

“GRIPPO”

The Freeman family first came into prominence some twenty years ago when the original Mr. Henry Freeman (shortly afterwards knighted) amazed the social world by announcing his intention of devoting his entire fortune to the entertainment of His Majesty's Navy. The actual amount of this fortune has never been discovered but it must run into several billion sterling and despite the heavy inroads made in it in recent years it continues steadily to increase. Even the source of this vast fortune is shrouded in mystery. Some say 'twas made in oil, some in gold mining, others declare the Argentine (meat?) responsible for the amassing of this vast hoard, but Sir Henry himself, like the Service he serves, preserves a discreet silence.

Shortly after the announcement of his amazing intention, Sir Henry—or Sir “Harry” to give him his more familiar title—was given a Barony and assumed the title of Baron Agrippa, after his famous charitable Roman predecessor. The name has since degenerated into the more common one of “Grippto,” by which he is known to thousands of his admirers.

The family crest is a somewhat peculiar one being a combination of the old and new. It consists of two clenched fists surmounting an oxygen breathing outfit beneath which are the words (Latin) “Dum Spiro Spero” (While I Breathe I Hope), commonly mis-contrued by the vulgar as “Let me breathe” or by the more vulgar still as “Strangle ‘im.” The coat of arms is actually in quarterings two of them being occupied by the two symbols mentioned, and the other two by a set of grappling irons and a pair of “footer” boots respectively.

His Lordship has eleven brothers—all with fortunes equally as large as his own—and it was not long before they also became affected with this strange philanthropic mania. Their good deeds are legion and it is no untruth to state that no one in the service, from the humblest boy to the mightiest Admiral is unfamiliar with them.

The family possesses an amazing intelligence service of its own. The arrivals and departures of all H.M. Ships are known by them for weeks beforehand and no matter which part of the globe ships choose to visit “Harry will find a way.”