, so to speak.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,116.

Then something happened that put a slightly different complexion on the matter. That "something," for a time, relegated Grundy and his funniosities to the background.

Tom Merry came down and posted up the team he had picked to oppose the Nomads.

At the appearance of the skipper of the junior eleven, Grundy was temporarily forgotten, and all attention was transferred to the list that Tom Merry pinned up at the other end of the board. Quite a number of fellows, apart from regular "caps," had hopes of being selected to go to Loamingham, the Hampshire ground of the Nomads.

There was a scramble to get near the notice as soon as Tom Merry had fixed it up.

"Read it out, somebody!" called out Noble, from the back of the crowd.

"My name there?" asked Clive somewhat anxiously.

"All serene, Clive!"

"Oh, good!"

"What about me?" asked Gore. "If that ass Merry has gone and left me out again——"

"Can it! I'll read it out!" yelled Jack Blake above the din.

"Carry on, then!"

Jack Blake proceeded to read down the list aloud.

"Merry, Blake, Levison——"

"Good egg!" murmured Levison.

"Talbot, Noble, Clive, D'Arcy——"

"Bai Jove! That's wathah sensible of Tom Mewwy——"

"Chuck it, Gussy! 'Wynn, Figgins, Kerr, and Redfern.' That's the lot," said Jack Blake.

There was a murmur of disappointment from some of those whose names had not been read out.

"Sure my name's not there?" asked Jimson.

"Mean to say Tom Merry has left me out again?" demanded Tompkins excitedly.

"Bogorra, and has that spalpeen ignored me intoirly?" roared Mulvaney.

"Bai Jove! Pway don't get excited, deah boys! I wegard it as wathah a well-chosen team!"

"What I want to know is, what about me? Where do I come in?" hooted Gore.

There was a babel of excited voices. The subject of the junior eleven in relation to the approaching Nomads' match had been a topic of all-absorbing interest for some days, and speculation as to Tom Merry's final selection had been keen. Now that the list was posted, opinion ranged itself into two very distinct camps. Those who were fortunate enough to have been selected gave the list their unqualified approval; while those whose hopes of playing on the Loamingham ground had been dashed to the ground, condemned it in no half-hearted fashion.

"What's wrong with me, I should like to know?" demanded Kerruish, of nobody in particular.

"What have I done?" asked Lennox.

"Tom Merry's an ass!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Rats! Tommy's a jolly sensible man!"

"Yaas, wathah! I considah——"

"Dry up, Gussy!"

"Weally, Kewwuish——"

For and against, the wordy battle raged.

"I'm fed-up!" declared Gore, who was particularly disappointed. "Term after term, Tom Merry picks the same old crowd."

"Hear, hear!"

"Bosh!"

"What's the good of practising and keeping in form, when we're never given a blessed chance?" demanded Jimson.

"No good at all!"

"Piffle!"

Then Lowther came out with the suggestion that had the unlooked-for effect—unlooked-for from Lowther's point of view, anyhow—of giving George Alfred Grundy a batch of recruits.

"Why not join Grundy's cricket team?" he suggested blandly.

Lowther had intended that remark to be humorous, and some of his listeners—the junior eleven men, for example—took it in that light, and chuckled.

There were others, however, who did not smile. Those who had been loudest in bewailing their fate in being excluded from Tom Merry's eleven were perhaps not in the mood to appreciate Monty Lowther's humour. Instead of laughing, they looked at each other.

"Dashed if I'm not half-inclined to do that!" granted Gore.

"There's something in it," said Jimson. "Better to play for another blessed team than to spend a lifetime waiting for a game in the junior eleven."

"Of course, Grundy's a half-witted sort of idiot——" said Lennox.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But, after all, he's financing the thing, and that's something. Probably he'll provide the kit."
 "He might even pay travelling exrs," murmured Tompkins thoughtfully.
 "Possibly meals and refreshments, too," grinned Mellish.
 "My hat!"
 "Look here, you chaps! I consider it's a jolly good idea of my pal Grundy's to start a cricket team," said Baggy Trimble, whose podgy frame had just arrived. "I'm going to put my name down at once."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Not that the money or the grub make any difference to

"I can just see Grundy agreeing to that!" chuckled Monty Lowther.
 "Of course, we shan't put it to him quite like that," grinned Gore. "No reason why we shouldn't make the thing go, though. Who's coming along to join up?"
 "I think I'll do it," said Jimson.
 "Me, too!" said Tompkins and Lennox together.
 "Faith, and it's meself that'll be joining with ye," grinned Mulvaney minor.
 "Any more?" asked Gore.
 Mellish of the Fourth, perhaps with the same unselfish motives that had actuated Baggy Trimble, signified his



George Alfred Grundy's amazing notice on the board (see inset—in circle) was temporarily forgotten as Tom Merry pinned up the team chosen for the match against the Nomads. All attention was transferred to the junior skipper's list, and there was a scramble to get near the board. (See Chapter 4.)

me, mind you," went on Baggy hastily. "I hope I wouldn't be guided by mercenary motives, like some of you fellows."
 "Oh, great pip!"
 "I shall join simply for the love of the game, you know," said Baggy fatuously. "Having been barred from the junior eleven owing to the jealousy of Tom Merry—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Beasts! Anyway, I'm jolly well going to see my old pal Grundy!"
 And Baggy Trimble rolled away to see his old pal—though whether George Alfred Grundy would have recognised himself by that description was a matter for conjecture.
 "Well, what about it, you fellows?" asked Gore.
 The malcontents looked at one another rather undecidedly.
 "H'm! It's a bit of a problem," said Tompkins. "If Grundy weren't such an utter idiot—"
 "But he'll only be one man out of eleven. If Grundy doesn't behave himself, we can soon squash him. I'll do it, anyway," said Gore.
 "Hem! But it'll be his own team, remember," pointed out Lennox.
 "Well, so far as the financial side of it is concerned, it will be," nodded Gore. "I shan't meddle with that, of course—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "But as to the playing side of it, I don't see why some of us shouldn't take advantage of Grundy's offer to collect together quite a decent team," said Gore. "We can run the team ourselves, and leave Grundy to run the finances. That'll be fair enough, won't it?"
 "Oh, rather!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

intention of joining the ranks of the volunteers, and then Kerruish, after a few moments of hesitation, nodded.
 "After all, it'll do nobody any harm," he remarked. "If Tom Merry changes his mind and decides he wants me next Wednesday, after all—"
 "You can apply for a transfer again," finished Lowther.
 "Exactly!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Reinforced by Skimpole, whose reasons for wishing to join Grundy's cricket team were probably too obscure to be understood by anybody but himself, and Mulvaney minor, the volunteers then marched in a body to the Shell passage.
 Gore led the way into Study No. 3, where Grundy was engaged in laying down the law to Baggy Trimble, while Wilkins and Gunn looked on.
 "Mind, Trimble," Grundy was saying, "there's going to be no slacking. Any member of the team I find slacking, I shall bash. Savvy? What's more—hallo, what's the rumpus?"
 "We've come to join up," answered Gore.
 Wilkins and Gunn jumped. They had quite anticipated that Baggy Trimble's application would prove to be both the first and the last. This unexpected crowd of volunteers was a distinct surprise to Grundy's followers.
 George Alfred Grundy, however, registered no such emotion as surprise.
 He looked rather pleased, that was all.
 "Crush in, all of you!" he said. "Trot out some cakes and biscuits, Wilky, and hand them round."
 "Certainly, old chap!"
 The volunteer cricketers began to feel glad they had

come. They squeezed in somehow, and took seats on the window-ledge, the coal-scuttle, the table, and even the floor. Grundy stopped laying down the law to Trimble, and started laying down the law to the newcomers instead. And while he did that, his guests disposed of his liberal stocks of cakes and biscuits with great good-will.

Plans were discussed—by Grundy—practice was arranged for the following day—again by Grundy—and a hundred and one details were settled—also by the great man of the Shell.

And as Grundy's cricket team were fully occupied with Grundy's cakes and biscuits, there was complete unanimity on all points, and everybody had to admit that Grundy had won the first round. He had managed to get together a team—a decidedly mixed kind of team, but a team, for all that. What he would do with it, now that he had got it, remained to be seen.

CHAPTER 5.

Cricket—a la Grundy!

AFTER tea on the following day, Grundy's cricket team made their first public appearance at the nets on Little Side.

A grinning crowd turned up to watch them practise, in anticipation of a rather entertaining time. They were not disappointed.

Grundy led his men to the scene of action, wearing on his rugged face an expression that would have done credit to a victorious Test Match captain.

He bestowed a lofty look on the grinning spectators, then disdainfully ignored them.

"All here?" he asked.

"Adsum!" grinned Tompkins.

"Good! Now I want you to pile in, while I keep an eye on you and give you a bit of coaching where necessary," said Grundy.

"You're not going to practise yourself?" asked Gore.

"Not just now."

"Oh, good!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy glared.

"Trying to be funny, Gore? Because if you are—"

"Not at all. I'll leave that to you," said Gore, amiably.

"Why, you silly ass—"

It began to look as if Grundy's first cricket practice was to begin with an exhibition of boxing. Fortunately, other members of the team intervened.

"Chuck it, you idiots!" said Kerruish.

"We've come here to practise cricket; not to watch a scrap," said Jimson.

Grundy snorted, but decided to postpone his argument with Gore till a more suitable moment.

"Get on with the washing, then," he ordered. "Take it in turns at the wickets. Ten minutes each will do."

"Right-ho, captain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy reddened. He did not seem to be receiving the respect to which his position as captain and manager of the team entitled him. He consoled himself with the thought that discipline would probably come as he kicked his raw recruits into shape.

Kerruish went into bat at one of the nets, and Lennox at the other. Both were fairly good batsmen. But that trifling circumstance did not prevent Grundy from giving them a little advice.

"Hold yourself in more, Kerruish!" he called out. "No need to spread yourself over the wicket like a blessed jelly-fish, you know!"

"What!" roared Kerruish.

"And keep your bat up straight, too. How the dickens do you expect to defend your wicket, if you hold it like a tennis-racquet?" demanded Grundy.

"Why, you crass idiot—"

"No slogging over there, Lennox!" yelled Grundy, transferring his attention to the other net.

"Slogging?" echoed Lennox, in surprise. "Who the thump's slogging?"

"You are! Remember you've got a wicket behind you; that's the first thing to get into your noddle when you're batting," explained Grundy.

"You—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The roar was from the back of the nets. The interested onlookers were already beginning to derive a little amusement from Grundy in his new role as cricket captain.

Grundy turned his critical eye on the bowlers.

"Steady on, Wilkins! It's a cricket-pitch—not a coco-nut-shy, you know!"

Wilkins looked round with a very extraordinary expression on his face. Wilkins, as a matter of fact, was an

excellent fast bowler, and to be told by a fellow who hardly knew the difference between a cricket ball and a glass marble, that his bowling was reminiscent of shying at coco-nuts, gave rise to quite a variety of emotions in him.

"Why, you burbling crackpot—" gasped Wilkins.

"Don't chuck the ball—bowl it!" urged Grundy. "Take it more quietly, Wilky. Don't just shut your eyes and let fly. Try to aim for the stumps; see?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And so the practice of Grundy's cricket team went on—with a superfluity of critical and exasperating remarks from its founder and captain. But, in spite of Grundy, the team got on fairly well. There were among them quite a good proportion of useful players; and though Trimble, Mellish, and Skimpole possessed none of the elements that make good cricketers, there was no doubt that without the drawback of their captain and manager, Grundy's cricket team was by no means beyond hope.

The onlookers were disappointed to find that without Grundy the new junior team provided very little in the way of entertainment. Skimpole and Trimble were rather diverting at the wicket, but, apart from their turn, Grundy's cricket team might have been any other junior team at net practice.

Gore and Kerruish and the rest took their practice seriously, and felt by no means dissatisfied with the result. As a team they were undoubtedly going to be greatly handicapped by the presence of Trimble, Skimpole, Mellish—and, of course, Grundy himself. Leaving out those four, however, they were a fairly capable lot, who would be able to render at all events, a moderately good account of themselves against an average team—if Grundy would let them!

Grundy was only just beginning to revive a little by the time practice was over.

"Want to bat for a few minutes before we pack up, old chap?" asked Wilkins.

Grundy shook his head.

"Not this evening. Of course, I don't need practice so much as you fellows."

"Hem!"

The cricketers exchanged slight smiles among themselves.

"Better pack up," advised Grundy. "Anyone coming over to the tuckshop now? I feel rather like a snack before prep."

"Oh, rather!"

"Thanks very much, old man!"

Grundy's cricket team gladly accompanied their captain and manager to the tuckshop, feeling, as they had felt the previous evening, that George Alfred Grundy had his good points, after all.

Grundy marched in through the open door of Dame Taggles' little shop under the elms, and his miniature army cheerfully followed him. Tea-time being only just over, the shop was deserted, so there was plenty of room for the invaders.

"Nobody here. Good!" remarked Grundy. "We don't want any of Tom Merry's crowd to overhear us chewing the rag."

"Why not?" asked Gunn curiously.

"If you keep your ears open, Cuthbert Gunn, you'll find out why not," was Grundy's answer. "I've got something rather important to say to you fellows."

"Oh!"

Gunn looked a little mystified, but took his place at the counter without further inquiry.

Dame Taggles came out from her back parlour and bestowed a smile on Grundy. Everybody smiled at Grundy—a circumstance which the great George Alfred, who took himself seriously, found distinctly annoying at times.

"Good-afternoon, Master Grundy! What can I get you?"

"Ginger-pop and cakes all round, ma'am, please. Now, crowd round, you chaps, and listen to what I've got to say."

The fellows crowded round and listened to Grundy—a task rendered more congenial than it might otherwise have been by the grateful and comfortable accompaniment of a liberal supply of ginger-pop and Dame Taggles' home-made cakes.

CHAPTER 6.

Some Wheeze!

"I'VE been thinking," began Grundy, having disposed of a small chocolate-cake and half a glass of ginger-pop.

"What with?" asked Gore, with an air of polite surprise.

Grundy paused and frowned at the interrupter, not quite getting the import of the question for a moment; Grundy was never very quick on the uptake.

"What do you mean by 'What with?'" he asked.

Gore grinned.

"Oh, nothing much, old bean! I've always understood

(Continued on page 12.)

WAR DIRECTED AND SEEN ON A SCREEN!

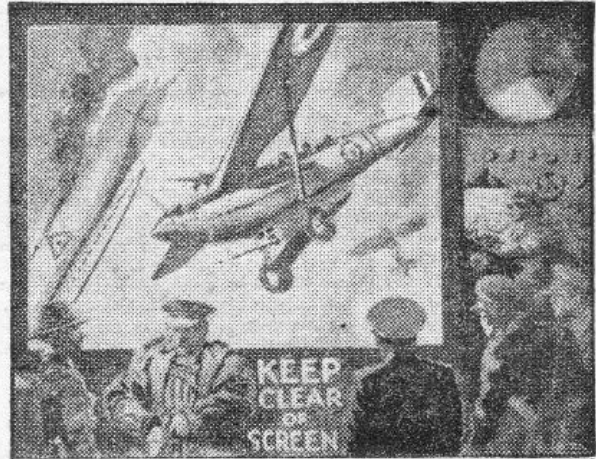
In the march of Mechanical Science Television will take its place foremost in the lives of men. War in the future will then be directed and reviewed on a screen.

This "dream of the future" is the subject of **NEXT WEEK'S HANDSOME COLOURED PICTURE CARD.**

Be Sure you add it to your Collection!



MARVELS of the FUTURE!



No 13.—Television in War.

