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The GEM

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EVERY
WEDNESDAY.



"THE ONE-MAN REBELLION!"

Refused to Obey Form Master, Housemaster, Headmaster; Punched a Prefect—

The ONE-MAN REBELLION

A priceless, side-splitting, long complete yarn of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 1.

The Ignorance of Linton!

"GRUNDY!"
No reply.
"G-Grundy!"
Still no reply.

"GRUNDY!"

And still no reply.

Mr. Linton breathed hard.

There was a series of soft chuckles in the Shell Form room at St. Jim's. All eyes turned on George Alfred Grundy.

Grundy did not seem aware of the attention bestowed upon him. Grundy was a fellow who liked the limelight—and plenty of it. Yet he did not seem interested in it now he was getting it. He saw, heard, and heeded not. He sat, wrapped in deep thought, with a far-away expression in his eyes.

"G-R-U-N-D-Y!"

This time Grundy did hear.

Mr. Linton had fairly bellowed his name, and Grundy gave a violent start.

"Oh! Y-yes, sir? Did you call me, sir?" he gasped.

"Of course I called you, Grundy!" snorted Mr. Linton. "You are not paying attention to the lesson, Grundy!"

"Oh, no, sir—I mean, yes, sir!"

"Then tell me who Brutus was, Grundy!" snapped Mr. Linton.

"Captain of the Shell, sir!"

"Wha-what?"

"Oh crumbs! I—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Obviously, Grundy's thoughts were still far away, though Mr. Linton had succeeded in capturing his attention somewhat. And the Shell knew what he was thinking about now. Grundy was an ambitious fellow, and his ambition was to be captain of the Shell. Unfortunately, his abilities were not equal to his ambition—far, far from it. He was, in fact, the duffer of the Shell, both in games and Form work.

Hence the laughter now.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Linton. "This boy's ignorance is no subject for merriment! Grundy!"

"Yes, sir!"

"It is obvious to me that you have not been paying attention to what I have been saying. How dare you make such an utterly absurd answer to my question!"

"I—I didn't quite grasp what you asked, sir," said Grundy sulkily.

"Then I will repeat it, and we shall see if you were listening to my discourse!" snapped the Shell master.

"Who, Grundy, was Brutus?"

"Oh, Brutus!" said GGrundy, and smiled; that was an easy one. "Brutus was King of Scotland, of course, sir!"

Mr. Linton jumped.

"K-King of Scotland!" he gibbered. "You—you say Brutus was King of Scotland, Grundy?"

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By
Martin Clifford

Grundy, the born idiot and prize ass, tries to make the school sit up. But the grand finale comes when Grundy can't sit down!

"Of course, sir—Robert Brutus, you know, King of Scotland!" said Grundy cheerfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" shrieked the justly incensed Mr. Linton. "Grundy! Boy! Do you dare—do you actually and seriously state that—that Brutus was K-K-King of Scotland?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Grundy, staring. "I fancy I'm well up enough in English History to know that, sir!"

"Bless my soul! You—you are utterly obtuse, boy! Are you aware," asked Mr. Linton in grinding accents,

"that we are dealing with Roman History, Grundy?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Then—then how—why—why—" stuttered the master.

"I was wondering that, sir!" said Grundy, with just a hint of sarcasm. "If you'll excuse me mentioning it, you're getting a bit mixed

up, sir!"

"M-mixed up?" gasped Mr. Linton. "I—your Form master—am getting a b-bit mixed—"

"I was going to point out that Brutus, being King of Scotland, came in English History, sir, not Roman," explained Grundy, with kindly frankness. "Robert Brutus—the chap who spent his time watching spiders, you know!"

—and Evaded Arrest! That's Grundy's Little Record for This Week!

The Shell gasped.

They were too scared to laugh now.

Mr. Linton's expression did not encourage laughter or smiles. It was, obviously, no laughing matter to him—and likely to be no laughing matter for the great George Alfred! More than once had Grundy attempted to correct his Form master—with painful results to himself. But this was the limit.

"Grundy!" gasped Mr. Linton at last.

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Grundy cheerfully.

"How dare you insinuate that I, your Form master, cannot differentiate between Roman History and English History! Are you mad, sir, or is this merely impertinence on your part? Answer me, boy!"

"No, sir," answered Grundy, not put out in the slightest. "I'm merely stating a fact. Brutus, being King of Scotland, came in English History, not Roman History."

"Blockhead!"

"Really, sir!" ejaculated Grundy.

"Dolt! Idiot! Brainless buffoon!" hooted Mr. Linton. "How—how dare you attempt to correct me, your Form master!"

"Really, sir, isn't it a fellow's duty—"

"Silence, you insolent and utterly stupid fellow!" shrieked Mr. Linton. "I shall cane you severely—with the utmost severity!"

"Cane m-me?" stuttered Grundy. "When a fellow's in the right! Oh, I say, sir, that's a bit thick—"

"Silence! Upon my word! Stand out before the class, Grundy! Bend over that form!" hissed Mr. Linton.

Grundy looked sulky. He slowly left his place, and then he paused.

"Look here, sir," he said indignantly, "am I to be caned for being in the right?"

"In the—the right?" choked Mr. Linton.

"I'm obliged to obey, sir!" said Grundy warmly. "But I do so under protest. Any ass—I mean any fellow knows that Robert Brutus was King of Scotland—the chap who ran away to watch spiders! If you'll look it up, sir, you'll see that I'm right."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Shell really couldn't help it now. Clearly the great George Alfred was getting sadly mixed between Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, and Marcus Brutus—"the noblest Roman of them all."

"Silence!"

Mr. Linton almost danced with rage; and then quite suddenly he became calm—with a deadly calmness.

"Grundy," he said grimly, "go to your place!"

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

"Silence, boys! The next boy who laughs will be severely caned. We will resume," said Mr. Linton quietly.

Grundy walked back to his place. He was looking more than satisfied, and he gave the grinning fellows a triumphant look.

He sat down and dug Wilkins in the ribs.

"Well, what do you think of that, Wilky?" he whispered "Bit of a climb down, what? That's shown him up, I fancy!"

"Idiot!" breathed Wilkins.

"I knew he'd have to own up he was wrong!" grinned Grundy. "The man's ignorant! It's not the first time I've had to correct—"

"Silence, Grundy!"

Mr. Linton's tone was almost mild—but with a mildness that would have made Grundy wonder had he not been quite so self-satisfied.

Grundy smiled and became silent. He was satisfied. He had shown up Linton, and he did not want to rub it in. Obviously Linton had realised at last that Grundy was right and he was wrong. The man was ignorant; but he was decent enough, at all events, to climb down when proved in the wrong.

Grundy fairly gloated as the lesson proceeded. Mr. Linton during the rest of the morning lessons asked him no more questions. He gave Grundy a grim glance now and again, but that was all.

Grundy grinned at the Terrible Three when the Shell was dismissed.

"Well, what d'you fellows think of Linton now?" he asked. "Bit of a climb down, what?"

"Fathead!" laughed Tom Merry.

"He's all that!" smiled Grundy, mistaking whom Tom referred to. "Fancy a Beak not knowing Brutus was King of Scotland! The man's ignorant! It's not the first time I've caught him out in mistakes!"

"You born idiot!" chuckled Tom. "It's you that's making a mistake, you footling owl! You're mixing Brutus up with Robert Bruce, King of Scotland. Brutus was one of the conspirators who killed Julius Caesar!"

"Rot!"

"Why, you silly owl—"

"Bosh! Utter piffle!" said Grundy scornfully. "Why, you're as ignorant as Linton, Tom Merry!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You're no more fit to be skipper of the Shell than Linton is to be master of the Shell!" said Grundy, with bitter disdain. "Such ignorance!"

"Rats! You silly idiot—"

"I don't want any cheek from an ignorant duffer like you!" said Grundy heatedly. "You all saw what happened. Linton climbed down—he had to. He was going to lick me—me, mind you! But he realised in time that I was right and he was wrong. You saw how he acted—as good as owned up. He left me alone after that!"

"Fed up with you, of course!" chuckled Lowther.

"Or else he's going to report you to the Head!" said Tom Merry, shaking his curly head. "You'd better look out, Grundy! I didn't quite like the look in his optics. He didn't cane you because he's got something else up his giddy sleeve, old man."

"Ass! Blind owl!" said Grundy, getting excited. "No good pretending you didn't see it, Tom Merry! Linton climbed down—everybody knows it! Linton's ignorant—he's not fit to be Form master!"

"Shush!" hissed Lowther.

Mr. Linton swept past, his gown rustling viciously. But he must have heard Grundy's unflattering remarks regarding himself. He paused for a brief second, and then, after a steady glance at George Alfred, he swept on his way again.

Grundy grinned.

"See that?" he remarked. "He heard me; but he knew it was the truth. He's ignorant, but he's honest enough. After this he can't ignore my claim to be moved up into the Fifth! I shall insist upon it, in fact. I've demanded it before, and he's licked me. But—"

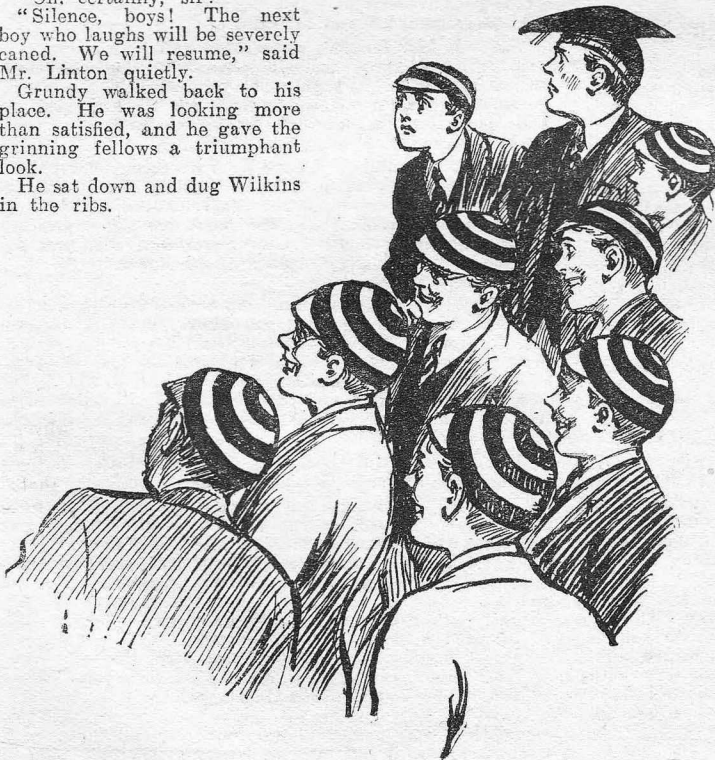
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling idiots!"

"In the Fifth! Oh, my hat!" gurgled Manners. "That's rich! You're more likely to be dropped to the giddy Third, Grundy!"

"Third! It's a home for idiots you ought to be in!" chuckled Lowther. "You're the biggest duffer—"

"That's enough!" bawled Grundy, in sudden rage. "Think I'm standing cheek from a set of ignorant asses like you! Why, I'll—I'll—"



He made a sudden rush at the laughing Terrible Three. Grundy was raging now. After his great victory over Linton in the Form-room, he had expected respect, at least. Instead he was getting cheek! It made Grundy wild, and he proceeded to show the Terrible Three what was "what"!

At least, he tried to. Unfortunately, the Terrible Three did not let him. They grasped him as one man, and Grundy howled as he descended on the passage floor with a resounding bump.

The Terrible Three walked away, laughing. And Grundy sat and gasped and spluttered in breathless wrath.

CHAPTER 2.

Relegated!

"THE Fifth! I shall insist upon it this time," said Grundy.

"But, you utter idiot—" began Wilkins.

"You silly owl—" began Cuthbert Gunn.

"That's enough!" snapped Grundy, glaring at his two staring study-mates. "I shall be in the Fifth soon, I expect, and I tell you I shall stand precious little cheek from you fags then!"

"Us—us fags!" gasped Wilkins.

"Yes, you fags!" said Grundy darkly. "After showing up Linton like I did, the man can't refuse my claim. I shall go to Railton now, and I shall insist upon getting my rights!"

"Your rights! What the dickens are they?" asked Gunn.

"My rights to be moved up into the Fifth!" said Grundy warmly. "As the only fellow in the Shell with any brains—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"The only fellow—not even excepting Linton—with brains!" said Grundy disdainfully. "I should have been moved up on my abilities long ago. It's sheer jealousy that's kept me among a set of hopeless duffers like the Shell. I ought to have been a senior long ago! Linton realises it!"

"Does he?" ejaculated Wilkins.

"Of course he does, George Wilkins. But he won't admit it. That climb down this morning, though, was as near admitting it as anything!" said Grundy, with a grin. "Linton's ignorant. He's a fool, in fact! But he's decent enough; I'll admit that much. I shouldn't be surprised after that showing up this morning if he didn't recommend my move up into the Fifth to Railton!"

"Oh crumbs! But I should!" remarked Gunn, winking at Wilkins.

"So should I—just a trifle!" agreed Wilkins, winking back at Gunn.

"He's realised that it's no good keeping back a fellow like me any longer," explained Grundy. "He'll be only too glad to get rid of me after this—afraid of me showing him up again, you know! I'm a thorn in his side! He'll realise that at any moment I may expose him as the ignorant ass he is—like I did this morning."

"Oh, ye gods! Like he did this morning!" murmured Gunn faintly. "Is the fellow blind as well as potty?"

"Yes, he's blind enough, Gunn!" said Grundy, thinking Gunn referred to Linton. "I don't know about potty, though I suspect it at times. Anyway, I'm finished with him. I shall strike while the iron's hot. I shall go to Railton at once and demand my place in the Fifth. If Linton has been to him about it, all the better, of course."

Wilkins gasped.

"You—you don't really intend to go to Railton and ask that?" he gasped.

"Of course!"

"You—you raving idiot!"

"If you're asking for a thick ear, Wilkins—"

"You're asking for the licking of your silly life if you ask Railton to shove you up in the Fifth!" hooted Wilkins. "You silly, thick-headed dummy, couldn't you see that Linton only left you alone this morning because he's got some other punishment in store for you, Grundy?"

"A licking from the Beak, I bet!" said Gunn.

"Rot! You cheeky young fags—"

"Young fags! Why, you—" gasped Wilkins.

"What else are you?" asked Grundy scornfully. "Cheeky fags! You don't expect a Fifth man to refer to you as equals, what?" Evidently Grundy already imagined himself a Fifth Form man. "We have a short way with fags in the Fifth, I can tell you. I might as well warn you kids now that when I'm in the Fifth— Come in, fathead!"

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Grundy bawled out as a sharp knock came to the door. It opened, and Mr. Linton came in.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Gunn.

But the Master of the Shell did not seem to have noticed Grundy's "fathead"! He eyed Grundy quietly.

"Grundy, you will come with me to the Housemaster's study!" he said.

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

Grundy's voice was quite eager, and he gave his chums a triumphant glance. It almost seemed as if he had anticipated a summons from Mr. Railton.

"Cheerio, kids!" he whispered, as he followed Linton. "I shall come back a Fifth man, I expect!"

And he strode after Mr. Linton.

Tom Merry was chatting in the corridor with several other fellows, and Grundy gave them a patronising nod.

"For it?" asked Tom Merry, as Grundy passed them.

"Don't be an ass, kid! It's Railton—I expect he wants me about my move up into the Fifth!" said Grundy; and he walked on.

"His move up into the Fifth!" chuckled Lowther. "Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's go and see what happens!"

The Shell fellows hurried on after Grundy and Mr. Linton.

The next moment Mr. Linton had disappeared into Mr. Railton's study on Grundy's heels.

The Housemaster gave Grundy a rather grim glance.

"I have sent for you on rather a serious matter, Grundy!" said Mr. Railton.

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Grundy eagerly. "I—I rather expected this, sir!"

"You—you did? Bless my soul!" said Mr. Railton, with a glance at the surprised Mr. Linton. "Doubtless, then, Mr. Linton has already spoken to you of his recommendation, Grundy?"

"Well, not exactly that, sir!" replied George Alfred cheerfully. "But I've more than once urged him to recommend my move up into the Fifth!"

"The—the Fifth!" stuttered the Housemaster. "What ever are you talking about, Grundy?"

"My move up into the Fifth, sir! I suppose that's why you've sent for me, Mr. Railton."

"Bless my soul! No, that is certainly not why I have sent for you, you absurd boy!" snapped Mr. Railton. "I have sent for you in order to tell you of a far different recommendation Mr. Linton has made to me. He has strongly recommended me to remove you from the Shell and place you in the Fourth Form again!"

"Wha-what?"

George Alfred Grundy got the shock of his youthful life. He nearly leaped out of his skin.

"That is Mr. Linton's suggestion, and it is a suggestion with which I agree entirely, Grundy!" said the Housemaster sternly. "Not only are your abilities unsuited to the Shell, but I am inclined to think you the most backward and obtuse boy in the whole Lower School!"

"M-mum-me, sir?" gurgled Grundy.

"Yes, you, Grundy! I have been watching your progress—or, rather, lack of progress—for some time! I have allowed you to remain in the Shell because I have hoped for some improvement as time went on. But you have shown no improvement whatever—no sign that you were capable of retaining your place in the Form."

"Oh! Oh, really, sir—"

"Silence! Mr. Linton has been exceedingly lenient with you—far more lenient than you have deserved!" resumed Mr. Railton grimly. "You are the most troublesome boy in the Form! His patience is exhausted—and so, I may add, is mine! This afternoon you will report to Mr. Lathom as a member of his Form, the Fourth. I will speak to Mr. Lathom and arrange with him for you to change your study and dormitory."

"Good lor! But—but, sir—I mean—look here—"

"Enough!" Mr. Railton raised his hand. "You will report to the master of the Fourth for afternoon classes, and you will remain a member of that Form until you show promise of better things, Grundy. Whether you remain there depends entirely upon yourself, my boy. You may go!"

"But—but, great pip! Look here, sir—"

"Silence! Leave the room, Grundy!"

"But I'm jolly well not— Look here, sir—"

"Go!" thundered Mr. Railton. "How dare you!"

"But, sir—" stammered Grundy wildly.

"Go!"

The Housemaster opened the door, and fairly pushed the astounded Grundy out into the passage. Grundy stood like

one dazed and bewildered—as indeed he was. It had been a terrific shock to him—in fact, he scarcely realised it.

“Hallo, here he is!”

A little crowd of grinning Shell fellows were waiting at the end of the passage.

“Well, was it your move up into the Fifth, Grundy?” asked Lowther curiously.

“Has Railton insisted upon you swopping places with Linton?” asked Manners seriously.

“Oh! Oh crumbs!” Grundy fairly groaned. “It—it’s awful, you fellows! You—you’d scarcely believe it if I told you! I can’t believe it even now, myself!”

“Not recommended you for the Head’s job?” said Lowther, in great surprise.

“Oh! Don’t be an ass! Of course not!” gasped Grundy, gazing at the grinning juniors with lack-lustre eyes. “It—it’s the absolute limit! Railton must be potty! He—he’s actually shoving me out of the Shell and into the Fourth—me, mind you, into the Fourth!”

“Oh, my hat!”

“What d’you fellows think about that?” asked Grundy.

“Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!”

They heard Grundy’s voice, and they heard Railton’s voice—it sent shivers down their spines. And then—they heard a sound resembling the beating of a carpet, and then Grundy’s voice again—raised in wild yells now.

Grundy certainly was making a “row” in a Housemaster’s study!

