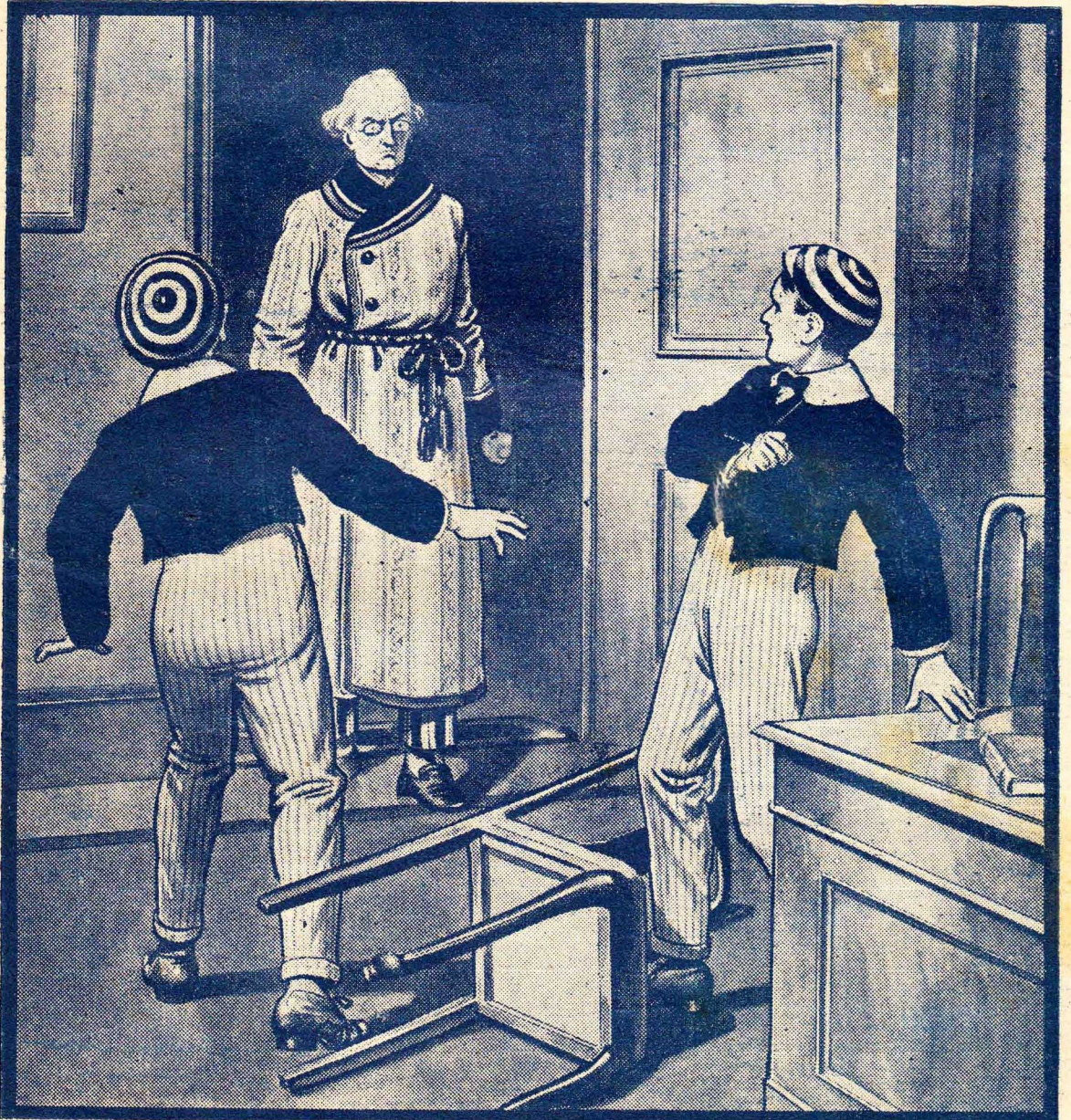


THE SUMMER HOLIDAY COMPANION PAPER FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL!



Two Splendid School Tales:
"GRUNDY'S GREAT RAID!" & "JOLLY ROGER'S SECRET!"
In This Issue.



THE MIDNIGHT RAIDERS CAUGHT IN THE ACT!

(A Tense Moment in the Grand School Story in this Number.)

Do Not Miss this Splendid Chance of Winning Half-a-Crown!



NOTE.—Half-a-crown will be awarded to the sender of every paragraph published on this page.

THE WHITE ANT.

This little creature, well under an inch in length, is one of the most destructive insects in Africa. As dwellings, it erects such huge heaps that in some localities it converts a flat country into a hilly one. The mounds are from twenty to fifty feet high, crowned always with bamboo-trees, which add another thirty to fifty feet to the height. The ants go about in huge armies, destroying everything they come across, except steel and iron. It is a curious fact that they attack only such portions of any object as are not exposed to the air. For instance, they will eat away the soles of boots and leave the uppers standing. Men have found use for the big ant hills, and some have been made into look-out stations for surveyors.—Stanley Wilson, 59, Sheep-bridge Road, Huddersfield.

A TRADE ORPHAN.

A man that does not wear a Panama hat is called in the trade an orphan. I was curious about the meaning of this, and asked my hatter what the term meant, what time he gently applied a revolver to my silk hat. "Why am I an orphan?" I asked. "Because," said the hatter, as his iron glided over the grease spots, "you have no Pa-na-ma."—F. Mortimer, Rose Dene, South Parade, Whitley Bay, Northumberland.

BRITISH TOWN AT WAR.

It is generally known that Berwick-on-Tweed is neither in England nor in Scotland, so it has to have laws specially made for it. These are, however, the same that are passed for England. Therefore, when we went to war with Russia in 1854, Berwick was named in the declaration of war, but when peace was signed it was omitted. This has resulted in Berwick being, officially, hostile to Russia for over sixty-five years.—R. V. Derbyshire, 37, Hulton Lane, Daubhill, Bolton, Lancashire.

A SHORT STORY.

A boy went into a fish-shop and asked the shopman if he had any dry fish. "Yes, sonny," answered the shopman. "Well, give 'em a drink, then," said sonny.—Miss Dorothy Mary Smith, 78, Bexley Avenue, Harehills Road, Leeds.

WASPS.

The best way to destroy a wasps' nest is to mix gunpowder with water into a stiff paste. Place the paste well inside the nest and fire it, covering the nest carefully with damp sacking so that none of the fumes escape. When the fumes have taken effect the nest can be opened with a spade and the comb lifted out by gloved hands.—Miss Irene Berry, 404, Derby Street, Bolton, Lancashire.

THE PIT PONY.

The pit pony lives a laborious and hazardous life. He comes to the mine with two or three others packed on the cage. The ostler receives them at the bottom, and leads them to their underground home. The first day or two are passed in these stables, so that the pony can accustom himself to his new surroundings. He is not without visitors. The pony-drivers and corporals—the latter with an eye to get new ponies for their districts—walk into his "standing," stroking him and commenting on his condition, like prospective buyers at a horse show. After the rest in the stables the pony is taken into the workings to his new duties. Perhaps at the start he will have a light job, so that his driver may teach him all the commands used underground, also to get him used to his new name. The pony soon settles down, and often he and his driver become good pals, the latter taking the pony some dainty every day in the shape of an apple, carrot, or turnip, or fresh grass. This makes a change from the everyday chopped hay and corn. The "putting pony," as he is called, works double shifts, that is about fourteen or fifteen hours.—Arnold Jones, Chapel House, Inkersal Road, Staveley, near Chesterfield.

A PICNIC IN GUERNSEY.

We reached Pleinmont at ten-thirty. This is the most western point of the island. Here extends a long reef of rock called the Hanois. A detonator sounds from the lighthouse in foggy weather. You can only reach the signal-station by boat, and we hired one to take us out. On our return we collected sticks and made a fire to boil the kettle, and then spread the cloth on the sands

for tea. Afterwards we climbed the rocks, looking for gulls' eggs. It was a laughable sight to see one of our party warding off an angry sparrow-hawk whose nest had been disturbed.—Herbert Tuckwell, c/o Mrs. Philip Robin, Baubigny, St. Sampson's, Guernsey.

JUTLAND.

Jutland is the only considerable peninsula that points directly north. Since early in the tenth century it has formed a part of the Kingdom of Denmark. Its area is 9,754 square miles, and the population in 1900 was 1,063,792. Jutland is said to have been inhabited in the earliest times by the Cimabri. In the fifth century the Jutes were in occupation, and they took part in the expedition of the Saxons to England. The Jutes were followed by the Danes, who were called the Northmen, and frequently desolated the coasts of Germany and France.—J. H. Griffiths, Glanderwen, Pantwelly, Llandyssul, South Wales.

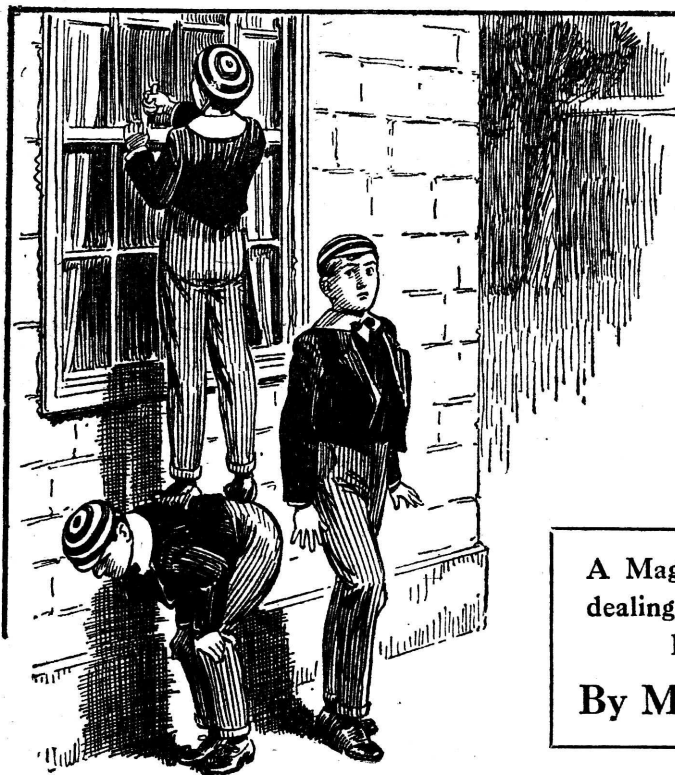
TURTLE CATCHING.