YOU are in an underground strong-room—walls, ceiling and floor of concrete many feet in thickness, and with an outer casing of solid armour-plate. From your corner you watch breathlessly an ever-changing picture which flitters intermittently across a huge white sheet occupying almost the whole expanse of one wall.

Staff officers in khaki, with red tabs on their shoulders and broad brass rims to their red-banded service hats, cluster before that tragic panorama, interchanging brief words and taking notes. Khaki-clad soldiers enter the door, close it carefully behind them, march up to the Chief-of-Staff, and hand to, or receive from, him slips of paper. A continuous stream these soldier-orderlies make, and on their prompt activities and that of the highly-placed officers watching that moving picture depends the fate of—the British Empire!

You are the greatly privileged spectator of a scene which has yet to be enacted. It may never happen. But the nations of the world, greatly as Peace is now courted, may some time in the future find themselves embroiled in another world-war—beside which the Armageddon of 1914-1918 will seem almost trivial.

The concrete, bomb-proof chamber is the secret meeting-place of the heads of the British Army. It is also gas-proof, for in the clouds above the open streets are enemy aeroplanes loaded with bombs filled with poison-gas. They are searching for this "brain" of the Empire's fighting forces—a "brain" which is watching on the white screen down below the fighting which at that moment is in progress at the far-distant Front!

So much will television have done for us.

Wherever an aeroplane fitted with those wonderful all-seeing eyes, which have just recently been invented can fly, there living pictures of the moment's activities

(Next week's article in this intensely interesting series of Marvels of the Future will deal with "A 200 m.p.h. Touring Car," a subject which is also included in our topping series of coloured Picture Cards.)

will be "caught" and wirelessly to Headquarters.

The enemy's secret fastnesses, his stores, and dumps of ammunition, his concentrating troops, his massing artillery, his hordes of raiding planes, the happenings in his own towns far behind the Line, will be watched by planes so high up as to be invisible from the ground.

In the "floor" of the plane, in the nose, at the tail, in the sides, those amazing eyes will be ready at an instant's notice to pass on all that comes within their view, to pass it on by the mysterious agency of wireless to the television screens of opposing forces.

The radius over which the planes' automatic eyes will extend their watching will be hundreds of square miles, and the pictures they pass on through hundreds of miles of space will be as clear as a distinct photograph.

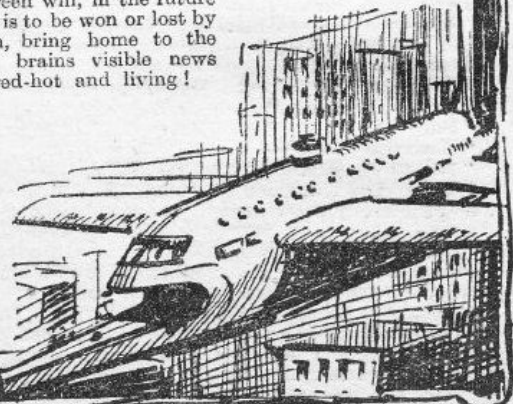
At the command of the Chief-of-Staff on duty in the concrete stronghold, a wireless operator stationed by the side of the screen will switch on scenes from any part of the battle area, blanking out one zone as another needs to be watched. Contrast it all with the World War days of 1914 and onwards!

Then, the War Office here at home relied for its data on special messages sent by telegraph, or wirelessly in the ordinary way. The flashed or written word conveyed but a tithe of the meaning of events. With the television age, all happenings, anywhere, will be a living picture on the screen.

At the Front in those past days, spying behind the enemy lines was done only occasionally, by men who walked intimately with Death or flew low over the enemy country in small scouting planes, returning, if Luck held, in due course with such scraps of information as could be picked up.

The real "eyes" of the Headquarters were exposed to imminent death in the actual Front Line, connection being maintained with the Chiefs-of-Staff far in the rear by means of land telephone lines.

Knobs and levers and small, insignificant dials, pulled and twiddled by operators seated in comfort and safety by the side of a white screen will, in the future war that is to be won or lost by television, bring home to the directing brains visible news that is red-hot and living!



"GRUNDY'S CRICKET MATCH!"

(Continued from page 10.)

that thinking was done with brains, so I was just wondering how you managed it."

"Why, you silly ass——"

Grundy glared at the humorous Gore for precisely one second, then he acted. It was not often that Grundy was quick in his decisions; but Gore had already got on his nerves that afternoon, and Grundy acted almost by instinct. Three succulent-looking jam-tarts were reposing on a stand on the counter near Grundy's stool. With a movement so rapid that Gore had no time to anticipate it, Grundy grabbed those jam-tarts and transferred them to Gore's face—business side down, so to speak.

There was a howl from Gore.

"Whooooop! Gug-gug-grooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As you're so funny, perhaps you'll see the funny side of that!" growled Grundy.

"Ooooooch! Grooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Apparently Gore didn't see the funny side of it. But the rest quite made up for Gore's failing in that respect. They roared.

"Now to get on," said Grundy briskly. "As I was saying when that born idiot butted in, I've been thinking."

He paused for an instant, possibly to give Gore another opportunity to butt in if he felt so disposed. Gore, however, was too busily engaged in wiping jam and pastry away from his physiognomy to exercise his humorous proclivities again, so Grundy rattled on:

"Now we've got some sort of a team together, the problem arises of arranging a fixture. Admittedly, you're a pretty diddler at present. I must say it struck me as I watched you practising that I'd never seen such a collection of third-raters in my life."

"Oh!"

"Hem!"

"Still, that doesn't matter much. So long as you rally round me and support me for all you're worth, I shall be satisfied," said Grundy.

"Rely on us, old scout," murmured Trimble, between mouthfuls of currant cake. "We'll back you up like anything. Won't we, chaps? Pass those meringues, will you, Grundy, old scout?"

"I'll pass you a thick ear if I see you gorging any more, you fat rotter!"

"Look here, old chap——"

"Now, about a fixture. I've thought out a wonderful wheeze," said Grundy.

"You would!" murmured Jimson, with a grin.

"Exactly! This is something extra special, though—a real gilt-edged stunt! In fact, it's about the brainiest wheeze I've ever come across," remarked Grundy impressively.

"Carry on, then!"

"Let's hear it, old chap!"

Grundy's listeners were quite willing to listen to all sorts of wheezes, wonderful or otherwise, so long as the supply of tuck lasted. It was what Jimson had described overnight as an equal division of labour—Grundy did all the talking, while his followers did the eating.

"Now, listen!" said Grundy. He glanced cautiously at the door to make sure that no curious outsiders were listening; then went on: "It's connected with that match Tom Merry's fixed up with the Nomads next Wednesday."

The juniors looked surprised.

"How the dickens does the Nomads' match affect us?" asked Lennox.

Grundy chuckled.

"It doesn't—at present. But if my wheeze works it will affect us very closely."

"But——"

"What the thump——"

"As you know, it's an away match."

"Quite right!" nodded Wilkins. "The St. Jim's team are leaving directly after morning lessons, without waiting for dinner. It's rather a long journey to the Nomads' ground."

"Loamingham, in Hampshire," said Grundy. "It's the distance that makes the idea practicable, as a matter of fact. Now, the Nomads' match, as you all know, is looked on as rather a big thing. They won't field their best team, of course; but even so, they're rather older than we are, and reckoned a pretty hot lot at that. If we could bag that match instead of Tom Merry's crowd——"

"Eh?"

"If we could whatter?" roared Jimson.

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"If we could bag that match instead of Tom Merry's crowd," said Grundy calmly, "it would give us something like a start; set us properly on our feet, in fact."

"M-m-my hat!"

"I should jolly well think it would!" gasped Lennox. "Tom Merry looks on it as the match of the season. But——"

"But how the thump do you imagine we can do that?" demanded Gore, who, having rid himself of most of the jam and pastry, had become as interested as the rest in Grundy's remarks. "If you think Tom Merry is likely to make us a present of the match, you've made a jolly big mistake. He won't."

"Ha, ha! Not likely!"

"Thinking of bribing the motor-coach driver to lose them?" inquired Kerruish. "If so, cut me out of it. I'm not having a hand in any bribery and corruption, Grundy, so that's flat."

"Nothing like that," said Grundy. "Naturally, you silly chumps won't have the intelligence to guess what the idea is."

"Well, we're not all equally gifted, of course," remarked Lennox sarcastically.

"Just so. Not to be expected," assented Grundy. "Stop chattering like a cageful of monkeys and I'll explain."

"Good old Grundy!" murmured Tompkins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My idea is this," said Grundy, silencing the laughter with a severe frown. "The match is fixed to take place at Loamingham, and Tom Merry and his blessed team are going to travel there by road. It stands to reason that once they get to Loamingham it will take them hours to get back to St. Jim's."

"Well, as it takes hours to get there, that sounds reasonable enough, certainly," grinned Wilkins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That being so, it will be impossible for them to get back to St. Jim's and play the Nomads here," pursued Grundy.

"But—but they're playing at Loamingham," said Gunn, staring.

"So they think at present," agreed Grundy. "But suppose the Nomads get the idea into their heads that that arrangement is cancelled, and a fresh one made for the game to take place at St. Jim's——"

"But why the thump should they think that?"

"Suppose we put the idea into their heads," said Grundy.

"Then——"

"Oh, great pip!"

"M-m-my giddy aunt!"

The juniors simply stared.

"In that case, they'll turn up at St. Jim's, and there'll be nobody to give them a game. So we shall have to step into the breach. Savvy?"

"Great Scott!"

Grundy's cricketers could only blink; Grundy's wheeze fairly took their breath away.

"You—you mean your idea is to mislead them deliberately——" said Jimson.

"To get them to believe that the match is to take place at St. Jim's, instead of at Loamingham, so that we can play them instead of the real junior eleven?" said Wilkins, almost dazedly.

"Just that!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Grundy, surveying his astonished followers with great satisfaction. "Pretty good idea, eh?"

"Pretty good!" echoed Gunn, with a grin. "Well, it's pretty something, anyway. Blessed if I know what to say to it yet. It takes a bit of getting used to. How the thump did you think it out, old chap?"

Grundy smiled.

"Ideas come naturally to me. It's a gift, I suppose," he explained modestly. "Anyway, it's a stunning wheeze. You can't deny that. Don't you see what an opportunity it will give us? We'll be able to play the blessed Nomads——"

"Great pip!"

"Lick 'em!" said Grundy confidently.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Perhaps!" said Kerruish, rather dubiously.

"Well, why not? I shall be playing," said Grundy, as if that fact made victory a certainty. "Naturally, the rest of you will have to support me to a certain extent. I don't see why we shouldn't win, myself. Anyway, you haven't said what you think of the idea. Isn't it a corker?"

"Hem!"

The juniors looked at each other rather dubiously. They hardly knew what to say. Certainly the scheme was ingenious enough, and they felt rather surprised that Grundy had been capable of such an achievement. But—There were somehow quite a lot of vague "buts" about it.

"Hem! Don't you think it's playing it rather low on

Tom Merry?" asked Jimson. "Of course, I know he's an ass, or he'd have given me a place in the eleven, but—"

Grundy sniffed. "Blow Tom Merry! Bother Tom Merry! Why should I worry about him and his rotten eleven? Isn't my team as good as his, any day of the week?"

"Well, of course it is, in parts," answered Jimson guardedly. "So far as I'm concerned, I'm willing to put myself up against any fellow in the team he's picked for next Wednesday."

"What about me, if it comes to that?" asked Kerruish, with a frown.

"And me?" growled Gore. "Look here, you chaps, if I'm not as good as any man in the blessed junior eleven, I'll eat my hat!" said Trimble, contenting himself for the time being with eating a cream-bun.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Take it from me, if we play the Nomads we shall give them just as good a fight as Tom Merry's crowd—probably better," said Grundy, with easy confidence. "No need for anybody to worry about that. And just think what a score it will be for us if we do win! Imagine Tom Merry's face

when he comes back and hears that we've played the Nomads and licked them! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Grundy went off into a fresh burst of laughter as his imagination dwelt on that optimistic picture. Gore chuckled.

"My hat! It would be a rare score for us, and no mistake. In any case, even if we lose, it will be a pretty good lark. I begin to think you've struck a real brain-wave, Grundy. I was going to lick you for bashing those rotten tarts at me, but dashed if I don't feel like letting you off now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Why, you cheeky ass—" "What about it, you chaps?" asked Gore, turning to the rest.

"H'm! Of course, it's a brainy wheeze," admitted Kerruish. "But—well, there's something I don't quite like about it, somehow. Anyway, how are you going to spoof the Nomads into thinking the match is to take place at St. Jim's, Grundy?"

"Simply phone the secretary. He's on the phone, I know; Tom Merry was talking to him yesterday."

(Continued on the next page.)



Our Oracle states that he will give £1,000 to any dog's home or free soup kitchen named by the editor, in the event of him ever failing to

answer a reader's question with, or without, the office boy's help; said sum to be paid when he has been able to save it out of his salary of thirty bob a week!

Q. What is amber?

A. It is fossilised resin. Thousands of years ago the gum of certain trees along by the Baltic Sea, in Burma and certain other parts of the world, rolled out and fell into sand. Then in course of time this sand, by tremendous pressure, became rock and the gum turned into amber. Sometimes flies, ants, bees, and other insects that lived thousands of years ago are found perfectly preserved in this golden coloured substance which is used to make such beautiful necklaces and other articles.



Amber, a fossilised resin, from which beautiful necklaces are made.

Q. What is a triceratops?

A. Benny Dicks, of Lincoln, has written to me stating that he is very fond of tops, although chaps at his school consider the sport out of season and old-fashioned. Well, he happened to see "triceratops" down in a museum list of exhibits that he found, and he wants to know if this was some special brand that the ancients used to play with. I fear not, Benny. More likely the triceratops had sport with the ancients. I print a picture to show you the special brand it was—yards long, with a skin as thick as a cruiser's armour plating, and a mouth more remarkable for size than classic beauty. This great pre-historic beast which roamed the earth in the days before history, has been extinct for thousands of years. I presume they must have constructed a specimen in plaster



You will never meet one of these "nightmare" animals, for they lived in the pre-historic days. It's called a triceratops!

at your local museum, eh, Benny, old top?

Q. What do the following initials stand for: I. W.; T.R.H.; M.O.C.; P.C.; M.F.H.; and P.T.O.

A. Isle of Wight; Their Royal Highnesses; Marylebone Cricket Club; Privy Councillor, or Police Constable; Master of Foxhounds, and Please Turn Over.

Q. How many schools in Britain are fitted with wireless?

A. About 5,000. "Gemite." The broadcasts to the schools appear to be extremely popular, from what I can hear from my great-grandchildren and others choiars; they hardly seem to be like lessons at all. My young correspondent suggests that it will be a jolly good thing when all homes are equipped with wireless, and it may be possible to do away with schools and school-teachers altogether.

Q. Who was the first man to dissolve Parliament?

A. Dunno! Guy Fawkes tried to—with a load of gunpowder!

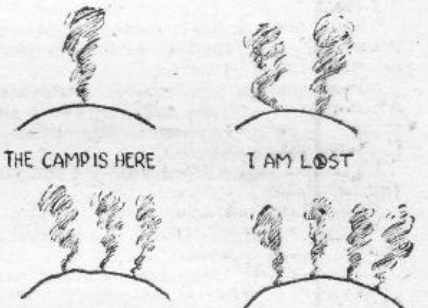
Q. Who was the fellow who never told a lie?

A. George Washington, first President of the United States of America. When asked by his father if he had hewn down the cherry-tree, he did not—as some of us might have done—blame it on the cat,

but said straight out he had done it with his little chopper. George Washington is revered the world over as the most remarkable American of all time.