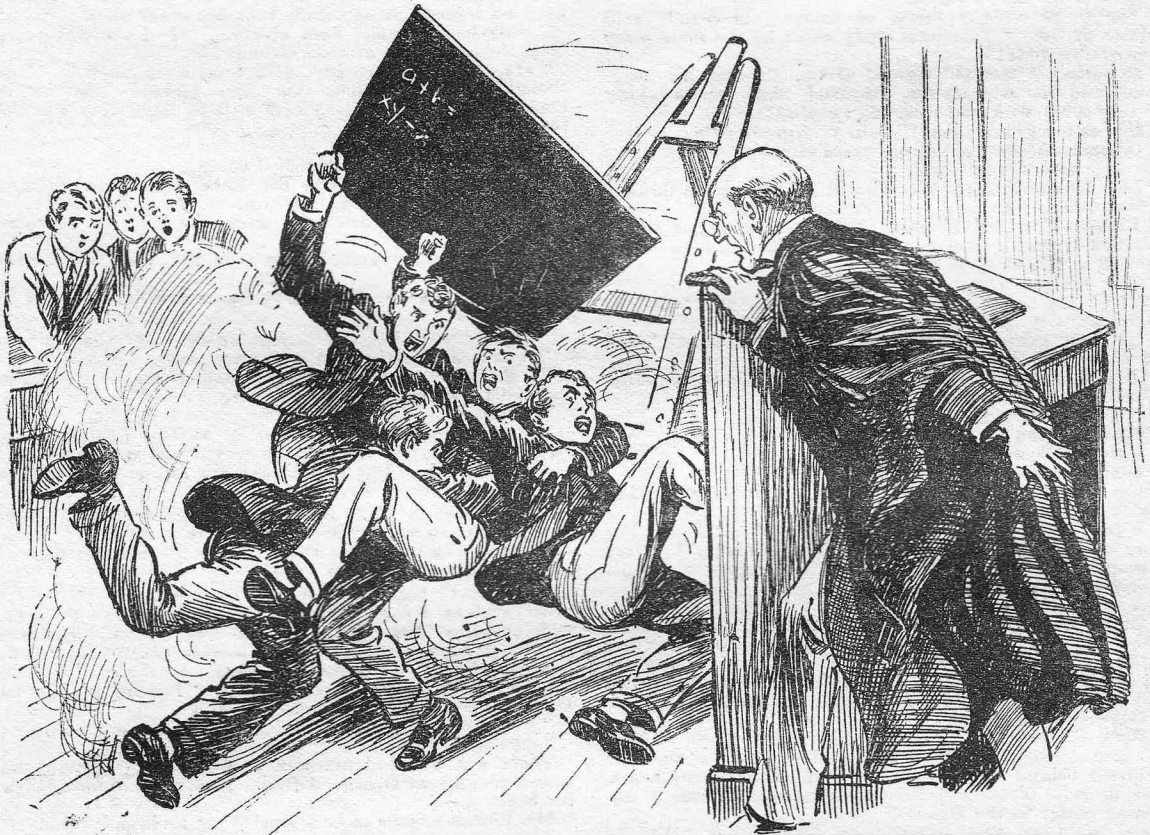
The yelling ceased, likewise the carpet-beating, and then Grundy came bundling out.

Grundy was crawling. On his rugged features was an expression of dire anguish. He seemed to be trying to tie himself into a knot.

“Had it bad?” asked Tom sympathetically.

“Ow, ow, ow!”

Grundy passed on, groaning. Beyond groans he appeared to be past speech or any vocal effort. Grundy had fallen, and, like Lucifer’s, great was his fall. And Tom Merry & Co. forbore to laugh again—until Grundy’s study door had closed behind him, at all events. Then they certainly did laugh. They felt sorry for Grundy in his hour of dire trouble and downfall. But they hadn’t forgotten his swank, his bragging, and his bounce, and they could not help



The struggling quartette crashed into the easel and brought the blackboard hurtling down!

The juniors showed just what they thought—by roaring with laughter.

It was rather heartless, but they could not help it.

Grundy stared at them, helplessly at first, and then, as he began to recover from the terrific shock, with great and growing wrath.

“You cackling rotters!” he hooted. “Is it anything to laugh at?”

“Ha, ha, ha! But is it an actual fact, Grundy?” said Tom Merry, ceasing to laugh with an effort. “You’re relegated to the giddy Fourth?”

“Yes—so Railton says! It—it’s monstrous—unbelievable!” raved Grundy. “It’s a rotten conspiracy! Unheard of! Me—chucked among a crowd of fags like the Fourth! Why, I’ll—I’ll show ‘em!”

The laughing juniors scattered as Grundy made a sudden rush. But he was not rushing at them. He rushed for the Housemaster’s door and actually thumped upon it, and then he barged in, his face red and determined.

“Oh, my hat! Now for it!” gasped Tom Merry. “He’s going to make a row in there—in a Housemaster’s study! Oh, the born idiot!”

The juniors—scared now—waited, listening.

feeling that he deserved it. Most certainly he had asked for it.

CHAPTER 3.

A Matter of Principle!

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY sat, hunched up and looking the picture of deepest dejection, in his easy-chair in Study No. 3.

Wilkins sat on the table and eyed him rather apprehensively, as did Cuthbert Gunn, who was seated on the window-ledge.

The news that Grundy had been relegated to the Fourth had caused quite a sensation. It was a happening almost unprecedented. The fact that it had happened to Grundy, however, was not looked upon as surprising at all. Nor did it meet with general regret—in the Shell. But it met with a great deal of laughter and general hilarity. Grundy’s swank—his loudly announced belief that his abilities entitled him to a place in the Fifth Form—was responsible for that. Even Wilkins and Gunn, his study-mates and

chums, disliked being termed "fags" by Grundy, and—slyly—felt that it served him right.

Yet Wilkins and Gunn did not really know whether to be glad or sorry that Grundy was leaving them. Grundy was leader in the study, and he was inclined to be rather a heavy-handed leader in more ways than one. He ruled with a fist of iron. What Grundy lacked in brain he certainly made up in brawn. And he often used his brawn—otherwise his massive fists—to keep his study-mates in humble submission to his authority. Like Linton and Railton, Wilkins and Gunn wondered now how they could have suffered a fool like Grundy so gladly, as it were. But now he was going. No longer would they be slaves under his autocratic rule.

But there was another side to it. Grundy was a wealthy fellow, and a generous fellow. The great and numerous "spreads" in Study No. 3—famous in the Lower School—were always provided by Grundy. He was as heavy-handed with his generous expenditure as he was with his fists. If they lost Grundy's overbearing ruling, they also lost his magnificent and numerous spreads.

Really it was difficult for Wilkins and Gunn to know whether to be sorry or glad.

"We—we're awfully sorry, of course, old man!" said Wilkins at last. "This—this study won't be the same place when you're gone!"

"It certainly won't!" agreed Gunn, shaking his head. "And—and that reminds me, old man! Shall you be taking the easy-chair with you into the Fourth?"

"Or—or the gramophone?" said Wilkins eagerly.

"Or your wireless, old chap?" said Gunn anxiously.

Grundy looked up at that.

"Eh? Of course not! Why should I?" he snorted thickly.

"Oh, well—we thought—" began Gunn lamely.

"Thought!" sniffed Grundy. "Who asked you to think, Cuthbert Gunn? You can leave all the thinking that's required in this study to me. See?"

"Oh! Oh, yes, old chap!"

"Of all the nerve!" went on Grundy, staring. "Do you fellows actually think I'm ass enough to go?"

"Go? Of course you're going!" said Wilkins. "You told us what Railton said—"

"And does that mean that I'm going?" hooted Grundy.

"Don't talk like an idiot, George Wilkins!"

"But—but Railton—"

"Blow Railton!"

"But the Head—"

"Blow the Head!"

"Grundy, old man," pleaded Gunn, "you're not going to kick up a silly fuss—"

"I jolly well am!" said Grundy warmly. "Think I'm going among a swarm of fags? Not likely! I've my position in the House to think of! I shall refuse to submit, naturally!"

"You'll refuse? Oh, great pip!"

"Of course! I refuse on principle!" said Grundy resolutely. "I was fairly floored, I can tell you, when Railton told me. But, now I've had time to consider it, I can see that it's impossible—quite! I've my dignity and position to think of. I'm not going! That's flat and final!"

"But—but Railton—"

"Blow Railton! It's a dashed conspiracy—that's what it is!" said Grundy heavily, and with great indignation. "Linton's behind it, of course—perhaps Tom Merry has a hand in it! They're jealous—jealous and afraid of my growing power in the House!"

"Oh, my hat! You awful chump—"

"I want no cheek, George Wilkins!" said Grundy warningly.

"But you'll be begging for the sack if you kick!" said Gunn.

"Rot!"

"A junior can't kick against a Housemaster's orders, Grundy," said Wilkins. "Be sensible, old fellow, and take it quietly."

"Piffle! Not likely! This," said Grundy bitterly, "comes of being kind to Linton—pointing out where the ignorant duffer was wrong. Just because I proved him wrong over that question of Brutus, you know. Why, a fag in the Third ought to have known better! I must say I'm simply disgusted with Linton. The man's dishonest as well as ignorant!"

"Grundy, you silly—"

"But I'll show him—Railton, too!" said Grundy, jumping up. "I'm not the fellow to submit to injustice tamely—no fear! I shall defy the lot of them! Justice is bound to win! It's a try-on—nothing else! If a fellow holds out they'll cave in! Was that the bell, Wilkins?"

"Yes. But, look here, Grundy—"

"Rot! Come along! I'll show the lot of 'em!"

"Grundy, old man—"

"Grundy, old fellow—"

"Come on!" roared Grundy. "I'm going to defy Railton—to hurl a challenge into his teeth! I've justice on my side!"

Grundy dragged the door open and strode out. Wilkins and Gunn went after him, giving each other a hopeless glance. They saw the "high jump" looming ahead for the great George Alfred. Useless to argue with him, however—in fact, Grundy rarely gave anyone the chance to argue. They could only hope for the best.

The passage was full of Shell fellows just making for the Form-room. Grundy elbowed his way through them in the majestic, lofty way he had.

"Hallo, here's Grundy of the Fourth!" called Lowther.

"Make way, you men, for this Fourth Form kid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy ignored the frivolous remarks, and strode on. The fellows stared as he flung open the door of the Shell room and marched in, however.

Wilkins and Gunn groaned. Their worst fears were realised. Grundy actually meant business!

The Shell Form room rapidly filled, and all eyes were fixed on Grundy as he calmly took his usual place.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I—I thought you'd been shoved in the Fourth, Grundy?"

"Ha, ha!" said Grundy, with a sardonic laugh. "You thought that, and hoped that, Tom Merry! But you're booked for a surprise! You're still to learn that I'm not the sort of fellow—"

"Grundy!"

It was Mr. Linton's astonished voice.

Mr. Linton had reached his desk before he sighted Grundy. But he sighted him now.

"Grundy, what are you doing here?" he went on severely.

"I've taken my rightful place in the Shell, sir!" said Grundy.

"What—what— Grundy, you were ordered to report to Mr. Lathom."

"Exactly, sir. But there's nothing doing!"

"Wha-what? Are you out of your senses, Grundy?"

"I should be if I obeyed, sir!" said Grundy. "But I'm not the fellow to submit to injustice."

"Grundy!"

"I mean no disrespect to you, or to Mr. Railton," said Grundy kindly. "I suppose you mean well, in a way—well for you, that is! But it isn't well for me, and I refuse to submit! That's all, sir!"

"That—that is all!" stuttered Mr. Linton, flushing red with sudden wrath. "Are—are you mad, Grundy? How dare you speak to me like that! Leave this room at once!"

"I'm sorry, sir—"

"At once!" hooted the master of the Shell. "In the circumstances, I shall not punish you for this—this astounding insolence. But I order you to report to Mr. Lathom, your new Form master, without further delay. Go! You are no longer a member of my Form. Go!"

"No fear!" said Grundy doggedly. "I've my position to think of, sir, and I must refuse!"

"You—you refuse?"

"Just that, sir!"

There was a scared murmur in the Shell. The fellows stared blankly at George Alfred. This was the limit, even for him.

Mr. Linton seemed to be trying to get his breath back.

"You—you refuse? Bless my soul! Boy! How dare you! Leave the room this very moment, sir!"

"I jolly well won't, sir!" snapped Grundy, and he sat down in his place again.

"Good heavens! The—the insubordinate boy!" gasped Mr. Linton. "Merry, you—you will escort Grundy to the Fourth Form class-room at once! Talbot and Lowther, you will aid Merry and see that Grundy does not escape you!"

"Very good, sir!"

The trio left their seats and approached Grundy. That youth set his teeth and clenched his big fists as he stood up. Obviously, there was going to be trouble for someone.

"Come along, Grundy, old man," said Tom Merry. "No good kicking, old chap!"

But the soft remark failed to turn away Grundy's wrath. As Tom laid a kindly but firm hand on his shoulder George Alfred promptly hit him on the nose.

"Yarooop!" roared Tom. "Why, you—you—"

"Hands off!" bellowed Grundy. "You jolly well dare—Leggo!"

But Tom Merry did not let go. He had been prepared to be kind to Grundy, but he was not so now. He grabbed Grundy, and Talbot and Lowther grabbed him also.

They hauled him out from the desks, struggling furiously and bellowing ferociously.

"G-good heavens!" gasped the scandalised Mr. Linton.

"Be-be careful, boys! Grundy-Grundy— Good heavens!"

Crash! Bang! Bump!

In stupefied horror the master of the Shell stared at Grundy, fighting furiously and bellowing at the top of his voice, crashed to the floor, with Tom Merry, Lowther, and Talbot on top of him.

CHAPTER 4.

Grundy of the Fourth!

BANG! Crash! Thump!

"Yooop! Oh crikey! Yow-ow!"
 "Leggo, you cads!" Grundy was roaring at the top of his voice. "Yow! I'll smash you, Tom Merry! Ow-ow! I'll show the lot of you! Yow-ow!"

"Good heavens!" gurgled Mr. Linton.

He gazed on helplessly.

The Shell had been scared at first. But they were all on their feet now, wildly excited as they watched that titanic scrap on the Form-room floor.

In the ordinary way Tom Merry might have handled Grundy alone, terrific fighting man though he was. Talbot also was a hefty fellow, quite equal to handling George Alfred. But the sense of injustice gave Grundy added strength; indignation and anger roused him to a pitch of fury and ferocious determination.

Tom Merry, Talbot, and Lowther had their hands full.

Bang! Crash! Thump!

The struggling quartette crashed into the easel and brought the blackboard hurtling down. There was a terrific howl from Grundy, and another howl from Talbot, as the blackboard caught them both resounding cracks as it fell.

"G-good heavens!"

gaspd Mr. Linton.

"Grundy—boy—desist!

How—how dare you!

Desist, I say! Good-

ness gracious me!"

Grundy did not

heed, if he heard.

The battle went on

with renewed violence

among the dust of the

floor. But numbers

were telling. Slowly

but surely Grundy was

dragged, still resisting

furiously, towards the

door.

Glyn jumped up and

opened it wide.

"Bless my soul!

This—this is too

much!" gasped Mr.

Linton, in fluttering

indecision. "Glyn, I

—I think you had

better help them. That

wretched boy must be

forced into obedience."

Glyn piled in quite

joyfully. In the door-

way Grundy made a

last desperate stand,

and for a brief few

seconds he fairly held

his own. But suddenly

his grip of the door-

post broke away, and

he went out into the

passage with a rush,

and all five went down with a crash.

"He's out!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The fellows started to leave their places, anxious not

to lose a glimpse of the entertainment Grundy was so kindly

providing them. But Mr. Linton's voice brought them up

short.

"Boys, keep your seats!" he shrieked. "Good heavens!

Any boy who is not seated in one second will be severely

caned!"

The Form master rushed to the door and closed it. Possibly

he feared Grundy might fight his way back. The Shell,

greatly disappointed, gazed excitedly at the closed door,

behind which came the sounds of battle.

Grundy, in fact, was still going strong—as strong as ever.

But it was four to one now, and Tom Merry, Lowther, Glyn

and Talbot, at least, were getting fed-up with Grundy.

"Over with him!" panted Tom Merry, whose nose was

streaming red. "Frogs-march the silly owl! That's right!"

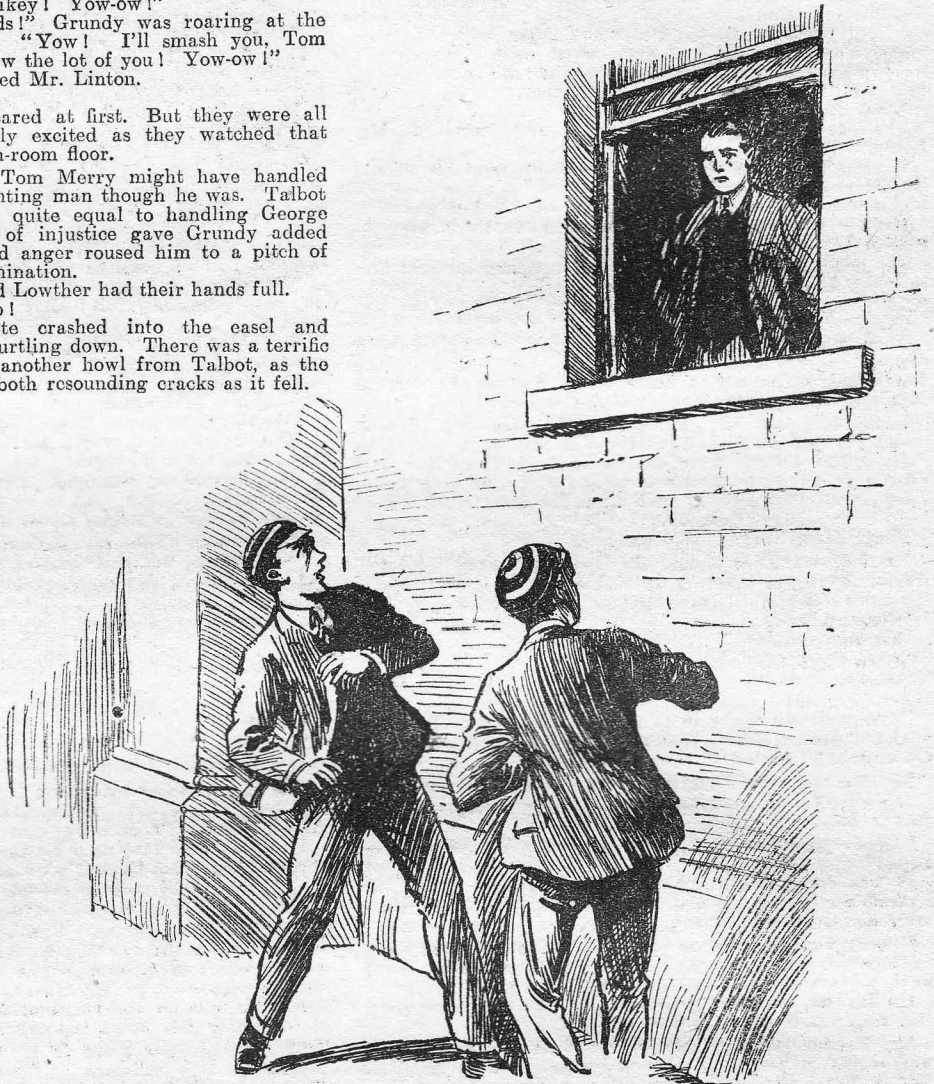
Bump!

"Yooooop!"

Grundy fairly whirled over in the grasp of the four. He howled as he thumped to the floor. Tom grasped one arm, and Lowther grasped another. Talbot grasped one leg, and Bernard Glyn grasped another. Grundy, struggling furiously but in vain, was raised from the ground and rushed face downwards along the passage.

Bump, bump, bump!

His struggles caused him to bump his forehead, and various other parts of his anatomy, with almost every step. And as he bumped he howled fiendishly.



Knox and Sefton wheeled round and looked upwards quickly. Mr. Railton stood in the window of his study. He had overheard every word!

But it was not a long way to the Fourth Form-room—fortunately for Grundy.

In the Fourth Form room there was not a little surprise and curiosity. From afar they had heard sounds of battle. The battle sounds drew nearer at last, and then came Grundy's bellowing, and then a sudden bang on the Form-room door.

It was Grundy's head striking it. Grundy himself was, as it were, knocking for admittance, though unwillingly.

"What—what— Good gracious!" exclaimed little Mr. Lathom, quite startled. "What—what ever can that be, boys?"

"It's an animal, sir, I think!" volunteered Cardew, who had easily recognised Grundy's voice. "A donkey, I fancy! Hallo, here it is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door opened, and Tom Merry & Co., gasping and

panting with their titanic exertions, rushed George Alfred in, and a howl of laughter went up.

"Silence!" shrieked Mr. Lathom. "G-good heavens! Grundy—boys! What ever does this mean?"

"Only Grundy, sir!" explained Tom Merry, panting breathlessly. "Mr. Linton sent him along—here he is, sir!"

"But—but— Good gracious! Boys, release Grundy this instant!" gasped Mr. Lathom.

"Certainly, sir!"
Tom Merry and his helpers obeyed promptly.
Bump!

"Yaroooooop!"
Up till then Grundy had had visible means of support—Tom Merry, Lowther, Talbot, and Glyn, by holding him up, had provided that. But when they obeyed Lathom and released him, he had none, as it were. He gave a terrific howl as he plunged downwards, his nose coming into violent contact with the dusty floor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Silence!" gasped the agitated and horrified Mr. Lathom. "Boys—Grundy! Good heavens!"

Grundy was going it again. Tom Merry and his helpers had started to walk out, believing their job was finished, and rather glad to think it was finished. But it wasn't. Grundy had leaped up and rushed after them, on vengeance bent.

He grabbed Tom Merry round the neck and brought him crashing down.

"I'll show you!" bawled Grundy.

Crash!

They were all five on the floor again, struggling with renewed energy and determination. Over and over the five rolled, mixed up in fierce battle, raising the dust in clouds as they punched and rolled and kicked.

Little Mr. Lathom, agitated and astounded, danced round the melee like a fluttering hen, raising his voice in vain. The Fourth were all on their feet, excited and greatly entertained. This was much better than geography. They hoped that Grundy and his fellow-entertainers could keep it up all the afternoon.

Bang, bang, bang!

"Bai Jove! That sounds like Gwunday's head!" gasped Arthur Augustus, standing up in his seat. "If this is how Gwunday's celebwatn' his entrance into the Fourth—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Gwunday!"