A curious mode of catching turtles is practised in the West Indies. It consists in attaching a ring and a line to the tail of a species of sucker-fish called the "remora." The live fish is then thrown overboard. It immediately makes for the first turtle it can spy, and fastens itself to it firmly by means of a sucking apparatus on the top of its head. Once the remora is fixed to the turtle, so firm is its grip, the fisherman is able to pull up both turtle and sucker.—C. W. Rayner, 216, Stanstead Road, Forest Hill, S.E. 23.

GUARDING THE BANK.

No burglar or bank thief has ever succeeded in making the Bank of England part with a penny. The great outer doors are so finely balanced that a clerk can, by pressing a knob under his desk, instantly shut them in the face of anyone making a dash for the street. They cannot be opened except by special machinery. In recesses near the doors are hidden four guardians who, without being seen themselves, watch all visitors through mirrors. Every night the store-room is submerged in several feet of water by machinery.—Lawrence Fry, 50, Belper Street, Ilkeston, Notts.

Contributions are invited from readers of the "GEM" for publication on this page. Anything will do, so long as it is interesting, short, and concise—a good joke, a description of a holiday, a bright idea for increasing the popularity of the "Gem," a good anecdote. "Pars" should not be more than three hundred words long—the shorter the better. They can be sent in on a postcard. Address all contributions to The Editor, The "Gem" Library, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and mark them "Readers' Own Corner."



GRUNDY'S GREAT RAID!

A Magnificent, Long Complete Story
dealing with the adventures of Tom
Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Grundy the Reformer!

“BANKS, by gum!”

As he gave vent to that ejaculation George Alfred Grundy, of the Shell Form at St. Jim's, came to an abrupt halt.

Wilkins and Gunn, his two chums, also came to a halt, and they stared at their leader in blank astonishment.

“What's biting you now?” demanded Wilkins.

And George Gunn tapped his forehead significantly.

“Can't you see that rotter Banks?” asked Grundy. “Up the lane there, talking to some Grammar School rotter!”

Wilkins and Gunn nodded, with no apparent interest in Mr. Banks or in his companion.

Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn were out for an afternoon stroll, it being too hot for cricket practice, and had just entered the woods when Grundy espied the bookie.

Banks was a bookie with an unenviable reputation, and a past which was, to say the least, murky. That is why George Alfred Grundy frowned when he saw Banks and the Grammarian in conversation. Not that it was any of Grundy's business, of course; but little things like that did not worry Grundy.

“Well,” said Gunn, at length, “what about it? I suppose Banks hasn't bought the blessed wood?”

George Alfred Grundy frowned. “I don't want any of your funny remarks, George Gunn. Banks is talking to that kid about horses, and I won't stand it!”

“Oh!”

“Do you know what I am going to do?”

“Sit down, I suppose,” suggested Wilkins, after some thought.

“No. You're a chump, George Wilkins! I'm going to give Banks a jolly good hiding. I'm not a quarrel-

some sort of chap, but I won't stand any rot!”

“Oh!”

“He's a bounder—a low-down bounder! Look at his loud suit!”

“Ultra-modern, certainly,” said Wilkins.

“What d'ye mean?”

“Why, it's beyond the present 'stile,” said Wilkins, with a slight grin.

“Fathead! If you think I've come out this afternoon just to listen to you making rotten jokes, George Wilkins, you're jolly well mistaken! You can go and eat coke!”

And George Alfred Grundy, his nose high in the air, strode off, leaving his two chums cackling.

But Wilkins and Gunn were loyal, and, as martyrs to the stake, they followed their leader.

George Alfred Grundy marched straight up to the stile with a very determined look in his eyes. Banks eyed him warily. He had seen Grundy before, and had more than once felt the weight of the big Shell fellow's fist, an experience he did not wish to repeat.

The Grammarian, however, eyed Grundy up and down with insolent calm, and then, with a contemptuous sniff, resumed conversation with his respectable companion.

Grundy clenched his hands tighter. “I'll let you have that note later,” said the Grammarian, ignoring Grundy.

“I suppose that will do?”

“Yes, that'll do. Must be before five, though.”

“Right-ho!”

The bookie nodded, and was just about to make his way off down the footpath, when George Alfred caught him by the sleeve.

“Just a second!”

Mr. Banks, uncertain whether to stay and see things through, or whether to make a dash for it, lost his chance of escape.

“I've spoken to you before about this,” said Grundy sternly. “You're leading this kid astray.”

“Leave go my arm,” said Mr. Banks, in none too certain tones. “What have I done to you? You mind your own biz!”

Grundy caught him by the scruff of the neck, and was about to take drastic measures, when the Grammarian intervened.

“Who the dickens are you?” he shouted, jumping from the stile. “And what do you mean by poking your beastly nose into my affairs?”

“You—you—” spluttered Grundy.

“Yes; that's it. What d'yer mean?” demanded Mr. Banks, whose courage had flowed back with the thought of a champion to protect him. “Can't a honest man—”

“You thundering scoundrel!” roared Grundy, flinging the expostulating Mr. Banks to the ground. “And as for you, you worm!” he added, turning to the Grammarian. “I don't know who you are, but you're a pretty measly worm, anyway!”

Smack!

George Alfred Grundy jumped back with a cry more of surprise than of pain, as the Grammarian, without the slightest warning, swept out his hand.

The colour rushed to the Shell fellow's face, showing only a white mark where the Grammarian's hand had landed. With a bellow of rage, he charged wildly forward.

“Take that, you rotter!”

In a second the two were fighting hammer-and-tongs.

But the Grammarian stood no chance, though he fought like a wild-cat.

Grundy's heavy fists found their billets every time, and in a few seconds the Grammarian landed on his back. He blinked up at his vanquisher, and deemed it better to remain down.

“Help! Banks, you fool, help!” he shouted.

Banks, stepping forward, neatly tripped the big Shell fellow, and Grundy fell heavily to the ground. Banks jumped on him, pinning him down.

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The Grammarian, seeing his opponent down, rose to his feet, and took a savage kick at him.

"Ow! You cur! Wait till I get at you! Wilkins! Gunn!"

Up to this point the two chums had been watching the contest with interest; but with two to one against him, and in his present position, Grundy stood not an earthly, and it was up to them to intervene.

Wilkins and Gunn, dashing forward, dragged the Grammarian off, and flung him to grass, Gunn taking up an independent position on his chest.

Grundy soon threw off the bookmaker. "Orl right! I didn't mean no harm!" whined Mr. Banks. "Let me go, and I'll never speak to no one agen. On me oath!"

But Grundy was in no mood to be buttered. His dignity had been hurt and his temper roused.

"Come on!" he said, brandishing his fists, and dancing round the alarmed Mr. Banks. "Come on!"

"I don't want to fight yer," said Mr. Banks sulkily. "Come on! See he doesn't escape, Wilky."

George Wilkins stood between Mr. Banks and the footpath, and all thoughts of escape fled from Mr. Banks' head. He was in for it.

With very bad grace, and a muttered exclamation, he threw down his coat and rolled up the sleeves of his dingy shirt. A pair of very flabby arms were revealed to view.

Then, in a most ungainly attitude, he squared up to Grundy.

With tightly-closed eyes and wildly-swinging arms he rushed forward.

Grundy neatly side-stepped, and landed Mr. Banks a straight left. Mr. Banks exhaled a sigh, and fell to earth with a noise which a novelist would describe as a sickening thud.

"Ow! I'm 'urt! O-o-h!" "Get up!" snorted Grundy scornfully. "I haven't started yet!"

"One—two—get up, Banks—three—don't lie there all day—four—play the game, man—five—"

Before Wilkins could finish his somewhat unorthodox counting Mr. Banks sprang to his feet, and, dodging the warlike Grundy, dashed up the footpath as fast as his stubby legs would carry him.

"Blessed funk!" snorted Grundy. The Grammarian made a sudden plunge, and succeeded in heaving Gunn from his chest. But he couldn't dodge Grundy.

"Now," said George Alfred—"now, you rotten little bounder! Who are you, anyway?"

The Grammarian eyed him up and down before replying.

"Who the dickens are you?" he retorted.

"I'm Grundy of the Shell. Perhaps you've heard about me?"

"Any relation to Mrs. Grundy?"

"I don't want any of your rot!"

"Oh! Well, my name's Morris. I suppose you want to report me. Well, you can, and be hanged to you!"

"Why, you little worm, what have I been doing? Helping you. All for your own good. And then—then—"

Words failed him. Such base ingratitude filled Grundy's heart to bursting-point.

But Gunn and Wilkins chuckled. They had seen other people annoyed with Grundy's "help."

"You're a new boy?"

"Yes. I'm very sorry, please, sir!"

"Don't be funny. I'm not a quarrelsome sort of chap, but I don't stand any

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rot. You want a jolly good licking, and, what's more, you're going to get it!"

For the third time that afternoon George Alfred put up his fists, and adopted a warlike look that would have frightened a world-beater.

"Here, steady on, old man!" said Gunn. "You've done enough of that stunt already. A bumping won't hurt this kid, but he certainly isn't your weight."

"H'm!" Grundy might be a bit too "handy" with his fists, but he was not intentionally a bully. He couldn't always see that he should not take advantage of his strength, but he did hate bullying.

"Right-ho, then!" With great enthusiasm he grasped the Grammarian. Gunn and Wilkins took a leg each, while Grundy saw to the head.

"Now," said Wilkins, "one—two—three—"

Bump! "Yarroogh!"

The Grammarian let forth a piercing yell.

To the surprise of all concerned there came an answering yell from the woods.

"All right! We're coming!"

"Gordon Gay!" breathed Gunn.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wilkins. "That's done it!"

And it had.

Gordon Gay, Frank Monk, and the two Carboys dashed into the wood, then halted as they saw their fellow-Grammarian in enemy hands.

"Rush 'em!" hooted Gay.

Grundy & Co. dropped their victim as though he had suddenly become red-hot, and faced their new opponents.