Q. What smoke signals were made by the Red Indians?

A. Believe me, "Wild West" of Wigan, I could write a whole book on this subject. On your behalf, I suggested to the Editor of the GEM, that the usual long complete school yarn should be reduced to two pages, and, for the benefit of you and other chums, I should be permitted to let myself go—at the regular rates of pay per thousand words. For answer, the Editor



THE CAMP IS HERE

I AM LOST

GOOD NEWS

SUMMONS TO MEET

The Redskins signalled to one another by means of smoke signals.

told me to go and curl my whiskers, chop chips, eat coke, and perform various other irrelevant feats, which is the reason I am reduced to showing by simple illustration only four of the many smoke signals used by the Redskins.

Q. Where is the Great Rift Valley?

A. This, George Blane, is one of the most interesting natural phenomena in the world. It is the name given to a gigantic crack in the earth which begins in Palestine at the valley of the Jordan River and extends down to the southern end of Lake Nyasa in East Africa, a total length of about 2,500 miles. The Dead Sea lies in one of the deepest parts of the Great Rift Valley, and at one place it widens out to form the Red Sea.

Q. What is a poncho?

A. A cloak made of a piece of cloth with a hole in the middle for the wearer's head, and used largely in some parts of South America.

(Now, boys, send in your queries and see if you can catch our wise old Oracle napping. A postcard will do. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,116.

"Know the phone number?"

"I'll jolly soon find it out."

"H'm!"

"Dash it all, Kerruish, don't let the blessed team down!" exclaimed Gore. "It's the jape of the term, anyway, but apart from that, it'll give us the opportunity of a rattling good game next Wednesday."

"Oh, rather!" grinned Wilkins. "Since Tom Merry posted up the list I'd given up hope of playing the Nomads. I'm beginning to hope again now!"

"Same here!"

"Of course, it's not quite the same as playing in the junior eleven, all fair, square, and above board," remarked Lennox thoughtfully.

"Well, not quite!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Still, it will give a man a chance to shine. If I score a century—"

"If!" grinned Tompkins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then Tom Merry can't very well refuse me a place in the junior eleven in future. I'm jolly well supporting Grundy, anyway," finished up Lennox.

"Good!" said Grundy. "What about the others? All in favour?"

Everybody seemed to be, with the solitary exception of Kerruish; and after a little hesitation even Kerruish gave in.

"Blessed if I half like it," he remarked in so doing.

"But still, if we bring it off, and I do happen to knock up a century—"

"What, another century?" asked Wilkins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will open Tom Merry's eyes and make him think twice before dropping me again," concluded Kerruish. "Count me in!"

And Kerruish was duly counted in with the rest.

CHAPTER 7

Very Mysterious!

"ALL ready for next Wednesday—what?"

Grundy addressed that remark to Tom Merry in the Hall next morning.

Tom Merry, and Manners and Lowther, who were with him, looked rather surprised. Since Grundy's unsuccessful trial at the nets the great man of the Shell had treated the junior eleven and all that appertained to it with a lofty disdain. His tone now, however, was quite cordial—almost suspiciously so, in fact. The Terrible Three eyed Grundy wonderingly.

"Talking about the fixture with the Nomads?" asked Tom Merry.

Grundy nodded.

"Yes, of course. Everything fixed up now?"

"Well, I suppose so," answered Tom, with another puzzled glance at his interrogator. "What exactly are you getting at?"

"Getting at? Oh, nothing! What should I be getting at?" asked Grundy, his rugged face turning pink. "Can't a fellow ask a question about a blessed fixture now, without being suspected of getting at something?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, yes. But you haven't been exactly an enthusiastic supporter of ours during the last day or so, and I rather wondered what the idea was—that's all, old bean!"

Grundy snorted.

"Supporter! I like that. Catch me being a supporter of your blessed ragtime team!"

"Then what's the jolly old anxious inquiry about?" asked Lowther.

"Ahem!" Grundy looked rather uncomfortable, as though he had put his foot in it; though what there was for Grundy to put his foot in was a deep mystery to the Terrible Three just then. "Naturally, I like to know what's going on, and all that sort of thing," he said rather vaguely, after a pause during which he seemed to be cogitating deeply.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at each other, tickled, and yet rather puzzled by Grundy's manner. That Grundy was after something, was obvious to them; though Grundy, in his innocence, probably imagined that his inquiries were being conducted with such masterly tact as to leave them unsuspecting. What could be Grundy's object, however, in inquiring with such an air of mystery about a junior eleven fixture the Terrible Three could not imagine.

"Thinking of bringing your team along to cheer us, Grundy?" grinned Tom Merry, hardly knowing what to make of this strangely-inquisitive George Alfred.

"Of course not, you silly ass!"

"Want the match called off so that you can play the junior eleven yourself?" asked Manners. "If so, nothing doing, old chap!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

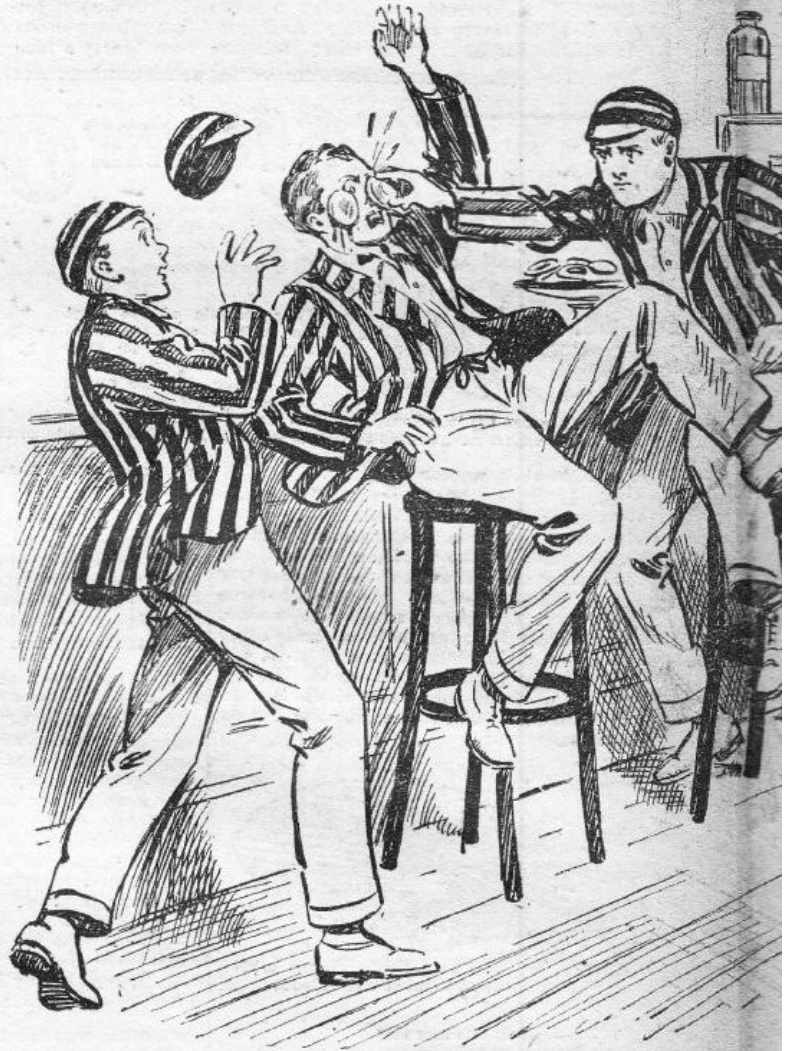
"Don't talk rot, Manners, unless you want me to give you a thick ear!" Grundy looked at Tom Merry again. "I suppose you've arranged everything with the Nomads' secretary now, Merry—time for pitching stumps, and all that?"

"Yes, everything's fixed, as you seem yearning to know, old bean," answered the skipper of the junior eleven.

Grundy nodded and appeared to grope for words again.

"Thought it was," he said at last. "Got on the phone

George Alfred Grundy glared at the humorous Gore for precisely one second; then, acting with a promptness that he rarely displayed, Grundy grabbed three jam-tarts from a plate near at hand and transferred them to Gore's face—business side down. There was a howl from Gore. "Ooooooch! Gug-gug-groooh!" (See Chapter 6.)



to the secretary, didn't you? Chap named Rutters—or was it Sutters? I forget which for the moment."

"Butters, dear man!" grinned Lowther.

"Ah, that's it!" said Grundy, as if the name of the secretary of the Nomads was the most important thing in the universe at that moment—as, indeed, it was to him just then.

"Thinking of coming along with us to pick up a few tips?" inquired Tom Merry.

"Don't try to be funny, Tom Merry! I say—about that phone call to the fellow Butters—"

"Well, what about it?" asked Tom Merry, staring.

"Find any difficulty in getting through to him?" asked Grundy, in quite an anxious tone.

"What on earth makes you want to know that?"

Grundy's face turned pink, then red.

"Oh, nothing much. I'm rather interested in telephones—trunk calls, and all that sort of thing," he explained.

"Well, my hat!"

The Terrible Three looked at Grundy, then looked at each other again. They were beginning to entertain quite

serious doubts about the exact state of George Alfred Grundy's mind.
 "Feel all right, old man?" asked Manners solicitously.
 "Eh? Of course I'm all right! Don't I look it?"
 "Hem! You look it, old man, but—"
 "Not feeling a bit queer in the head—dizzy, or anything like that?" suggested Lowther.
 Grundy glared.
 "If you're trying to make any of your idiotic jokes, Lowther—"



"Sounds like Grundy now," grinned Tom Merry. "But—but what's the big idea? Why all these questions about junior eleven fixtures, and trunk calls? Explain, you ass!"
 "Eh? Nothing to explain," answered Grundy, his rugged face redder than ever now. "I was only sort of interested in—in trunk calls, and how long it takes to make 'em. This call to Loamingham, for instance—how long did it take you to get through to Butters?"
 "Oh, about five minutes! But what the thump—"
 "Loamingham six-two, Sutters' number, isn't it?"
 "Butters, do you mean? No, it's Loamingham three-nine, as a matter of fact," answered Tom. "But—but you're not thinking of phoning him yourself, are you?"
 "Why should I?"
 "Well, you seem jolly interested in his number, old bean."
 "Taken to studying telephone numbers, as well as trunk calls?" asked Monty Lowther gravely.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Grundy grunted.

"Ass! No; matter of fact, I—I was sort of wondering whether he's any relation of another Sutters I know in that part."
 "But his name's Butters—not Sutters!"
 "Oh, crums, I forgot! Well, I suppose he can't be a relation then, can he?"
 "Well, hardly."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Did you use the telephone in the Prefects' Room when you phoned?" asked Grundy.
 "Guilty, my lord! But—but once again, dear man, what's the merry idea?"
 "Idea? Nothing—nothing at all, of course."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three roared. George Alfred Grundy was expecting rather too much if he anticipated that they would believe his numerous questions to have been altogether pointless. They had no doubt whatever now that Grundy's object in approaching them had been to obtain all available information relating to the fixture with the Nomads, and it was quite obvious to them that Grundy intended communicating by telephone with the secretary of that club. Why Grundy should want to do that remained a mystery to Tom Merry & Co., but at all events they were under no illusions about his wanting to do it.

"Dashed if I know what you fellows are cackling about," remarked Grundy. "If a chap can't ask a few civil questions—"
 "Yes; but what questions!" grinned Manners. "All asked with a view to satisfying your curiosity—nothing else, of course!"

"No ulterior motives!" gasped Lowther. "Oh, Grundy, you'll be the death of me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Grundy snorted, and strode away, leaving the Terrible Three still roaring.

Quitting the Hall, Grundy sprinted up the stairs two at a time, and made straight for Study No. 3, where Wilkins and Gunn were waiting for him.

Grundy's study-mates glanced at him rather curiously as he entered.

"Seen Tom Merry?" asked Wilkins
 Grundy nodded, and chuckled.

"Rather! I got all the information I wanted from him, too. The secretary's phone number and name—Butters, it is, by the way; must remember that; the time it takes to get the call through—only five minutes—and all details."

"And you got all this without making Tom Merry suspicious?" asked Gunn incredulously.

"Naturally. Trust me to manage a tricky bit of business like that," answered the great man of the Shell. "Now, if it had been either of you—"

"We'd have made a fearful hash of it, of course!" finished Wilkins, rather sarcastically.

"Of course you would," nodded Grundy, in cordial agreement. "Anyway, it's all plain-sailing now, and at dinner-time, if the coast's clear in the Prefects' Room, I can get through to Loamingham while you chaps keep guard."

"Sure Tom Merry didn't smell a rat?" asked Gunn.
 "Quite sure. Didn't I say so?"

"No possibility that you've made a mistake, I suppose?" asked Wilkins.

Grundy frowned.
 "If you're doubting my word, Wilkins—"

What was going to happen in the event of Wilkins doubting Grundy's word remained unknown. The bell for classes rang at that moment, and Grundy & Co. began a hurried search for their books. And for an hour or two Grundy's word and the Nomads had to give place to Virgil and English history.

CHAPTER 8.
 Exit Trimble!

BAGGY TRIMBLE of the Fourth rolled cautiously down the Shell passage after classes that morning. Out of doors the sun was shining, and Nature was at her best. Most of the fellows had gone out to enjoy the sunshine, and the Shell passage, as a result, was deserted.

Baggy Trimble did not feel the call of Nature in the same degree as other fellows. Or perhaps it was that he felt more strongly the call of a supply of tuck which reposed in Grundy's study just then.

Grundy's fond uncle had turned up, trumps with a magnificent tuck-hamper that morning. Trimble had watched that hamper brought in, and his podgy mounth had watered at the sight of it. During lessons, his mind had dwelt longingly on it. By the time midday break had arrived, Grundy's hamper had become quite an obsession with him.

Now, the Shell passage was free from interfering beasts who might have wanted to know what he was doing there,
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and Grundy and his two henchmen were out of the way. True, they were not far away; to be precise, they were on the floor below, at the Prefects' Room—Grundy himself within the sacred precincts of that apartment, and Wilkins and Gunn keeping guard outside. Trimble knew that much, for he had dogged their footsteps since classes had been dismissed. That they were safely out of the way for five minutes at least, however, Trimble had no doubt. The fat Fourth-Former intended to make the most of that five minutes.

Trimble halted outside Study No. 3, and like Moses of old, looked this way and looked that way. He saw no man coming, so he put his podgy paw on the door-handle, and rolled into the study.

A grunt of satisfaction escaped him as his eyes fell on the hamper he sought, standing in solitary state on the study table. This was rather unexpected luck. Trimble had quite anticipated having to negotiate a locked cupboard door before he got to the hamper. In point of fact, Grundy was too much concerned with urgent matters connected with his cricket team to bother about it. So Trimble had an easy task.

He rolled over to the table, and spent a few seconds contemplating the hamper with an appraising eye. It was a large hamper, and the address-label attached to it bore the name of a well-known London store. Baggy's practised eye saw that the provender it contained would be extensive enough in quantity and varied enough in kind to satisfy even his gargantuan requirements.

"Ripping!" he muttered.

For a moment he felt tempted to seize the entire hamper

as it stood, and transport it to some distant box-room, where he might consume its contents at his leisure. But there were drawbacks to that plan. Certainly, Grundy, whose mighty instinct dwelt on other things than tuck, was at times a little absent-minded where matters appertaining to the inner man were concerned.

But even Grundy was not absent-minded enough not to notice the disappearance of a complete hamper; and Trimble felt somehow that suspicion would be rather likely to fall on himself. By a perverse trick of fate, most of the beasts in the Fourth and Shell seemed to suspect Trimble when tuck disappeared.