"Give those Shell fish socks, Grundy!"

"Silence!" shrieked Mr. Lathom wildly. "This—this— Good heavens! Boys—Grundy—Merry—cease—stop!"

"I suppose we ought to pile in to help Grundy," gasped Blake. "He's a Fourth man now, you know! Shall we— Oh crumbs! Railton!"

Mr. Railton came hurrying through the open doorway.

He almost fell down as he sighted the struggling mass on the floor.

"Good—good heavens! Mr. Lathom! What—what— Boys!"

It was enough. All the agitated, fluttering, timid Mr. Lathom's implorings and orders had failed. But Mr. Railton's one word was enough.

Grundy would have gone on. But he found himself alone as Tom Merry, Lowther, Talbot, and Glyn sprang away as they heard the Housemaster's angry voice.

He lay on the floor, gasping and panting desperately. But he scrambled to his feet at last.

Mr. Railton looked at him—they all looked at him. He was worth looking at. He was covered from head to foot in dust. His jacket was ripped up the back and down the front. His collar and tie were adrift and like rags. His rusty, heated features were streaked with crimson, and one eye seemed to have shifted its position, likewise his swollen nose.

Tom Merry & Co. looked bad enough, but George Alfred had fought not wisely, but too well. He looked a wreck.

"Grundy!" gasped Mr. Railton. "What—what does this mean?"

"Ow, ow, ow! Yow-ow! Grooogh!" gurgled Grundy.

"Merry!"

The Housemaster turned to Tom.

The leader of the Shell gasped.

"Mr.—Mr. Linton ordered us to bring Grundy here!" he fairly stuttered.

"To—to bring Grundy here!" exclaimed Mr. Railton, staring. "Am I to understand that Grundy reported to Mr. Linton, his old Form master?"

"Y-yes, sir!"

"And refused to come here himself?" stuttered Mr. Railton.

"Ahem!" Tom coughed.

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He still felt sorry for Grundy, despite the ache in his nose and a rapidly swelling eye.

But, really, the Housemaster had no need to ask that question. The answer was obvious.

"Grundy!" gasped Mr. Railton. "Wretched boy! What does this extraordinary and rebellious conduct mean?"

Grundy gasped for breath.

"It—it jolly well means," he panted breathlessly, "that I'm jolly well not going into the Fourth!"

"What!"

"Think I'm going among a swarm of fags?" hooted Grundy, glaring at the grinning Fourth-Formers. "Think I'm going to be humiliated like that—me? Not likely!"

"G-Grundy!" gasped Mr. Railton. "How dare you!"

"I won't submit to such injustice!" gasped Grundy desperately. "I'm the victim of a rotten conspiracy. I'm a fellow of spirit! I refuse to be crushed like a worm!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured Gussy. "Poor old Gwunday!"

Mr. Railton blinked at him. Grundy looked a hapless object, and doubtless the Housemaster felt sorry for him. But discipline had to be maintained.

"Grundy," he said quietly, "I regret that I have found it necessary to place you back again in the Fourth. But it was necessary, and you must submit to authority, my boy. In the circumstances I will not punish you for this disgraceful outbreak. Take your place in the Fourth Form without further nonsense—at once!"

"I'm sorry, sir!" panted Grundy. "I mean no disrespect to you, personally, sir! But I'm going back into the Shell!"

And Grundy started doggedly for the door, and there was a gasp.

Mr. Railton hooked a swift hand in Grundy's collar and yanked him back again.

"Grundy—foolish boy!" he gasped. "Will you obey—"

"No, I jolly well won't, sir! Leggo!" roared Grundy, and he started to struggle.

That was more than enough for the Housemaster. His brow darkened, and with one twist of his powerful wrist he twisted George Alfred across Mr. Lathom's chair.

"Your cane, please, Mr. Lathom!" he snapped.

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir!" gasped Mr. Lathom.

In his distress and agitation kindly Mr. Lathom grabbed first a pen and then an inkpot before he seemed to grasp that a cane was wanted. But the Housemaster got the cane.

"Now, Grundy! For the last time, will you obey me?"

"No, I jolly well won't!" bawled Grundy, wriggling desperately. "Leggo, or—"

Whack!

"Yoooooop!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

The Housemaster was going it strong now. Mr. Railton had been exceedingly patient with the headstrong George Alfred, but his patience was quite exhausted now.

He laid on the cane as if he was determined to beat every scrap of dust from Grundy's trousers.

Grundy roared and bellowed and wriggled. But the Housemaster's grip was like iron.

It was a record licking. Grundy's struggles grew less, but his howls grew more as Mr. Railton laid it on. The fellows looked on, scared, and not a little sorry for Grundy. George Alfred was paying a heavy price for his insubordination. He was on the verge of weeping when at last the Housemaster laid down the cane.

"Now take your place in the Fourth Form, Grundy!" gasped the Housemaster.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Mr. Lathom pointed to a vacant seat. Grundy tottered towards it. He crawled dizzily and somewhat painfully. He was, obviously, crushed and subdued—for the time being, at all events. He sat down on the form, and then he leaped up again with a strangled yelp. Evidently he found sitting down painful.

"You may stand until you have recovered, Grundy!" said Mr. Railton grimly. "Mr. Lathom!"

"Y-yes, sir!"

"If you have any further trouble with Grundy, send for me at once and I will repeat the dose!"

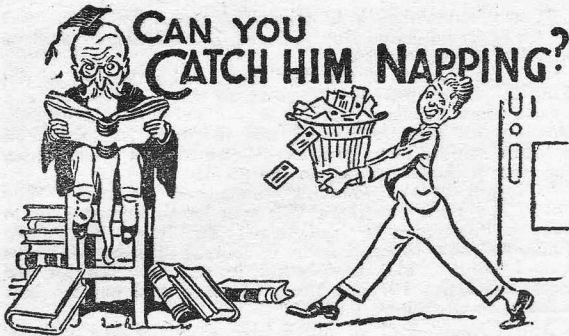
"Oh! Ah! Very good, Mr. Railton!"

Kindly Mr. Lathom hoped very much that it would not be necessary to send for Mr. Railton to repeat the "dose"!

Nor was it!

Mr. Railton departed, ordering Tom Merry, Lowther, Talbot, and Glyn to clean themselves and return to their Form-room. The Fourth settled down to lessons. Grundy sat down at length, wriggling and groaning. But there was no more insubordination. Grundy was subdued. That

(Continued on page 10.)



Look here, chums, it's up to one of you to beat the Oracle. He's now suggested that I should give him a shilling for every question he gets right!—Ed.

I GOT to the office a bit late the other morning, and seeing that a lift was about to ascend, I rushed into it.

"Good-afternoon, whiskers!" said a voice, and looking up I saw that the other occupant was the Editor!

"Good-morning, sir!" I replied. "I'm sorry I'm late!"

"What's your reason?" asked the Editor.

"Well, you see, sir," I explained, "when I arrived at the Underground this morning I found a train was about to leave, so I ran for it, and the guard shut the door in my face—and caught my whiskers. And that—er—delayed me."

"That's a good one!" said the Editor.

I don't know what he meant, because I didn't think it was at all good—it hurt a lot! Anyway, he seized me and marched me into the sanctum and started firing off questions at me without even giving me time to take my coat off.

"John Walters, of Bowes Park, wants us to tell him, if we can, whether the game of rounders is the same as baseball?"

"No, sir, though it resembles baseball in some ways. A game called baseball-rounders, which is practically the same as baseball, was invented in 1889. In America matches between organised baseball clubs were first played in New York in 1843. In baseball there are two sides of nine men each. Each side has nine turns, or innings, at bat. In play, the fielding side is made up of the pitcher and catcher, the first-baseman, second-baseman, third baseman, and short-stop, and the left-fielder, centre-fielder, and right-fielder. The most important man in the side is the pitcher, who throws the ball to the batsman. Batting, in baseball, is a science in itself, and a good batsman can place the ball in any part of the field he chooses by meeting it at different angles."

"That's excellent. I didn't know you knew so much about it. Fred Blake, a Brondesbury 'Gemite,' would like us to tell him who the Fenians were."

"The Fenians were an Irish-American secret society, founded in America by a man named John O'Mahony in 1858."

"And can you tell the same inquirer where Inisfail is?"

"Inisfail, sir, is a poetical name for Ireland. It means the island of the stone."

"What is hydrophobia?"

"Hydrophobia means dread of water. It is a symptom of rabies, a disease that often attacks dogs."

"Walter Withy, of Stoko Newington, wants to be told what a coronach is."

heat, and the thievish character of the wild tribes that live round it, it has very seldom been navigated."

"What is cretonne?"

"The word cretonne, sir, is now applied to a strong, printed cotton cloth, used very much for the same purposes as chintz. The name is said to come from Creton, a village in France, where the manufacture of linen was carried on at one time."

"How does the dahlia get its name?"

"The dahlia is named after Dr. Dahl, sir, who was at one time a famous botanist."

"Can you tell Fred Hawkes, of Wendover, anything about the sport of ice-yachting?"

"Yes, sir, I can. A modern ice-yacht is made of a single-piece backbone which runs the entire length of the boat, and a runner-plank upon which it rests at right angles, the two forming a kite-shaped frame. An ice-yacht forty feet in length will carry six or seven passengers, and the record speed for a mile, given a flying start, is seventy-two miles per hour. In a high wind an ice-yacht will touch ninety miles an hour. The curious thing about an ice-yacht is that it travels faster than the wind. In America they have a kind of toboggan with a sail, which is known as a scooter. It is usually fifteen feet long, with an extreme beam of five feet, perfectly oval in form and flat. It has mainsail and jib, carried on a ten-foot mast set well aft, and is fitted with two parallel metal runners. These scooters are steered by trimming the sails, and will touch a speed of fifty miles per hour quite easily. They are quite buoyant in the water, and so are safe enough if the ice breaks."

"I see," said the Ed.

"It would be, sir," said I.

"What d'you mean by that, whiskers?" he demanded sternly.

"I mean, sir, it would be icy if you fell in."

"Can you tell me what an ichneumon is?" rapped out the Editor.

"Yes, sir. It's a weasel-shaped animal found in North Africa. In India the same kind of animal is called a mongoose. In India it serves a useful purpose, being very efficient at killing snakes. This it does by fixing the old snake in the back of the neck with its sharp teeth and shaking it as a terrier shakes a rat. The snake doesn't stand much chance, believe me."

"Tell George Hyland what a beacon is."

"A fire lit on a high hill, sir. Also, the word is used for any unlighted structure, like a staff and cage, or staff and globe, fixed on to a floating buoy."

"The name, sir, given in the Highlands of Scotland to the lamentations round the dead."

"Can you tell W. Keating, of Clapham, something about the Dead Sea?"

"Yes, sir. The Dead Sea is a lake of Palestine, forty-seven miles long and nine miles wide. It hasn't any fish in it, and it is extremely salt. It lies in the Jordan Valley, and, owing to the intense

"What is a cordon?"

"A cordon, sir, is the name for a sash or ribbon worn by members of an order of knighthood. The word is also used for a line of soldiers or police encircling a certain district."

"Now, whiskers," said the Ed., "I've a query from a reader in Camberwell. He wants to know what a dhole is?"

I grinned. Yes, actually grinned, chums, at the simplicity of that question! "A dhole? It's something somebody draws, sir," said I.

"Draw me one, then," said the Ed. "Draw me a dhole. D-H-O-L-E."

Of course, I was a bit flabbergasted at that, because I'd never drawn the dhole with an H in it in my life, so I looked hard at the carpet, then I said:

"A dhole, sir, is a dog. It is sometimes called the 'Red Dog' of India. In colour it's reddy-brown; it's a bit bigger than a jackal, and hunts in packs." That being all I knew about it, I shut up, and twiddled my whiskers into knots, being all of a doodah, as you might say. Seeing the old Ed. was busy poring over the correspondence, I took advantage of the opportunity to have a dekho at the spiffing serial in the jolly old Gem. Then the Editor looked up, and roared out:

"Now, then, whiskers—a Pevnsey reader wants to know what dry-ice is?"

"That's a nice, icy one—I mean, a nice easy one, sir!" said I. "Dry-ice is the trade-name for solid carbon dioxide. It is made by freezing the gas which, when heated, evaporates instead of melting. Dry-ice is used a great deal in refrigerators for preserving perishable goods, and it is reckoned that one pound of dry-ice is as effective as twenty pounds of water-ice. It can be sawn up in just the same way, too."

"That's excellent; I was afraid, p'raps, it couldn't be," said the Editor, looking facetious. "Now, my lad, just tell George Wiltshire, of East Ham, what a decoy is?"

"Yes, sir. A decoy, or decoy-duck, is a contrivance used in the capture of wild fowl. This is the way they are made: Long tunnels leading from the sea or estuary into some pond are covered with an arched net. This net gradually gets narrower and narrower, as it goes along. The birds are enticed into this net by a tame, trained bird put at the entrance. Sometimes an artificial bird is used. You get the idea, sir?"

"Yes, thank you," said the old Ed., "I get the idea. And if you don't answer up a bit quicker, you'll get the sack! What is the Fata Morgana?"

"A mirage, sir, seen in the Straits of Messina. Objects on the opposite shore appear suspended in the air."

"Will you explain what a mirage is, exactly?"

"Yes, sir. A mirage is an optical illusion, due to progressive variations in the refractive indices of adjacent layers of the atmosphere."

"Well, whiskers," said the old Ed. admiringly, "you really seem to get cleverer and cleverer. I must think out some brain tests for you. But that's no excuse for your head swelling to such a size that it won't go through the doors of the Underground trains. Good-morning!"

D'you know, I don't think he really believed what I told him when he asked why I was late!

THE ONE-MAN REBELLION!

(Continued from page 8.)

terrific licking had been enough, and he did not, apparently, want another "dose." Grundy was now a member of the Fourth, and safely in the Fourth. And though Mr. Lathom did not trouble him with lessons, Grundy was still there when afternoon classes were dismissed at last.

CHAPTER 5.

Grundy Aspires!

"CAPTAIN of the Fourth! My hat! That's it!" Grundy's deeply frowning brow suddenly cleared as if by magic. As he murmured that remark his eyes gleamed with sudden enlightenment and satisfaction.

It was an hour or so later. Tea was over in Study No. 4 of the Fourth. Grundy—aided by Wilkins and Gunn—had moved his belongings already into that study. To the disappointment of his old chums he had taken the easy-chair, likewise the gramophone and wireless with him. It had not been an easy move, or a pleasant move for Grundy. It had not been pleasant, either, for Mulvaney minor and Clarence York Tompkins who shared that study now with him.

Grundy had not liked it; Mulvaney and Tompkins, though they admitted Grundy had his compensations, had not liked it, either. In fact, there had been trouble at once. Grundy was in a vile temper, as might be expected. Tompkins had just looked into his study, after class, and had gone out again at once—with Grundy's boot behind him. Clarence York had had tea in Hall that day!

So had Mulvaney minor. Grundy had found Mulvaney a stiffer proposition than Tompkins. Nevertheless, Mulvaney had also departed without waiting for tea—looking a wrock.

A raging tiger had been like a lamb compared with Grundy, at first. For an hour Grundy sat in his easy-chair and sulked, like Achilles in his tent. But he thought as well as sulked. There were fellows in the Shell who claimed that Grundy could not think, simply because he lacked the mental machinery. But that was an exaggeration. Grundy could think a little, and he thought pretty hard over the new and uncommon situation in which he found himself.

Obviously—quite obviously—it was no good kicking against the fiat. To do so, further, would be asking for the sack—which Grundy certainly did not want. He was relegated to the Fourth, and he was obliged to swallow the humiliation as best he could. It was a bitter pill to swallow. But unless he wanted a series of lickings from Railton, with the possibility of the sack, he had to swallow it.

Grundy thought and thought. And as he thought a new and unexpected side of the situation appeared to him. After all, there were possibilities in the situation. In the Shell he had been a mere nobody to the other fellows. Grundy had to admit that to himself bitterly. He was the only fellow with brains in the Shell; he was the only fellow who could play footer, or cricket, or could row, box, or swim; the only fellow with ability and character. Even Linton was a fool compared with him—George Alfred Grundy! But, unfortunately, Grundy himself was the only fellow who seemed to see it, to be aware of the facts.

It was lamentable, but, unhappily, true. By Linton and by his ignorant, blind Form-fellows, he had been treated as a fellow of no account.

Well, he was out of the Shell now, and a member of the Fourth. There was no reason at all why such a sad and unaccountable state of affairs should exist in the Fourth. Possibly his step downwards was to prove just the bend before a mighty leap upwards. Better to be a somebody in the Fourth than a nobody in the Shell.

"Captain of the Fourth!" murmured Grundy. "Why not? The poor benighted kids will be thumping glad to have a Shell man to lead them! By Jove! That chap Blake will have to stand down, of course! But he's a decent kid, I believe, and he's bound to see that it's for the Form's benefit. I'll just run along now and explain how matters stand to him, I think."

And Grundy, full of enthusiasm over his new scheme, hurried out and went along to Study No. 6. His aches and pains were vanished now; the deep wound to his vanity and dignity healed up wonderfully before this brilliant new prospect.

Captain of the Fourth! Head of cricket and footer in the Form! Boss of games and all Form matters! Possibly he could persuade Lathom to make him a sort of prefect over these beastly Fourth-Form fags. Well, he'll show those Shell cads what was what now. Under his leadership the Fourth were going to knock the Shell into the middle of next week!

As it happened, the Terrible Three were with Blake & Co., and there was a general grin as Grundy barged in, his badly damaged features flushed with enthusiasm. Grundy gave Tom Merry a lofty nod.

"Hallo! What the thump are you Shell fish doing in a Fourth man's study?" he demanded. "Clear—sharp!"

"Bai Jove! Weally, Gwunday—"

"You shut up, D'Arcy!"

"Grundy, you cheeky owl—"

"You shut up, Herries! I might tell you fellows, right away, that I'm standing no cheek from fellows in the Fourth!" said Grundy, with a warning look round. "I'm here. I didn't want to come; but now I'm here—now I'm a Fourth Form man—I'm going to make the best of things. I'm going to make things hum, too! It's up to you Fourth kids to back me up tooth and nail. See?"

"Us—us Fourth kids, did you say?" demanded Blake, with deadly quietness.

"Eh? Oh, yes—naturally!"

"To—to back you up!" stuttered Blake.

"Exactly! But just shift those Shell fish out, and I'll explain how matters stand, and what my programme is!" said Grundy.

"Bai Jove!"

"You—you cheeky ass!" said Lowther.

"You shut up, Lowther! You're in the Fourth quarters now, so you'd better be careful, my lad!" said Grundy grimly. "I'm going to make the Fourth a warm place for any Shell fish to enter."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You can stay and hear what I've got to say, if you like," said Grundy. "In fact, I'd rather like you to know that being shifted into the Fourth has been rather a good thing for me!"

"And a bad thing for the unlucky Fourth!" groaned Blake. "Get out, you burbling chump!"

Potts, The Office Boy



"I think I've told you once that I'm standing no cheek from you kids, Blake!" said Grundy. "Now, listen to me. I believe you've been a sort of captain of the Fourth until now, Blake?"

"I believe I have—just a sort of one!" grinned Blake. "But why only up to now, old chap?"

"Because I'm captain of the Fourth now!" said Grundy calmly.

"Bai, Jove!"

"You—you are!" ejaculated Blake. "And who the thump's appointed you captain of the Fourth?"

"I've appointed myself!"

"Oh! Oh, my hat! You—you've appointed yourself?"

"Exactly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy glared as Blake & Co. burst into a roar, in which the Terrible Three—understanding Grundy's cocky manner—now joined.

"You cackling dummies!" hooted Grundy, exasperated. "It's nothing to laugh about, you idiots! I mean it! From now on I'm skipping the Fourth. I suppose you won't have the cheek to oppose my superior claims, Blake?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling idiots!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake, wiping his eyes. "My dear man, to be captain of the Fourth you'll need a bigger claim than just being the biggest duffer and the most hopeless imbecile at St. Jim's. You'll never get the job just on those claims!"

"Wathah not, Gwunday! Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy glowered. If the fellows were going to meet his claims with ribald hilarity, then the sooner he showed them he was in deadly earnest the better.

"You cheeky rotters!" he snorted furiously. "You don't seem to realise that I'm in earnest, you fools!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotter, Blake! Claim! I'll jolly soon show you that I've one good claim, at all events—the claim to be the best man with my fists!" roared Grundy. "Put them up! We'll fight it out here and now!"

And pushing his cuffs back, Grundy made a rush at Jack Blake. Blake promptly dodged, and stuck out a swift leg. Grundy took a header over it, and went into the fireplace with a terrific crash and clatter.

But he was up again in a flash, breathing hard, and determined. He made another rush at the smiling Blake. This time Blake closed with him, dodging his waving fists, and then Blake's chums took a hand.

"You're going to be rather a nuisance at this rate, Grundy!" said Blake cheerfully. "Out you go, old chap! Lend a hand, chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy collared the great George Alfred. The Terrible Three looked on, smiling. They had done their share in trying to educate Grundy when he was in the Shell. Now it was up to the fellows of the Fourth to do what they could to make Grundy face facts.