"Grammar School for ever! Give 'em beans!" hooted Gordon Gay.

Gunn went down to a terrific right from Monk, and Wilkins went down a second later as his nose came in painful contact with Carboys' fist.

Grundy fought wildly, but the odds were against him.

Gordon Gay, with a tremendous hook, sent him to earth, and Grundy sat and blinked in a dazed manner.

Morris danced round with glee as the other Grammarians sat on their St. Jim's opponents.

"Is it pax?" asked Gordon Gay.

"No!" hooted Grundy.

"Don't be a fool, man. The odds are five to three, and we're all better men than you!"

Grundy & Co., though they didn't agree with the latter half of the Grammarian's statement, saw reason in the first half. Besides, it was a hot day.

"Oh, all right!" said Grundy, with very bad grace. "But I'll pay you for this!"

Gordon Gay, with a merry laugh, jumped from the Shell fellow's chest, and helped him to his feet.

Wilkins and Gunn staggered to theirs.

"Don't let the beasts go yet!" said Morris shrilly.

"Why, do you want to fight them?" asked Gay, with a laugh. "Thought you were fonder of betting than fighting, Morris!"

Morris scowled.

"You wait, you rotters!" said Grundy hoarsely. "You'll pay for this!"

He stamped off, followed by his forlorn-looking and dishevelled chums.

Gordon Gay watched them disappear, and, with a laugh, led the way off to the Grammar School for a wash and brush-up.

"You're a pretty fine sort of chump!" growled Gunn, as the three Shell fellows limped painfully homewards.

"Oh, rats!" grunted Grundy. "Anyway, I'm done with that young rotter Morris!"

CHAPTER 2.

No Offers!

"HALLO! What on earth's this?" Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, stared in amazement as Grundy & Co. entered the school gates.

Taggles, the school porter, who also happened to be by the gates, blinked his eyes in astonishment.

"My heye!" he gasped.

"Not yours, Taggy," grinned Monty Lowther. "Grundy's! Isn't it a nice colour?"

"Hi, Grundy!" George Alfred scowled as he was thus hailed.

"What d'you want?" he bellowed truculently. Grundy's fighting soul could never be sated.

"You!" said Lowther sweetly. "We want to see you close to. I want to see if you're wearing coloured glasses, if it's your own little eyesey-weyeseys."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, come on!" Wilkins clutched his leader's arm. "We don't want to be the laughing-stock of the whole House!"

"Let go of my arm, George Wilkins!"

With a resigned shrug of the shoulders Wilkins released his chum's arm. When Grundy was determined, wild horses could not drag him from his set course.

At the present moment he wanted to get near Lowther—very near, in fact.

"Hallo, Grundy, old man!" said Tom Merry. "We've just been having a little argument. We want you to decide it. Manners suggests that you must have been having an argument with a lawn-mower—"

"Look here—"

"Lowther says—"

"I don't want to hear Lowther's fat-headed remarks!"

"But he says—"

"Rats!"

Grundy strode off, followed by yells of laughter. From behind he presented a peculiar sight. Grass seemed to cover his back. His Eton jacket was split, and his collar was a crumpled rag.

"Hallo, there's old Grundy!"

Harry Noble, the Australian junior, pointed to the Shell fellow, and gave a joyful chuckle.

"I thought old Grundy said he was going for a quiet country stroll. Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"It do," said Bernard Glyn. "It does."

"Poor old Grundy! Always in trouble!" sighed Talbot.

Grundy, with a face as red as fire, marched across the quad followed by chuckles and jeers from fags, who scuttled quickly away once they had hurled their witty epithets.

But Grundy heeded them not. His brain was otherwise occupied. Revenge is said to be sweet, and Grundy was dreaming of the sweets to come. His brain worked slowly, and as yet he could only think of one thing at a time, and the jeers of the crowd was but distant music in his ears.

"Grundy!"

Mr. Railton, the School House master, stopped with amazement, and stared at the big Shell fellow.

"Grundy, have you been fighting?"

"Y-yes, sir!"

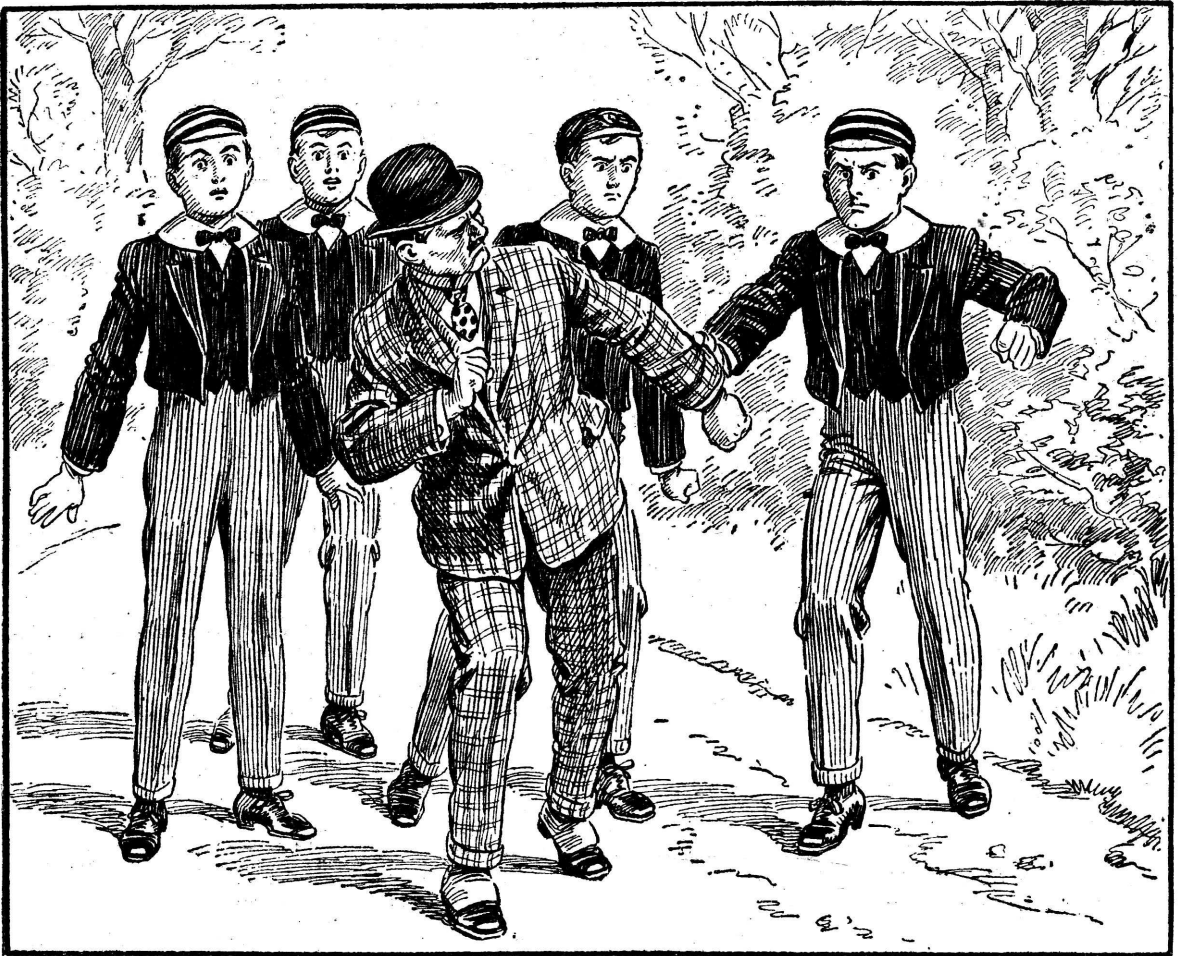
"How many times have I told you to keep your fists to yourself?"

Not knowing, Grundy could not say. He ran his fingers through his ruffled hair, a most comical look on his face.

It was as much as Mr. Railton could do to refrain from laughing.

"I—I—I—"

"Very well, Grundy. Go and clean



“All right; I’ll let you have the money before five!” said the Grammar School junior. The bookie nodded, and was just about to make off down the footpath, when Grundy caught him by the sleeve. “Just a second, Banks! I’ve spoken to you about leading kids astray before now!” he said sternly. (See Chapter 1.)

yourself. Remember, that to have the strength of a giant is excellent, but to use it like a giant is tyrannical. You can go!”

“Yes, sir!”
And Mr. Railton walked off, smiling. George Alfred Grundy made his way to the bath-room.

Wilkins and Gunn were already there. “Had another fight, fathead?” asked Gunn.

“No.”
For a few minutes Grundy’s great mind was devoted to bathing his swollen and somewhat distorted features.

Then, with a red but noticeably cleaner face, he looked up.

“I’ve got a wheeze!” he exclaimed.

“Bury it!” sniffed Gunn.

“Pawn it, and lose the ticket!” growled Wilkins.

“Don’t be a pair of chumps. It’s for scoring off the Grammarians.”

“What?”

“Again?”

“Fathead! I tell you it’s a jolly fine wheeze! To-night we—”

“You—not us!” said Gunn emphatically.

“You’re a nice sort of pal, William Gunn.”

Gunn grunted a non-committal grunt.

“Here am I thinking out wheezes, wearing out my brain thinking out ideas, and then—”

“When?”

“Look here, George Wilkins, if you can’t stop making fatheaded remarks

when I’m talking I’ll give you a thick ear!”

“Oh, stop rowing,” growled Gunn.

“I’m fed up with you, Grundy!”

And Gunn marched off, slamming the door behind him. A second later George Wilkins followed him.

George Alfred Grundy, left to himself and his wheeze, sniffed.

Having made himself more or less respectable and presentable, he made his way down to the Shell corridor.

Fellows were streaming in from the river, the cricket-field, and the tuckshop to tea.

Grundy went into his study, and sat down sulkily. After a minute or two he went out, slamming the door behind him.

Going along to Study No. 10, he tapped on the door and walked in. Tom Merry & Co. were at tea.

“Hallo, Grundy!” said Tom Merry.

“Just the very fellow I wanted to see. Now, we’ve been having an argument about—”

“Eh?”

“No,” an argument. Lowther says that—

“I don’t want to hear Lowther’s fat-headed remarks, or anyone else’s fat-headed remarks. I’ve got an idea.”