"Beast!" muttered Trimble, mentally applying that epithet to Grundy.

On second thoughts, the fat junior decided that it would be more judicious on his part if he helped himself to the contents of the hamper as generously as he could in the circumstances, thereafter replacing the packing, and hoping that Grundy would notice nothing amiss.

Whatever he did had to be done quickly, anyway. Trimble ceased cogitating, and applied himself to the task of opening the hamper.

That task occupied less than a minute. Baggy's hands were not particularly nimble, but he could rise to any emergency with tuck in the offing. He deftly untied a formidable-looking knot, and broke a seal. The latter circumstance was unfortunate, but it couldn't be helped. Probably Grundy would not observe such a trifle as a broken seal.

Baggy raised the lid and removed some of the packing. His little eyes glistened at the sight that was revealed to him. A tin of fruit cake, and a tin of assorted biscuits, two jars of jam, bottles of preserved fruits, a pot of preserved ginger—all these, and a host of other edibles calculated to delight the heart of a Trimble, reposed in the packing of Grundy's hamper.

Trimble's podgy mouth fairly watered.

He dived into the hamper, and began to make a hurried selection. The tin of fruit cake was brought out and placed on the table first. One jar of jam, a tin of pineapple chunks, and a bottle of preserved fruits quickly followed, and after that, a tin of ox tongue, and a packet of toffee. Baggy hesitated for a brief instant, then annexed a bottle of lemonade and the tin of assorted biscuits.

He regarded the remainder a little dubiously. There was still a lot left, but he had succeeded in making a considerable hole in the hamper. He didn't want Grundy to suspect that marauding hands had been at work, of course, but—

It is well said that he who hesitates is lost. Baggy hesitated again, then picked out the pot of preserved ginger. That brought to light a hidden tin of jam-tarts. The fat

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junior opened the tin, and regarded the tarts with a thoughtful brow.

"Perhaps the beast won't miss a couple!" he muttered.

No sooner he thought than the deed! A podgy hand closed on one jam-tart and transferred it to an equally podgy mouth. Baggy enjoyed that little snack—so much so, that he sampled another jam-tart, and then another.

In a very short space of time the jam-tarts were no more.

The jam-tarts evidently whetted the fat junior's appetite. Having disposed of them, he started on the fruit-cake. He was half-way through it, when the sound of footsteps down the passage stopped his champing jaws.

Baggy paused, holding what was left of the cake in mid-air.

"Oh, crikey!" he gasped.

The sound of those footsteps reminded him with the force of a sudden shock that he was in Study No. 3 in the Shell passage in circumstances which suspicious-minded fellows might regard as rather compromising.

Baggy's fat knees knocked together.

"Oh, crumbs!"

He made up his mind that as soon as the footsteps passed he would gather up such of the provender as he might still annex in possible safety, pack up the hamper again, and make himself scarce as quickly as possible.

It was a wise decision, but it came rather too late. Instead of passing the study, the footsteps stopped outside.

Baggy gave a dismal groan.

"Oh dear! If it's that beast Grundy—"

It was! As the handle turned, the trembling Baggy recognised the gruff, unmusical tones of that beast Grundy himself!

"Of course I managed it. That chap Butters fell for it like a blessed lamb. Didn't even ask me if I was Tom Merry. Agreed to play at St. Jim's without a murmur. I tell you, Wilky—Hallo, what the thump—"

George Alfred Grundy paused in the doorway of Study No. 3 with an expression on his rugged face that made Trimble wish devoutly that he had gone while the going was good.

"What's up, old chap?" asked Wilkins. "Well, my hat!"

"Trimble!" ejaculated Gunn.

"Oh dear!" groaned Trimble.

"Why, you—you—you fat robber!" stuttered Grundy.

"Our hamper!" roared Wilkins.

"Oh dear! I say, you chaps—"

"The—the robber!" roared Grundy furiously. "Look at him! The blessed daylight robber!"

"Pinching that glorious hamper!" almost wept Wilkins.

"Oh dear! I say, Grundy, I hope you don't think I've touched your hamper—"

"What!"

"I'm as innocent as a babe—really, old chap!" said Baggy desperately. "As a matter of fact—"

"The fat villain!"

"I really came in here to stop a gang of fags from wolfing it all up," explained the Falstaff of the Fourth. "The rotters were simply scoffing it, old chap, when I stepped in. Blessed if I know what those kids are coming to nowadays!"

"You—you—"

"If it hadn't been for me, old chap, the greedy young beggars wouldn't have left a scrap—"

"You gormandising burglar!"

"Oh, really, Grundy! If that's what you call gratitude—"

"Oh, crikey! The fat villain's practically finished the whole bag of tricks, by the look of it!" said Gunn, wrathfully examining the remains of Grundy's hamper.

"Our fault. We should have locked it up, knowing what a prowling housebreaker this fat rotter is!" snorted Wilkins.

"Look here, Wilkins—"

"Serag him!" roared Grundy.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Slaughter him!"

Trimble dodged, and gave a yell of alarm.

"Lemme alone! Look here, if you beasts touch me—"

"Smash the fat villain!"

"I shall decline to play cricket for you! I'll jolly well let you in the cart!" hooted Trimble, leaping out of the way of the clutching hands that reached out towards him. "I mean it, Grundy! Yooooop! I shall refuse to play for your blessed team any more—"

"You won't get a chance to play for me any more, you fat cormorant!" roared Grundy. "Think I'm going to have a

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thieving porker like you in my team? Not likely! Collar him, you men!"

"Yarooooogh!"

"Yank him over the table while I rake out a cricket-stump!" ordered the lord and master of Study No. 3. "I'll teach the fat burglar to pinch our tuck!"

"Yoooooop! Beasts! Look here—"

Loudly protesting, Baggy Trimble was yanked across the table. He pleaded and threatened in turn, but all his pleas and threats passed by Wilkins and Gunn like the idle wind which they regarded not. Wilkins and Gunn felt too incensed over the loss of their tuck to be affected by the most heartrending pleas or the most blood-curdling threats.

"Found a stump, Grundy?" asked Wilkins.

Grundy rose from the recess in which he had been rummaging, and nodded grimly.

"Hold the fat rotter down! I'll do the lamming!"

Thwack!

"Yaroooooop!"

Thwack! Thwack!

"Yaroooooop!"

The stump rose and fell with deadly precision, and Baggy Trimble roared with pain and wrath until Wilkins and Gunn began to look quite uneasy.

"Better ease up now, old chap," said Gunn. "He'll have all the beaks in the House here if he keeps on like this."

"Just three more!" said Grundy vengefully.

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

"Yow-ow! Whoooooop!"

"That'll do! Let him go now, you men. Perhaps that'll teach you, Fatty—"

"Groooooogh!"

"Not to lay your thieving maulers on tuck belonging to this study!" said Grundy sternly. "As to your membership of my cricket team—"

"Yah!"

"You can consider it ended. In fact, you can consider yourself expelled from the team with enormity," added Grundy solemnly.

"Don't you mean ignominy, old chap?" asked Gunn gently.

"No, I jolly well don't! I don't want you to tell me what I mean, either. Trimble is expelled with enormity. Get that, Fatty?"

"Beast!"

"Now you can buzz off!" said Grundy, opening the door.

Baggy Trimble didn't need a second invitation. He rolled out of Study No. 3 at express speed. The fascination of that celebrated apartment had totally departed so far as Trimble was concerned.

The fat junior did not pause until he reached the safety of his own study in the Fourth passage. There he sank into the armchair, and for the next quarter of an hour no sound was heard from Trimble save sundry variations of the themes, "Ow!" and "Yow!"

Trimble was still emitting an occasional grunt when he went in to dinner. The effects of his "stumping," however, had almost, if not altogether, gone by that time. Trimble's wrath, on the other hand, had in no way diminished. His podgy brain, in fact, was busily engaged in considering schemes for making Grundy rue the day when he had assaulted the important person of Baggy Trimble. And he was still pondering on the matter when he went into afternoon classes.

CHAPTER 9.

Trimble Does His Duty!

"I SAY, you chaps—"

Trimble of the Fourth poked his head round the door of Study No. 10 in the Shell passage at tea-time that afternoon and nodded amiably to Tom Merry & Co.

The Terrible Three regarded Trimble with far from welcoming looks.

"Scat!" said Lowther laconically.

"I say, you chaps, I've come—"

Manners nodded.

"We can see that. Now go!"

"He, he, he!"

"What's the joke, Trimble?" asked Tom Merry.

"He, he, he! Manners' little joke, you know!" grinned Trimble, closing the door. "Now, look here, you chaps—"

"Nothing doing. We're all stony," said Lowther.

"Oh, really, Lowther! You know jolly well I make it a rule never to borrow money. Thanks, I will!"

And, in response to an invitation which nobody else heard, Trimble helped himself to a jam-tart.

"Shall we kick him out?" asked Manners.

"Too hot to do anything so violent," answered Tom Merry. "Let him stay. After all, he hasn't invited himself to tea for at least a couple of days!"

"He, he, he! You chaps will have your little joke!"

(Continued on the next page.)



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grinned Trimble. "I say, Lowther, pass the currant-cake, you know. Don't be mean to a guest."

"Why, you fat idiot—"

"Thanks, old chap!" said Trimble, helping himself to three slices. "Now, look here, you chaps, I didn't come here to feed, you know—"

"Didn't you? Oh, my hat!"

"But I haven't the heart to turn down a really pressing invitation," explained Trimble, between mouthfuls of currant-cake. "As a matter of fact, the real reason I came here was to get your advice."

Lowther grinned.

"Well, you can have my advice at once. Don't wolf up all our currant-cake unless you want to depart from this study a lifeless corpse!"

Trimble changed his mind about taking some more cake, and started on the cream-buns instead.

"Putting all jokes on one side, you chaps, I'm rather worried," he said. "I'm up against the sort of problem that leaves a gentleman puzzled to know what to do for the best."

"Who's the gentleman in this case?" asked Manners, with interest.

"Me, of course, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts! Look here, you chaps, if you can't treat a guest with more respect than this I shall decline to stay another minute."

"Buzz off, then, old fat bean!"

"Hem! On consideration, perhaps you don't know better; I'll overlook it this time," said Trimble hastily. "Anyway, to resume what I was saying, I'm rather worried over a problem of—of etiquette and behaviour, you know."

"Trot it out, then. You can speak quite freely to your uncles," grinned Lowther.

Trimble helped himself to another cream-bun.

"Perhaps I'd better not mention names for the present," he said thoughtfully. "I'll just state a case, and then you can tell me what you think of it."

"Carry on, Baggy," said Tom Merry, wondering what was coming.

"Suppose a fellow has been told by another fellow about a conspiracy the second fellow is getting up against the first fellow's pals," said Trimble cautiously. "Only suppose, you know!"

The Terrible Three nodded.

"Pretty simple so far," remarked Lowther.

"And suppose the first fellow wants to tell his pals about the conspiracy, but he knows that the second fellow will give him a fearful hiding if he does so—"

"Sounds a bad character, this second fellow!" grinned Manners.

"What should the chap do?" asked Trimble. "Should he keep mum and save his skin, or should he tell his pals about the conspiracy and chance the fearful hiding?"

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Lowther.

Trimble snorted.

"Of course it's not, you ass! This is a serious problem—awfully serious, as a matter of fact. What's the right thing for this fellow to do? What do you think, Tom Merry?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Sounds a bit fishy to me, Baggy. Still, if it's as you say, the chap ought to warn his pals, I should think."

Trimble nodded.

"Exactly what I think. Well, suppose now, that the fellow tells his pals—warns them of the conspiracy in time, you know. Don't you think it would be up to them to stand by him and see that he didn't suffer in any way for doing the right thing?"

"I should imagine so. I should do it myself, anyway."

Trimble smiled.

"Thanks very much, Tom Merry! In that case, I'll tell you about the conspiracy, then."

"What?"

"You see, Grundy—"

"Grundy?"

"Yes, Grundy. He's the chap behind the conspiracy, you know."

"Then there is a conspiracy—a real one, I mean, not one you've invented to pass the time away while you're gorging?"

Trimble grunted.

"I wish you wouldn't be so dashed rude to a guest, Tom Merry. Of course there's a conspiracy. It's against the junior eleven, and Grundy's the fellow behind it."

Tom Merry became suddenly serious.

"Against the junior eleven? What the thump are you talking about, Baggy?"

"It's a fact, anyway," said Baggy. "I'll tell you all about it. Grundy's spoofed the Nomads to play at St. Jim's next Wednesday, instead of at Loamingham."

"Wha-a-at?"

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The Terrible Three stared at their podgy guest incredulously.

"Fact!" nodded Trimble. "It's a conspiracy; all the chaps belonging to Grundy's cricket team are in it."

"That means you're in it, then?" remarked Manners.

"You're one of Grundy's star players, aren't you?"

Trimble grunted.

"I was; but not now. I've washed my hands of Grundy now, to tell you the truth."

"Perhaps Grundy has washed his hands of you," grinned Lowther.

"Oh, rats! Anyway, blow Grundy! I'm through with him!" said Trimble, his fat lip curling. "I've come to warn you against the rotter, Tom Merry, and I think you ought to be jolly grateful to me."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I'm grateful enough, if there's anything to be grateful for, Baggy. But—but if what you've told us is true, what the dickens is his game? What fun is there in getting the Nomads to come here on a fool's errand?"

Trimble chuckled.

"That's just where you're wrong. He's not bringing them on a fool's errand at all."

"But if we go to Loamingham—"

"That's just it," grinned the fat Fourth-Former. "While you're doing the journey to Loamingham and back, Grundy's blessed team will be playing the Nomads. See?"

"M-m-my hat!"

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" ejaculated Manners. "Don't you see the wheeze, Tommy? Grundy's going to entertain the Nomads as if his ragtime team is the real junior eleven!"

"Great pip!"

The Terrible Three looked at each other almost dazedly. That Grundy was up to some mysterious game they had already guessed. But they had never suspected that Grundy was capable of so daring and deep a scheme as this.

"Well, this beats the band!" breathed Tom Merry at last.

"The awful bounder!"

"Sure you've got it right, Trimble?" asked Manners.

"Of course he's got it right," said Lowther. "Doesn't this explain old Grundy's behaviour this morning?"

"Oh crumbs! Of course," grinned Tom Merry. "He wanted to know Butters' phone number, and how long it took to get through. Now we know why!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, thank goodness we've been warned in time," said Tom. "Three cheers for Baggy! For the first time in all history he's come in useful!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Tom Merry—"

"Now you can finish up the currant cake," said Lowther considerably.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Without further ado Trimble commenced operations on the remainder of the currant cake.

"I'm glad to see you chaps are showing a bit of gratitude," he remarked, as he tucked in. "Mind you, I shall expect you to stand by me if that rotter Grundy kicks up a shindy afterwards."

"We will, old fat man!"

"But, of course, I should have done the right thing whatever the consequences," said Trimble. "I dare say to fellows like you it seems a jolly plucky thing to do, but it's nothing much to me. I've merely done my duty. Pass the rest of the tarts, Manners!"

And Trimble tucked into the tarts, happy in the knowledge that he had done his duty.

CHAPTER 10.

A Plot Against the Plotters!

"THE deep bounder!"

Tom Merry made that remark for at least the sixth time.

Trimble of the Fourth, having exhausted all the available supplies of tuck in Study No. 10, had departed, and Tom Merry & Co. were sitting round the table discussing the situation.