Blake & Co. proved equal to the task—though it was a tough task.

It was a wild and whirling struggle. But Grundy's aches and pains were numerous, and as he struggled they made themselves felt. Moreover, he was still tired after his afternoon's gigantic exertions. Against the four of them he stood no chance whatever.

The battle surged nearer and nearer to the door, and Tom Merry obligingly and smilingly opened it in readiness. "Out with him!" gasped Blake. "Captain of the Fourth, what! The cheek of the man! Out with him!"

"You rotter, Blake! I'll smash you! I'll— Yarroop!"

Grundy went through the doorway like a shot from a gun, and landed with a heavy thump in the passage. Blake, breathing hard, closed the door and locked it. Grundy sat up and blinked dizzily at the locked door.

"Ow, ow, ow! Ow! Yow!" he gurgled. "Cads! Rotters! But I'll show 'em—another time!"

And Grundy staggered to his weary feet and crawled away. He was not feeling up to renewing the conflict, locked door or not. It was clear to him now that Blake—the cheeky idiot—was not going to have the decency to stand down tamely, after all. Plainly he had no intention of resigning quietly in his favour. If Grundy was going to be skipper of the Fourth, it was evident he would have to fight for the position. Well, so be it. Grundy relished a fight. He was quite ready to make a fight for the cherished position of captain of the Fourth. But—not that evening! He had done quite enough fighting for one day!

CHAPTER 6.
The "Meating" 1

"HALLO! What the dickens—"

"Ha, ha! Grundy again!"

"Yaas, wathah, bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "The—the feahful ass!"

Blake & Co. were standing before the notice board in the junior Common-room.

A new notice was there. It had attracted their attention at once. There seemed to be something rather striking and unusual about the new notice pinned to the wall. A little crowd of fellows were grinning as they stared at it, and Blake & Co. joined them.

Then they saw it, read it, and understood.

It was Grundy again—Grundy of the Fourth!

"Better look out, Blake!" called Levison warningly, as Blake stared at the notice. "Grundy's after your job like a hungry dog after a bone!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Obviously the Fourth fellows treated Grundy's ambitious aspirations as a great joke. It was Grundy's misfortune that the more earnest Grundy became the more the fellows seemed to laugh at him. But Blake frowned as he read the "Notiss" pinned on the board.

"NOTISS!

"A Meating will be held in the Fourth Form room this afternoon at three o'clock prompt in support of G. A. GRUNDY'S candidature for the captaincy of the Fourth.

All men who are tired and weary of the slakness, inefishunsky, and hopeless leadership of the present incumbent captain of the Fourth, should rally round GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY, and give their loyal support at the meating when G.A.G. will outline his PROGRAMME.

"(Sined) GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY."

"Well, my hat!" breathed Blake, as he read it. "That—that ass! That—that born idiot! That—that—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A Ready Answer!



Blake glared. Being the fellow referred to in the notice as "Incomptant," Blake, naturally enough, did not think it very funny.

"The—the burbling ass!" he gasped. "He—he means business, then! The cheeky owl! Why, I'll—I'll smash him!"

"Tear the silly thing down!" chuckled Herries.

"No fear!" Blake burst into a laugh. "Let him rip! Give him fair play!"

"But the dashed cheek——"

"Exactly!" smiled Blake. "Give him fair play, though! We'll turn up at the giddy meeting, and hear what he's got to say. I hope all the Fourth will turn up to hear him. Before he's opened his mouth a minute he's bound to start calling us fags and kids! Then we'll give him something else besides fair play!"

"Just what I was thinkin', old fellow!" agreed Cardew, smiling. "In fact, I've already been to the tuckshop and bagged all the stale eggs Mrs. Taggles has in stock. Let dear old Grundy say 'kids' just once—only once—and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hear, hear!"

Blake chuckled, and walked on with his chums.

Very luckily Grundy had already made himself rather unpopular in the Fourth. Grundy was a superior and lofty fellow who often referred to the fellows in the Shell as "kids." It was not to be surprised, therefore, that he now referred to the fellows in the Fourth as "kids" and "fags" also. Grundy simply couldn't help it. It was always a mystery why Grundy—the biggest duffer in the school—should regard himself as superior to fellows who could lick his head off at Form work and games, but he did! Naturally the fellows did not like it, while most of them—having a deep respect for Grundy's big fists—had to lump it, as it were.

But Grundy was treading on dangerous ground, if he only knew it. The Form, in fact, looked upon Grundy's relegation to the Fourth as an insult to themselves. They did not want Grundy.

Unfortunately—for himself—Grundy was not aware of this fact. He was under the mistaken impression that the Fourth would welcome such a mighty man of brains and brawn.

He fairly beamed on entering the Fourth class-room at a few minutes before three o'clock that afternoon.

It was packed to overflowing with Fourth fellows, while a sprinkling of Shell fellows had been allowed to enter. The Terrible Three were there, like the rest, in the hopes of being entertained by Grundy!

Grundy marched in briskly, and glanced about him.

"Hallo!" he remarked. "That kid Tompkins has got the chair into position, then! Good! He's saved himself a licking! Oh! You're here, Blake! Well, you may as well stay; I don't object! I rather want you to hear what I've got to say about you!"

"Bai Jove!"

Grundy marched to the end of the Form-room. Tompkins—mindful of Grundy's heavy-handed authority—had placed a table there. On the table he had also placed a chair. Grundy was pleased to see his orders had been obeyed. What he did not know, however, was that someone else had placed wedges under the back legs of the table, inclining it forwards. Someone had also placed a handful of tin-tacks on the chair.

Grundy was left to find that out.

Amidst a general grin, Grundy climbed up on to the table, which wobbled perilously. Then he sat down on the chair, finally discovering the tin-tacks!

"Yaroooooop!"

"Look out——"

Crash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It all happened to programme—the programme arranged—unknown to Grundy—for Grundy! As he sat down on the tin-tacks, he gave a fearful yell, and leaped up again. At the same moment the table tilted forward, and George Alfred, likewise the chair, slid off it with a rush and came down with a crash to the floor.

"Yaroooooop!" roared Grundy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The great man sprawled on the floor with all the wind knocked out of him, and tin-tacks still sticking to his nether garments. The spectators howled with laughter.

Grundy scrambled up at last, raging.

"Who—who did that?" he bellowed furiously. "Tell me who played that rotten trick on me—me! I'm going—I'm going to smash him into little pieces! I—I—I——"

He spluttered and glared about him at the grinning faces. But the miscreants responsible for his downfall did not come forward, and after glaring a while, Grundy righted

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the table, placed the chair in position again, picked the tin-tacks from his trousers and seated himself again. It was beneath Grundy's dignity to stand before a crowd of fags!

"Go it, Grundy!"

"On the ball!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy frowned. It was respectful, earnest attention he wanted, not ribald hilarity. But he wasn't getting it.

"That's enough!" he bawled angrily. "Stop that idiotic cackling, you fools, and listen to a man! My hat! You dare to bung that apple at me, Mellish, and I'll spifficate you! Now, you kids——"

"You what?" It was a roar.

"Eh? Silence! I might tell you that I'm not used to listening to a lot of snivelling fags yelling, and I won't stand it. Now, you kids, you've got to hear—Yooop!"

Grundy broke off and yelped as a chunk of ink-soaked blotting-paper smote him full in the mouth.

That signalled the beginning and end of his great speech. The Fourth had only intended to allow Grundy to call them "kids" once before acting. But he had said the offending word twice, and even called them "fags."

They waited no longer.

Following the ink-soaked blotting-paper came a hurricane of missiles of all descriptions—apples, stale eggs, nuts, books, soaked dusters, chalk—all sorts and kinds of articles. The Shell had quite failed to cure the great George Alfred of his swank, his lordly self-importance, his overbearing heavy-handedness. But the Fourth were determined to cure him. They were making a good start now.

Whizz, whizz, whizz!

Grundy danced, and bellowed, and roared, dodging vainly the flying missiles. Then someone up-ended the table from the rear again, and Grundy and his chair once again did a nose-dive.

Crash!

Grundy's yell on this occasion was enough to have awakened the Seven Sleepers.

He was hurt and he was angry. He lay there for a moment, breathless and panting, and as he lay Herries tipped the contents of an ink-bottle over his upturned flushed features.

That did it. Grundy gurgled and gurgled and then he leaped madly to his feet. Grundy was rather dense—very dense, in fact. But even Grundy could not help seeing now that the Fourth had congregated there, not to hear his words of wisdom, but to rag him!

With a wild roar of rage, George Alfred went into action. There were just thirty-two fellows in the room, but thirty-two to one were not odds that frightened Grundy.

CHAPTER 7.

Lathom "Stops One"!

BANG! Crash! Wallop!

"I'll show you!" roared Grundy. "Rag me, will you! Take that!"

"Yooooooop!"

Levison took it—his face just happened to be in the way of Grundy's huge fist, and Levison yelped and toppled backwards. Again Grundy sent out one of his famous lefts, and this time the table leg took it—Cardew having dodged in the nick of time.

"Yaroooooop!"

The crowd roared as Grundy gave a fiendish howl and began to suck his barked knuckles.

"Ha, ha, ha! Go it, Grundy!"

"Give the chair one now, old man!"

"You cackling fools!" hooted Grundy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, bai Jove! Look out, deah boy!"

There was need to look out. Grundy was going it. In Grundy's view it was very necessary to show the Fourth, right away and once and for all, just what was what. One severe and lasting lesson was what they needed. His authority must be respected, and the Fourth must learn right away that he meant it to be respected.

Unfortunately—for Grundy—the Fourth had somewhat similar views in regard to George Alfred. The Shell had been unable to tame the duffer. The Fourth intended to do it. Grundy had been pitchforked among them, and it was obviously his intention to rule the roost and boss the show. That was where Grundy needed correction. They intended to correct him in such a manner that he was unlikely to repeat the mistake.

Grundy was unaware of the view taken by the Fourth. He had hoped to gain control of the Fourth peaceably, by an eloquent speech. As the Fourth refused to listen peaceably, his only recourse was to gain control by means of his fists.

Besides, Grundy was hurt. His person and his dignity had suffered severely at the hands of these silly fags. So Grundy piled in with a will.

There arose a chorus of yells and howls as Grundy got busy with his lefts and rights.

"Yarooop!"
 "Oh, my hat! Collar him!"
 "Look out! Hold him! Grundy, you— Yarooop!"
 "I'll smash the lot of you!" roared Grundy. "I'll jolly well show you what— Why, you—leggo! I tell you— Yoooooop!"

Grundy was down, struggling madly underneath a yelling, laughing swarm of raggers. The odds were just a little too great for the gallant George Alfred.

As they scrambled madly on the dusty floor, some joker tipped the upturned table over them, and then the chair, while ink began to fly in showers over the scrum.

It was a thorough rag, and the Fourth—or those who had so far missed the weight of Grundy's fists—were enjoying themselves. But Grundy was not, nor were those youths who were in close touch with him on the floor.

"Collar him!" shrieked Blake. Blake himself was in Grundy's powerful grasp at the moment, and Grundy seemed bent on banging Blake's head through the floor.

"Drag the madman off, you idiots! Yarooooooop!"
 Bang, bang, bang! went Blake's head on the floor.
 "Ha, ha, ha! Go it!"

"Bai Jove! Wescue Blake, deah boys!"
 A sudden rush sent Grundy toppling off Jack Blake, and then the battle was renewed on top of the upturned table.

"Collar him!" shrieked Blake. "Oh crikey! Grooogh! My napper! Collar the raving lunatic and stick him on the table, and we'll bung things at him—use him as a cock-shy!"

"Good weeze! That's it! On the ball!"
 But collaring Grundy was easier said than done. Grundy had no intention of being used as a cockshy—not if he could help it. He fought like a Trojan, and he certainly succeeded in showing the Fourth "what was what" that afternoon. The sounds of battle echoed and re-echoed far and wide.

There was a sudden yell from the doorway.
 "Ware prefects! Look out! Here's Knoxy!"
 Nobody seemed to hear the warning, however; nobody seemed to sight Knox of the Sixth as he came rushing into the room, amazement on his face and an ashplant in his hand.

"What the dickens— Great Scott! Stop that row, you young fiends!" he bawled angrily.
 Whack, whack, whack, whack!

The prefect started to lay about him with his ashplant. The yells increased, and Knox soon forced a way to the centre of the disturbance, fellows jumping away right and left from the swishing ashplant.

"Look out! Yarooop! Oh, my hat!"
 "Stop that!" roared Knox. "You young fools!"
 He rushed into the scrum, and, guessing Grundy was the cause of the row—the sight of that youth was enough—Knox forced himself forward, stooped, and made a grab at him.

Cardew happened to be standing just behind, however, and the temptation was too much for that humorous youth.

He gave the stooping Knox a swift push; and, overbalancing, the prefect dived headlong into the scrum, falling on top of Grundy.

What happened next seemed like a horrible nightmare to Knox.

Such a chance to get in a few knocks at the unpopular Knox was too good to miss for the scapegraces of the Fourth.

The next second the battle was renewed with vigour, and Knox disappeared beneath a heaving mass of juniors, his ashplant flying from his grasp. He bellowed and roared in vain. Punches and whacks fell upon him from all quarters. But most of the punches came from the raging and almost hysterical Grundy, upon whom Knox had flopped.

Knox, the prefect, was simply forced to hit back, in fact. And he did, fairly raving in his rage. Grundy and Knox were fairly going it now.

There came another warning cry from the doorway:
 "Cave! Look out! Beaks!"

"Bai Jove! Stop it, deah boys! Lathom! Oh ewikey!"
 It was Mr. Lathom. He came hurrying into the room, his timid face full of alarm.

"Boys! What—what— Good gracious! Stop—stop this uproar at once! Grundy—Knox— Bless my soul!"
 Most of the fellows heard and heeded. And little Mr. Lathom rushed forward in angry determination.
 "Stop! I order you to stop! Knox, have you taken leave of your senses? Grundy, how dare you! Stop! Cease this unseemly uproar! Knox, stop!"

Mr. Lathom dived into the scrum and made a grab at Knox; and then—

How it happened nobody knew exactly—few of the fellows saw clearly, at all events. But suddenly Mr. Lathom was seen to stagger backwards and sit down on the floor with a bump.

His hands clutched his nose, and through his fingers trickled crimson.

Obviously the master of the Fourth had "stopped one."
 "Oh, great pip!"
 "Oh, my hat!"
 "Oh, bai Jove!"

There was a sudden, terrible silence.
 Even Knox and Grundy were aware that something terrible had happened now. They separated, breathing hard. Arthur Augustus, Lowther, and Tom Merry helped Mr. Lathom to stagger to his feet. He stood there dizzily, mopping his nose and blinking dazedly behind his glasses, which still remained in position.

"Ow, ow, ow!" gurgled the master. "G-Grundy—wretched boy! Ow, ow, ow!"
 "I—I say!" gasped Grundy, panting hoarsely. "It—it wasn't me, sir! Wharrer you looking at me like that for, sir? Oh crikey!"

Grundy was in an exhausted, parlous state. He ached all over, and was feeling a mass of bruises and pains. He panted and panted. But even in his hapless state he could not help noticing that Mr. Lathom was glowering at him; that nearly every fellow eyed him in horror.

"I—I say, sir—"
 "Silence! Wretched boy! Hooligan! Miscreant!" hooted Mr. Lathom, clutching his nose in anguished rage. "Be silent, sir! Grooogh! By dose! You—you villain! You have struck me—your Form master! You shall be flogged—exbelled!"

"Expelled!" panted Grundy. "But—but I say—I mean it wasn't me! I didn't—" Grundy babbled incoherently, aghast. "I—I didn't hit you, sir! I swear I didn't!"
 "How dare you deny it!" almost shrieked Mr. Lathom. "You—you are the most rebellious—the most troublesome boy in the school! You—you shall suffer dearly! Grooogh! Ow, ow, ow!"

(Continued on next page.)

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Grundy gazed about him wildly.

Knox stared. He had been terrified. But now, as he heard Mr. Lathom's words, his terror vanished.

"He—he was the cause of it all, as usual, sir!" he stammered. "Shall—shall I take him before the Head, sir?"

Grundy exploded.

"You—you howling rotter, Knox!" he bawled in sudden rage. "It wasn't me! I swear it wasn't me! It must have been you, you rotter!"

"Me? Don't be an idiot!" snapped Knox. He pulled himself together. "Of course it was you, Grundy; every fellow here saw the blow! Come along, you young rascal!"

"Hold on, Knox!" It was Blake who stepped forward. "I don't believe it was Grundy at all!" he snapped, giving Knox an accusing stare. "It was you, Knox; I'm certain I saw—"

"Silence, Blake! How dare you make such a foolish and unfounded statement!" hooted Mr. Lathom. "It was this wretched, ungovernable boy, Grundy, who struck me! No boy would be so mad, so foolish as to strike a master—no boy but that rebellious young villain! Certainly not a prefect! Silence!"

"But, sir, I saw Knox, too—" began Cardew blankly.

But Mr. Lathom silenced him.

"Enough! Knox, bring that young rascal to the headmaster!" he gasped. "Silence! Blake, I leave you to restore order here! Come!"

And, still clutching his nose, Mr. Lathom tottered out. Knox, his face quite white, and shaking, hooked a hand in Grundy's collar and marched him out, Grundy himself seeming far too dazed and bewildered to resist.

They vanished; and the Fourth and the few Shell fellows present stared at each other, aghast.

"Phew! That—that's done it!" breathed Jack Blake, caressing a rapidly swelling eye. "Jingo! What a scrap! But—but poor old Grundy's for it. And I swear it wasn't him!"

"It jolly well wasn't!" said Cardew, his eyes gleaming. "I saw it clearly! Clearly enough, anyway! When Lathom grabbed Knox, Knox thought it was one of us. He swung round savagely and hit out. I saw him do it!"

"That's it! I saw it, too!" said Blake eagerly. "Look here, we're not seeing old Grundy get it in the neck when it wasn't him. The man's a born idiot, but he's an angel compared with that worm Knox! It was that sweep Knox!"

"Bai Jove! I believe it was, deah boy, though I didn't see it."

"I didn't see the blow, either," said Tom Merry gravely. "But—but if you're sure it was Knox, then it's up to you to speak out, Blake. We know what a liar Knox is, and we know Grundy couldn't tell a lie if he tried."

"The whole affair was our fault!" groaned Blake. "We ragged him—"

"Dear man, never mind that now!" interposed Cardew coolly. "Any other fellows who saw it done?"

"I did!" snapped Julian.

"Then the fellows who saw it had better come along to the Beak and speak up for dear old Grundy," said Cardew grimly; "otherwise, friend Grundy's booked for the long jump for a cert."

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove! Pway wush off, Blake—"

"Come on!" snapped Blake.

It was the only decent thing to do. Blake, with Cardew and Dick Julian—the only fellows who were quite sure that Knox did it—hurried out. The crowd swarmed after them, eager and excited; and a moment later they were outside the headmaster's door.

From within came the Head's deep voice; then came Grundy's voice, excited and desperate.

Blake knocked sharply and went in.

CHAPTER 8. Grundy's Bolt!

DR. HOLMES sat at his desk, a deep, grave frown on his brow. Mr. Lathom was there, still hugging his damaged nose. Knox was also there, as was Kildare, who had been hastily called upon. Grundy, looking sullen and defiant, stood before the Head's desk, the prefects ranged on either side of him.

It looked almost like a military court martial.

The crowd in the passage just got a brief glimpse of the solemn scene, and then the door closed behind Blake.

The Head stared angrily at Jack Blake.

"What is it, boy? Unless your message is of importance kindly leave the room at once, Blake!" he snapped.

"It—it is of importance, sir!" gasped Blake. "It's about Grundy, sir. It wasn't Grundy who biffed—I mean who struck Mr. Lathom, sir! Cardew and Julian—"

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"Silence, Blake! How dare you force your way in here?"

"But, sir, in justice to Grundy—"

"Be silent!" thundered Dr. Holmes. "There is no question as to Grundy's guilt! Knox saw the dastardly blow struck, and Mr. Lathom himself is assured that it was this wretched, rebellious junior. Leave the room at once, Blake!"

"But, sir—"

"Go!" thundered the Head. "If you actually saw the blow struck, Blake—"

"I—I didn't see it very clearly, but Cardew—" stammered Blake.

"Enough! If you cannot be sure, then your evidence is of no value. Leave my study, Blake!"

"But Cardew and Julian swear—"

"Go!"



A hurricane of missiles of all descriptions descended upon Grundy—in

It was a bellow. Evidently the Beak was not to be trifled with—not in reasonable mood for outside evidence.

Blake backed out and closed the door.

It was really what he might have expected. In fact, it dawned upon Blake that their evidence would not be likely to be taken in face of Lathom's conviction, and Knox's evidence. Knox was a prefect, and his word would certainly be taken before a junior's word.

"No go!" groaned Blake, as his chums swarmed round him. "The Beak won't listen—the old ass!"