Lowther dropped his cup noisily, and staggered back, his hand on his heart.

“Don’t!” he said. “I’ve got a weak heart. You shouldn’t spring these shocks on us. What have we done?”

“Fathead!”

“This is too—too much!” said Lowther dramatically. “Grundy, the great George Alfred, has an idea. Ah! But whose?”

“Mine!” hooted Grundy.

“Well—well, let’s have it! What is it? A new wheeze for making motor-cars out of fountain-pen nibs?”

“No. As a matter of fact, it’s for doing down the Grammarians.”

“Doing them down? I hear that the school’s being ‘done up’ now,” said Manners. “Why do you want to do it down?”

“Don’t be a silly chump! I mean for licking them—beating them!”

“Take it away!”

“Bury it!”

“You call yourself captain of the Shell, Tom Merry?”

Tom Merry, his mouth full of cake, nodded amicably.

“Umph!” he agreed.

“Well, here am I, willing to lead a party to do down the Grammarians. To-night I’m going—”

“That’s where you’re wrong,” said Lowther, shaking his head.

“Eh?”

“You’re going now. Good-bye!”

“Look here—”

“Shut the door quietly!”

“You’re a rotten lot of bounders—”

“Good!”

“And I’ve a jolly good mind to leave you out of this wheeze—”

"Hooray!"

Slam!
Grundy slammed the door, and stamped away. But he had still another card to play.

He hurried down to the Fourth Form passage, and tapped on the door of Study No. 6, where Blake, Herries, and Digby were finishing their scanty suppers. "Come in, chump!"

Blake, Herries, and Digby stared round as the Shell fellow entered the door.

Arthur Augustus, fixing his celebrated monocle into his eye, gave him a searching look.

"No," said Blake, "you can't!"

"Eh? What do you mean, I can't?"

"Why, haven't you come to borrow a sardine?"

"No."

"Well, take one, anyway. They're rather high, I know. Coming over?"

"Yarough!"

Grundy gave a yelp as a rather highly-flavoured sardine caught him full in the face.

"Lemme gerrat him!"

He made a wild rush to reach the cheerful Blake. But Herries, with unusual presence of mind, barred the way, poker in hand.

Grundy shook a large-sized fist at the grinning Yorkshire junior.

"You wait!" he roared. "Just you wait!"

"I am!" chuckled Blake.

But Grundy was fed up with Study No. 6.

As a last resort he made tracks for his own study.

"Hallo!" said Wilkins glumly.

"Hallo, Grundy!" said Gunn, more amicably. "What's for tea?"

"Blow tea!"

"Isn't any to blow!" said Wilkins, with a faint, unconvincing attempt at humour.

"I've got an idea!" said Grundy, in a firm tone that brooked no denial.

"Oh dear!" sighed Wilkins.

"What, again?" murmured Gunn faintly.

Grundy gulped down something in his throat, but let the remarks pass.

"I'm willing to stand my chums a tea, but my chums are the fellows who stand by me in my hour of need."

"Ha, ha!" murmured Wilkins, in a stage whisper.

"What do you say to a raid on the Grammar School to-night?"

"Rotten!" said Wilkins candidly.

"Putrid!" grunted Gunn.

"Don't be funny. I'm jolly serious. Just the three of us could do it nicely. You know the dormitories at the top of the house. Well, if we got into the school we could lock all the doors—see? What do you think of it?"

Wilkins and Gunn looked at one another. If they said what they thought of it there would be no tea. And they were hungry.

"Splendid!" said Gunn limply.

"Oh, awfully topping!" said Wilkins, concealing a grin.

"Good! I knew you fellows were sensible. We'll talk it over with tea. What about some grub from the tuck-shop?"

"Ah, what about it?" echoed Gunn, sitting up.

And Wilkins seemed filled with new life.

They winked at one another. There might be some means of not going to the Grammar School, but they meant to make sure of their tea.

And George Alfred looked quite pleased.

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CHAPTER 3.

Not an Excursion!

"ARE you chaps awake?"
George Grundy sat up in bed, and listened.

But there was no reply to his

question.

Boom! Boom!

"Two, by gum!" he exclaimed. "Why couldn't those fatheads keep awake?"

But Gunn and Wilkins had gone peacefully to sleep, fully confident that when the time came to start the attack their leader would be safe in the arms of Morpheus. But for once they had misjudged Grundy. So full had his mind been of the attack that he had slept but lightly.

Now, fully awake, he was indignant that his chums should be asleep while he sat awake.

It did not take him long to take action. Jumping out of bed, he groped his way across the dark dormitory to where he knew Gunn's bed to be. George Gunn, having had a sumptuous tea, was pretending to sleep the sleep of the just. As a matter of fact, he was awake; but he had the good sense to keep his eyes tightly closed.

"Gunn!"

Snor-r-r-e!

Grundy jumped back at that extraordinary snore. Gunn was a sound sleeper, and the sound was penetrating.

Grundy took a tight grip of his chum's shoulder, and Gunn, for fear of worse happenings, sat up suddenly.

Crack!

"Yowp!"

Grundy clutched his head, and Gunn put a hand to his nose.

"Your fathead!"

"You ass!"

"My head!"

"By dose!"

Grundy glared at Gunn, and Gunn glared at Grundy.

Wilkins, two beds away, gave a loud snore.

"What's that? Who's there?"

Tom Merry sat up in bed, and peered round the dorm.

"Who's there?"

"Nobody!" said Grundy, in a whisper.

"Fathead! I suppose by the idiotic remark that it's you, Grundy?"

Silence!

"If you're going on a fatheaded expedition to the Grammar School, don't make a row. I hope Gordon Gay & Co. catch you, that's all."

"Bosh!"

Grundy stepped over to Wilkins' bed.

But George Wilkins was not having any. He rolled out of the bed on the other side, and dragged the clothes round him.

"Are you awake, Wilky?" asked Grundy, in a hoarse whisper.

He placed his hand on Wilkins' bed.

"G-good heavens! He's not there!" he gasped. "Are you there, Wilky?"

"No."

"That's funny! I could swear I heard a voice!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You are there, you rotter! Get up! We're late. You don't want to rouse the house. Hurry up and dress!"

"Oh, all right!" said Wilkins sulkily. He knew that it was no use arguing with Grundy.

With many a muttered exclamation the three chums dressed themselves. Then, shivering, they crept downstairs, Wilkins and Gunn muttering remarks which, luckily for them, Grundy did not hear.

Getting out of the school was an easy matter. It was not the first time the

three had paid a midnight visit to the Grammar School, but Gunn and Wilkins fervently hoped it would be the last.

"Ugh!" said Wilkins, as they stood in the quad. "It's jolly chilly for the summer!"

"Blow the summer! Don't stand here jawing!"

Grundy crept off into the night, followed by his chums.

"Don't make a noise—Yow!"

"Don't you, fathead!" chuckled Gunn. "Don't be an ass. How could I help falling over that blessed—"

"Don't make a noise—" hissed Gunn; and Wilkins gave a joyful chuckle.

In dignified silence, marred only by the fact that he fell from the wall into the road, Grundy led the way down the little lane.

Fortunately for them, the three did not pass a solitary person on their walk.

Soon the Grammar School loomed up ahead. It was a pitch dark night, and they had to go warily.

"Follow me!" said Grundy.

He clambered up the wall, and dropped noiselessly to ground on the other side. It was a big drop, and he landed on his hands and knees.

Gunn and Wilkins followed him.

"Here we are!"

Grundy stopped beneath a window. It was not too far up for him to reach.

But he could not quite reach the latch.

"We can't reach that," grumbled Gunn.

"You stand on my back, then you will," said Grundy. "Come on, no slacking!"

With a resigned sigh, Gunn clambered on his leader's back. He took out his pocket-knife and slipped it between the two frames.

Then he gave a short whistle of surprise.

"Hallo! It's unlatched!"

"Unlatched?" said Wilkins.

"Good!—All the better," grunted Grundy. "Hurry up, Gunn. Open it."

Very carefully Gunn pushed up the lower frame. All was dark within the room, and he hesitated before entering. But he had gone half-way, and he felt that he might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. Placing a knee on the window-sill, he squeezed through the opening.

"O.K.?" asked Grundy.

"Yes; hurry up!"

Wilkins, clambering on his leader's back, followed through the window.

"Here, what about me?" asked Grundy. "How'm I going to get in?"

"Shush! I heard a noise!" whispered Wilkins rather anxiously.

"Rot!"

Wilkins and Gunn moved about the room trying to find the door; Gunn pushed over a chair, and the two stopped. In the night the noise sounded like gunfire.

"Not so much—Oh!" Grundy broke off with a start, as he heard a foot-step in the quadrangle. "What the dickens!"

"Got you, my lad!"

Grundy gasped helplessly as a firm hand was placed on his shoulder.