It was a little difficult to decide just what to do. As Grundy had apparently got the Nomads to agree to play at St. Jim's, the obvious thing was to allow that arrangement to stand. On the other hand, the junior eleven had been rather looking forward to the trip to Loamingham. A motor run into Hampshire did not fall to their lot every day, and there was about the match with the Nomads the additional attraction that in consideration of the length of the journey members of the eleven were to be excused prep—a privilege which would automatically be cancelled if the game were played on Little Side. Tom felt that most of the fellows would be disappointed if Grundy's arrangement were adhered to.

"What are you going to do, Tommy?" asked Manners.

"Blessed if I know what to do. It seems a bit thick to ask Butters to switch back to the arrangement that Grundy has kindly altered for us, and yet—"

"And yet everybody's keen on the outing to Loamingham," finished Manners. "Just so. What's your idea, Monty?"

Monty Lowther had been rather quiet for several minutes. He looked up with a grin as Manners addressed him.

"Sh! Don't interrupt the merry old train of thought! I've almost got it."

"Got what?"

queried Lowther. "After all, it's only six o'clock yet, and most of the Nomads' players are young chaps out at business, I believe. Probably not one of them knows anything about it at the present moment."

"H'm! That's true!"

"My idea is that if you phone up Butters in the next half-hour or so you'll find he'll be only too glad to revert to the original plan. He's probably finding it a good deal more inconvenient to arrange to come to St. Jim's than to play the match at Loamingham."

"Something in that," nodded Manners.

Lowther grinned.

"Consider that fixed then. Now we come to my idea. As things stand, poor old Grundy will simply wait here with his team until he gets tired."

"Serves the silly ass right for trying to jape the junior eleven," grunted Tom Merry. "If he'd pulled this off, it would only have meant that the Nomads would have licked his crackpot lot to a frazzle, and made St. Jim's a laughing-stock."

"I don't mind telling you, Tom Merry," said George Alfred Grundy loftily, "that something is going to happen soon that will put your blessed eleven right in the shade." "Sh! Quiet, you ass!" hissed Kerruish. "Oh rats!" snorted Grundy "If you think I'm likely to give the game away, Kerruish. Yarooop!" Grundy's remarks ended in a fiendish howl as Kerruish's heavy foot descended on his toes. (See Chapter 11.)



"The idea. A real top-notch, if I mistake me not! Half a minute!"

"Forget it, Monty!" pleaded Tom Merry. "No screamingly funny japes wanted, you know. This is a matter of business."

"Park the idea till next April the First," suggested Manners brightly.

"Ass!" snorted Lowther. "This is going to be a real corker, I tell you. Oh crikey! Got it! Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's off!" grinned Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my hat! I had a feeling I'd strike something pretty soon!" chortled Lowther. "Listen, Tommy—"

"Can't you keep it till another time, old bean?"

"No jolly fear! This is just the wheeze you're waiting for. Listen to me—"

"No help for it, I suppose," said Tom Merry resignedly. "Go ahead, then. And cut it as short as you can."

"First of all, about the problem of whether to ring up the Nomads again, or let Grundy's arrangement hold good," said Lowther. "I should say, cancel the new arrangement and let the old one stand."

Tom Merry made a grimace.

"All very well, Monty, but I don't suppose Butters will be very pleased at that. After having gone to the trouble of arranging to come here—"

"But do you think he has gone to any trouble yet?"

"Perhaps so; but still, I hate to think of dear old Grundy being disappointed. And I think I've found a way of getting him a fixture after all."

Tom Merry and Manners stared.

"Why the thump should you bother to fix up a game for Grundy's benefit?" asked Tom Merry.

Lowther chuckled.

"Put it down to my kind-hearted nature, Tommy! Now, listen. The Nomads you're playing are not the only team with that name. Ever follow local junior cricket?"

"I've read about it in the 'Wayland Times' occasionally. Why?"

"Noticed reports about a team called the Wayland Nomads?"

Tom Merry smiled.

"I think I remember them. Aren't they the people who have gone three seasons without a win?"

"They are, they is! Now, by a strange and lucky coincidence, the Wayland Nomads are advertising in the 'Wayland Times' this week for a game next Wednesday—"

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Manners, getting an inkling of the idea that the humorist of the Shell was propounding.

"And with the record they've got, the chances are that they haven't fixed anything up yet. Naturally, they'll jump at the opportunity of a game at St. Jim's—"

"Oh, my hat!" Tom Merry began to grin. "Surely, Monty, you're not thinking—"

"Of asking the Wayland Nomads to play Grundy's crowd? That's exactly what I am thinking, though," nodded Lowther. "Of course, Grundy needn't know they're only the Wayland Nomads—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Probably he'd be disappointed if he knew who they were—"

"Probably."

"Grundy needn't know anything about it, in fact—until after the match," grinned Lowther. "Of course, when it's all over, and the Wayland Nomads have won their first match in three years—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Merry and Manners.

"Then we can enlighten him, but not before. Well, what do you think of the wheeze?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lowther's question was unnecessary. His listeners were roaring.

"Oh, my giddy aunt! What a jape!" gasped Tom Merry. "Imagine Grundy entertaining the Wayland Nomads, under the impression that they've come all the way from Loamingham to play his eleven!"

"Think of him chortling over the junior eleven—when it's his crowd that are being japed all the time!" gurgled Manners.

"And think of his face when he learns the dreadful truth!" grinned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Passed nem con, then?" asked Lowther.

Tom Merry nodded.

"It's the jape of the term, Monty. You deserve a public vote of thanks for thinking it out. I'm going to get busy at once."

And the junior skipper rose to go out.

"Mind how you talk to Butters," said Manners.

"I'll talk to him like a Dutch uncle. What about the Wayland chaps, Monty? Do we have to write, or phone?"

"Phone—Wayland, one-two-one, I believe. Here's the 'Wayland Times.'"

Monty Lowther found the advertisement he had spoken of and passed the newspaper over to Tom Merry.

The junior skipper scanned the notice and checked the telephone number, then he handed the paper back.

"Shan't be long, chaps," he said; and with that he quitted the study and went downstairs to the Prefects' Room.

He was back again within ten minutes, and his expression told Manners and Lowther at once that he had been successful.

"All O.K.?" asked Manners.

"Couldn't be better. Butters' was jolly glad to swap back to the original arrangement. Naturally, he asked what the dickens we were playing at—"

"So I should think," grinned Lowther.

"But, anyway, he was glad to fall in."

"And the Wayland Nomads?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"The secretary is a chap named Green—junior clerk in an estate agent's office, apparently. It was his office phone number. He nearly fell over himself when I asked if he'd like to come to St. Jim's."

"The Wayland Nomads have never had such an honour. I rather fancy they'll play the game of their lives."

"Well, that's that," said Tom Merry, with a sigh of relief. "Thank goodness we found out Grundy's little game in time. I rather think we're going to see some fun next Wednesday."

"Like to stay on and watch the game on Little Side?" asked Manners. "I'll take your place in the junior eleven if you like, Tommy!"

But Tom Merry evidently considered that the match at Loamingham was even more attractive than watching Grundy's eleven play the Wayland Nomads. Manners' generous offer was declined.

CHAPTER 11.

The Great Day!

DURING the next few days an air of suppressed excitement was noticeable in the Lower School at St. Jim's. Mysterious groups held subdued converse in Form passages, in the quad., and elsewhere, and broke up hurriedly at the approach of strangers. Observant juniors noticed that those groups were invariably composed of members of Grundy's cricket team, and a good many fellows were puzzled to know what was "on." Others who were in the confidence of the Terrible Three guessed what was the subject of the mysterious conferences, and

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chortled. Hence it came about that a confab on the part of any of Grundy's followers was usually followed by an inexplicable burst of laughter on the part of passers-by who happened to be in the know. And those who were not in the know could only wonder.

To all outward appearances, Grundy had kept the secret well confined to the membership of his team—a state of affairs which agreeably surprised Wilkins and Gunn. Grundy's study-mates had been rather dubious as to the possibility of keeping the jape hushed up, in view of the large number sharing the secret. But apparently nobody breathed a word. Even Mellish, who was almost as fond of tittle-tattling as Trimble, had kept mum—probably knowing on which side his bread was buttered. As to Trimble, Wilkins and Gunn paid a personal visit to that podgy Fourth-Former and warned him against "bubbling," as Gunn expressed it, in such blood-curdling terms that they felt assured of having terrified him into silence. Undoubtedly they did leave Trimble feeling decidedly scared, but as he had, in point of fact, already "babbled" to Tom Merry & Co., his solemn promises were not really of much use.

Spurred on by the exciting prospect of playing against a first-class junior team, Grundy's merry men practised hard—with the possible exception of Mellish, who was more interested in the free teas and suppers provided by the team's benevolent tyrant than in the cricket. Minus Trimble, there were still eleven men left—Grundy, Wilkins, Gunn, Gore, Jimson, Tompkins, Lennox, Mulvaney, minor, Kerruish, Mellish, and Skimpole. Considered as a team they were decidedly mixed, but most of them had a fairly good opinion of their own capabilities on the cricket-field, and hopes of a glorious victory against the celebrated Nomads ran high.

Grundy was, of course a sore trial to his team at the practice-nets. But his decided disadvantages as a cricket captain were amply compensated for by his undoubted advantages as a host. Mid-day snacks, lavish teas and plentiful suppers were the order of the day for the fortunate members of Grundy's cricket team. The team's headquarters at Study No. 3 in the Shell passage was a land flowing with milk and honey, and the cricketers were glad to partake generously of the milk and the honey, and anything else of an edible nature that came their way.

Baggy Trimble made more than one application to rejoin when he saw what blissful times he was missing—but without success! Trimble realised at last that Grundy was not having him back at any price, and at that realisation the fat junior reluctantly abandoned hope, and felt very glad that he had "done his duty," after all.

Meanwhile, the real junior eleven were naturally not idle. Tom Merry kept them hard at it at the nets, and the two rival teams practised side by side as harmoniously as might have been expected in the circumstances.

The Terrible Three did not keep back information concerning Grundy's plot and their counter-plot from the players selected for the trip to Loamingham. The joke was too good to nurse to themselves completely, and, in a sense, the junior eleven had a right to know what had happened. Apart from the players, and Herries and Digby who as intimates were specially favoured, however, nobody was told what was in the wind.

The fellows roared when they heard that Grundy's great plot had been discovered, and when they were told the details of Lowther's plot to pay Grundy back in kind, they yelled. There was a general quickening of interest in the outcome of the great day that was now very near.

"You seem to be keen on net practice, Grundy," remarked Tom Merry, coming away from the nets on the evening before the day of the match. "Expecting to play the M.C.C. shortly?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy smiled indulgently. The great man of the Shell felt that he could afford to smile, with the rosy prospects opening out before him of a cricket victory over the Nomads, and a moral victory over the junior eleven.

"Cackle away!" he said cheerfully. "It may be my turn soon. I don't mind telling you that something is going to happen soon that will put your blessed eleven right in the shade, and make me junior cricket captain of the school."

"Sh! Quiet, you ass!" hissed Kerruish, with an anxious glance at the grinning faces of Tom Merry and his men. Kerruish had a strong idea that if Grundy were given his head he would soon be letting the cat out of the bag—not that that really mattered, if Kerruish had but known.

Grundy frowned.

"Who're you telling to be quiet, Kerruish? Can't a chap talk, now?"

Grundy's merry men gave their manager and captain meaning looks.

"Mind you don't talk too much, that's all," growled Kerruish.

Tom Merry's team grinned. They found the embarrassment of Grundy's followers rather entertaining.

"Sounds quite mysterious," remarked Monty Lowther. "Keeping secrets from your schoolfellows now? Naughty Grundy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy snorted.

"Oh, rats! Look here, Kerruish, if you think I'm the kind of chap to give the blessed game away—Yarooo!" Grundy's remarks ended in a fiendish howl as Kerruish's heavy foot descended on his toes.

"Sorry, Grundy!" remarked Kerruish. "Quite an accident, of course! Come on, old chap!"

And Kerruish linked his arm with Grundy's, while Wilkins joined up on the other side. Grundy's cricket team tramped off, leaving the junior eleven shrieking.

Wednesday dawned, bright and cloudless, with a promise of heat in the air. George Alfred Grundy was up with the

neck speed, propelling Arthur Augustus D'Arcy before him with the aid of a cricket-bag.

The swell of the Fourth was wildly protesting.

"Yawwoogh! You wuffian, Blake! I insist on goin' back!"

"Insist away!" grinned Blake, lunging forward with his bag again in a manner that caused Arthur Augustus to leap hurriedly into the refuge of the charabanc. "All serene, Tommy! Gus noticed a speck of dust on his bags, and wanted to change 'em. I decided there wasn't time."

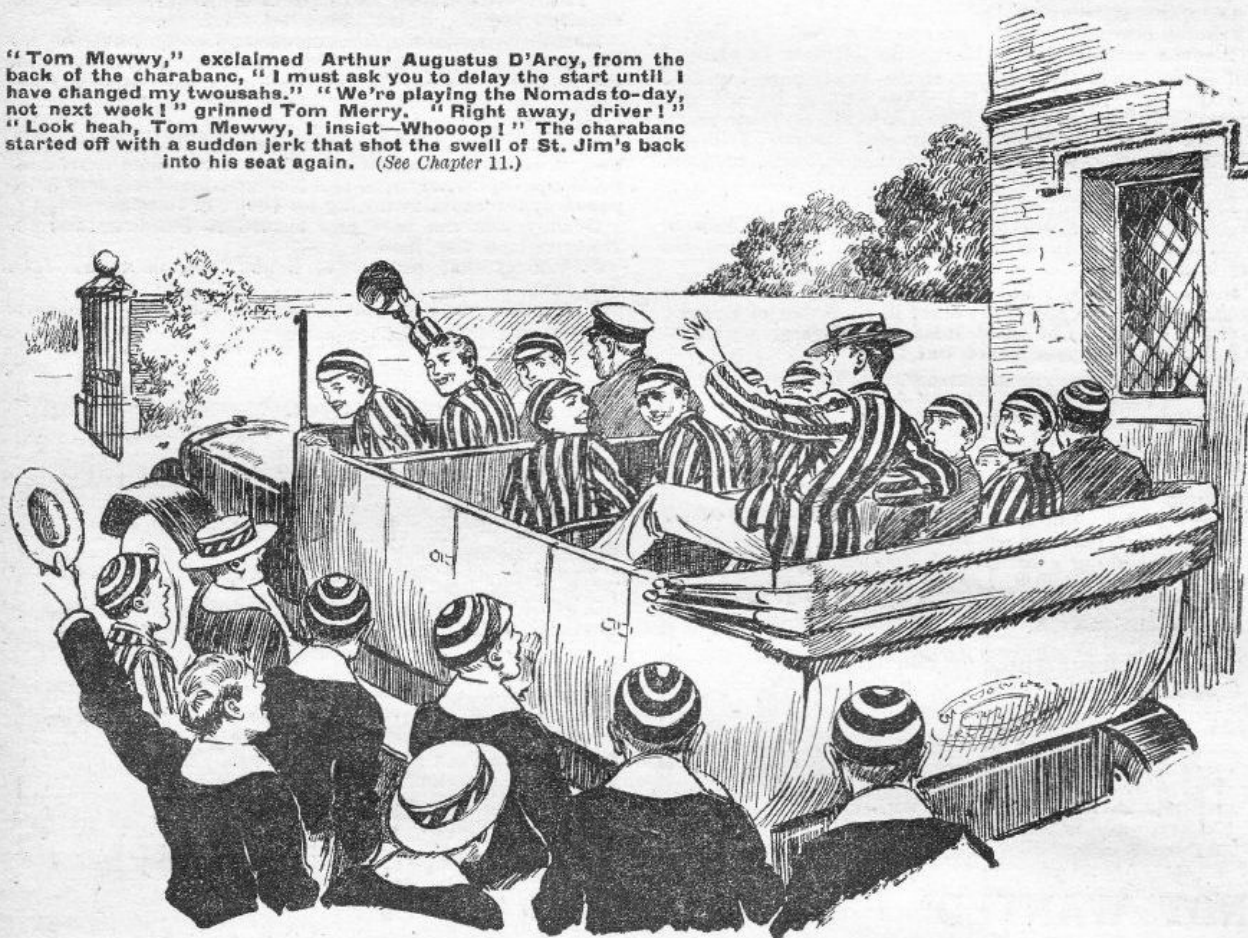
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gwoooogh! You fwightful wuffian, Blake! As soon as there is time, I shall give you a feahful thwashin'! In the meantime, Tom Mewwy, I must ask you to delay the start until I have changed my twousahs."