"But—but won't he listen to our evidence?" stuttered Julian. "Dash it all—"

"No good!" snapped Blake. "Grundy's booked, I'm afraid! The Beak's bound to take Knox's word before ours! Oh crikey!"

They stood and listened, eager to learn the outcome of the "court martial" on Grundy.

In the study Grundy himself was fairly seething with indignation.

Knox was quite calm and collected now. Knox knew perfectly well that it was his fist that had floored Lathom. But his terror had vanished now. Lathom believed Grundy had done it. That in itself was enough to banish Knox's terror. But Knox had realised now that his own word would certainly be taken before a junior's word—and especially the word of George Alfred Grundy, whose recent conduct was enough in itself to condemn him.

Knox had only to keep cool, and deny it, and also to swear with certainty that Grundy had done it. Knox felt quite safe now.

He had already told the Head that he actually saw the fatal blow struck by Grundy, and the Head had taken his statement without question. Grundy was booked for the sack.

But the inquiry was not ended yet.

As the door closed behind Blake, the Head turned to



soaked blotting-paper, stale eggs, apples, nuts, chalk, and books!

George Alfred, who looked as if he was itching to spring like a tiger upon the cool-faced Knox.

"Grundy!" he boomed. "Wretched boy! I am astounded—astounded and grieved beyond measure that any boy in this school should act as you have done! I had already heard of your recent rebellious conduct, and now, this—this abominable act of reckless, brutal hooliganism has shown me that you are not fit to remain a member of this school!"

"But—but, sir—" panted Grundy.

"Silence! You have struck a master—your Form master!" said the Head gravely. "Only expulsion can meet the case. You will leave St. Jim's in the morning, Grundy!"

"But—but it wasn't me!" choked Grundy, horrified. "I swear I didn't strike Mr. Lathom! It was that rotter, Knox—I know it was—it must have been! The rotter knows—"

"Silence! How dare you charge a prefect with such an

offence?" said the Head angrily. "You are only making matters worse for yourself by such a wicked accusation, Grundy! Your unprovoked attack on Knox in the first place is sufficient to earn your expulsion. I understand that you were expelled from your last school for an exactly similar offence!"

"But—but that—" Grundy spluttered desperately. It was true enough that he had been expelled from Redclyffe for "biffing" a prefect, and he realised how that fact went against him now. "But it was proved afterwards, sir, that I was in the right—"

"Silence! Enough!" The Head raised a majestic hand. The matter was proved beyond question, and it was useless prolonging the inquiry. "Silence, Grundy! The matter is closed, and you leave the school to-morrow! Kildare, kindly escort—"

"One moment, sir!" It was Mr. Lathom's distressed and agitated voice. "One moment, sir—kindly listen to me, I beg of you!"

"Mr. Lathom—"

"Pray allow me to speak, sir!" gasped the fluttering Fourth Form master. "I—I am very much disturbed—dismayed at the thought that any boy should be—be expelled through me, sir!"

"Mr. Lathom? I do not understand you! The boy has amply earned expulsion—"

"Yes, yes—if he had struck me intentionally he would certainly have earned expulsion!" gasped Mr. Lathom, his kindly face full of distress. "But—but pray allow me to give my view—as the person injured—"

"Pray proceed, Mr. Lathom!" said the Head, staring.

"It—it was an accident, sir!" said Mr. Lathom earnestly. "The—the boy struck wildly—he was surrounded by juniors, and it was difficult to see what was happening. But I am assured that Grundy did not know that I was there!"

"Bless my soul! You did not state this before, Mr. Lathom!"

"I was angry—upset and dazed, sir! But I realise now that—that Grundy did not strike me knowingly. It was an accident, of that I am assured, sir!" gasped Mr. Lathom earnestly. "He was striking out at Knox—"

"That, Mr. Lathom, alone is sufficient to earn the boy expulsion!"

"But—but—" Mr. Lathom glanced coldly at Knox—"but he was defending himself against Knox—I am obliged to explain the facts, sir. I sprang forward to drag Knox away, for I feared he would injure the boy. In the confusion Grundy struck me. Those, sir, are the facts!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, with a hard look at Gerald Knox. "You should have explained this to me before, Mr. Lathom. Your story alters the case, of course. None the less, the boy has been rebellious—he is constantly causing trouble in the House. He struck you, a master, and whether by accident or design, he must suffer severe punishment!"

The Head paused and eyed Grundy's flushed face thoughtfully and grimly.

"In the circumstances, Grundy," he said at last, "I shall not expel you. You will be flogged here and now, and I trust—I trust for your own sake that it will be a lasting lesson to you. You have Mr. Lathom to thank for an exceedingly narrow escape from expulsion."

"But—but, sir, I didn't do it!" almost shrieked Grundy.

"Silence! Kildare and Knox, you will hold Grundy across that chair in a suitable position for a flogging."

"Very good, sir!"

Kildare and Knox approached Grundy. That youth jumped back. His face was red with indignation and desperate resolve. Grundy had pluck—heaps of pluck. He was not the fellow to submit to what he felt was a rank injustice. He knew it was not his fist that had downed Lathom. Therefore he wasn't jolly well going to submit. Grundy was not the fellow to do that—Head or no Head!

"Stand back!" he gasped. "Hands off, Kildare! Knox, you rotter; touch me and I'll knock you into the middle of next week, you sweep!"

"Grundy!" gasped the Head, scandalised.

"Grundy!" pleaded Mr. Lathom.

"I don't care!" bawled Grundy. "I'm not jolly well going to be flogged for something I haven't done! Stand back!"

"Grundy!" thundered the Head. "G-good heavens! Kildare—Knox, obey my orders and apprehend that wretched rebellious boy!"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

And Kildare and Knox, looking very grim, closed upon Grundy.

Grundy kept his word. Knox grabbed at him, and Grundy's fist sent him spinning across the room. Kildare gasped and made a grab, and Grundy dodged the grab and leaped for the door.

"Good heavens!"

Crash!

Knox, his hands clutching his nose, fell with a crash into the fender amid a terrific clatter of falling fire-irons. Kildare jumped after Grundy, and went smack into the edge of the door as Grundy wrenched it open.

Kildare reeled back with a yell, and Grundy flew, leaving disorder and consternation in the august sanctum of the headmaster of St. Jim's. Grundy had "done it" this time with a vengeance.

CHAPTER 9!

Gaining the Fort.

BUT in the passage the crowd had listened in scared silence. They had heard quite a lot—they had heard the Head's stern sentence, and they had heard Grundy's bellowed defiance.

"Bai Jove! Poor old Gwunday's goin' it!" murmured Arthur Augustus, in no little distress. "He's an awful ass, but—but—"

They all felt sorry for Grundy now.

Then came the terrific crash of Knox falling into the fender, and the juniors eyed each other in wonder. Had Grundy, in his madness, biffed the Head, too?

The juniors would have given anything just then to get a glimpse of Grundy? And just then they did get a glimpse of him, but only a glimpse.

The door flew suddenly open, and Grundy came bolting out.

"What the—"

"Great pip! It's Grundy! Look out!"

Grundy scattered the crowd like chaff before the wind as he came charging out. And just as the crowd was closing again Kildare, followed a second later by the raging Knox, also came charging out.

"Oh wikey!"

The two seniors charged through the gaping, startled crowd, and went tearing after George Alfred.

That luckless youth flew. After him flew Kildare and Knox. And after them—following a stunned silence—went the crowd in a mad stampede.

Undoubtedly Grundy was still "going it." And everyone wanted to see him going it, and to be in at the death, if possible. By the looks of the prefects' faces—especially Knox's—there was likely to be a sudden death for Grundy once he was caught.

But Grundy wasn't caught yet.

At the head of the stairs Baker of the Sixth was standing, and Grundy nearly sent him spinning downstairs. Fortunately, Baker clutched the banisters, saving himself, and then he heard Kildare's yell.

"Stop that fellow! Stop him, Baker!"

Baker also joined in the chase. He went downstairs two at a time. Grundy tore across the hallway. Mr. Ratcliff, Housemaster of the New House, was just entering the doorway, and Grundy met him in full career. But there was no stopping Grundy. Mr. Ratcliff gave a gurgling yelp, and sat down on the top of the steps with a resounding bump. Grundy flew on.

Kildare and Knox bolted out of the House after him. Fortunately, they sighted Ratty just in time, and they each leaped over him, and continued the chase.

Grundy flew across the quadrangle—anywhere. He was dazed and bewildered, and seething with righteous indignation. He had no programme in his mind, no plan of action. All he knew was that he wasn't going to be flogged!

Round the quad he ran, and after him went the three prefects. North and Rusden were chatting and strolling under the old elms, and Kildare bawled out to them:

"Stop him! Stop Grundy, North! Stop that kid!"

"Hallo! What the— Right, Kildare!"

North and Rusden grasped what was wanted and jumped out on the gravel path to stop Grundy.

Grundy swerved off at an angle, desperate, but dogged yet.

Kildare and Knox separated—Knox to get behind Grundy, while Kildare cut across to intercept the fugitive, who was obviously making for the gates.

Again Grundy swerved. Kildare barred escape through the gates now. Moreover, Grundy glimpsed Taggles standing there, with arms outstretched in readiness. For once, old Taggles had been quick on the uptake, so to speak.

"Oh!" gasped Grundy.

He halted a second and gazed round him wildly. But avenue of escape there was none. Other seniors were pouring to the chase now; he was hemmed in on all sides like a hunted fox. And then—just then Grundy sighted the open door of the tuckshop.

It stood invitingly open. Grundy glimpsed the interior and saw it was empty. Dame Taggles was outside; she

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was standing on a pair of steps cleaning the windows of the little shop.

Grundy flew for the haven of refuge.

"Stop him!" roared Kildare furiously. "Mrs. Taggles, look out!"

Dame Taggles nearly fell off the steps as Grundy charged past her, flew into the little shop, and banged the door after him.

Kildare reached the door just in time to hear a bolt shot, and then the click of a lock. Another second and then sounded the ramming home of still another bolt.

"G-good gad!" gasped Kildare.

He was joined next second by the other seniors. And then the crowd, many of them grinning, but most of them quite scared, came rushing on the scene.

From the School House came a surging flood of fellows. The news had got round already. Baggy Trimble came tearing up, his fat face ablaze with excitement. A lot of fellows came rushing across from the New House to see what was "on." Grundy liked the limelight. He was likely to get more of it than he wanted now. There was a buzz of excited voices.

"What's on?"

"Who is it?"

"What, Grundy? The School House man!"

"Yes, that silly lunatic! Always knew he was potty! Biffed Lathom and the Head; knocked the Head into the fender, I believe!"

"Wha-what?"

"Yes, and now he's fastened himself in the tuckshop!"

The news—with many inaccuracies and exaggerations—was flying round from mouth to mouth now. It created a sensation—more than a sensation.

Bang, bang, bang!

Kildare, in a seething state of rage and exasperation, was banging on the door now.

"Open this door, you footling young fool!" he roared.

"Grundy, you—you raving young idiot, open this door!" "Rats!" came a bawling roar from inside. "Go and boil your silly head, Kildare!"

"What—what—" spluttered Kildare.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a new sound from within the tuckshop—the dragging of heavy articles across the floor. Then came heavy thuds against the door.

"Oh, Gweat Scott!" gasped Kildare. "The—the born idiot's barricading the door. He—he means business!" Grundy did!

CHAPTER 10.

Holding the Fort!

WITHIN the tuckshop Grundy was working feverishly.

The great idea had dawned in upon him now.

No longer was he bewildered, hunted, and without a programme.

He would hold a barring-out—a one-man barring-out! After what had happened a flogging would certainly not satisfy the Head. He would insist upon expulsion. Grundy realised that much. He was desperate now indeed. He had to make a fight for it! To give in now would mean his being allowed time to pack his box—that was all. Well, he would fight for it—would fight the lot of them. He'd show them!

Grundy worked madly. He secured both front and back doors. He rammed roughly-made wedges under each door. Then he dragged heavy boxes in front of both doors, piling them high, and jamming boxes between the counter and the front door.

He felt safe at last, and he smiled as he heard Kildare bellowing to him from outside.

"Open the door, you born idiot! You hear me?"

Bang, bang, bang!

"Go on!" bawled Grundy, flushed with excitement.

"Go on, bang away! You'll only hurt your silly fists! Yah! I defy the lot of you! Yah! Go and eat coke!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, standing among the crowd outside. "Gwunday means to make a fight for it! Good man, Gwunday!"

"Hear, hear!"

Grundy had suddenly become quite a hero—among the juniors!

He was a born idiot—that was the general opinion. Still, they couldn't help admiring him for putting up a fight for it, and they hoped he would win—though they very much doubted it.

It could not be said that Grundy was a popular fellow. But he was far from being disliked. He was a hopeless duffer, and he was "swanky" and overbearing and condescending. But he was a likeable fellow, for all that.

Wilkins and Gunn—hovering about on the edge of the crowd—were almost in tears.

"The—the duffer—the poor old ass!" groaned Gunny. "He'll be booted out for a cert now, you men!"

"Well, he'd have been booted out, in any case," said Wilkins glumly. "Much better for him to make a fight for it—his only chance, in fact!"

That was the general view.

Meanwhile, Grundy was in readiness—or almost in readiness. He feared no assault from the window—at least the whole window would have to be smashed in for them to get at him. The panes were the old-fashioned, small kind, with strong oaken framework. Like the rest of St. Jim's, the tuckshop was not jerry-built—it was, in fact, built very solidly indeed. The doors were big, iron-studded, oaken doors, and the walls were of ancient stonework.

It made an ideal fort for Grundy, in fact. There was food in plenty. There was water from a tap in the little inner room, and there were a few cooking utensils there also. Grundy felt he could withstand a siege easily enough—unless the water was turned off!

But Grundy was not thinking of a possibility like that just then.

"He glanced out through the window. There was a roar from the crowd as they sighted him.

"There he is!"

"Go it, Grundy! Stick it out!"

"Yaas, wathah! Good luck, deah boy!"

"Silence!" shouted Kildare. "You young fools—encouraging that mad idiot! Silence! Grundy!"

"Hallo! Want anything?"

"You young fool! Here is Railton coming!"

"Good! Let 'em all come!" bawled Grundy. "I'm ready! I've got twenty or thirty siphons of lemonade and ginger-beer ready, and a pile of stale eggs. I'm going to give 'em free to visitors! Pile in! Who wants 'em? Just shove your heads in somewhere!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently Grundy was in high feather now, and confident of victory.

Kildare breathed hard, and just then Mr. Railton came rustling up. Behind him bounced the Head, while still farther behind came Mr. Lathom and Mr. Linton. Grundy was, indeed, getting the limelight.

"Kildare—that foolish boy!" gasped Mr. Railton. "Has he locked himself in?"

"Yes, sir—and bolted the doors and barricaded them, sir!"

"Good heavens! The boy must be mad! Grundy!"

"Hallo! Want me, old bean?"

"It is your Housemaster speaking, Grundy!" snapped Railton, pretending to believe Grundy did not know that. "Open this door at once, you utterly stupid and rebellious boy!"

"Rats!"

"What—what—"

"Rats!" yelled Grundy excitedly. "I'm not opening this door until the Head agrees to my terms, Railton!"

"Good gracious! Grundy, how dare you?" spluttered the Housemaster. "Ah!"

The Head came rustling up just then, and Railton turned to him.

"That—that boy—that rebellious boy—refuses to open the door!" he said, in trembling accents. "Grundy, sir!"

"Bless my soul! This—this is too much!" gasped Dr. Holmes, his face crimson. "Have you ordered him to open the door, Mr. Railton?"

"Yes, sir. But—"

"Good heavens! We shall see if he refuses to open to his headmaster, then!" boomed Dr. Holmes. "Grundy—boy!"

"Hallo, sir!" Grundy called back cheerfully.

"Open this door at once, and obey your headmaster!"

"On what terms, sir?"

"T-t-terms!" gasped the Head. "Terms? Boy, how dare you! I shall certainly not make any terms with a rebellious young rascal! You shall be expelled!"

"Am I expelled now, sir?"

"Most certainly! You shall leave the school this very day, sir!"

"Then you're not my headmaster, and I can't obey you, Dr. Holmes!" called Grundy cheerfully. "Go and eat coke!"

"What—what—"

"I'm not opening this door until you agree not to expel me or flog me!" said Grundy steadily. "I've done nothing wrong! I was being ragged, and I stood up for myself. Then Lathom barged in and got biffed. But it was Knox who biffed him, not me. Sack that lying sweep, not me!"

"Grundy—"

"Let a fellow speak! I won't be unjustly flogged or sacked!" shouted Grundy warmly. "I refuse to submit to injustice! Promise not to flog or sack me, and I'll give in—not before! Got that, sir?"

The Head had. His face flushed red as a turkey with wrath. He fairly trembled with anger.

"Grundy—boy—I—I will give you one last chance! Open this door!"

"On what terms, sir?"

"Wretched boy!" thundered the Head violently. "I refuse to bandy words with you! Taggles! Is Taggles there?"

"Ho, yessir! Wot I sez is this 'ere—"

Taggles pushed through the crowd. Dame Taggles had departed hastily, fearing hostilities. She had brought her husband on the scene, however. The Head waved to him.

"Taggles, fetch your tools and break that door down!"

"That—that door!" stuttered Taggles. "My heye! It'd take a batterin' ram to break down that there door, sir!"

"The back door seems an easier proposition, sir!" suggested Mr. Railton.

"Ah! Yes, yes! Taggles, you will proceed to break down the back door—an entrance must be forced without delay, and that young rascal apprehended!"

"Ho, yessir!" grunted Taggles; and he ambled towards his lodge, mumbling something about "Nice goings hon!"

The Head and Railton hurried round to the back of the tuckshop. The juniors, seething with excitement, swarmed after them. Taggles soon appeared with an axe, a hammer, and a chisel.

(Continued on next page.)





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"Be quick, Taggles!" snapped Dr. Holmes. "This disgraceful state of affairs must be brought to an end without delay. Mr. Railton, kindly have that wretched boy brought before me before he is sent home!"

"Very good, sir!"

Apparently the Head took it for granted that Grundy's hours were numbered. But it was beneath his dignity to stay to see Grundy apprehended. He strode away back towards the House, his gown rustling like the plumage of an angry hen.

Taggles, at a motion from Mr. Railton, started operations on the door. Kildare and several of the seniors had already tried their burly shoulders on the door—to no effect. It had not budged. Now Taggles got to work with a hammer and chisel.

Bang, bang! Crash!

The chips of wood began to fly. Taggles managed to get the end of the chisel inserted at last between the jamb of the door. A jeering bawl came from Grundy within.

"Come on—come on! Come and find out what I've got waiting for you! Yah!"

Grundy was heard to move away from the door, and Taggles renewed his efforts. Then sounded the sudden crash of glass. It was Grundy who had jammed the end of a broom through the window, smashing one of the small, square panes.

Biff!

"Yoooooosh!"

Taggles roared as the end of the broom jabbed him viciously under the chin. But Kildare jumped forward and grabbed it, and wrenched it from Grundy's grasp—Grundy having to let go or get his hands badly cut. Taggles rubbed his chin, made violent remarks, and resumed.

Not for long, however. Grundy was using his brains. The nozzle of a lemonade siphon poked through the broken pane, and then—

Swoooooosh!

Taggles got it full in the face and eyes. Lemonade streamed down his hair, his face, and ran down his neck. He roared and spluttered and danced, while Grundy pressed the trigger remorselessly. Then Kildare grabbed the old chap and dragged him out of range.

"Groogh! Spooosh! Young—groogh!—villain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd was highly entertained. It was the real beginning of hostilities. The little back window of the inner room opened right on to the door. Grundy had barricaded most of it with boxes, but he had left a space for such eventualities as this. He was already at the hole with a new siphon.

Kildare grabbed up the hammer and chisel, and attacked the door with resolution. He was drenched from head to foot the next moment before he could jump out of range.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

As he staggered back, Grundy gave a triumphant yell and dropped the empty siphon. Next moment a dozen stale eggs came flying through the hole, one after another.

Biff, biff, biff!

Kildare stopped one with his face, and Knox stopped two. All the prefects got an egg somewhere, for they were crowded round the door. There was a chorus of furious howls, and a storm of laughter from the crowd—which jumped quickly out of range.

"G-good heavens!" gasped Mr. Railton. One of the eggs had missed his head by an inch; another had broken into a smelly mess on his gown. "Grundy—boy! Good heavens! Kildare, that boy must be captured! This—this cannot be allowed to go on!"

"G-good gad!" choked Kildare. "But—but how are we to shift him, sir? We'd better leave him to it—he'll get tired—"

"Nonsense, Kildare! The headmaster's orders must be obeyed!"

"Very well, sir! Oh, good!"

Someone had been blessed with a brain-wave. Two prefects came rushing up with some boards, which they slammed over the hole in the window, and leaned against them.

Kildare—safe from assault and battery from the window now—started work on the door with terrific determination.

Crash, crash, crash!