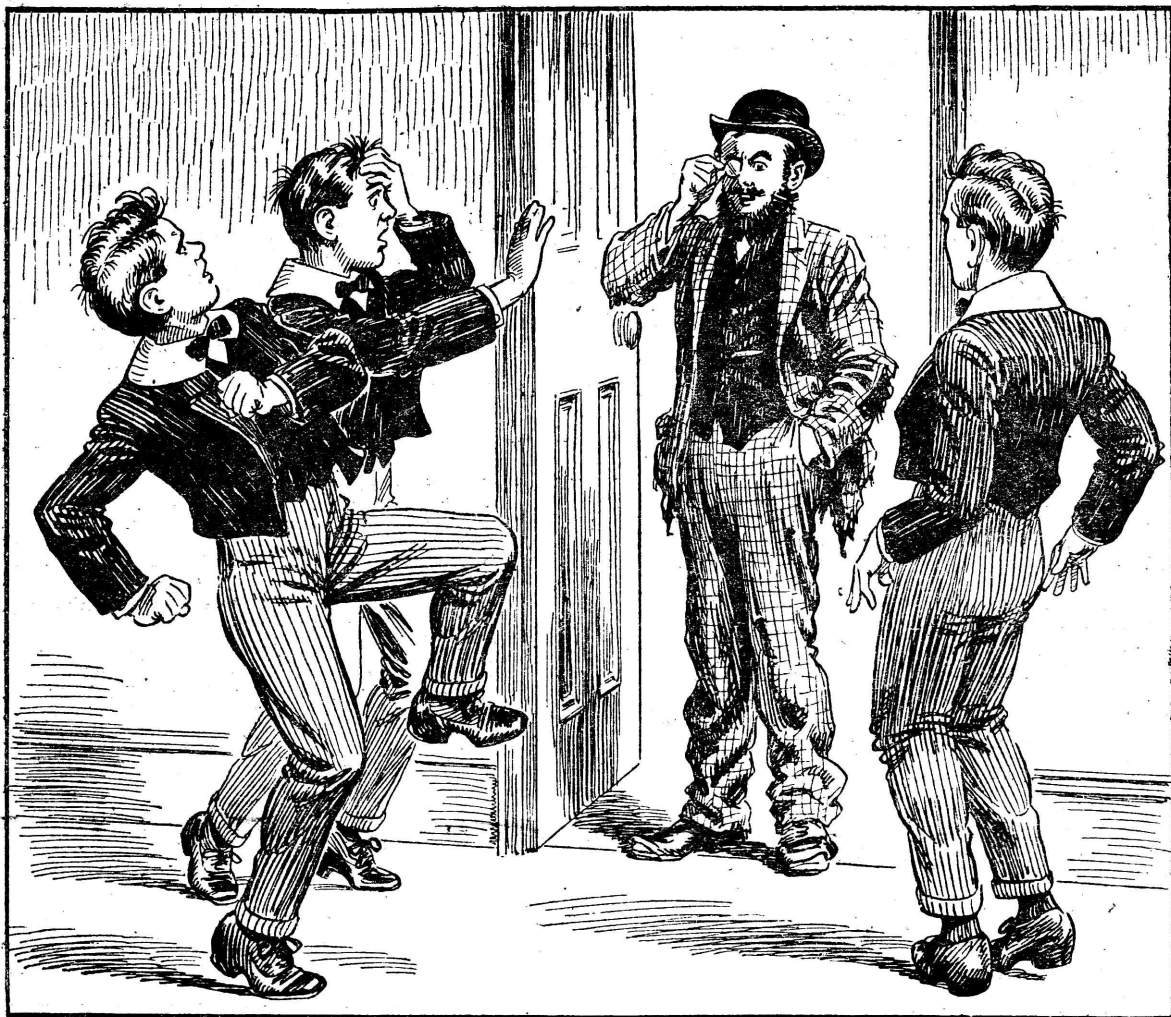
"What's the game, my lad?"

The Shell junior stared white-facedly into the hard and grizzled face of the Grammar School porter.

"I—I—" he stammered.

"Looks like a real cop, eh?" asked the other. "Open window—"

Wilkins and Gunn, inside the room, had thoughts of jumping through the window and rescuing their chum. But, too late! Already the tumult had been



“My only aunt!” gasped Blake. In the doorway stood Arthur Augustus D’Arcy. His aristocratic chin was concealed by a thick beard, and in the place of his usual natty and elegant attire he wore an old shabby suit. “What do you youngstahs want?” said Arthur Augustus in a deep voice. (See Chapter 5.)

heard, and footsteps were approaching the room.

“Oh dear!” gasped Gunn. “We’re in the soup!”

“Why did the silly ass come!” groaned Wilkins.

Grundy, holding heated altercation with the porter, forgot his chums entirely. And they were trapped!

“What does this mean?”

The key was turned in the lock, the door flung open, and Dr. Monk stepped into the room.

He switched on the light.

Wilkins and Gunn blinked sheepishly in the flood of light, too dazed to speak.

“Schoolboys!” gasped the Head. “St. James’ schoolboys. Good heavens!”

He stared at the two juniors in blank amazement, and they looked sheepishly at the carpet.

“What have you to say?”

What could they say? Wilkins and Gunn looked helplessly at one another.

From without came the raucous tones of the school porter.

“Doctor, here’s one of them. Caught ‘im red-anded I did. Open window an’ all!”

Already the doorway was crowded with Grammarians, all staring in astonishment at the two juniors.

“St. Jim’s rotters!”

“Burgling!”

Dr. Monk stepped to the window.

“Burroughs,” he said, “bring that boy inside!”

“Yes, sir!”

The headmaster looked round to where the Grammarians stood, wide-eyed, in the doorway.

“Boys! Why are you here? Get to bed at once. Hake, see the boys off to bed!”

“Yes, sir!” said the prefect.

And in a tumult of surprised chatter the Grammarians were shepherded to their dormitory. No sooner had their chatter died away than Grundy was led into the study.

“Now,” said the Head sternly. “What is your explanation of this most unseemly invasion?”

“Yes, sir. I can explain it. We—”

began Grundy, then he broke down helplessly.

“Well? I am waiting.”

“We—I—”

Then Grundy, at a loss for words, looked at his chums.

There was nothing to say.

“Why— Good heavens, my desk has been burgled!”

Quickly the headmaster strode across the room to where his desk, the drawers forced open, stood in disorder. It took him but a second to examine it. Then, pained surprised in his voice, he exclaimed:

“I have been robbed! Twenty pound notes have been taken from my desk.”

Wilkins and Gunn went white. Grundy gave a hoarse cry.

“Sir! You don’t think that we— we—”

The Head shrugged his shoulders, sadly.

“What can I think?”

“But, sir—”

“I came here and found two juniors in my room. The window is open. My desk has been robbed. There are the facts. There is no one else in the room.”

Grundy looked round the study wildly.

“I will not search you. Confess, and I will punish you as lightly as the circumstances permit, otherwise—”

Grundy looked at his two chums, doubtfully. But only for a second or so.

“It’s monstrous, sir! It—we—”

“The evidence is to my mind quite convincing,” said Dr. Monk coldly. “If you have explanations, I am ready to hear them.”

Grundy and Co. remained painfully silent.

“Very well, then. You must be searched.”

Grundy and Co. prepared themselves for the indignity. Burroughs did his THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 650.

work thoroughly, but only a few coins and other oddments were brought to light.

"Where is the money?" asked the Head sternly. "Have you hidden it?"

"No, sir. We are innocent," said Wilkins, through dry lips.

"Quite innocent," added Gunn hoarsely.

"Perhaps you didn't put the notes in the desk—you may have been mistaken—I sometimes—"

"Boy! The notes were there!"

Grundy hung his head.

"To-night," continued the headmaster sternly, "you will be locked in the punishment-room. To-morrow I will take you to Dr. Holmes."

"Oh!"

And with heavy hearts Grundy and Co. spent a chilly night in a dark room, their minds tormented by thoughts of the morrow. But, where was the money?

CHAPTER 4.

In Deep Disgrace!

CLANG, clang, clang! The rising-bell clanged out noisily as Taggles gave vent to his feelings and expressed his indignation at having to rise so early in the morning just to ring a bell.

"Yaw—yaw!"

Monty Lowther yawned sleepily.

Tom Merry sat up in bed.

"Did you chaps hear old Grundy come in?" he asked. "I heard him go, and lay awake a long time waiting for him to return, but I didn't hear him at all!"

"Wake him up and ask him, thasser bes' way," mumbled Manners sleepily.

"Grundy!" bellowed Tom.

No answer came from Grundy's bed.

"Here, chuck a pillow at the lazy bouncer, will you, Talbot?"

Talbot paused with the pillow half-way in the air.

"Hallo!" he said, letting the pillow slide to the ground. "That's jolly funny."

"What's jolly funny?"

"He's not there!"

Tom Merry sprang out of bed.

"Nor is Wilkins, nor is Gunn!" he shouted excitedly.

"Good heavens!"

"The silly chumps have been run in," chuckled Lowther. "I guessed they would be."

"I say, this is jolly serious," said Tom. "They ought to be back by now. Hundreds of things may have happened."

By this time the dormitory was awake, and there was an excited buzz of talk.

"Anything might happen with Grundy," said Talbot.

"Perhaps they've come home with the milk," suggested Lowther, looking out of the window.

"Ass!"

Lowther stared out of the window.

"No sign yet—Hallo!"

"What's the matter? Grundy in the arms of a policeman?" grinned Racke.

"Not a policeman, but old Clancy, of the Grammar School."

"What?"

There was an excited rush to the window.

"Poor old Grundy!"

"And look at Wilkins!"

"Doesn't old Gunny look happy!"

Some of the juniors thought it a huge joke, but some were genuinely concerned.

"The silly asses!" said Tom Merry.

"Trust Grundy to get in a mess. It's really our fault for letting the idiot loose!"

"Why can't they lock him somewhere safe?" groaned Manners.

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"Perhaps they will," said Gore, examined the desk, and found that it had been rifled. Some twenty pound notes had been stolen. The study door had been locked on the outside, and the two boys were alone in the study. One boy remained outside, presumably to give warning in case of alarm. Very fortunately he was unable to do so.

"Poor old Grundy!"

The Shell fellows dressed hurriedly, and dashed downstairs.

But Blake & Co. were ahead of them.

"Hallo! What do you Shell fish want?" asked Blake. "Come to see Grundy? Where's he been?"

"Grammar School, by the look of things," said Kangaroo.

"He asked us to go. Jolly glad we didn't!" grinned Herries.

As the master and the three juniors approached an avenue was made for them.

Grundy & Co. received sympathetic looks on all sides, but they hardly noticed the fellows. Their faces were white and strained.

"My word, they look bad!" said Blake, with a whistle of surprise.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Something jolly serious!" suggested Manners.

"Perhaps old Grundy's smashed the school, instead of the Grammarians."

"Poor old Grundy!" said Tom Merry, shaking his head.

And that was the general opinion.

But what was the crime? Fellows hung about the passages in anxious groups.

Daring fags who walked quickly past the headmaster's study claimed to have heard the Head speaking in deadly serious tones, and some of the bolder ones, gifted with imagination, had heard the word "Expulsion."

But one and all came to the conclusion that it must be something "jolly serious."

The real news came from Baggy Trimble.

Trimble had a wonderful ear for key-holes. It was a nasty habit of his, for which he was heartily disliked.

"Have you heard?" he asked breathlessly, coming up to Tom Merry, Blake, and Figgins, as they stood in the Hall before morning lessons.

"Heard what, you fat chump?" asked Blake.