"Thanks! But we're playing the Nomads to-day, not next week," grinned Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Tom Mewwy," exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, from the back of the charabanc, "I must ask you to delay the start until I have changed my twousahs." "We're playing the Nomads to-day, not next week!" grinned Tom Merry. "Right away, driver!" "Look heah, Tom Mewwy, I insist—Whoooop!" The charabanc started off with a sudden jerk that shot the swell of St. Jim's back into his seat again. (See Chapter 11.)



lark, inspecting the pitch on Little Side in quite a professional manner. Not for a moment did Grundy dwell on the possibility of his plans miscarrying in any way. His only anxiety was lest the pitch, which was rather dry, should excite any critical thoughts in the minds of the Nomads.

Fortunately for the success of Grundy's undertaking, no other game had been arranged to take place on Little Side that afternoon. That possibility had escaped Grundy's notice at first, and he had received quite a shock when it occurred to him. Undoubtedly, the success of the plot would have been seriously jeopardised if there had been no vacant pitch on which to play the match. As it turned out, however, the Little Side patch was vacant for the afternoon, and Grundy had been able to obtain Kildare's consent to playing there, without arousing any suspicions in the mind of the school captain.

There were a good many sighs of relief when classes were dismissed that morning. Those fellows who were going to Loamingham got their bags ready, and went down to the quad to the waiting charabanc. Their journey was timed to begin before dinner-time, cold lunch being taken with them for consumption on board.

"All here?" asked Tom Merry, when he came on the scene.

"All but Blake and Gussy. Hallo, here they come!" said Clive.

There was a chuckle from the fellows in the "sharry" as Jack Blake came down the School House steps at break-

"Right away, driver!"

Arthur Augustus jumped to his feet in alarm.

"Look heah, Tom Mewwy, I insist—Whoooop!"

The charabanc started off with a sudden jerk that shot the swell of the Fourth back into his seat again. And Arthur Augustus after that had no option but to go to Loamingham—complete with speck, so to speak.

There was a cheer from the juniors who had assembled as the charabanc moved off.

"Pleasant journey, Merry!" called out Grundy cheerfully.

"Thanks, old bean! Hope you'll fill in the afternoon somehow!" returned Tom Merry politely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The charabanc rolled away, and the crowd scattered, George Alfred Grundy and a group of his players proceeding to Little Side to survey the pitch once again, and to chortle over the success of their wheeze.

But the last of the chortling had not been done yet.

CHAPTER 12.

Grundy's Cricket Match!

"CAN it be—"

"Surely it can't—"

Grundy and his hopeful followers, waiting patiently around the pavilion facing Little Side after dinner that day, stared almost incredulously.

They had been watching the gates expecting any minute to see the Nomads arriving in a well-appointed charabanc. Loamingham was a great centre of cricket, and the Nomads were in a sufficiently flourishing financial condition to run to luxuries like that.

Something had rewarded Grundy & Co's eyes at last. But it was not exactly what the fellows had looked for. Instead of the luxurious motor-coach they had imagined, the vehicle that had at last rolled through the gates was an exceedingly antiquated Ford lorry.

"Can't be them," said Grundy, shaking his head.

"Then who the dickens can it be?" asked Wilkins. "There are a dozen fellows sitting in the back, and they're all in flannels."

"Some other team, perhaps," suggested Gunn.

"But there's no other team due here to-day. It must be the Nomads."

"Well, my hat!"

The juniors were astonished.

"Fancing coming all that distance on a truck like that!" said Lennox wonderingly. "Enough to jolt them to pieces."

All doubts as to the identity of the newcomers vanished when the lorry rolled down the drive leading towards the playing fields, and pulled up near Little Side. There could no longer be any question about it, and Grundy, followed by a greatly surprised crowd of cricketers, went to greet the guests.

"You the Nomads?" called out Grundy.

A cheerful-looking youth with a mop of unruly hair of the variety popularly known as "ginger" jumped off the lorry and nodded.

"Right, first time! You Mister Grundy? I'm the chap you spoke to on the phone the other day. Name of Green." Grundy started as he shook hands with Green.

"But I thought your name was Butters?"

"Not me, old sport! My name's Green. Ask any of the chaps."

"Quite right!" came an endorsement from some of the chaps.

"Ginger' Green!" supplemented one of them.

"Queer! Still, I suppose I was mistaken," said Grundy, looking rather mystified. "Jump down, you fellows, and make yourselves at home. The pavilion's over there."

"Have a comfortable journey?" inquired Tompkins, with another glance at the antiquated Ford lorry.

"What-ho! The Lizzie's all right, once you get used to the bumps."

"My hat!"

The juniors were too polite to make any further comment, but their looks spoke volumes.

"Well, we're all ready to begin, when you are," remarked "Ginger" Green. "This the pitch? My word, you do yourselves proud here, don't you?"

"Hem! Not a bad little pitch. Not quite up to your standard though, is it?" inquired Kerruish.

Kerruish couldn't quite understand why some of the Nomads grinned at that remark, but there was no question about their doing so. One or two even looked at him rather sharply, as if wondering whether Kerruish was pulling their legs.

Probably Kerruish might have found a lot more to puzzle over if there had been time. Further consideration of the problems connected with the Nomads, however, was postponed by the captains tossing for choice of innings.

Grundy won the toss, and elected to bat first, and the Nomads took the field.

It was at that point that Grundy's team struck their first snag.

"I suppose you'll put me in first, Grundy?" queried Gore casually.

"Something wrong with your supposer, then!" was Grundy's unsatisfactory retort. "I bat first, with Kerruish."

The cricketers looked at each other rather meaningfully.

"Now look here, Grundy—" began Tompkins.

"I should have thought—" said Wilkins.

"As your pal—" remarked Gunn, more in sorrow than in anger.

Grundy glared.

"Any objections? Because if there are, I'm quite ready to settle all argument here and now."

And Grundy rolled back his shirtsleeves and eyed his rebellious team inquiringly.

"Well, perhaps after all, it doesn't make much difference," remarked Gore. "Whether he goes in first or last, he'll make the same score."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you cheeky rotter—"

Grundy looked for a moment as if he intended wading in and committing assault and battery on his cynical subordinate then and there. But with an effort, he suppressed that inclination, and sat down to strap on his pads instead. Even Grundy had more sense of the fitness of things than to begin a scrap in front of the Nomads before the game had begun.

"Ready, Kerruish?" asked Grundy, having padded and gloved himself in readiness for the fray.

"Ready for anything, old bean!"

Their appearance on the field was the signal for a cheer from the spectators, who were gathering fast as the news of Grundy's cricket match spread.

"Go it, Grundy!"

"Mind the windows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy's walk changed imperceptibly into a swagger. He waved a lordly hand and smiled a lofty smile. Grundy felt that the hour of his triumph had arrived at last. After all the obscurity he had had to suffer in the past, the applause of a crowd was sweet indeed to Grundy. The thought that the applause might be ironical, did not intrude on the great man's consciousness.

"Don't forget what I told you, Kerruish," he said, as he parted from the Manx junior. "Stonewall for all you're worth, you know. Leave the run-getting to me."

"Rats!" was Kerruish's cheery reply.

Grundy started, wondering whether he had heard aright. But the moment was not opportune for inquiring further into Kerruish's surprising remark, and he had to leave the matter over.

Grundy took his guard, then indulged in a long sweeping survey of the field, apparently with a view to ascertaining the weakest points in the enemy's fielding arrangements. Having satisfied himself, he patted the crease, and at last took up a batting position—or at least, the nearest thing to a batting position that Grundy could manage.

"All serene, Grundy?" asked Hammond of the Shell, who had consented to officiate as umpire.

George Alfred Grundy nodded, and the game began.



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"Play!"

A red-faced youth, whom his colleagues addressed as "Nobby," bowled the first ball of the match. It looked a simple enough ball; in fact it probably was a simple enough ball. Tom Merry or any of the batsmen of the junior eleven would undoubtedly have made very short work of it.

Grundy spread himself out to that very simple ball. Squaring his shoulders, he lifted his bat, and fairly let himself go. Certainly, if Grundy's bat had succeeded in hitting the ball, he would have sent it hurtling away far over the pavilion.

Unfortunately, he did not succeed in hitting the ball. How it was possible to miss it, was a mystery to Kerruish, who watched from his end. But Grundy did it. Grundy did a lot of things that other people found it hard to understand.

In one mighty swipe, that almost overbalanced him, Grundy swung his bat round, and almost simultaneously a slight sound at the back of him told even Grundy that his first innings was over.

Click!

"How's that, umpire?" roared "Nobby."

"Out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy looked down at his wrecked wicket, his rugged face a picture of surprise and dismay.

"M-m-my hat! Look here—"

Hammond jerked his thumb in the direction of the pavilion.

"No time to waste, Grundy. Next man in, you know!"

"Well, of all the flukes—" gasped Grundy disgustedly.

"Fluke he blowed! You were clean bowled, that's what you were!" grinned "Ginger" Green.

"Hurry up, Grundy!"

There was no help for it. Grundy walked off, to the accompaniment of a cheer that Grundy himself suspected now, and the score-board registered only the last round digit of the century that Grundy had fully intended to score.

Lennox, who was next man in, quitted the pavilion and went down to the vacant wicket, while the greatly surprised and perturbed Grundy sat down in a deck-chair and unfastened his pads.

"Do we still stonewall for the remainder of the innings?" asked Gore sarcastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy glared.

"No cheek now, Gore! That was a fluke—the sheerest fluke I've ever seen. Things happen like that in cricket sometimes."

"They do when you play!" grunted Gore.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll see a difference in the second innings, though," growled Grundy. "This innings will soon be over now, I suppose."

"Oh, will it?"

"Bound to be, now that I've had the bad luck to get out," said Grundy confidently. "You'll find it'll be a regular procession. Now, then, Lennox! No blind swiping, there!"

Lennox had just played a careful ball that produced the first run of the match. Grundy's description of his play as "blind swiping" was decidedly wide of the mark—so wide, in fact, that there was quite a chorus of protests from the fellows who were standing near.

"Don't talk rot, Grundy!"

"That was a nice hit!"

"Nice rats!" snorted Grundy. "Talk about something you know a bit about, Jimson—marbles, for instance, or hopscotch!"

Jimson turned pink.

"Well, of all the silly asses—" he began.

"Hold your bat straight, Kerruish!" roared Grundy, loftily ignoring the incensed Jimson.

"Dry up, Grundy!"

Grundy pointed a scornful finger at Kerruish—who was, as a matter of fact, holding his bat perfectly well.

"Ten to one the silly ass will be clean bowled first straight ball he gets— Oh, my hat! There's a fluke!"

Kerruish had stepped out to a safe ball and sent it whizzing to the boundary for 4.

There was a ripple of hand-clapping from the crowd.

"Well hit, Kerruish!"

"Played, sir!"

Grundy, as captain of the team, should, of course, have been pleased. If anything, however, he looked the reverse. It wasn't in Grundy's programme for the rank and file of the team to score boundaries. The rank and file were expected to stonewall, leaving boundaries to Grundy. Grundy being out, their correct course was to abandon hope for the first innings, and get it over as quickly and decently as possible, so that Grundy could have his second chance of

winning the game for them. That was how Grundy felt about it. Possibly Kerruish knew that Grundy felt like that; but if he knew, he didn't care. So little did Kerruish care about Grundy's feelings in the matter, in fact, that he scored a boundary off the very next ball. And there was another cheer from the spectators, and another grunt from Grundy.

Despite the bad beginning on the part of their leader, Grundy's eleven did fairly well. Kerruish was a tower of strength. Lennox was caught out when the score was at 24, and Wilkins, who followed, was stumped after scoring 6; but Kerruish remained, and gave the Nomads plenty of leather-chasing to do.

Gunn distinguished himself by a careful 30, and Gore also reached double figures with 12. Apart from those performances, however, Grundy's merry men did nothing of outstanding merit, and Kerruish was given no chance of reaching his century.

The innings tailed off in a rather disastrous manner, Mulvaney minor, Mellish, and Skimpole succeeding each other rapidly without a run.

Grundy seemed to cheer up a little at that unfortunate finish.

"Told you it would be a procession!" he remarked. "Wait till the second innings, though—"

But Grundy's prognostications concerning the second innings were drowned by a loud chorus from Grundy's listeners.

"Rats!"

The final score was 127, Kerruish having carried his bat through the innings for a masterly 65; and there was a cheer for the Manx junior as he returned to the pavilion.

"And now to get the beggars out in double-quick time!" said Grundy.

But whether Grundy's team were capable of achieving that desirable end remained to be seen.

CHAPTER 13.

Licked!

"THE Nomads? Can't be!"

"Impossible, old bean!"

"What are you giving us, Grundy?"

Quite a crowd of sceptical juniors stood round George Alfred Grundy plying him with questions.

Things were not going too well with Grundy's eleven. The captain-manager of that celebrated team had decided to do a bit of bowling himself. As a result of that decision the Nomads had replied to the St. Jim's total of 127 by scoring 250 for six wickets, the wickets being taken entirely by Wilkins.

Notwithstanding that somewhat unsatisfactory state of affairs, Grundy had returned to the field after the tea interval fully prepared to lick the Nomads to a frazzle.

The great George Alfred started bowling again. And the Nomads started piling up the runs. The visitors were by no means pastmasters of the great summer game; but they found it an easy matter to score runs off Grundy's bowling. The batsmen cheerfully slogged away at every ball that chanced to descend anywhere near them. The score mounted up and up. And the hopes of Grundy's team went down and down.

The captain of the visiting team declared when the score reached 300; and the St. Jim's eleven returned to the pavilion hot and tired beyond description, and with feelings towards Grundy that were almost homicidal.

Whether the play of the Nomads had become more confident as a result of their afternoon's experiences, or whether it was that Grundy had proved too much for his players' nerves, was a moot point. But the second innings of the St. Jim's men at no time reached the standard of their first session's play. One player followed another to the wicket with monotonous regularity, and towards the end it became a regular rout.

Somehow or other, Grundy's men knocked up 40 runs. There the game ended, and the players left the field, the visitors being easy winners by an innings and 133 runs.

Grundy had a thoughtful frown on his face as he bade his guests farewell.

"Well, you've won," he remarked.

"We have that!" grinned "Ginger" Green.

"But I fancy there'll be another story to tell next time," said Grundy. "No doubt you fellows noticed that I wasn't supported as I might have been."

"Um!"

The visitors grinned, but refrained from expressing any opinion on that matter.

"Anyway, you must come again. Enjoyed yourselves?" inquired Grundy, as an afterthought.

Ginger Green nodded.