There was a snap of a breaking lock at last as the seniors crashed against the door, while Kildare worked away desperately. There followed another snap—the breaking away of the bolts that held the door. Lock and bolts were gone now.

"Altogether!" yelled Kildare. "We've got the beggar now!"

They flung their weight again and again at the shaking door. The sound of the blows resounded across the

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quadrangle. The prefects were wet and smelly and very angry.

"Oh, bai Jove! Gwunday's numbah is up now, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus dismally.

"Not yet, I fancy!" said Tom Merry. "Grundy's not the man to give in easily! Good luck to him, anyway!"

"Hear, hear!"

Crash, crash, crash!

The door bent inwards—there was the sound of shifting boxes inside. The door had bent inwards a foot—quite sufficient for Grundy to get to work with his lemonade again, in fact.

Swoooooosh!

"Yoooooop! Grooogh! Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle!"

The prefects staggered away from the door, streaming with lemonade. At such close quarters they had got fairly soaked. As they staggered away the triumphant Grundy got busy with eggs again.

Whiz, whiz, whiz!

Eggs flew through the narrow opening in the door—fresh eggs and eggs not "eggactly" fresh, as Lowther put it. The prefects fairly bolted before the whizzing ovals. It was victory for the rebel again.

But the prefects were furious now—at least, Kildare was not done. He made a blind rush back at the door, fearful of Grundy closing and securing it again, and thus ruining their hard work.

"Back up!" he roared. "Baker—North—Rushden—come on! Quick!"

The seniors backed up with a will. They charged at the door. This time it really looked as if Grundy's number was up. The door gave another inch—there was the creaking of wedges straining under the weight. And then—

Something else came through the crack—something entirely unexpected and unlooked-for. Grundy also had been visited by a brain-wave.

It was pepper! Really, they might have guessed that Grundy would think of that. And Grundy had.

The pepper came flying out in a cloud, and it settled over the straining prefects, on their faces, and over their clothes.

"What the— Wha—"

"ATISH-OOOO!"

It was a terrific sneeze from half a dozen frantic seniors. They jumped away from the door, doubled up in dire anguish, their faces twisted and contorted. And as they jumped away they sneezed and sneezed frantically.

Then the wind caught the floating pepper in the air, and soon nearly every fellow in the quad was sneezing, and also every master.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Grundy, from within the fort.

"Come and have some more. Come on!"

But there were no takers, so to speak. The prefects were whacked. Their faces were red, their eyes were red and streaming. Their clothes were drenched and covered in egg white and yellow. Still sneezing terrifically, the prefects tottered away and went indoors in search of the bath-rooms.

The masters followed—Mr. Railton, after recuperating, to seek the Head's advice on the matter. Quite clearly it was not going to be an easy matter to shift George Alfred Grundy. And that youth—triumphant and gleeful—was left to his own devices, in undisputed possession of his stronghold.

CHAPTER 11.

Knox Gloats!

"ROTEN!"

Tom Merry & Co. agreed with Wilkins and Gunn that it was rotten.

Wilkins and Gunn really knew now whether they were really sorry at parting with George Alfred. They were; they missed him badly. And now, the thought that he was expelled filled them with distress. They had gone along, dismally, to discuss the matter with Tom Merry & Co., who had also agreed that it was "rotten."

Everybody's sympathies—in the Lower School, at all events—were with George Alfred. Nobody wanted him to be sacked. He was an awful ass—several kinds of a born idiot, as all agreed. But he was one of the best, nevertheless, and they did not want him to be sacked. Moreover, none of the juniors believed now that he had "biffed" Mr. Lathom. Blake was almost certain he had seen Knox biff him; Dick Julian and Ralph Reckness Cardew were absolutely certain.

It was an hour since the sensational assault on the besieged Grundy in the tuckshop. Since then Grundy had been left severely alone. Possibly the Head was giving the reckless, headstrong youth time to think things over; possibly the Head and Railton were drawing up a new plan

of attack. At all events, they made no further move for the time being.

Yet nobody believed Grundy could come off victorious—excepting Grundy himself, of course. It was only a matter of time. Then would come the high jump for Grundy!

"It—it's rotten!" repeated George Wilkins almost tearfully. "Sacked—old Grundy sacked, you know! We've got to do something, you fellows! If it's true what Cardew and Julian say—"

"It's true enough!" said Blake grimly. "I'm as certain of it as they are. It was Knox who biffed Lathom and caused the trouble!"

"Then we ought to go to the Head—"

"Haven't I been? He refuses to listen. He'll refuse to believe us against Knox if he did listen."

"But we've got to do something to save old Grundy. Can't we tackle Railton?"

"He won't take our word against Knox's, unless—"

Tom Merry paused. "Look here! We'll go and tackle Kildare and get him to speak to Railton."

"Good idea! He'll see we get fair play."

The juniors agreed that it was worth trying, and they hurried along to Kildare's study. Kildare was in a bad temper, but he listened. Unlike the Head, Kildare knew just how much Knox's word was worth.

"And Cardew and Julian can swear to this—that they actually saw Knox strike the blow?" he asked curtly at last.

"Yes. Think Grundy would have kicked up rusty like this if he was guilty, Kildare?" said Blake warmly.

Kildare did not reply to that.

"I'll speak to Knox first, kids!" he snapped. "If it wasn't Grundy, then the young fool may escape expulsion, at all events."

The juniors departed, and Kildare went in search of Knox of the Sixth. Kildare was not feeling at all kindly disposed towards Grundy; but he was not the fellow to allow an injustice to be done to any fellow. He found Knox chatting with Sefton of the Sixth in the quad.

Kildare did not beat about the bush.

"I've heard that it was actually you who struck Lathom this afternoon, Knox!" he said curtly. "The kids are all talking about it—I've heard it several times. And I've just had the names of at least two juniors who actually saw you strike the blow—or who claim to have done."

Knox stared at him.

"Oh, have you?" he snapped at last, with a sneer. "And you're inclined to take a fag's word against mine, what? Thank goodness the Head's not such a fool!"

"I'm not saying what I personally believe, Knox!" said the captain of St. Jim's quietly. "But I've been approached in the matter, and it's my duty, I fancy, to see that justice is done, and that the truth is known. I'm only asking you, Knox, if there's any truth in it."

"Truth in it!" blared Knox furiously. "Of course there isn't, you impudent cad, Kildare! It's just like you to back up those young scoundrels!"

"Rubbish!" said Kildare sharply. "I'm doing nothing of the kind, Knox. I was asked to look into it by juniors, certainly. And I felt it my duty to do so. If you say there is no truth in it—that it was Grundy who struck Lathom—"

"Of course it was, you fool!"

"Then I'm obliged to accept your word, Knox!" said Kildare quietly, and he walked away.

"The—the meddling, interfering fool!" hissed Knox savagely. "Look here, Seffy, for goodness' sake don't you let it out that it was I who did it! I told you—"

"I guessed you'd done it from the way that young fool acted!" grinned Sefton. "That's why I asked you. But, my dear man, you've no need to worry. What's a couple of kids' words against yours?"

"I know. But now that meddling fool Kildare's on the scent—he hates me, and if he can get proof—"

"You silly owl, I shan't let it out, trust me!" grinned Sefton. "You're safe as houses! After all, you didn't mean to biff that old fool Lathom—"

"But I did biff him!" said Knox, and he burst into a laugh. "Well, so long as you don't let it out I'm safe enough, I—"

"That is your mistake, Knox!"

It was the voice of Mr. Railton, Housemaster of the School House.

Knox and Sefton nearly leaped out of their skins. They wheeled round and looked upwards.

Then they understood. Mr. Railton was there; he stood leaning out of the open window of his study. Neither of the seniors had realised they were even under the study window, much less that it was open and that Mr. Railton was there.

But he was there! And one look into his steely, grey eyes told Knox at once that he had heard all.

Knox never felt so near to fainting in his life.

"I—I—I—" he stammered.

"There is no necessity for us to discuss this matter here, Knox," said Mr. Railton quietly. "I usually make a point of ignoring anything I overhear by accident. But this is too serious—a different matter entirely. You will go to Dr. Holmes at once, Knox, and you will confess to him that you have lied—that it was you who struck Mr. Lathom this afternoon. Sefton, you will kindly overtake Kildare and ask him also to meet me in the Head's study without delay. Stay, though! Ask him first to discover the names of the boys who saw Knox strike Mr. Lathom. They also will report to Dr. Holmes!"

"Oh—oh, yes, sir!" breathed Sefton, and he walked hastily after Kildare.

Knox stood shaking, his mouth opening and shutting like a stranded fish. Mr. Railton turned away from the open window and disappeared. He had no desire to hear anything further from Gerald Knox just then. And with feelings too deep for words, Knox of the Sixth staggered indoors like a limp rag, his face quite ghastly.

CHAPTER 12.

Backing Up Gussy!

"SOMETHING on!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry & Co. were in the quad. But they were not near the tuckshop. Grundy's stronghold had been placed out of bounds by the Head. Any junior caught near it was to be punished severely—very severely indeed. Grundy was to be left alone in his glory until the authorities thought fit to make another attempt to dislodge him from his position.

Tom Merry's eyes were gleaming, and Wilkins and Gunn were looking a trifle hopeful.

"Levison saw Knox crawling into the Head's study," said Tom. "He was fairly crawling, I believe, and he looked absolutely pipped. And Kildare's ordered Dick Julian and Cardew to go to the Head, too. That looks like business!"

"Kildare's done it!" went on Tom. "I knew he would! But—but the Head won't listen, I'm afraid. He's not like old Kildare!"

"Well, something's on, anyway," said Jack Blake. "I was hoping the Beak would send for me. I'd jolly soon tell him what's what! But I'm not quite so certain as Julian and Cardew, worse luck. I—"

"Shush! Here's Kildare!"

Kildare came down the School House steps.

"Any luck, Kildare?" demanded Tom. "Have you—"

"Yes. Knox has been to the Head, and has explained that it was he who struck Lathom, and not Grundy," said Kildare quietly.

"He's owned up?" breathed Tom.

Kildare tried hard not to grin.

"He owned up—accidentally!" he said. "He denied it to me, and after I'd gone he admitted it to Sefton. Unfortunately—for him—he didn't realise he was standing just under Railton's open window, and—well, Railton heard him and nailed him. That's all—"

"Phew! Great pip! And Grundy—"

"I'm just going to speak to him now. If Grundy will return indoors and give himself up, the Head will withdraw his expulsion, and he's to get let off with a flogging. That's all!"

And Kildare walked on towards the tuckshop.

The astonished but delighted juniors waited for his return. They heard Grundy's bellowing voice in the distance, but they dared not approach the tuckshop. Kildare came back at last; he was looking very grim indeed.

"Well, is the dummy coming out, Kildare?" asked Blake eagerly.

"He refuses to come out!"

"What? Oh, bai Jove!"

"The—the born idiot!" gasped Kildare. "He—he refuses to give himself up unless the Head withdraws the flogging, too. Says he has his—his position in the House to think of. Goodness knows what his thumping position is—unless it's the biggest fool in the school, and he certainly holds that position! The—the—"

Words seemed to fail Kildare, and he stamped away indoors to report to the Head Grundy's astounding defiance. Tom Merry & Co. and Wilkins and Gunn groaned.

The Head was ready to be lenient now—now Grundy's innocence in regard to that luckless blow was concerned. But Grundy looked like ruining all by his stubbornness.

Still on the dollar trail, Dick and Danny have another shot at making a fortune!



The Dollar Hunters



THIS WEEK:—
"GREEN CABS!"

CHAPTER 1. A Bargain!

DICK YATES had to shout to make himself heard, because he sat beside his pal, Danny Malone, in a carriage on the New York Subway, and the rattle and roar of the speeding train almost deafened both of them.

"I'm beginning to think," he said, "that for every chance of making a fortune in your wonderful country there are half a dozen chances of losing a fortune."

There was a look of amazement on Danny Malone's freckled face.

"Say, buddy," he queried, "who's quitting now?"

"P'r'aps it's the sultry weather," said Dick. "Anyway, I don't feel so good and hopeful this morning."

"Laying down on me?" asked Danny.

"No," retorted Dick. "But I'm losing faith in your golden land of opportunities, and all that bunk."

"Gee, that's too bad!" Danny's freckled face was puckered up in mock concern. "Where does it hurt you most, buddy? Lost faith, have you? Hot diggity! And who started this dollar-hunting stunt, anyway?"

"I did," admitted Dick. "I left England to chase dollar bills. I told everybody there wasn't a chance left in the Old Country for a go-ahead fellow like me. I said this was the place to make money. New York—America—the land of golden opportunities. And now, look at me! I said I'd land here with a thousand dollars and I'd go back with a million. But do I look that way? Guess I'm lucky still to have my thousand."

"But we've been up against that crook, Van Duren," said Danny. "You chummed up with me and got me crazy after dollars, and now you're quitting because we've had three setbacks."

"You were after quitting yesterday," Dick accused him.

"Sure, so I was," Danny admitted. "But we're on a good thing, buddy, this time. You've led me, but this time I lead you, slap up to the green pastures and the dollar factory. This is a wow, and we'll clean up big and pretty."

"What is it?" asked Dick cautiously.

If he had learnt nothing else in his brief but hectic career in New York he had learnt the value of caution. He had honestly believed that the Old Country was played out, and that there were no chances for any young fellow who was out to make money. His parents having died and left him a little money, he had left Old England behind him to seek his fortune in New York, invited by his uncle, Sam Schuster, a New York police sergeant.

But the only real good thing that Dick had found in New York was his friendship with Danny Malone. Right from the first he had found himself up against Van Duren, the scoundrelly solicitor. Dick had joined forces and capital

with Danny Malone, and they had gone out into the busy world of New York City looking for that golden chance of making a fortune, but it had eluded them. Instead, they had butted into the nefarious schemes of Van Duren, and they were lucky to escape with their capital intact. In the case of Prosperity Wharf they had been lucky to escape with their lives.

"I tell you straight," said Dick, "if Van Duren is mixed up in your new bonanza, I quit. Three times we've wriggled away from him, and next time we may not be so lucky."

"Brake down, buddy," said Danny. "Van Duren's not likely to have a finger in this pie. I tell you, it's a wow. It'll mean hard work and all that, but the chance is right there."

"Spill it, then."

"In a word buddy, it's transport! What are the demands of this present generation? I'll tell you! Movement and speed! In these days of hustle and rush, folk naturally want to go where they want to go as fast as they can go, and they must have comfort all the time. You supply the means of movement with speed and comfort, and they'll pay for it. You get me?"

Dick stared at his pal.

"What exactly are you getting at?" he asked. "You get me riding out to Brooklyn, and I guess it's up to you to explain. You said it was a gold-plated bonanza, and—"

"Shucks, so it is," said Danny. "Lamp that, buddy—give it the once over!"

A BATTERED TAXI GATHERS NO
DOLLARS!

But it sometimes catches crooks!

He handed Dick a newspaper folded to display the advertisement column, and one announcement had been underlined heavily with pencil. Dick read that advertisement and began to understand.

"Going concern for sale at knock-down price. Garage, two cabs, and complete outfit.

Chance of a lifetime for hard-working guy."

"It's this way with me, buddy," put in Danny. "We've tried real estate and got stung. We tried speculation on Wall Street, and backed out while we were safe. We tried being wharfingers, but Van Duren was interested. Strikes me speculation is the wrong way. This garage stunt is the goods, believe me. We won't make a fortune, but we might make a good living. We can buy more cabs when we get the dollars, and maybe work up a big transport company. Gee, but the chance is there!"

"And Van Duren?" asked Dick.

"He's not likely to have anything to do with a Brooklyn one-horse garage that houses a couple o' cabs," sneered Danny. "If you're a croaker I'll handle this job myself."

"I'm only being careful," said Dick. "I'm with you, Danny. We'll take a look at this going concern."

They left the train at the next station and walked briskly to the address given in the advertisement. The garage looked all right. There was a good drive in, and the place had been newly painted. One of the large doors was open, and they could see the gleaming bonnet of a brand-new taxicab. At least, it looked brand new.

A keen-faced man leant against the doorpost, smoking, and the pals walked up to him. As usual, Dick did most of the talking.

"Are you the proprietor of this outfit?"

"Sure. Why?"

"We might buy it," said Dick.

"I want cash down, and you kids don't look worth more'n two cents and a stick o' gum. What's the big idea?" he snarled.

"Nix on that, big boy," retorted Danny. "If we buy, we buy, and our dollars are good."

"Honest Injun?" queried the man.

"Genuine inquirers," said Dick. "But first, why are you selling?"

"I'll tell you, mister. It's this way. My brother died a month ago, and he's done left me a ranch down in California. I want to leave this burg as soon as I can get rid of this joint. That's how it is. Because I'm in a hurry I'm selling cheap. One thousand dollars will buy her as she stands. Walk in gents and see f'r yourselves."

The pals walked in, and there wasn't much their keen eyes missed. The garage was in apple-pie order, with all necessary repairing tackle, petrol tanks, and two green cabs, complete. Like most New Yorkers, Danny knew all there was to know about motors, and Dick ran him close in knowledge of internal combustion engines. Neither of them was expert, but they knew enough to be able to tell a good engine from a bad one.

The garage itself meeting with their approval, they tested the two cabs. Both the pals could drive, and, ignoring the fact that they had no licences as yet, they drove the cabs round and round the block.

Then they brought them back into the garage, and tested and probed and examined, and could find no fault.

"A bonanza!" whispered Danny, trying hard not to show how pleased he was. "Dirt cheap at a thousand dollars!"

"Stop grinning, then, and watch me," retorted Dick. He strode up to the owner. "Not so dusty," he said. "But a thousand—say, how d'you get that way?"

"A thousand or nothing," said the proprietor. "You can't knock me down a cent."

"Eight hundred," said Dick.

"Nope!"

"Eight hundred and fifty!"

The proprietor made a gesture of hopelessness.

"F'r the love o' Mikel!" he exclaimed. "Do I look that sort o' sap?"

"Nine hundred."

"Nothing doing, mister."

"Nine hundred and forty-five," said Dick.

"Nope! A thousand is my price and I won't budge."

"Good-morning!" retorted Dick. "I was keen on buying, too. Still—there it is. If you won't see reason, good-morning!"

He walked away, and Danny went with him. But Danny hated the idea of going.

"Aw, gee, buddy!" he complained. "It's a snip at a thousand. And you're throwing it away f'r the sake of—"

"Hey, wait a bit!" yelled the proprietor. "Make it nine hundred and fifty and she's yours!"

Dick spun round sharply.

"Done!" he said. "Nine hundred and fifty it is!"

"Hot diggity!" exclaimed Danny. "F'r driving a bargain, buddy, you're the alligator's pyjamas!"

"Come round to my lawyer," said the proprietor, "and we'll start the job of fixing up the deal."

"Who is your lawyer?" asked Dick sharply.

"Job Smithers, just round the corner."

"Good!" If that lawyer's name had been Van Duren Dick would have called the deal off, but without any suspicion in his mind, he went round the corner to the lawyer's office.

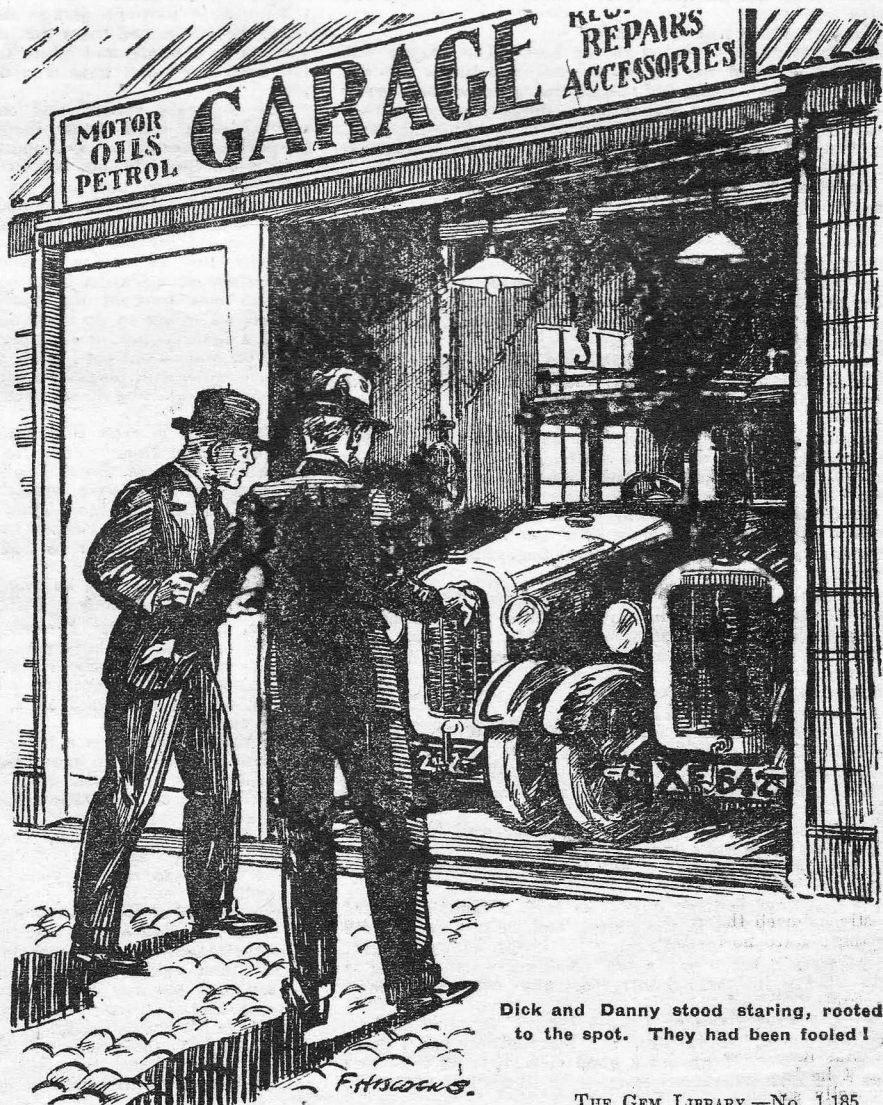
Even then Danny was a trifle nervous. But when he came face to face with the lawyer, he found that it was not Van Duren.