"About Grundy. I was just passing the Head's study when my shoelace broke—"

"Rats!"

"I mean, I dropped my handkerchief—and I stooped to pick it up, when I heard the Head say—"

"Shut up!"

"No, he didn't! He said that Wilkins and Gunn were a couple of mean rotters, and—"

"Yes, I can just imagine the Head saying that!" said Blake sarcastically.

"Well, you know what I mean—words to that effect. Anyway, it's jolly serious."

"We know that—Hallo, Kildare! What's wrong?"

"You kids are wanted in Hall at once. Hurry up!"

"And that's that!" said Figgins.

"Come along. Now for the deadly news!"

The fellows quickly filed into Hall, and there was an incessant buzz of talk.

But as Dr. Holmes entered the Hall from the far end all talk ceased as if by magic, and silence reigned supreme.

The Head took off his glasses, placed them on the desk, then nervously placed them on his nose.

"Boys," he said in his deep voice, "a very serious charge has been made against three of your schoolfellows, and, in case anyone present can bring light to bear on the matter, I will place the facts before you."

"Last night three boys from the Shell Form broke bounds, and paid a visit to the Grammar School. They entered Dr. Monk's study, and by some chance were discovered. Dr. Monk, on entering the

room, examined the desk, and found that it had been rifled. Some twenty pound notes had been stolen. The study door had been locked on the outside, and the two boys were alone in the study. One boy remained outside, presumably to give warning in case of alarm. Very fortunately he was unable to do so.

"It is natural that suspicion should rest on the two boys in the study, although the evidence as yet is not convincing enough to actually accuse them of the theft; for, on searching them, the notes were not brought to light. However, their crime is serious, and they will be severely dealt with. I have given them twenty-four hours in which to confess. If by to-morrow night they have neither confessed nor proved their innocence, they will be expelled!"

He cleared his throat, and the whole school literally hung upon his next words.

"Should any boy here know of anything which would assist these boys to prove their innocence, or would prove their guilt, I shall be pleased to see them in my study immediately. But I want proof, not mere suspicion. Nor do I want friends to come and say they think their unfortunate schoolfellows innocent."

For a half-second or so he looked round the crowded Hall, but not one stirred.

"Dismiss!" he said, and swept out of the Hall, leaving the school in an uproar.

"They're not guilty!" said Tom Merry.

"Of course they're not!" said Talbot.

"Grundy may be several kinds of an ass, but he's not a thief!"

And that sentiment was echoed throughout the school.

But it did not help Grundy & Co. in their predicament.

Where was the proof? Who could clear them?

CHAPTER 5.

Gussy Gets "Going!"

WOT! Uttah wot!" Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"It certainly is a bit strange; but, unless old Monk has been talking through his hat, one of them must know something about the matter," said Blake.

By now, of course, the whole story was known throughout the school. The story of that unfortunate night had passed from mouth to mouth, and, although in the main the story was compatible with the facts, there had been numerous enlargements.

Whether or not Wilkins and Gunn were guilty was a matter of opinion. Most of the fellows agreed that they could not be. But some maintained that, as they were alone in the room, they must have been guilty, unless Dr. Monk had forgotten to put the notes in the desk. But he had had them from the bank only that day, and a search of the school had brought no light to bear on the matter. The mystery remained as impenetrable as ever.

"Of course, we know Gunn and Wilky well," said Talbot. "They're not the kind of fellows to steal. Besides, they would have known that, had anything been reported missing from the school, they would immediately be suspected. For we knew that they had gone to the Grammar School."

"It's a lot of rot!" said Kangaroo, but in none too convincing tones. "They didn't touch the beastly notes!"

"Then who did?" asked Racke, with a slight, unpleasant laugh.

"That's the question," said Gore.

And it was; but talking did not help to find a solution.

"They were only in the blessed room a minute!" said Herries.

"Time enough to take notes, though," said Talbot seriously.

“You speak from experience, I suppose?” sneered Crooke.

Talbot ignored the cad of the Shell completely, but Mellish gave a slight snigger.

“In fact, I shouldn’t be surprised if you were at the Grammar School last night,” said Crooke, encouraged somewhat by Mellish’s snigger.

Tom Merry turned on him, his eyes blazing.

“Don’t be a cad, Crooke!” he said fiercely. “There’s quite enough scandal without you causing more.”

Talbot in the past had not pursued his present straight course, and at one time had been termed the Prince of Cracksmen—a title he had been only too pleased to relinquish. But Crooke, his cousin, would never let him forget it. Most of the fellows let bygones be bygones, and, as Talbot was such a thorough sportsman, and had many times saved his side, he was voted a jolly good fellow.

“They can’t both be guilty,” said Manners, after some thought.

Cardew nodded his head wisely.

“Yes,” he said, in his usual languid tones, “they were only in the study a short time, I hear, and, unless the theft was prearranged, one—and one alone—can be guilty.”

“Bai Jove!”

“Hallo! What’s biting you?” asked Blake.

“Nothin’, deah boy. I’ve been thinkin’—”

“Oh!” said Digby comprehensively.

“Yaas. You see, when they were searched the money was not found.”

“We know that, fathead!”

“Yaas. But if they took the money, an’ it was not on them when they were searched, where is it?”

“Oh, where—oh, where can it be?” sang Lowther softly.

“After that clever deduction, are we any forrader?” asked Julian sarcastically.

“Weally! Suahly the money must still have been in the study?”

“Yes, of course—unless they threw it out of the window.”

“Bai Jove!”

Arthur Augustus sprang out of his easy-chair as if he had been electrified.

All eyes were turned upon him in surprise. The Common-room was crowded, and talk ceased as the elegant Fourth-Former, without the slightest warning, strode out of the room, excitement plainly written on his aristocratic features.

“What the dickens!” gasped Blake.

“What’s wrong with poor old Gus?” grinned Manners.

Digby tapped his forehead significantly.

“It’s the hot weather,” he said.

But Blake looked rather worried.

“Old Gus has got some bee in his elegant bonnet. I’m going to see where he’s got to.”

And he left the room, followed by Herries and Digby.

The fellows in the Common-room soon forgot the chums of Study No. 6 as they talked over the amazing Grammar School raid.

But Blake, Herries, and Digby were rather worried about their chum. They knew Gussy as of old. He had many strange ideas, and was as obstinate as a mule.

“Wonder what the young ass is going to do?” mused Blake.

“Goodness knows!” sighed Herries.

“P’r’aps he’s only thought of a new pattern for a necktie. You never know with him.”

Blake shook his head.

“No. I’m afraid he’s gone to the Head with some silly yarn about Gunn and Wilkins being innocent. You know the sort of ass he is. The Head will

throw him out most likely, so we better be there to pick up the pieces.”

They ran up the stairs to the Head’s study, and almost reached the door when Dr. Holmes came out, with a rather worried look on his face.

“Gussy’s not there, then,” said Digby. “Let’s try the study!”

They tried the study, and had their reward.

The door was locked, and, from rustlings inside, Arthur Augustus was dressing.

“Gussy!” hissed Blake, kicking the lower panel.

The rustling ceased, but there was no reply.

“Gussy!” said Blake, in a slightly louder tone.

Herries grasped the handle firmly and rattled it.

Thump, thump!

“Gussy! Open the door, you chump!”

“Wats!”

Blake turned to his chums wearily.

“It’s no good,” he said. “We shall have to wait until the silly chump has finished!”

“Rot!” snorted Herries. “It’s our study as well as his, isn’t it? Well, I’m going to get in, if I have to smash the door to do so!”

Bang!

“Gussy, if you don’t let us in we’ll bash down the door—” hooted Herries.

“Then we’ll bash you—” shouted Digby.

“And then your toppers!” finished Blake.

At this dire threat an audible gasp evinced the fact that Arthur Augustus had heard, and was alarmed.

There was a slight click, and the door opened.

“Now, what are you— My hat!”

Blake broke off with a shout of amazement at the sight Arthur Augustus presented.

Herries’ lower jaw dropped an inch or two; and Digby gave a feeble gasp.

“My only aunt!”

For in the doorway stood Arthur Augustus; but not Arthur Augustus as they knew him. His aristocratic chin was concealed by a thick beard, and his face was covered with grease-paint, but not his neck. His eyebrows had been darkened, and, in place of his usual natty and elegant attire, he wore an old, shabby suit. The trousers hung in wrinkles, and the coat hung only by threads.

“Great Scott!” shouted Blake.

“What do you youngstahs want?” said Arthur Augustus, in a voice so deep that it seemed to come from the apertures in his much-worn boots.

Blake jumped, and looked round the room suspiciously.

Herries’ jaw dropped another inch.

From one of the many holes in his garment the swell of St. Jim’s drew his famous monocle.

“Weally,” he said, fixing it in his eye, “you young boundahs! I want to see—er—Mistah Blake!”

“Eh?”

“If you took that out of your eye you might,” said Blake.

“You wude person! My name is Cwake—Dexton Cwake. I am a detective.”

“My hat!” gasped Blake faintly.

“Crake—Dexton Crake!”

“Oh dear!” sobbed Digby. “Hold me, someone—Dexton Crake! Ho, ho, ho!”

“Weally, I want to see Mistah Blake.”

“Oh dear!” said Blake, wiping his eyes. “Please, Mr. Crake, will you answer a question for me?”

“What? I mean, yaas, my boy!”

“Well, why do you wear a glass eye?”

“You wude wottah! I mean, because I have a weak eye!”

“Then why don’t you wear a glass hat, Gussy?”

“You wottah! You knew all the time!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“You watched me through the key-hole.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Arthur Augustus remained in blissful ignorance that the grease-paint and old clothes in no way tended to conceal his identity, and it seemed a great pity to spoil his bliss.

“But—but where are you going?” asked Blake, when he had at last controlled his laughter. “You’re not going to open a shop in the Strand?”

“Wot! I’m going to clear up the mystewy! I shall go to the Gwammah School as Dexton Cwake, the London detective, and solve the mystewy.”

“Like that?” shrieked Digby, breaking into a fresh guffaw.

“Yaas, you ass, of course!”

“Ho, ho, ho!” roared Herries, holding his sides.

“Dexton Crake, the great defective!” sobbed Blake.