"Al, thanks very much! And it's been rather a treat for us to win a game, after three years' bad luck."

(Continued on page 28.)

THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF AN AMAZING NEW SERIAL OF ADVENTURE!



The Robot Man!

By H. J. ALLINGHAM

Even as the Conquistadors under the leadership of the immortal Cortes marched forward through the forests and jungles of Mexico in days gone by, fighting terrible perils, overcoming odds with that dogged grit that has pulled so many adventurers through, so does Captain Storm lead his little band of explorers into the mystery of the unknown Amazon!

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Comrades Four!

A NARROW stream, one of the innumerable tributaries of the mighty Amazon, wound its way through a wild, mysterious, and thickly-wooded country.

In a small clearing on the bank of the stream seven figures were gathered—five men and two boys.

They were Europeans, but their faces were so bronzed by the tropic sun that only their features revealed the fact.

They were standing in a close group, and engaged in eager and sometimes excited conversation.

The explanation was that they had just buried their leader; his newly-made grave was only a few paces from where they stood.

"It's not worth arguing about," said one of the men. "It was foolish to come so far; but now Captain Boyd is dead it would be sheer lunacy to go on. We must turn back and think ourselves lucky if we reach the coast without loss of life."

The speaker was a small, wiry, hard-featured man, with a pair of black, piercing eyes under shaggy white eyebrows. His name was Paul Trench.

"I agree, and so does my colleague, Mr. Watkins," said a tall, lean man of thirty-five or so, who had the face of a student. "We joined this expedition for scientific reasons, and although we were willing to do our utmost to further the undertaking we feel we have done enough. It is time to go back."

"That settles it, then," said Trench. "And now to elect a leader in the place of Captain Boyd."

"One minute," said another of the men. "I have a word to say."

Everyone looked at the new speaker. Usually he was a man who spoke little, and his intervention came as a surprise.

He was a man of forty, rather under the middle height, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,116.

but broad-shouldered, muscular, and in the pink of condition. He had a hard-bitten, deeply-lined face, and a square jaw, and a pair of pale blue eyes which somehow suggested the coldness and hardness of steel.

He had served in the British Mercantile Marine, and he held a master's certificate. His name was Captain John Storm.

Paul Trench eyed him superciliously.

"All right, Storm," he said. "Say what you want to say, but cut it short. We don't want to waste time now."

Storm nodded.

"It won't take me long," he said.

"What I want to say is that I am not going to turn back."

"What the—" began Trench; but the other silenced him with a gesture.

"Wait till I have finished, Mr. Trench. You've had your say; now it is my turn. This show of ours is called the Rollins' Relief Expedition. Two years ago Professor Rollins, with a large party, set out to explore the interior. He disappeared; but from native reports there is reason to believe he is still alive, held in captivity."

"We know all that," said Paul Trench impatiently.

"Don't interrupt," replied Storm curtly. "This expedition was formed to search for Professor Rollins, rescue him, and bring him back to the coast. The professor isn't an ordinary man. He is one of the greatest scientific inventors that ever lived. His life is worth more than all our lives put together. The parties who put up the money for this expedition paid us well, and it's up to us to do the job. While Captain Boyd was alive I took my orders from him. Now I take orders from no man. I refuse to return to the coast. I am going on."

"Then you will go alone!" said Trench, with an ugly laugh.

"Not quite!" said a quiet voice; and at the same time a boy of sixteen or seventeen stepped forward and placed himself by the side of Captain Storm.

He was a tall, handsome lad, with curly, brown hair, and a pair of fearless, grey eyes, and his name was Jack Carter.

"I go with Captain Storm," he said simply.

"So do I!" cried another voice, and a younger boy leaped forward.

He was only fifteen, and small for his age, and almost delicate in appearance.

"No, no!" cried Paul Trench, an ugly scowl coming into his face. "Jack can go on if he is fool enough, but you, Master Frobisher, must come back with us to the coast."

Harry Frobisher shook his head.

"No, thanks, Mr. Tench. I stand by Jack and Captain Storm."

Paul Tench seemed greatly disturbed at this as though the boy's decision had upset some secret plan.

He glanced furtively at the man who had been previously spoken of as Mr. Watkins.

The latter shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well," said Tench, again addressing Captain Storm. "Your fate be on your own heads. You and those two boys, Storm, are going to your death, and the responsibility is yours. We will now get a move on. Collect Captain Boyd's personal belongings, Teddy, and make them into as small a bundle as you can."

The final words were addressed to a little man who had not yet spoken.

This was Teddy White, a sharp little Cockney, who had joined the expedition as Captain Boyd's personal servant. He was a good worker but a great gumbler, and all through the trip he had bemoaned his lot and wished he was safely back in his home in King Street, Hammersmith.

"Werry good, Mr. Tench," he said. "But seeing as how we ain't got no leader now, and we being, as you say, equal and free to speak our own minds, might I be allowed to say a foo words?"

"Well?" said Paul Tench impatiently.

Teddy White cleared his throat.

"I wants to say, Cap'n Storm, as how I finks you're werry onwise. There ain't no sense in going on no farther into this 'orrible uncivilised country. If you ain't killed by savages or wild beasts you'll be ate alive by insect's. You're crazy, that's wot you are. Thick-headed, obstinate, stoopid, and a bit off your crummet! Excuse my plain-speaking, cap'n. I speaks as man to man."

"That's all right, Teddy," said Captain Storm, smiling.

"When you get back to the coast—"

"Old 'ard!" interposed Teddy. "I ain't going back to the coast. I'm going to stay wif you."

"What!"

The little man nodded.

"You is a juggins and a mug, Cap'n Storm, and I don't approve of wot you made up your mind ter do. But you're a white man, whereas a party wot I won't mention by name hev got a yellow streak. I sticks by you, and, begging your pardon, cap'n, that's all I've got to say!"

"Good old Teddy!" cried Jack Carter, springing forward and wringing the little man's hand. "I knew you wouldn't be one of the rats to leave the ship."

Teddy White shook his head dolefully.

"D'ye know why the rats leave, Master Carter?" he asked.

"Because they've got a yellow streak."
 "No; because the ship is sinking."
 And Teddy shook his head again solemnly and sighed deeply.

A Mysterious Voice!

THE Rollins' Relief Expedition was now reduced to four members.

They sat on the bank of the darkly flowing stream and considered their position.

The others had gone off on their long journey to the coast taking with them half the stores and ammunition.

Paul Tench had wanted to take the lot, pointing out that all the native carriers had refused to go any farther. Captain Storm, however, had insisted on an equal division. As

he had enforced his argument while toying with a revolver, perhaps it was not surprising that he got his way.

"I wonder why the natives deserted us? They seemed a decent lot," said Jack Carter.

Captain Storm smiled.

"They were afraid," he said. "I know their lingo, and for the last twenty miles they have been getting very nerry. They have a notion that the country just ahead of us is haunted."

"Haunted?" exclaimed both boys with interest.

"Yes. Of course, it is just foolish superstition; but it seems queer tales have come down from the hills lately. During the last three days we have passed through two villages

of native huts. They were both empty and deserted. You noticed that?"

"Yes; I thought the people had hidden in the bush, frightened by our approach."

"No; the villages had been deserted for a long time. The whole country about here is depopulated. The people have fled."

"Why?"

"That is what we have to find out. Something has terrified them. It may be only an idle tale, or it may be some real danger. The same tribe that captured Professor Rollins and who we believe are holding him in captivity may have made war on the surrounding people, and caused a reign of terror. Now, my lads, listen to me. We must keep together, never losing sight of one another, and every man of us must keep a sharp look-out."

"I kin do that, Cap'n," said Teddy. "My eyes are fast rate. I kin see danger a mile off. But when it comes to fighting I ain't proud, and I don't push meself forward. I takes a back seat. Let that be clearly understood. I'm a man of peace, I am. Always was and always will be."

"My plan," went on Captain Storm, "is to make a hiding place for most of our stores in the bush yonder. And then, travelling light with only our rifles and ammunition, we will keep along the bank of this stream till we reach the source. We shall then be up in the hills and can have a look round. If my map is correct there ought to be a big open plain beyond that ridge."

Everyone at once got busy. The stores were buried and the place covered over with brush-wood, and then the party set forth along the stream.

Captain Storm led the way with Teddy White trotting at his heels. The two boys followed close behind.

There were still two hours before sun-down, and the captain had decided they should keep going steadily till then.

It was not easy going. The ground was marshy, and several times they had to make a detour, and cut their way through the bush.

As they advanced, the stream became narrower, and the opposite bank with its thick tropic foliage trailing in the water came nearer and nearer, so that it seemed to the boys that the forest was advancing on them and meant to swallow them up.

"How do you feel, Harry?" said Jack Carter, with a side glance at his chum.

"Topping!" replied the younger boy. "A bit excited, too. I feel as though something is going to happen."

"Not sorry you came with us instead of going back?"

"No fear! I wouldn't be out of this."

"I'm glad too you came with us. I didn't somehow like the idea of you going off with that fellow Tench."

"A queer chap, wasn't he?"

"Very. And yet you spent a good time in his company as we came along."

"Yes, he cottoned on to me somehow," said Harry, with a laugh, "and he was always suggesting some risky stunt. I had one or two near shaves you know, when we went off alone together. But it was great fun."

Jack Carter looked thoughtful.

"Your people are rich, aren't they?" he said suddenly.

Harry laughed again.

"I'm rich," he said. "I haven't any people to speak of. Only an uncle and he's a rotter. I shall come into a fortune when I'm of age."

"Did Paul Tench know that?" asked Jack quietly.

"Oh, yes. He was in my uncle's service, you know. A sort of gamekeeper down in Sussex."

"You don't like your uncle?"

"No, he's a beast. Still it was jolly decent of him to let me come out with this expedition, so I won't run him down. Of course he did not know it would be dangerous."

"I suppose not," said Jack. "All the same, old fellow, I'm jolly glad we've got rid of Paul Tench, and that you won't have any more near shaves in his company."

"Steady! What's that?"

It was the captain who spoke, and the little party came to a sudden halt, and stood listening and looking about them.



CAPTAIN STORM, leader of the intrepid band of adventurers whose exploits are recorded in the topping new serial that starts to-day.



JACK CARTER, another of the band, and a jolly fine chap, too. You'll like him!

The stream was now so narrow that a man might have leaped across it.

The sun had sunk out of sight, but its dying rays gave a warm glow to the sky, and there was still plenty of light to see by.

All was very still. The only sound that came from the surrounding forest was the low hum of insects.

And then suddenly as the four friends stood listening, all their senses alert, there fell upon their startled ears a sound so mysterious and awful that for a moment the blood of everyone of them seemed turned to ice.

It was a low, rumbling moan of enormous volume, and incredibly prolonged.

It seemed to roll through the forest like a wave of sound and then fade away among the hills.

Then it passed and all was once more silent as the grave. Teddy White, who like the others had stood petrified, now gave a squeal like a wounded rabbit, dropped on his knees and began to babble incoherently.

"I want'er go 'ome," he moaned. "I want'er go 'ome. This ain't no place for me. Somefing's going to 'appen. I knowed it, I knowed it. Somefing's going to 'appen and I shan't see 'Ammersmiff no more. Oh!"

Then he began to choke and splutter as he grovelled on the ground in his terror.

"What do you make of it, cap'n?" asked Jack Carter in a low voice.

"Hanged if I know," replied Captain Storm. "But no man or beast made that row. That's one comfort. It is some natural phenomenon. Earthquake rumblings, or something of the sort. If it has happened before I don't wonder the natives were scared. Get up, Teddy, you are not hurt yet, and you are not going to be, I expect, unless the earth gives way under us, and that's not likely."

"And yet it sounded somehow human," said Harry Frobisher thoughtfully.

Captain Storm nodded, and then gave a short laugh.

"Yes, that's what I thought. Reminded me of a man groaning through a megaphone at sea, only this was ten times bigger in volume. But, of course, that is only fancy. There are lots of queer things in Nature which we don't understand. Let us get on. A little higher up we can cross the stream. Then we will climb that hill. Do you see the bare patch just below the summit? We will make for that and camp in the open for the night. I don't know how you feel, but I should like to get out of this forest for a bit."

The others agreed. There was something indescribably gloomy and threatening in the thick forest growth which closed them in on all sides.

Teddy White could scarcely stand, and not until the others threatened to go on without him did he consent to struggle to his feet. And even then Jack and Harry had to support him on either side.

But as they trudged on, and the awful sound was not repeated, the little man's courage and spirits revived.

"You mustn't be frightened, young gents," he said, after a prolonged silence. "The cap'n is right. You'll see a lot o' queer fings, and 'ear a lot o' queer fings, now you are in foreign parts. But you mustn't be scared. That won't do no good. Mark you, it's only natural you should get the wind up when anything uncommon 'appens, you being young, and, as you may say, not yet come to man's estate. But you must fight agin it. When danger comes face it, if so be there ain't no chance of running away."

"You give very good advice, Teddy," said Jack, with a wink at Harry over the little man's head.

"Ah, you come to me when you want advice, Master Jack," said Teddy. "I knows the world. That's where it is. I ain't had much eddication, but I've had a lot of eggspierience. And that's wot counts—eggspierience."

They crossed the stream, and, plunging into the jungle, began to mount the hill, keeping close together.

"You keep close to me, Master Jack, and you, too, Master Harry," said Teddy nervously. "Then you'll be all right. I'd never forgive meself if you was to get lost. And keep a close eye on the cap'n," he added. "Cap'n Storm's a fine man, and we got ter stand by 'im."

At last they emerged from the deadly jungle, with its prickly bushes and tangled vines, and, with a sigh of relief, came out on a kind of rocky plateau cut by Nature on the hillside.

The light was now fading, but even so they found they had a marvellous view of the surrounding country.

Behind them was the dense, impenetrable forest, dark, gloomy, mysterious, but in front of them, and away to the right far below the ledge on which they stood, there stretched a vast, rolling plain, with scarcely a tree to break the monotony of wave upon wave of rank brown grass.

It was vast and majestic, but very desolate.

Captain Storm searched the landscape with his glass, but no living thing could he see, not even a bird upon the wing.

"Queer," he muttered, "with water so near, such a plain should be crawling with animal life. What on earth is the blight that has fallen upon this land?"

But he did not utter these thoughts aloud. When he spoke to his comrades he was cheery enough.

"Not a bad camping-ground," he said. "If there are any enemies ahead, we shall have good notice before they are on us. We will have our rations now, and in the morning we will go hunting, so as to fill our larder. Hallo, Teddy! What have you found?"

Teddy White was dancing about excitedly close up against the rock that rose like a wall at the back of the plateau.

"A 'ouse, cap'n!" he shouted over his shoulder.

"A what?" cried the captain; and he and the two boys rushed over to where Teddy was standing.

When they came up he pointed triumphantly to a small hole, narrow and about four feet high, in the hillside.

Investigation revealed this to be a cave which certainly, perhaps centuries before, had been made by the hand of man. Moreover, there was a hole in the roof which let in the daylight from the inaccessible summit of the hill.

"A good find, Teddy," said Captain Storm. "We will get up our stores here as soon as we can make this our advance post, for the time being, at any rate. Now for supper. All hands to make a fire."

No fire was really necessary, for the night was warm. But Captain Storm was anxious to keep his party in good spirits, and he knew that a blazing wood fire in the open air was the best kind of cheery company.

The fire was built on the plateau just outside the cave, and the four adventurers gathered round it and ate their evening meal.

