



## By GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY

*(The Duffer of the Shell Form)*

*(Editor's Note:—We take no responsibility for the spelling errors in this contribution as Grundy, the author, insisted upon its being published exactly as written.)*

**I**t's an old saying and a true one that a profit is not without honner save in his own country.

Judging by the way they treat me at St. Jim's, you'd think I couldn't play footer for toffy. Yet the fact remains that I'm far and away the best player in the skool.

You can't beleeve it? Let me tell you something, then, that will make you sit up and take notiss. Here it is: *A prominent League team once asked me to sign on for them as a professional!*

Now, what about it?

I shall never forget the incident. I'd been playing my usual brilliant game in a Shell trial match, finishing up by scoring a sensational goal a minnit before fool-time. Some of the fatheads were a bit critical beawse it was a goal against my own side; but nobody denied that it was well scored.

As we came off the field, a crowd of chaps hailed me. They had an old bearded gentleman in their midst and they were all grinning—why, I don't know.

"So this is the grate Master Grundy!" cride the old gentleman. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am Mr. Monty Codd, of the Wayland Wanderers F.C. If I may say so, sir, you have just played a very brilliant game of footbawl."

"Well, you're right there, Mr. Codd!" I smiled, shaking hands with the jenial footbawl manager—for that was evidently what he was. "Not many chaps at St. Jim's can touch me when it comes to skill on the footer field."

"Has it ever occurred to you to turn professional, Master Grundy?" Mr. Codd arsked me.

"I'm a rattling good player, of corse," I answered modestly. "But I can't say I ever thought of turning pro."

"Then I should seriously advise you to think it over," said Mr. Codd. "A player of your marvellous ability ought to make a fortune out of the game."

"I don't doubt it for a moment," I said, with a nod. "Come to think of

it, in fact, it's not at all a bad idea. But how could I set about it ? "

" Set about it ? " echoed Mr. Codd, with a harty larf. " Why, you need only say you were thinking of becoming a pro. and half the footbawl managers in the country would be tumbling over each other to get in first."

" Something in that," I admitted thoughtfully. " But aren't you a footbawl manager yourself ? "

" I am. And if you are prepared to honner my humble club, the Wayland Wanderers F.C., by signing on for them, I shall be only too pleased to perform the necessary formallities ! "

" Then I'll do it ! " I cride. " The Wayland Wanderers shall have the bennefit of my marvellous footbawling ability ! "

" Thank you a thousand times, Master Grundy ! " beemed Mr. Codd. " Unforchunately it will take a few hours to get the papers drawn up, but if you will turn up to-morrow somewhere about midday at our offices underneeth the grand-stand, I will see that everything is ready for you. It's a prommisse, of corse ? "

" Why, of corse ! "

" You won't go and sign on for Aston Villa or the Arsenal in the meantime ? "

" My word is my bond," I answered proudly. " I have said that I'll play for the Wayland Wanderers and I'll jolly well do so ! "

And I meant it !

Natcherally, there was a good deal of eggsitement at St. Jim's. Everywhere I went I was cheered, and the fellows seemed to larf like anything when they saw me, out of sheer good humer.

After morning skool on the following day, I trotted down to Wayland.

Quite a crowd followed me, and there was much larfing and chaffing on the way. I was the centre of

attraction, of corse, and altogether we made quite a jolly party.

Up we rolled to the Wayland Wanderers footbawl ground.

" Well, good-luck, old been ! " said Monty Lowther, who had been diskussing my footbawl future with me coming along the road. " By the way, if they tell you old Codd's not in or something, don't beleeye them. They'll probably be trying to keep you out on account of jellusy about your brilliant play."

" Leave it to me ! " I said, and in I walked.

An ugly-looking fellow wearing flannel trowsers and a sweater met me in the passidge inside.

" What d'you want ? " he arsked.

" I'm Grundy. I've got an appointment with Mr. Monty Codd ! " I said kertly.



I felt myself fly through the air and land with a fearful bump on the pavement outside.

The fellow in the sweater stared.

" Mr. Monty Codd ? And who's he when he's at home ? "

" Your manager, of corse ! " I answered sharply. " Don't try to fool about with me. Just tell Mr. Codd I'm here, instantly ! "

The fellow skowled.

" I tell you there's nobody here of the name of Codd. And who d'you think you're talking to, anyway ? "

" That's enuff ! " I cride. " Out of my way ! "

I strode past him and neerly cannoned into another chap.

" Want someone ? " this second chap arsked.

" I want the manager."

" Well, I'm the manager. What can I do for you ? "

I larfed.

" Don't talk rot ! I want the real manager—Mr. Monty Codd ! "

" Never heard of him in my life ! " declared the fellow. " My name's Sam Smith. I'm the manager here."

" Bosh ! Let me pass. I've got an appointment with Mr. Codd about signing on for the Wanderers and I'm jolly well going to keep it ! "

They both seemed tickled to death, for reasons that weren't clear to me.

" Haw, haw, haw ! Going to sign on for the Wanderers, are you ? " roared the first fellow. " That's the latest, that is. Haw, haw, haw ! "

" Looks to me like someone's been having you on a bit of string ! " the second fellow said. " Take my advice and go back to skool."

" Keep your blessed advice ! " I snorted. " I'm jolly well going to see Mr. Monty Codd, whatever you say ! Stand back ! "

I gave one of them a biff on the chest and the other a flick on the nose.

They yelled.

" That's done it ! " roared the

fellow who called himself Sam Smith.

" Chuck him out, Bill ! "

" What-ho ! " roared Bill.

The neckst moment a wild and whirling scrap was in progress.

I don't mind telling you that I gave those two rotters something to go on with before I finished with them that morning. I must have come very near to mopping up the floor with them. But somehow, at the last minnit, the tide turned in their favour and they mannidged to overcome my resistance.

" Now chuck him out ! " Sam Smith said vennomously.

And though I struggled desprityl, they did it. I felt myself fly through the air and land with a fearful bump on the pavement outside.

I've tried to get in many times since ; but there's always a small army of bruisers to stop me. I've never seen or heard anything of Mr. Monty Codd again ; but I fansy he'll turn up one of these fine days. Monty Lowther, who's a very sensible chap sometimes, is equally certain he will.

The chaps all roar every time I mention the matter. I'm dashed if I know why, but they do ! Tom Merry still larfs, too, every time I arsk him for a place in the Junior Eleven. Potty, I fansy !

Anyway, I've got the sattisfaction of knowing that I'm the only chap at St. Jim's that was ever offered a place in a professional team. And even if the chaps continue to blind themselves to the facts, this article should at least make the jeneral public realise my true worth.