Arthur Augustus, with none of the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere, strode indignantly from the study to execute his self-imposed task; while Blake & Co., when they had sufficiently recovered, sent the news from mouth to mouth. And quite a crowd waited at the gates to see the return of Mr. Dexton Crake, the great “defective.”

CHAPTER 6.

Detection!

“MY hat!”

“Did you ever?”

“Well, hardly ever!”

Gordon Gay gave a whistls of amazement.

The Grammarian fellows were trooping in to tea from the playing-fields, and at Gordon Gay’s exclamation most of them stopped and stared, and, having stared, their remarks savoured not of politeness.

“What is it?” chuckled Gay.

“The count who took the count!” chuckled Carboy.

And certainly that was the appearance Gussy gave the onlookers.

At the moment he was experiencing some difficulty in convincing Burroughs, the porter, that he had not come merely to collect rags and bones. His elegant accent carried weight, and at length, not without misgivings on the part of the porter, he was allowed to pass.

“P’r’aps he’s Clancy’s young brother,” whispered Frank Monk.

Clancy was an unpopular master, and with unpopular masters no theory is too bad to be rejected.

“Ha, ha! Yes!”

It did not take long for the rumour to spread, and soon everyone was hurrying to get a glimpse of Mr. Clancy’s young brother.

Gussy eyed the growing crowd with doubt, mingled with a slight feeling of apprehension.

As yet the crowd was not hostile. But Gussy knew the Grammarians.

“What ever is it?”

“It’s washed its neck!”

“Tell old Clancy, someone!”

A diminutive fag was despatched to the master, much to Arthur Augustus’ evident amazement.

“Go away, you youngstahs!” he said loftily.

“My hat! It’s—” Gordon Gay did not finish his sentence, but dragged his chums aside.

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"It's that chump Gussy!" he whispered.

Monk nodded.

"So it is!" he agreed. "Give the young ass enough rope and he'll hang himself!"

"But some chump has sent for Clancy!" broke in Carboy. "There'll be a jolly old row!"

And there was every probability of Carboy's surmise proving correct.

"Do you want Mr. Clancy?" asked Snipe.

"Er—I—er—want to see Doctah Monk, my deah young fellah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea of Dr. Monk, the quiet, sedate, and almost fussy Dr. Monk, interviewed by this specimen sent the crowd into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

For by now the grease-paint was trickling down Arthur Augustus' face in thin streaks. He had used his No. 5 with liberality unmatched with skill.

"Look!" piped a Second-Former. "He hasn't washed his neck!"

Arthur Augustus flushed beneath his artificial tan.

"Weally, you young wascal—"

With grace born of practice he drew his monocle from some receptacle in his garment and screwed it into his eye.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A fresh gust of laughter swept over the crowd.

The suit, the man, and then the monocle. It was really too funny.

And now Mr. Clancy was approaching the crowd.

Arthur Augustus, feeling that everything in the garden was far from being lovely, looked round wildly for a means of escape. But he was hemmed in on all sides.

But a D'Arcy always knew how to face adversity with a smiling face.

Mr. Clancy burst through the crowd.

"What is all this?" he demanded.

"Who is fighting?"

"No one, sir," said Carpenter.

"It's your brother, sir," piped a still small voice from the edge of the crowd.

"My—my brother! Boy! What do you mean? I have no brother."

"Oh!"

That, "oh," pregnant with disappointment and surprise, startled Augustus.

"Weally, my deah sir—" he began, when Mr. Clancy cut him short.

"You! Who are you, and what, may I ask, are you doing in the school precincts?"

"Weally, sir. I wish to see the headmastah."

"Boy, are you mad, or merely insane? Why do you come here in this queer garb?"

"I wish to see the headmastah. I am Dexton Cwake, the London detective."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" sobbed Carboy, on Monk's shoulder. "Dexton Cwake—the London detective."

Mr. Clancy stuttered.

"He's mad. Hold him while I find the doctor!"

He hastened off, and the circle round Arthur Augustus closed in on him. But he was not to be thus robbed of his liberty. Giving a sudden spring he broke through the crowd at its weakest point, where stood some diminutive fags.

These went down like ninespins before his mad charge, and in a second he was free, making a bee-line, not for the gates, but for the School House.

"After him!"

"Hold him!"

The crowd followed in hot pursuit, and others seeing the chase joined in, not knowing the whys and wherefores, but for the sake of excitement.

But the swell of St. Jim's had a good

lead, and kept it. He had been to the Grammar School before, and knew his way about the school. Once in the building, could he but throw the pursuers off the scent, he would be safe. He raced to the Head's study. He knew the Head must be at tea with his wife and children, so the coast would be clear. And the rabble that followed him would never have the nerve to raid their headmaster's study.

Once in the room, he quickly shut and locked the door, panting with sheer exhaustion.

Then he ran to the window, looking for means of escape. If needs be he could drop to the ground; it was some consolation to know this. He could see Mr. Clancy coming across the quadrangle with the headmaster, talking rapidly and waving his arms.

Arthur Augustus, or Dexton Cwake, laughed triumphantly, and turned to carry on his detective work.

As he turned he gave a start of surprise. He was not alone. In the far corner a Grammarian junior crouched.

The swell of St. Jim's eyed him suspiciously.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped. "What evah are you doin' heah?"

"I—I— Who are you? I'll give the alarm. You thief!"

"Wats!" I will awwest— I am Dexton Cwake, the London detective, and I wish to know why you are in your headmastah's study."

The junior, concealing a slight grin, pointed to the desk.

"I've brought an impot," he said briefly. "You chump!"

"Why, you young wascal!"

"Help!" shouted the Grammarian.

There was a pattering of feet in the corridor, and Gordon Gay, followed by Frank Monk, dashed in.

"Hallo, Gus, so you're here!"

Arthur Augustus gave a violent start. He was known!

"Bai Jove!" he stammered feebly.

"You boundahs, so you knew all the time. I suppose that wottah Blake told you?"

"No ass! Do you think you're disguised?"

But the swell of St. Jim's deigned not to reply.

More Grammarians crowded into the study, and Morris, for it was he who had been in the study when Arthur Augustus had entered, had time to slip away unnoticed.

"Gussy!" Gordon Gay stepped up to the St. Jim's junior and spoke in low tones. "Gussy," he said "you're a priceless young ass, but I shouldn't like to see you get into a real row, as you will if the doctor sees you, so open that window and bunk, we'll catch and rag you all right—but the Head can't chase you through a window!"

"Bai Jove! That's jollay good of you, deah boy! I—"

"Never mind that, fathead, bunk!"

And Arthur Augustus "bunked."

Gordon Gay & Co. followed through the open window, the last of the party disappearing over the sill as the Head entered the room, followed by Mr. Clancy. They were too late.

Gordon Gay & Co., having caught up the now much-worn D'Arcy, gave him the time of his life, and finally ducked him in the water-trough. But it was as nothing to what the Head of the Grammar School might have given him. And he thanked his lucky stars as he limped away.

"Good-bye, Dexton Crake!" yelled Gordon Gay.

"Hooray!"

Arthur Augustus looked a particularly

sorry sight as he trudged through the lane of grinning juniors. Water oozed from his boots and clothes; and his low-crowned bowler hat looked a rag. His monocle hung from its cord minus the glass.

"Good-bye, water-nymph!" said Frank Monk sweetly, waving a kiss.

And Burroughs, the porter, gave a "haw-haw" that earned him a glassy look through the glassless monocle; but that only made him laugh the more.

In the lane were Blake & Co., with bicycles.

"Here he is!" chuckled Herries.

The swell of St. Jim's looked up in surprise, but apart from expressing his gratitude to his chums for bringing his bicycle, he spoke not a word during the whole journey back to the school.

But his aristocratic features bore a thoughtful frown. He was on the trail, as he explained to Blake in the bicycle-shed. And Blake heartily endorsed his statement, and added words to the effect that the noble scion of the house of D'Arcy was also a trial. A remark which was received with the silent contempt it merited.

CHAPTER 7. The Way Out!

TAP!

"Come in!"

Arthur Augustus, still with the thoughtful frown marring his aristocratic face, stepped inside Study No. 3 on the Fourth Form passage in the New House, and bestowed on Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn a cheery smile.

Figgins and Kerr grinned amiably, while Wynn, his mouth full of steak, waved aloft a piece of kidney affixed to a fork.

Ignoring this kind offer, Arthur Augustus came straight to the point at once.

"It's about Gwunday," he said.

"Oh, yes, Grundy," said Kerr.

"I suppose you've come to tell us that he's caged in a blessed room?" said Figgins. "If so, I have the honour to tell you that we already know. Sorry, and all that, of course."

"Don't wot, deah boy. This is vewy sewious."

He frowned slightly at Wynn, as though steak-and-kidney pies, of which Wynn was getting inside information, were not compatible with serious thought. But Wynn waved a cheery fork with the equally cheery admonition to "wire in."

"Ahem! Not just now, deah boy. The fact is, Figg, I've come to see Kerr about old Gwunday."

Figgins nodded, with a slight twinkle in his eyes.

"Oh!" said Kerr. "I thought that, bar Grundy's explanation, nothing is known. Surely nothing more has been found?"

"Not—not exactly, deah boy."

"This is how the matter stands, I believe," said Kerr. "One," he counted on his fingers, "Gunn and Wilkins were discovered in Dr. Monk's study, with no one else in the room. The desk was locked on the outside, and the window was open. Two, some money was missing. Three, the said money could not be found when the two were searched. Four, the two have as yet offered no actual useful explanation."