"What I likes about this is the peacefulness of it all," remarked Teddy White sentimentally. "Adventures is all werry well, fighting is all werry well for them as has a talent for it. Hunting wild beasts and swimming raging torrents likewise is all werry well for the young and active, but give me peace. Here we are, us four, 'appy as sandboys, all alone—"

"White men, begone!"

The words, uttered in a tone of thunder which shook the very heavens, crashed out of the growing darkness and brought the four travellers, with startled cries, to their feet.

The Iron Monster!

"STEADY, lads—steady!"

Captain Storm's quiet voice stiffened the courage of the others just as they felt their reason was tottering, and that they must scream aloud in their terror.

The flames of the wood fire, leaping high, revealed their white faces, and on every face, save the leader's, was depicted wonder and amazement.

Captain Storm looked grim and stern, and there was a dogged set to his square jaw.

"So," he said, after a pause, during which a deathlike silence had once more enveloped the deserted land, "it is men we have to deal with, after all!"

"Don't you think it might be magic, sir?" ventured Harry Frobisher. "The natives told some rum stories as we came along."

"What is magic, my lad? Only the name which ignorant people give to something they cannot understand. That voice is to us a wonder. When we know how it was produced we shall find it is only a trick."

"A trick? Then you think, sir, someone is trying to frighten us?" said Jack Carter.

"Obviously; and he is an Englishman, too, or, at any rate, he knows the English language. You heard the words?"

"'Eard 'em! My word! 'Eard 'em!" exclaimed Teddy White. "Did we 'ear 'em? Oh, no! I don't think!"

"What are you going to do, sir?" inquired Jack Carter, who was a boy who believed in action.

"I am going to find out who is at the back of this tomfoolery, and ask him what he means by it," replied the captain bluntly.

With that he turned his back on the party and entered the cave. When he came out again he was carrying his heavy sporting rifle.

"Now, lads," he said, "go into the cave and get some sleep. I will keep watch out here, and in the morning we will investigate."

"I should like to keep watch with you, sir," said Jack.

"I am not a bit tired."

"So should I, sir!" exclaimed Harry Frobisher eagerly. "I don't want to miss anything."

"You will do as you are told," said Captain Storm coldly. "While I am in command I expect my orders to be obeyed without talk. Good-night!"

Thus rebuked, the two boys, without a word, followed Teddy White into the cave.

The three of them stretched themselves on the ground in the darkness, pretty close to one another.

"What do you think of it?" said Harry Frobisher in a whisper.

For some reason, he did not care to raise his voice. "I've given up thinking," replied Jack. "I'm going to wait and see what happens."

"That wasn't a human voice."

"No."

"But it spoke English."

"Yes."

"Then what—"

"I don't know; and if we talk any more about this thing we shall go off our heads. Go to sleep!"

Teddy White said nothing. He was terribly shaken, and words failed him. His one hope was that he might die in his sleep and not have to worry any more about anything.

It had been a tiring as well as an exciting day, and soon all three were asleep.

They were awakened an hour or two later by a startled shout from outside the cave.

It was the captain's voice, but so marvellously changed that those who heard it were terrified.

Teddy White was spellbound and did not move, but the two boys with one accord leaped to their feet and rushed out of the cave.

The fire had burnt itself out. It was still dark, although the faint glow of coming dawn could be seen in the sky.

Captain Storm was standing with his back to the boys as they came out of the cave.

He was standing perfectly motionless, leaning on his rifle, his head thrust forward, staring out across the great plain which stretched away below them.

"What's the matter, captain? Anything wrong?" asked Jack, striding forward.

He received no answer. The captain did not move, but remained staring fixedly into the gloom.

The two boys followed the direction of his gaze, and then suddenly, with a stifled, half-hysterical cry, Harry Frobisher gripped his chum's arm.

But neither spoke.

For several seconds no one moved. The three of them stood there in a frozen group, like graven images, staring in front of them.

The vast plain stretching away beneath them was lost in the darkness, blending into dark shadows.

And out of those shadows there had just emerged a monstrous shape.

It was formed like a man, but of such prodigious height that its mighty hand over-topped the tallest forest tree.

And yet this incredible thing, which looked like the giant of a fairy tale, or the fantastic creation of a child's nightmare, was alive! It was moving! With a slow and measured tread it was advancing towards them across the level plain.

"Get back into the cave," said Captain Storm, in a low voice that faltered a little in spite of himself.

"And you?" asked Jack.

"I stay here!"

"Then so do I!" said Jack.

"And I," said Harry Frobisher.

Captain Storm made no reply. He scarcely seemed to have heard.

None of them spoke again, and the monstrosity came on. Nearer and nearer it came.

The hill sloped steeply down to the plain.

When the strange and terrible monster was scarcely fifty yards away Captain Storm leaped to the edge of the rocky ledge on which they were standing and shouted a challenge.

"Stand or I fire!" he cried.

There was no answer. Without altering his pace, silent as death, the monster came on.

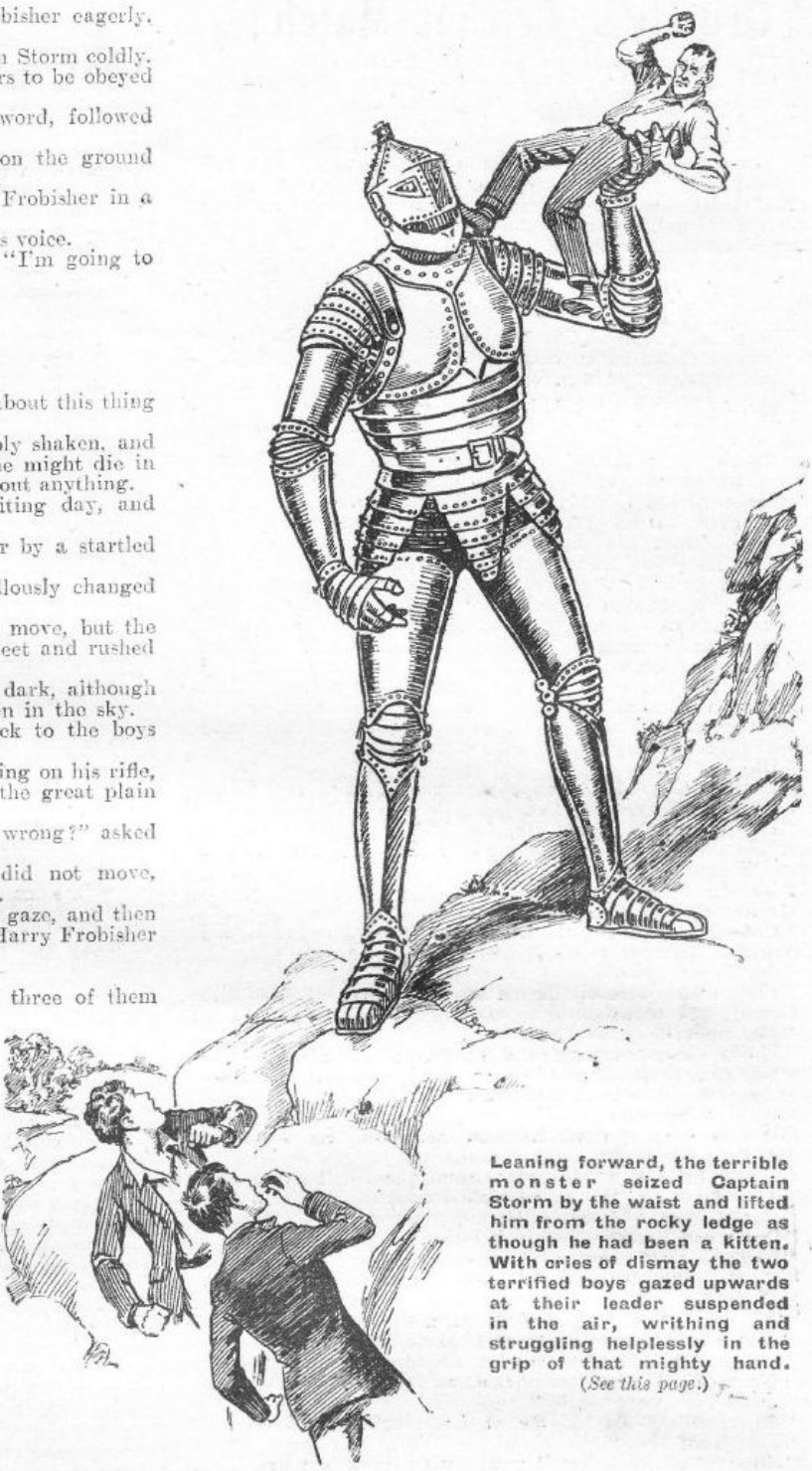
Captain Storm dropped on one knee, took steady aim, and fired.

The bullet struck the mighty body with the sharp, clear, ringing sound of metal against metal, and then flew off.

And the thing came steadily on.

The captain fired again, with the same result, and then the creature was upon them.

It took two enormous strides up the side of the hill, and then, leaning forward, thrust out a great hand, seized the captain by the waist, and lifted him from the rocky ledge as though he had been a kitten.



Leaning forward, the terrible monster seized Captain Storm by the waist and lifted him from the rocky ledge as though he had been a kitten. With cries of dismay the two terrified boys gazed upwards at their leader suspended in the air, writhing and struggling helplessly in the grip of that mighty hand. (See this page.)

With cries of dismay the two terrified boys gazed upwards as the rifle clattered on the rocky ground at their feet.

There, high above their heads, they saw their leader suspended in the air, writhing and struggling helplessly in the grip of that mighty hand.

At the sight of the horror before them young Harry Frobisher's legs collapsed beneath him, and he sank to his knees without knowing it. Both hands were pressed to his mouth to stop himself from screaming.

Upon Jack Carter, the older boy, however, the effect was different.

Fear held him also, but there was something besides fear in those steady grey eyes as he stood perfectly rigid gazing at the marvel and waiting for what was to happen next.

(Here's a sensational beginning to our new serial, but it's nothing compared with what is to come. Not a single GEM reader should miss the continuation of "The Robot Man" in next week's GEM, for it abounds in thrills.)

"Grundy's Cricket Match!"

(Continued from page 23.)

Grundy started.

"But—but I thought you won every match last year?"

"Crikey! You've got it the wrong way round, guv'nor. We haven't won a match for three years, have we, chaps?"

"No fear!" grinned the chaps.

And on that note they rolled away in their decrepit Ford lorry, leaving not only Grundy, but almost everybody else within earshot in a considerably astonished state of mind.

"Here they come!"

There was a rush of feet from all directions as the junior eleven charabanc rolled through the gates that evening.

"Where have you been all this time?"

"Have you found out—"

"Did you know—"

A clamorous crowd surrounded the vehicle as it drew up before the School House steps, eager to hear what the junior eleven would say when they heard how they had been japed.

George Alfred Grundy was well to the fore, wearing a broad grin on his rugged face. By this time he had recovered from his disappointment at not winning the match. That was unfortunate, but as he had explained to numerous callers to Study No. 3, he couldn't very well have won the match entirely without support, and as that support had not been forthcoming, the defeat was, after all, not such a disgrace to himself personally as it might have been. Anyway, his eleven had played the match, and Tom Merry's team had had their journey for nothing. And Grundy had turned up prepared to crow loud and long.

He barged his way to the front of the jostling crowd, and greeted Tom Merry with a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Dear old Grundy," remarked Tom Merry. "Still cheery, I see."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Grundy. "Oh, my hat! Excuse me, but I really can't help it. Ha, ha, ha! Had a nice trip, Merry?"

"Very nice indeed, old bean!"

Grundy choked with laughter.

"Did—did—Oh dear! Ha, ha, ha! Did you get a good game?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"First rate! One of the best games we've ever had!"

Grundy jumped.

"Eh, what?"

"We had a rare struggle; of course, they're rather above our weight, really," said Tom Merry gravely. "But we managed to lick 'em all right in the end."

"What?" hooted Grundy.

"It was a narrow victory; but we won. So that's all right, isn't it?"

Grundy blinked at the captain of the Shell in amazement, and most of the crowd looked equally surprised.

"But—"

"Don't you know—"

"Leg-pulling!" snorted Grundy. "They don't know what's happened here, so they've arranged to pull our legs. That's it!"

"Tell 'em, then," grinned Mellish.

"Just what I'm going to do! Look here, Tom Merry, it's no good pitching us a cock-and-bull yarn about licking the Nomads. As a matter of fact, we've played the Nomads on Little Side here. See?"

"So have we played 'em at Loamingham, old bean," retorted Tom Merry.

"But you couldn't, I tell you! We played 'em here!"

"Sure they were the same Nomads?" asked Jack Blake sweetly.

"Of course they were!" Grundy grinned. "I fixed it all up over the phone, you see. Cancelled the arrangement you made and got them to come here to play us instead. See? Jevver got left? Ha, ha, ha!"

And Grundy went off into a fresh roar.

"Dear old Grundy!" sighed Jack Blake.

"Simple old soul!" grinned Figgins. "Think we'd better tell him, Tommy?"

"Seems a pity to spoil his fond dream, but I think we'd better," answered Tom Merry, and the junior captain of St. Jim's explained the situation to the astonished Grundy.

The juniors looked at each other. And then as the truth dawned on them, and they realised how the "japers" had been japed, a great roar went up.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"

"Spoofer!"

"Dished! Dished completely!"

"Jevver get left, Grundy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors shrieked with merriment. But not all of them shrieked. Grundy's cricketers—Grundy's sporting followers, who had failed to give their leader the support he needed that afternoon—did not join in the general mirth. They looked at each other, then they looked at the transfixed Grundy, then they looked at each other again.

"Japed!" muttered Wilkins.

"Dished!" gulped Gunn. "Dished, diddled, and done!"

"Just as we might have expected," hooted Gore.

"That silly ass—"

"That burbling jabberwock—"

"That born idiot—"

"Scrag him!" roared Tompkins fiercely.

"Slaughter him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy came out of the trance into which Tom Merry's startling news had sent him.

"Look here—"

"Bump the rotter!"

"If you silly asses had only kept mum—"

"Rush him!"

There was a rush.

Grundy met that rush with perfect equanimity, quite prepared to defend himself against the whole school. But his equanimity lasted no longer than a couple of seconds, at the end of which time he was whirled off his feet and soundly bumped.

Grundy's emotions, when he regained a perpendicular position again, were too deep for words. The glorious jape over which he had almost gloated for the best part of a week had reacted on Grundy's own head. He had set out to raise the laugh of the term, and he had raised it; but the laugh was with Tom Merry and his followers, and all against Grundy himself.

Rare, indeed, were the occasions when Grundy felt humiliated. But as he sought the seclusion of Study No. 3, with the laughter of the whole House ringing in his burning ears, all that the great George Alfred asked was to be allowed to hide his diminished head.

Grundy's cricket match provided a subject for mirth at St. Jim's for a good many days. Every incident in that remarkable game on Little Side was recounted, again and again, until the members of Grundy's ill-fated team felt more than sorry that they had ever associated themselves with the sporting aspirations of the great man of the Shell.

Baggy Trimble went about in fear and trembling for a day or so, anticipating every moment that Grundy's heavy hand would fall on him. But the blow never came. So deeply had Grundy been affected that he did not even trouble to inquire how his plans had leaked out, and, in due course, the Falstaff of the Fourth breathed again.

Naturally, it didn't take very long for George Alfred Grundy's customary self-satisfaction to reassert itself. But it was a long, long time before he again dared to mention the word "cricket" at St. Jim's.

THE END.

(Look out for the extra special long story of Tom Merry & Co. in next week's GEM, entitled: "FOR LOVE OF LADY PEGGY!" Make sure you read it, chums. There'll be another dandy FREE picture card in this bumper issue, too!).

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