Dick wrote out a cheque and signed a lot of papers.

"It'll take two days to get these documents certified and stamped," said the lawyer. "You come round here on Friday morning and I'll hand you the keys."

"Suits us," said Dick. "We'll be here."

There was a lot of shaking hands, and the pals made tracks for home.



Dick and Danny stood staring, rooted to the spot. They had been fooled!

"It's a snip!" said Danny, breathless with pleasure. "The cabs alone are worth the money."

"I know it," agreed Dick. "Seems too cheap to be true."

"He wanted the cash quickly, that's all," said Danny.

"Don't go croaking any more, buddy."

"I'm not croaking, but I took down the registration numbers of those cabs to be on the safe side. Now, Danny, we'd better see about all the licences and things, so's we can start right in on making money."

CHAPTER 2. Sold Again!

DICK and Danny spent a very busy two days getting ready to enter the transport business, then on the Friday they repaired hopefully to the office of Job Smithers, the lawyer. He was very pleased to see them, and apologised for the fact that the former proprietor of the garage had taken his money and hastened to his new ranch in California, where his presence was badly needed.

"Don't worry," said Danny. "Guess we can manage without him."

"Sure we can!" agreed Smithers.

They signed more papers and took the key of the garage. Then the two chums shook hands and hastened off.

"The best thing we ever did in our lives," cried Danny.

"Hot diggity, but this is the beginning of our first million dollars!"

"Hope so," said Dick, trying hard not to croak. He didn't feel at all comfortable, yet he could not explain, even to himself, what it was that troubled him.

Arrived at the garage he inserted the key in the lock, turned it, and slid the door back. Danny took one look and howled with rage.

"Fooled! Hoodwinked! Look!"

Dick stood staring, rooted to the spot. The garage was there, and some of the repairing gear was there, but the cabs had changed. Instead of two gleaming, brand new green vehicles, there were two broken-down, dingy, rusty cabs, that looked fit only for a rubbish heap or a breaking-up yard. And, to make matters worse, they carried the same registration numbers that had appeared on the brand new cabs!

"Played us for suckers!" groaned Danny. "And got away with it!"

"Have they?" queried Dick grimly. "Guess this has got to come to a show down right now!"

He turned and ran down the street, with Danny close behind him, round the corner to the office of Job Smithers. As they turned the corner they saw a car speeding away out at the other end of the long road, but they didn't pay any attention to that—not just then.

They climbed the stairs to Smithers' office, and came to a sudden halt outside the door, rage and despair in their hearts.

"Fooled! Hoodwinked!" groaned Danny, yet again.

The name-plate had gone from the door, which was locked. The caretaker came down the stairs, and Dick made curt inquiries, and the answers he got confirmed his most dismal forebodings.

"Old Smithers? Why, he only hired the office for a couple o' weeks. He went only half an hour ago, if that! Paid his rent and ran downstairs like there was boogies after him!"

"Where's a phone?" snapped Dick.

"Behind the main door."

Dick rushed to the instrument and called up the bank.

"Stop payment of my cheque for nine-fifty!" he said.

"Too late," came the answer. "We paid out on that yesterday!"

"Guess we're ditched," said Dick.

"All through me!" groaned Danny.

"Snap out o' that!" retorted Dick. "We're in this together, Danny. It's as much my fault as yours. But what's the use o' moaning? We'll try the p'lice!"

But at the station headquarters Sam Schuster eyed them sadly.

"Your dough's gone, and it's sweet farewell!" he said. "What were these guys like?"

Dick gave a brief but good description, and Schuster nodded his head.

"I'd like to meet them guys," he said. "They're two of the slickest tricksters in the States, and we're wanting 'em badly. Guess your money's gone for keeps, sonny. Sorry, but maybe it'll teach you a lot. Nothing worth having is really cheap in this country or any other—not even experience."

"When I want a sermon I'll ask for it!" snapped Dick.

"Sure, I know," said Schuster. "You feel sore and I don't blame you none. If we get a good view of those tricksters

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we'll gaul 'em so fast you won't see their dust. But you'll never see a cent of your money again. Sorry, and all that!"

The pals turned away sadly and went back to their garage, only to meet more trouble. A burly man was waiting for them.

"These your cabs?" he asked.

"This is our garage as well," said Dick.

"Guess again, kid," retorted the stranger.

"But we bought the whole show from Smithers," said Danny.

"Listen here, you smart Alec!" snapped the newcomer.

"That garage was never Smithers to sell. He rented it from me a month ago, paying a month's rent in advance. And if you want to stay here you pay another month's rent here and now."

The pals groaned, seeing only too plainly how they had been fooled. All the papers and agreements they had signed had been clever forgeries, but there was nothing to be gained by groaning. Dick paid a month's rent of the garage and the man took his departure.

"I'd kick myself if I knew how to do it," said Danny miserably. "Three times we've nearly lost our money. This time it has gone, and it won't come back. We ought to've known it was too good to be true—a humdinger of a garage with two up-to-the-minute cabs, all in for nine hundred and fifty! We ought to've known!"

"We ought," agreed Dick. "But the biggest mistake we made was in not insisting on all the business being done through our own lawyer. You get me? If we'd named our own lawyer and refused to deal with Smithers, we'd have been saved this knock. In any case, here we are with only a few tools and a couple of rotten cabs, and we've got to make the best of it. But if we are to see our money back our middle name's got to be luck, in capital letters! Let's start!"

They went into the garage and examined the cars. The more they examined them the more they groaned; but they worked with might and main, taking no notice of anyone—not even the small boys who collected in the doorway to jeer.

The old cabs rattled and complained, but by dint of several days' hard work the engines began to behave properly, although it was impossible to ignore the fact that they were very old and almost worn out.

After that, the pals had to set to work polishing and painting and repairing the dingy upholstery in order to make the vehicles fit to be seen. It was hard work, and Danny could not see the sense of it at first.

"Why not say we're beaten right now?" he asked, wiping the perspiration from his face.

"The best part of our money's gone," retorted Dick. "What we've got to do is go out with these old crocks and make a little money, if it's only enough for the first instalment on one decent cab. But, of course, if you're quitting because we've run plumb into hard times—"

"I'm not quitting!" snapped Danny. "We'll start to-morrow!"

And on the morrow they took the cabs out. Dick went one way, and Danny went the other. But it was heart-breaking. Most of the taxi-cabs of New York are owned by huge combines with plenty of money. Their vehicles gleamed in the sunshine. They were clean, spick-and-span, fast and powerful. People took one look at Dick's old crock and walked away to find a decent cab, and Danny met with the same fate.

Dick was hoarse with hailing likely-looking passengers.

"Taxi, sir? Cab, lady? Distance no object, sir."

"Aw, chase y'rself! I want a cab, not a truck."

Then one dear old lady with umpteen parcels hired Dick to take her to the railway station.

"You won't go too quickly, will you, driver?" she said.

"Oh, no, ma'am!" said Dick. "You've no need to worry about that!"

He had never spoken a truer word in his life. That old cab couldn't safely do more than twenty miles per hour, and then only downhill. But the old lady was perfectly satisfied, and at the station she alighted and received all her parcels.

"Two dollars, lady," said Dick.

"Is that all?" she said. "You are a very careful driver, and I intend to reward you. Here are three dollars for yourself."

Dick parked at the railway station, while an express came in from Milwaukee and Chicago. He got one fare from that trainload, and he took the hayseed to a dingy hotel at Hoboken, raking in three dollars in fare and tip. Then he set back towards Wall Street and the business end of the city, but that six dollars represented all he could earn, and it wasn't encouraging.

The brokers took one look at his old cab and walked on to find another. In a way Dick couldn't blame them, but it wasn't helping him to get a decent cab. He had

lost the best part of his thousand dollars, and what little money Danny had they had to use for working capital. The situation was grave whichever way he looked at it.

CHAPTER 3.
Luck at Last!

DICK decided to head for Brooklyn in the hope of meeting Danny and comparing notes. He proceeded slowly in case he missed a likely fare, but it was always the same.

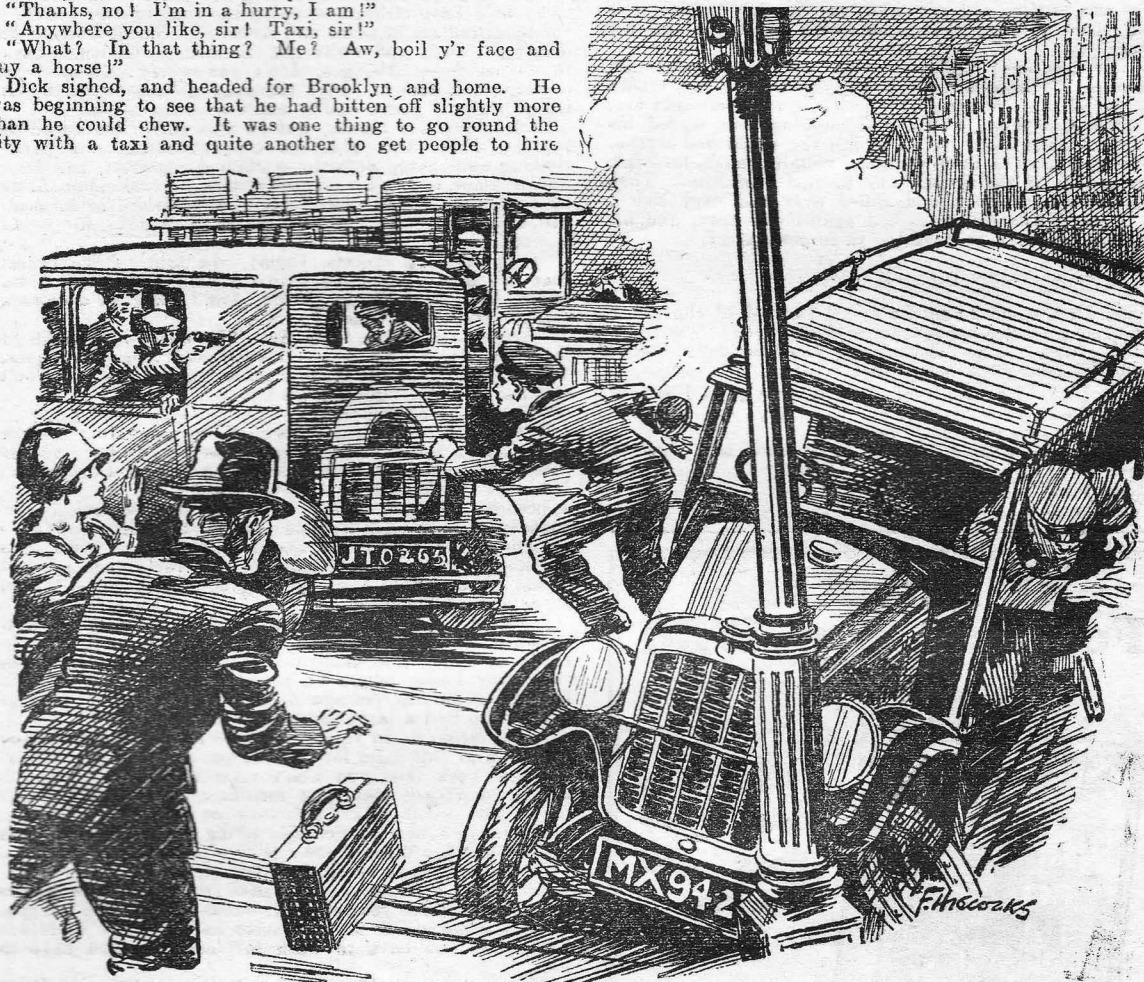
"Taxi, sir! Distance no object!"
"Thanks, no! I'm in a hurry, I am!"
"Anywhere you like, sir! Taxi, sir!"
"What? In that thing? Me? Aw, boil y'r face and buy a horse!"

Dick sighed, and headed for Brooklyn and home. He was beginning to see that he had bitten off slightly more than he could chew. It was one thing to go round the city with a taxi and quite another to get people to hire

"There," said the cop. "I give you ten minutes to get her going. After that I'll summons you f'r obstruction!"

Dick didn't know for sure whether he could, and he didn't worry. He was too wild with his old cab. He could see that six dollars a day wouldn't buy many new taxis.

He got the cab working again and drove off towards Brooklyn, still game but unhappy. He kept a good lookout for Danny without seeing him. It was getting towards late afternoon, and the banks were closing. It was a slack time, and everybody seemed drowsy. Dick felt that way himself, and he just cruised along, one eye open for passengers and the other eye lifted for Danny. He found neither for some time.



The old taxi skidded helplessly across the road, and then crashed into a lamp standard!

the thing. He couldn't force passengers into his ramshackle old cab.

He got into a traffic jam and stopped. The cop on point duty eyed the old cab and grinned, then he waved on the stream of waiting cars. Dick slipped in the clutch, released the foot brake and—nothing happened. Drivers bellowed, the cop shouted and waved his arm like a windmill. Dick wrestled and fought with his brakes and gears, but the old cab shuddered and remained where it was.

The cop came striding over.

"What's biting you, kid?" he asked.

"It won't budge," said Dick.

"Looks as though a good meal would do it good," retorted the cop. "But can't have you cluttering up the road. Get a move on!"

Dick set his jaw in grim determination and fought with the electric starter. Then he alighted and cranked her up till it seemed as if he'd shake the roof off. Small boys jeered, chauffeurs laughed spitefully. Then suddenly the aged engine spluttered into life.

Dick rushed round to his seat, but by the time he was behind the wheel the engine was silent again. The cop regarded him with mingled rage and scorn. He placed one hand on the back panel and shoved the old cab, while Dick steered her, round into a side street.

Then—crack! The peace of the afternoon was lit asunder. Revolvers cracked viciously, men shouted hoarsely. Dick saw masked gangsters rush from a bank into a waiting car that shot off at a terrific speed. Then, from a side street came an old taxi. It was Danny, and a cop was riding on his running-board. The cop was Sam Schuster, gun in hand.

A gangster leant from the window of the car, and his gun spat fire. Schuster replied, but whether he registered a hit it was utterly impossible to say. But the crook got Danny's off-side front tyre. The old taxi skidded helplessly across the road, crashed into a lamp standard, and seemed to settle down on its broken axle as if to die.

Danny leapt from his seat. Schuster was shot off like a bundle of old rags. His head struck the sidewalk a nasty thud, and he lay huddled up and strangely still.

It all happened in the twinkling of an eye, but it fired Dick to action. He forgot he was driving an aged crock. He stamped on the accelerator, and the old taxi leapt forward like a live thing. He flooded her with petrol, put her in top gear, and drove after the escaping crooks along the wide main street.

Many years had come and gone since that aged car had ever moved so fast. The old engine roared and rattled, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,165.

but it worked, and the wheels went round. Dick just forgot all details. He was at the wheel of a cab, and before him sped the crooks, who, as far as he knew, had shot down his uncle in cold blood.

He was mad, infuriated, and he went after them. One crook was leaning out of the window pumping lead at the old taxi as fast as he could, but he never hit Dick once. The windscreen of the rattling cab was shattered. There wasn't a pane of glass unbroken. But Dick kept her at it, coaxing more and more speed out of her in one great, relentless effort.

He saw the crooks draw in towards the sidewalk, and guessed in a flash that they intended shooting round into a side street on the off side. He coaxed yet more speed out of the rattling old cab, and the ungainly vehicle shot ahead, Dick steering her to intercept the crooks on the corner.

It was madness! Men shouted with excitement and horror, as the ramshackle taxi forged ahead. The crooks came round in a sweeping curve. Their revolvers spat fire, and Dick was dimly aware of something that seared his cheek like a hot iron. Then he left the wheel and started to his feet. Even as there came the metallic crash, he leapt. It seemed as if the crooks' car loomed over him. Then he struck the roadway and rolled over and over like a shot rabbit. Something crashed against his head, and his senses left him in a red smother of forgetfulness!

When Dick came round he found himself at the police headquarters surrounded by sympathisers. Danny was there, looking grave. Sam Schuster, his head bandaged, stood close by, a grim smile on his face.

"Hey, Dick," he said, "you stopped those guys, I guess."

Dick grinned back at him.

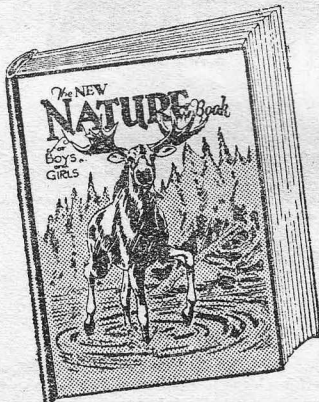
"I aimed to do just that," he said.

"But you don't know who the boss crook was," put in Danny.

"No. Who?"

"Van Duren!"

All About the Folk of the Wild



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"Gee!" Dick stared at everybody in turn. "Say—how come?" he asked.

"Like this," said Schuster. "Van Duren failed to pull off a coup on Wall Street. He had to get a lot of dollars, and get 'em quickly, so he got in touch with a gang, and held up the Brooklyn Bank. He'd have got clean away with it, too, if it hadn't been for you."

"And he's in gaol right now, buddy," said Danny gleefully. "What d'you know about that, hey?"

"It's a pippin," said Dick. "But what about our cabs? They're both smashed up!"

A beaming, corpulent gent thrust his way forward.

"See here, Mister Yates," he said. "I'm the president of the Brooklyn Bank. If that guy, Van Duren, had got away he'd have cleaned us up to the tune of two hundred thousand dollars in notes and securities. Seeing as how he didn't get away and we've got the money and bonds back in our safe—Aw, gee, don't you worry! You'll get compensated, sonny! Five thousand dollars ought to put things right, I guess, and it won't hurt the bank."

Dick smiled his thanks, but he was really too dazed to reply. There was a lot of congratulations and hand-shaking and taking notes by scribbling reporters, and Dick hardly knew what was happening until he was going home by trolley-car with Danny. He wasn't hurt a great deal, his wild leap from the taxi only resulted in his being stunned.

"Five thousand dollars, Danny," he said. "We'll split that two ways. It's more than our money back, after all, and we're dead lucky to get it! I did think we'd come a cropper over those cabs!"

"Same here," agreed Danny. "It was all a stroke of luck, the like of which won't ever come our way again. We get our money back, and more besides! It's a wow! But I'm through, buddy, from now on."

"Through?" echoed Dick.

"Just that," explained Danny. "I'm going to get me a good honest job in a big firm. See? I'll start at the bottom at so many dollars per week, and I'll work and I'll work till me fingers is raw, and till I'm president, or something. You get me? This business of looking for chances of making a fortune cuts no ice with me! It's nothing more'n a gamble that might come off once in a hundred years, and might not. It's me for a good job and plenty of work, till I get to the top of the ladder! I'm cured o' fortune-hunting!"

Dick was grimly silent. He felt that there was a deal of horse sense in what Danny had got off his chest. He made no reply, and thought things out while they made their way home, where he found a letter awaiting him, bearing a British postage stamp. It was from another uncle, who had a large farm in Devonshire.

"I'm getting on in years," it ran, "and I want somebody to take over this farm for me. If you're making a fortune in New York then you won't want to take up farming, but if you're not making a fortune you might think this out. You won't make a fortune at farming, Dick, but you'd make a nice comfortable living if you're not afraid of hard work. What d'you say?"

Dick showed that letter to Danny.

"It's your best bet, buddy," said Danny. "I shan't like you going back to your country, but it may be best for you. Shucks, there are as many chances back there as there are here, only you have to work for 'em, like you have to here."

"Guess I'll grab it while the going's good," said Dick. "But as soon as I can afford a good holiday, Danny, I'm coming back over the herring-pond to see you again."

"I'll live for that day, buddy," said Danny. "And maybe when I get me enough dollars I'll take a look at Old England meself!"

"You'll always be welcome where I am," said Dick, gripping him by the hand. "I reckon it's better this way, Danny. The partnership is dissolved, but in many ways I guess it's been worth while."

"Sure, so it has," agreed Danny. "Wouldn't have missed it for all the dollars in Wall Street. But Schuster was right. You can't get money for nothing in this world, and here's where we start in working hard. If a fortune comes our way, well it does. But if it don't, who cares? So long as we make a good living we won't have a thing to grumble about. This is the end of dollar-hunting!"

And they went round, arm in arm, to the nearest first-class restaurant to have a slap-up feed and to celebrate in general.

THE END.

(Well, that's the end of Dick and Danny. But why worry? You'll meet Micky, another cheery cove, in next week's GEM. "Micky's Micro Mixture!" is an unusual yarn—and you'll get an unusually long laugh!)

Our roaring serial of life in the
Royal Navy!

BY DAVID
GOODWIN



THE FIGHTING MIDDY!

(For opening chapters,
see page 26.)

Four to One!

NED bit his lip, and though he did not wince, he would have given a good deal to fell Grimshaw with a smite upon the head from a chartease, or anything else handy just then. But he stuck to his post, though his temper burned within him, while Grimshaw went back and lounged into his chair again.

Ned was thinking over the various things he would like to do to Mr. Grimshaw, when his eye lit on that gentleman's handkerchief lying on the seat under the porthole. It had fallen out of Grimshaw's cuff when he used the malacca, and as Ned saw it a slow grin grew upon the middy's face.

It was not long before Grimshaw missed his handkerchief, being one of those people with chronic snuffles, and he got up and looked for it. Seeing it on the seat opposite, he stepped across and bent down to reach for it.

At that moment, in the nick of time, Ned opened the scuttle as the ship rolled.

A solid column of water a foot thick spouted full into Grimshaw's face and knocked him backwards. He collapsed on the floor with a spluttering yell, drenched to the skin, amid a roar of laughter from the whole gun-room. Ned slammed the scuttle and fairly bolted.

The sequel to that little incident can be told briefly, for after Grimshaw had changed his clothes, Ned got a terrific tanning with a dirk-scabbard for opening the scuttle, and another for leaving his post. He had grown too tough on the Victorious for a dirk-scabbard to have much effect on him, however, and he took both thrashings without a word.

NED AND JINKS RUN INTO TROUBLE ROUND THE CORNER!

"I'd have taken three, and taken 'em grinning, as payment for that little jape," said Ned to Jinks, as they stood by the fore-barbette as the Victorious steamed in past St. Helen's Point. "It was worth it to see that sallow-faced swab get the only proper wash he's had since he joined the ship!"

"Rather!" chuckled Jinks. "Though he did give you the dickens own belting! But I don't think it's only beltings you've got to fear from Grimshaw. He'll put the screw on you another way. Look, there's good old Pompey showing up again!" he added, as Portsmouth came into view.

"Grimshaw doesn't give shore-leave, thank goodness, and I vote we ask Number One for it this afternoon. I think there's a bit due to us."

The first lieutenant granted the chums their leave this time without demur, and though it was rather late when the passes were signed and handed out it was

arranged they should return with the pinnace at eight bells.

It poured rain all the afternoon, so they missed little by not getting away early. The wet cleared off when they went ashore, however, and they left their boat-cloaks at the quayhouse on landing.

"Feels as if the whole blessed town was rolling and pitching, doesn't it?" said Ned, as he experienced once more the curious sensation that a sailor feels on solid land after a cruise at sea—as though the pavement were heaving under him like a ship. "Let's get a paper, and see if there's anything about the spy."

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They did so, but there was not a word of the affair. Jinks declared the authorities would not let it get into the papers.

"Let's go and grub first," he said—"a real, top-hole feed at one of the best places, and while we're having it we can decide what to do."

Ned agreed; but the end of it was that the comfortable restaurant and the freedom to talk, after the silence of the gun-room mess, where no middy was allowed to say a word, set them chattering to such an extent that it ran away with nearly the whole of their leave, and they left the place with little more time in hand than would take them to get aboard.

"This is rot!" said Ned, in annoyed tones, as they went out. "You think of nothing but your best girls and feeding yourself, Jinks! We came ashore to see about this Secret Service business."

"Not bad things, either. A chap can't always be plotting," said Jinks. "But where have we got to? I bar these short cuts!"

They had tramped through the wet streets for ten minutes on their way back, and it soon became clear the short cut which Ned had insisted on taking was a long one. They had wandered into the maze of narrow streets at the back of the old town quays, and it was getting dark.

"This is all wrong," said Jinks, stopping. "What a chump you are! Let's ask this johnnie behind."

They inquired the way of a youth who was overtaking them. After a glance at them, this individual directed the pair down a couple of turnings. It did not seem to Ned the right direction, but he supposed the youth must know.

"There's the waterside, anyhow," said Jinks, as they turned the second corner and saw the masts of shipping by a quay at the end of the street, "but it's nowhere near the Admiralty Steps. Doesn't matter. We can find our way now—only we'd better hurry."

"Hallo!" said a voice. "Look at these 'ere spangled jaybirds!"

The speaker was one of four rough-looking youths of about eighteen or nineteen, who stood at the corner. They looked at the middies as if seeking a quarrel; but as neither Ned nor Jinks wanted anything of the sort they kept straight on.

Jinks noticed with surprise, however, that one of the four was the youth of whom he had inquired the way, and who had apparently gone ahead by some other turning and arrived in front.

"Where are you coming to?" the youth said suddenly, stepping across the path of the two boys.

"We're in a hurry," said Ned, trying to get past. "Look here, we don't want any row—"

"Don't yer?" said the others, crowding round swiftly. "Who'd you thing you are shovin' into like that? Think you own the street?"

One of them charged straight into Jinks, shoulder first, the middy only just dodging in time, and Ned received a heavy blow on the chest.

"If they want it, let 'em have it!" exclaimed Ned, firing up. And the next moment he was hitting out at his assailant with all his might.

The middies, though only two against four, knew enough of boxing to give a thoroughly good account of themselves against the street roughs, and Ned in particular sailed in like a whirlwind, his fists driving hard and swift as a professional pug's.

"Forward, Victorious!" he cried, as he sent one of his opponents staggering while Jinks tackled the rough who had charged him.

The odds were heavy, and Ned got a blow from one that nearly laid his cheek open. He drove his opponent back into the wall with a lightning-like jab on the "mark," and, turning to face the other, landed a left-hand uppercut beneath the point of the chin that fairly laid the hooligan on his back.

Jinks, hard pressed by a rival bigger than himself, was only just holding his own, when the rough's companion darted in from one side, and, with a savage trip, sent Jinks sousing heavily into a great pool of liquid mud that filled the gutter and half the roadway.

"Bear a hand here!" shouted Ned, as he saw a bluejacket come racing down

the street to the rescue, too late to check the three roughs, who now had Ned alone to deal with. "Victorious, ahoy!"

"Put him through it! One's down!" roared the roughs, and they rushed in at Ned from three sides at once. "Out him, mates! He's the one we're arter!"

Jinks Buys a Uniform!

NED made a swift spring backwards in the nick of time, and, dodging one of his assailants, got clear for a moment. Had they hemmed him in between them, he would have stood no chance. He struck out with all his might, catching one of the roughs heavily on the mark, and spun round quickly to face the others.

"Help, Jinks—quick!" cried Ned. "What! Are you down? By George, I'm done, then!" he panted, as they closed upon him again.

One of the three launched a savage kick at his stomach, which Ned only just dodged, and an instant later he dealt the next man a clip under the angle of the jaw that made him drop in his tracks, clucking like a hen.

Jinks, despite his fall, was up again in a twinkling, soaked from head to foot with liquid mud, but game as ever, and savage as a young bull after the trick that had been played on him. He rushed into the fray with a war-whoop, and was soon pounding away hammer-and-tongs at one of Ned's assailants, leaving his chum with only a couple to deal with—one of them already damaged. Once they were checked, the roughs were no match for the tough young sailors, and Navy boxing, even in a midshipman, is as much as any ordinary landsman cares to tackle. The hooligan who had first been laid on his back was getting up again, but the other three were fast giving way. The whole affray was only a matter of seconds.

"Ere's another flatfoot comin'! I'm orf!" gasped Jinks' opponent, as he caught sight of the tall bluejacket, who had hove in sight far down the street, and was running to the rescue as hard as he could pelt.

"Hook it, mates! We've done the job all right!" cried the first of the four.

And they turned tail and fled down the street just as the seaman came up. The two who were on the ground had scrambled to their feet, and the attacking-party scattered like partridges.

"Dirty swabs!" roared the bluejacket, racing after them pell-mell, with his trouser-ends flapping like wings. "Lemme get hold o' ye! Come on, and have a bit straight from the lower deck!"

He charged upon his way like a bloodhound in pursuit of mongrel terriers, and the street roughs did not wait for him, but scuttled away with twinkling heels. Neither Ned nor Jinks joined in the pursuit. They were quite blown enough already. Ned had a long cut over the temple where the knuckles of one of the roughs, guarded by a heavy ring, had struck him.

As for Jinks he looked a pitiful wreck, and his mud-sodden clothes weighed him down too much for running.

"Whew! That was sharp work!" panted Ned. "What a set of sweeps! Are you damaged, old chap?"

"Damaged!" cried Jinks. "Look at me! My only number one uniform, too! And I'm soaked to the skin with this filthy stuff!"

"But you aren't hurt?"

"Hurt! I'd rather have lost all my front teeth! Ugh!" "Never mind, old thing. You nipped up and went for them again like a battering-ram. It'd have been a rare tough time for me if you hadn't got going."

"Didn't do much. You're a nailer with your fists, Hardy—you know how to put your weight into it. What a set of beasts! It's a bit thick if peaceful and innocent citizens like you and me can't go down the—Hallo! Here's the sailor back again. Why, it's Brinkman!"

The bluejacket who had gone in chase of the flying foe had made a desperate effort to capture at least one of them; but, though a first-class fighter, Jack ashore is no runner, and the roughs, knowing every inch of the neighbourhood, had out-distanced him and made their escape.

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

MIDSHIPMAN NED HARDY, son of a line of sea captains, is appointed to the Victorious, the same ship from which his brother Ralph has been cashiered in connection with a robbery. His fortune, however, soon befalls the new snotty, for he is made the scapegoat of a Russian plot to wreck the British Navy. Thanks to a warning note from Ralph, Ned succeeds in establishing his innocence and bringing his enemy to book. Granted leave, the young middy joins his Cousin Bourke aboard the fighting protection gun-boat Speedwell, and plays a great part in the capture of a Danish pirate caught fishing in forbidden waters. Shortly after rejoining the Victorious Ned is doing his best to keep the water from entering a leaky scuttle when he is assailed from behind by an old enemy in Sub-Lieutenant Grimshaw, armed with a malacca cane. (Now read on.)

Ned dealt one of the roughs a clip under the angle of the jaw.



The bluejacket, after repeating his opinion of them several times over in the language of the lower deck, came back to the scene of the conflict. It was Brinkman, the burly young seaman whom Ned had once saved from drowning.

"Hallo, Brinkman! No luck with your bow-chasers—ch?" said Ned. "Never mind, the essence of tactics is surprise, and you cleared 'em out just as they were concentrating their fire. A hot action—what?"

"To think o' them blackguardly swabs settin' on to you, sir!" said Brinkman explosively. "If I'd caught any of 'em, I'd ha' knocked his two headlights into one so you wouldn't know 'em from a gyroscope! Have they hurt you? You're bleeding, sir!"

"It's nothing! One of them wore a knuckle-ring," said Ned.

Brinkman, who had shown a doglike fidelity to the middy ever since the day of the rescue, wanted to tie up the cut, but Ned refused to be bothered about it.

"I never see such a set of rats as these Gosport shore-loafers!" said Brinkman indignantly, as he swabbed and scraped Jinks' sodden clothes with a newspaper and a jack-knife. "My eye, but you're in a fine mess, sir! You'll want dry-docking after this! But the way you young gents walked into those four dock-rats was a sight for sore eyes! Good for the old Victorious! You kept the flag flyin'!"

"Plenty of colour left on us," said Ned, grinning, as he mopped his temple, and Jinks ladled some mud out of his left ear. "What they tackled us for, I don't know, unless—"

"Drunk most likely," said Brinkman. "I've got the worst of it off, sir," he added to Jinks. "If you'll shed your smoking-jacket, I think I can do it some good. Then we might go to a place where you can get a wash—"

"I say, Brinkman, when are you due aboard?" broke in Jinks.

"My leave's up at six bells, sir."

"Well, hurry up, man, and run for it or you'll be late! That'll mean leave stopped and a spell of cells. You can't say you stayed for us, or we shall catch it for keeping you. Look sharp and get aboard!"

"But I don't mind the cells, sir, if I can be of any use—"

"Hook it, Brinkman! Scoot along back! Do you hear?" said Ned. "We don't want you to get into a row on our account. We're all right now."

"Thank you for helping us. We'll do you a turn some day, Brinkman. Off you go!" said Jinks.

The seaman departed very reluctantly, though, in truth he had barely time to get aboard before his leave was up; but as Ned had ordered him, he went at the run.

"Real good chap, Brinkman is," said Jinks, trying to clean his hands on the wall. "Now what's to be done?"

"Why, we'd better hurry down to the Asia Pontoon and not waste any time, either. The pinnace'll be there, and it's a deuce of a long way; we're due on board at eight bells."

"Hang it, man, I can't go like this!" said Jinks, striding into the light of a street-lamp. And Ned whistled as he saw what a ghastly picture his chum presented. The gun-room mess were very particular about their uniforms, and the Victorious prided herself on being the smartest ship

in the squadron. "I should never hear the last of it! And Number One'll be down on me like bricks!"

"It's no good arguing!" broke in Ned impatiently. "You've got to go on board, haven't you? Anything's better than breaking leave. We'll manage somehow. Come along!"

"It's a rotten look-out!" said Jinks, as they set off at a rapid pace, and turned the corner. "My governor isn't well off, you know, and there are a lot of us; it'll be a screw for him to get me my other uniform in time. Nothing'll make this one fit for anything again!"

"No; it's done for!"

"I wish I could raise one somehow. But it's no go. I—"

"'Evenin', young sir! You've been an' had a tumble, ain't you? Come in, an' I'll soon have some o' that muck off for you."

The speaker was a big bloated-faced man, standing on the pavement with his legs straddled wide, just outside the door of a tailoring and second-hand clothing shop that fronted the quay. Neither the man nor the shop looked very attractive, but the thing that caught Jinks' eye was a complete jacket-uniform as worn by midshipmen, in good condition, displayed in the centre of the window.

"Ay, that's somethin' in your line, sir—just the thing for you, an' I'll let you 'ave it cheap!" said the shopman, jerking his thumb towards the uniform. "Brand-new, an' hardly used. I bought it off young Lord Mansford, what left the Navy on comin' into his title—so 'elp me bob, I did—an' I'll let you have it dirt cheap!"

"By Jove!" murmured Jinks, glancing in at the window, "I wonder if it would fit me?"

"It's worth trying," said Ned. "If it fits—and it's cheap—you'll be all right. There's just time if you hurry!"

"All right, I'll try that suit on," said Jinks to the proprietor, hurrying into the shop. "It looks about my size."

"I'll lay it'll fit you, sir," said the man, bringing the uniform out of the window.

While Jinks was cleaning himself and changing, Ned had the use of a basin of cold water, and soon stopped the flow of blood from the cut on his head. When he had done so, he returned to the shop and found his chum fully dressed, glancing at the effect in a mirror.

"I say, they aren't half bad!" said Jinks.

"Fit you like the paper on the wall, sir," said the shopman enthusiastically. "Not a stitch out o' place!"

The uniform, though not new, certainly fitted well, and that was the main thing; in fact, it might have been made for Jinks.

"It'll do all right," said Ned. "Come on, and let's get aboard! Have you got the price of it on you? Here, I've got some money—not much, though! What's the damage, tailor?"

"Considerin' what a beautiful, slap-up uniform it is, sir," said the man, rubbing his hands, "I'll let you have it, as a favour, as low as twenty pounds!"

(It's pretty obvious that Jinks has been stung. But what can he do? Look out for more ructions in next week's instalment of this roaring yarn of the Royal Navy!)

The One-Man Rebellion!

(Continued from page 19.)

They knew that a flogging was nothing to George Alfred. He was tough, and the mere physical punishment would not trouble him overmuch. It was sheer obstinacy now. Yet—if Grundy kept on with his defiance, his rebellious conduct, the Head would most certainly expel him after all. That much was quite certain.

"We've got to do something!" groaned George Wilkins desperately. "We've got to save the fool from himself. If we could only get hold of him we could yank him to the Head ourselves. Better for the chump to get a flogging a thousand times than the sack!"

"That's so," admitted Tom Merry. "Grundy doesn't care twopence for the actual flogging, it's his silly dignity he's thinking of. And he's earned a flogging by his idiotic tricks, the silly owl! But—but—"

"Let's risk trouble and visit him," said Lowther, with a sudden chuckle. "I fancy I can see how to work Grundy. Play on his vanity a bit; let him think it'll be a terrible blow to the school and to us if he gets sacked, and I bet he'll come round!"

They discussed the programme for some moments, and then they sneaked round to the rear of the tuckshop and called for Grundy. He came to the loophole in the window quickly enough.

"Hallo! What do you fags want?" he demanded. "Coming to join me? If you are, you've got to understand that I'm boss, Tom Merry!"

"Not quite, old man!" said Tom. "But, look here, Grundy! There's been enough of this! Can't you play the game?"

"P-play the game?" stammered Grundy through the hole.

"Yes. Why don't you play the man and take your licking?" demanded Tom indignantly. "Afraid of a flogging! Bah! You'll leave St. Jim's in the lurch, leave your best pals without a strong man to look after them, and bring disgrace on your own family—just because you're afraid of a flogging!"

"Afraid of a flogging!" Grundy laughed. "Why, you idiots, I could stand a dozen floggings one after another. But—My hat! I never looked at things in that light, you know. The fact is, I was standing up for my rights. You fellows know how I was kicked out of the Shell."

"Well, you're in the Fourth now, and—I'll tell you what!" said Blake, as if in a burst of generosity. "I'll give you your chance, Grundy! If you can raise a team that'll beat a team raised by me at footer, I'll stand down, and allow you to be captain of the Fourth! How's that?"

"What a chance!" breathed Tom Merry, winking at Blake.

Grundy's eyes gleamed.

"You mean that, Blake?" he shouted.

"Yes—absolutely! If a team picked by you can beat a team picked by me, then I'm ready to resign the captaincy in your favour for ever and ever!"

"That settles it, then!" snapped Grundy excitedly and gleefully. "I'm coming out! The Head can give me a

dozen floggings if he likes! I shall apologise to him—I've no grudge against him personally, you know! I shall explain just how things are, and take the blessed flogging! Here goes!"

They heard him dragging away boxes and wedges. The door was dragged open at last, and Grundy, flushed but quite cheery, joined them.

"You're going to the Beak now?" gasped Tom Merry.

"Of course!"

"Good man—and good luck! We'll cut off and tackle Lathom. We'll talk to him like a Dutch uncle, and get him to put in a good word for you!" said Tom eagerly.

"After all, it was us ragging you that caused the trouble. Buzz off, old man—and good luck!"

And Grundy "buzzed" off quite cheerfully, and made his way to the headmaster's study. Grundy's rebellion was over—his barring-out was ended. But whether it would end happily for George Alfred remained to be seen.

But it did!

The Head was a humane man, and a kindly man. He understood Grundy's character better than that great man did himself. And now Grundy had been proved innocent, and now Grundy had apologised humbly—as Grundy did—Dr. Holmes was in the right mood to be lenient. To help matters, little Mr. Lathom pleaded for Grundy, explaining that it was owing to his Form ragging that youth that the trouble had been caused in the first place.

In the end, the Head decided not to flog Grundy, after all. He believed Grundy had had his lesson—though Tom Merry & Co. doubted that. At all events, Grundy got off with a severe caning—certainly a lucky ending indeed for the rebellious George Alfred.

What happened to Gerald Knox nobody knew—excepting the Head and that unhappy senior. But it was noticed that Knox went about very little during the next few weeks, and he was very subdued indeed. Obviously Knox had had it "hot and strong" from the Head.

And the match between a team chosen by Grundy and a team chosen by Blake never came off. Blake never ran any risk of losing the captaincy to Grundy. There was no need, in fact, for such a trial of skill. For Mr. Linton and Mr. Lathom had a pow-wow regarding Grundy, and afterwards both gentlemen had a pow-wow with Mr. Railton, who likewise pow-wowed with the Head in regard to Grundy.

And the upshot was that George Alfred ceased his brief connection with the Fourth and went back to his old place in the Shell. Evidently the Beaks all agreed that it was a mistake to relegate Grundy to the Fourth. Or perhaps they feared more trouble with Grundy—as Grundy himself chose to think! But, whatever it was, Grundy returned to the Shell, and soon his relegation was a thing of the past.

THE END.

(You'll find plenty of big bangs in next week's rollicking fine "Guy Fawkes" yarn, entitled: "THE GLORIOUS 'FIFTH'!" Step in right now and get your newsagent to reserve you a copy of the "GEM.")

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