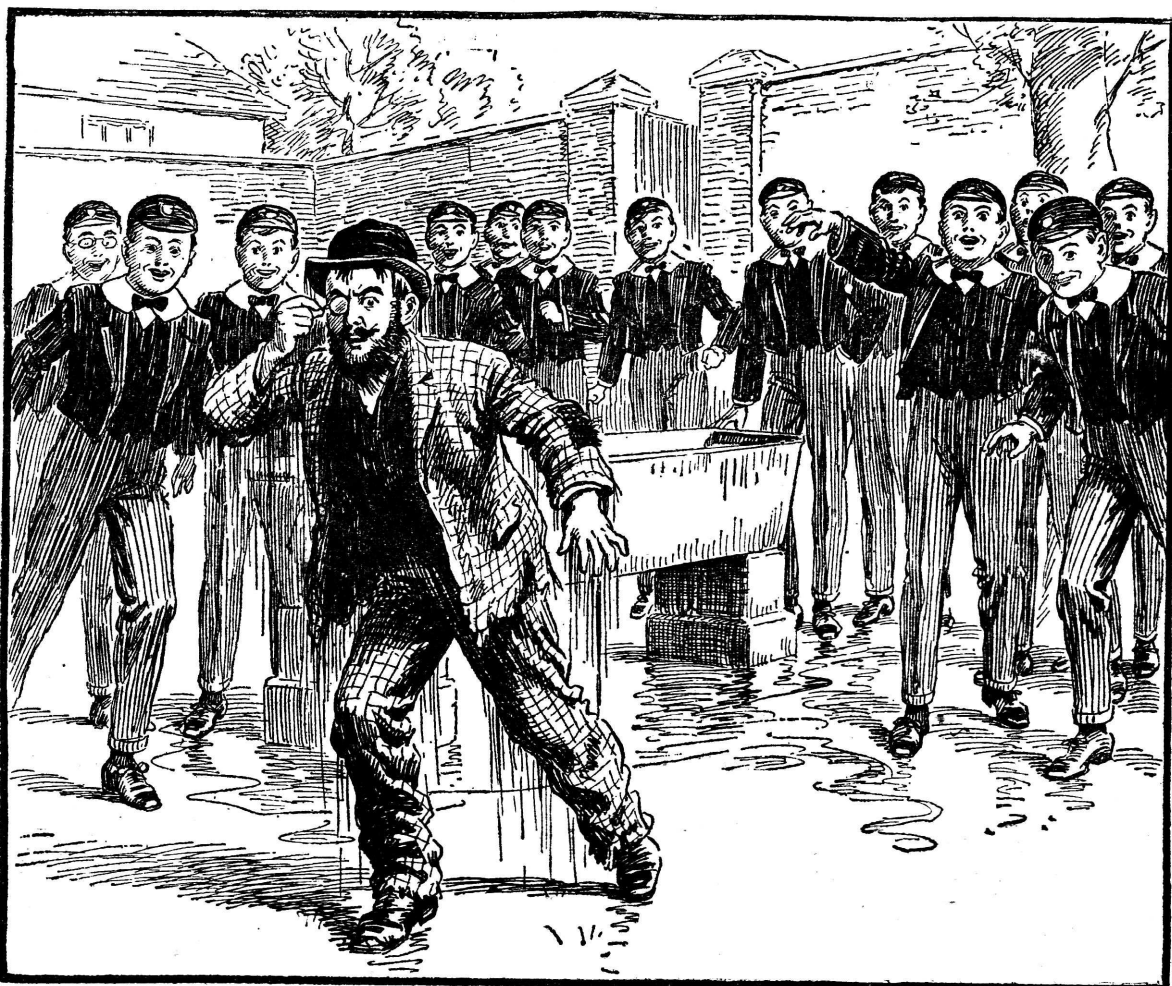
"Well, as a mattah of fact, deah boy, I did some investigating at the Gwammar School this afternoon."

"I heard about it," said Figgins, grinning.

"Ahem! It ended wathah unfortunately, but I discovahed somethin'."

"Oh!"

"Yaas, wathah! When I was in Dr. Monk's studah, I found a Gwammawian



“Good-bye, Dexton Crake!” yelled Gordon Gay. Arthur Augustus looked a sorry sight as he trudged through the lane of grinning juniors. Water oozed from his boots and clothes, and his low-crowned bowler looked a rag. “Good-bye, water-nymph!” said Frank Monk, sweetly. (See chapter 6.)

theah. I don't know him—he must be a new boy, and he looked as though he might be in the Fourth. He tried to hide when I entahed—”

“To hide?”

“Yaas. Of course, he made an excuse that he had some lines to bwing; but that was all wot. He was theah for no good.”

“No, of course not,” said Kerr thoughtfully. “Let me see. The theft took place last night?”

“Yes.”

“Well, suppose—I only say suppose—there was another fellow in the room besides Gunn, and Wilkins—”

“But—”

“Wait a second. And suppose that he, having taken the notes, had hidden the money and himself—for he was not detected. He would, to avoid suspicion, have to leave the money behind, in case an organised search was made.”

“Bai Jove! You mean that pewwaps some wottah was hidden in the study all the time Gunn and Wilkins were theah—”

“Exactly,” smiled Kerr. “It is possible, barely possible.”

“It's jolly well likely,” said Figgins loyally. “Trust old Kerr to find the way out. Want any brain-work done, come to the New House.”

“Wats! Howevah, I admit theah may be somethin' in Kerr's theowy. As a mattah of fact,” he added thoughtfully, “I had nearly thought of it myself—”

“Oh, yes, of course!” smiled Kerr. “In fact, the more I think of it the more likely it seems. But who was the hidden third?”

“The fellow I saw!” exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly.

“Probably,” said Kerr. “It would be his first opportunity of revisiting the scene of his crime, and he must revisit it to recover the money he had hidden.”

“Bai Jove! Of course, he would be at classes all day, and the Head would natuwallly be out for tea. Theah was a half yesterday, but not to-day.”

“True,” said Figgins. “It's the chap, right enough. But how can we prove it?”

“Only by a visit to the school, I think,” said Kerr. “And Gussy having been there, that's pretty hopeless. They'll be on the look-out for more invaders.”

“Yes; but couldn't you find some good disguise—some disguise which would enable you to see Dr. Monk at once?” asked Figgins thoughtfully, though fully confident that his chum would find some way out.

“H'm!” murmured Arthur Augustus. And Fatty Wynn stopped nibbling pie-crust to think of a disguise.

But it was Kerr who had the happy thought.

“I have it!” he cried. “Lathom. I've made up as Lathom so many times that I feel I can act the part absolutely to the life. There won't be much risk,”

“That's the idea!” said Figgins enthusiastically.

“Yaas wathah!” chimed in Arthur Augustus; while Fatty Wynn, with a sigh of content, resumed his munching, feeling that it no longer incumbent upon him to cease work.

“Right-ho, then!” said Kerr, rising. “The sooner the better. Dr. Monk will probably be in his room, and, anyway, unless the matter is cleared up to-night it is farewell to Grundy tomorrow; and, though he is a bit of a nuisance, I rather like old Grundy.”

D'Arcy hurried off to the School House, while Figgins and Kerr raked out the “props” of the New House Amateur Dramatic Society, and commenced the necessary make-up.

It did not take Kerr's skilled hands long to alter the whole appearance of his face. Kerr lived the part he acted, and as Figgins stoutly maintained, could, like Garrick of old, have acted a gridiron.

But now he wished to act the part of the Fourth Form-master, and he knew the part well. It was not the first occasion on which he had visited the Grammar School so garbed. And his nerve was more than equal to the strain.

Mr. Lathom would be persona grata at the Grammar School, and all obstacles would be removed from his path should he desire to make a search or inquiries.

In a few minutes Kerr was ready, gowned and disguised so that not even

Mr. Lathom's closest friend could have told the two apart.

"Now," whispered Figgins, "you'll go in the gown, of course?"

"Yes. A bit unusual, but it is a great help in the part. I can pretend I came in a flaring hurry."

"Good! Fatty, run and see whether the coast is clear."

"Better still, beard old Lathom in his giddy den," advised Kerr. "Go in to him on some pretext. Pretend you've forgotten something about prep."

Fatty gave a lugubrious look, but it was in a good cause, and he made tracks for the Fourth Form-master's room.

Figgins hurried down after him, and looked round the quad. Then he gave a low whistle, which Kerr, in the study above, heard, and, hearing, came down the stairs with a sedateness compatible with the dignity of so great a personage as Mr. Lathom.

He passed Mr. Ratcliff in the Hall, and received a curt nod, Mr. Ratcliff wondering what on earth Mr. Lathom might be doing in the New House.

Kerr got clear of the House safely, one or two juniors politely raising their caps to him.

It was still light, of course, and the juniors, having finished tea, were making for the nets.

"All clear!" whispered Figgins. "Best of luck, old man!"

Kerr nodded, and walked quickly to the gates. Taggles, the porter, standing idly outside his lodge, gave the junior a nod and a somewhat obsequious "Good-evening, sir!"

Kerr smiled. It was good proof that his real identity was not suspected.

It did not take him long to reach the Grammar School, although he dare not hurry, lest the heat and the perspiration should interfere with the grease of his make-up. But the grease was carefully concealed, thanks to his own skill.

Burroughs, the Grammar School porter, who knew the Fourth Form-master by sight, gave him a polite "Good-evening!" as he touched his cap, wondering at the same time why the master had come.

But he was soon to know.

Kerr walked quickly into the School House, where he was greeted somewhat effusively by Mr. Clancy.

"Ah, good-evening, my dear Lathom! So pleased to see you again!"

"Yes, Clancy. But I am here on important business. Is Dr. Monk engaged?"

"No, I think not. No, he isn't."

With a curt "Thank you!" Kerr strode off, for there was no time to spare.

"Come in!" called the headmaster, in response to Kerr's tap on the door.

Kerr opened the door, and was greeted warmly by the Grammar School headmaster.

"Dr. Monk," he began, getting to the point at once, "I have come to-night about that most regrettable incident in which three St. Jim's juniors participated."

"Ah, yes!" said Dr. Monk gravely. "It is a very serious affair. The money has not yet been discovered, although the grounds outside and the interior have been thoroughly searched."

"Really? Well, I am convinced that the two boys found in this room are quite innocent of the theft—and I have a theory."

"Oh!"

Dr. Monk's tone amply showed his opinion of the matter, but he said nothing more.

"Yes. It occurred to me that it is possible that, while the boys were in

this room, another person was hidden here."

"But, my dear sir!"

"Ah, but there are reasons for my surmise! The two boys had not much time to commit the crime, and unless all was prearranged, only one of them could be guilty—"

"Granted."

"Then, is it not possible that a third person is involved? The money was not found upon them, or near here. Yet you are certain it was in the desk?"

"Quite certain. If necessary, I can bring witnesses to prove that at twelve o'clock the money was there. Mr. Clancy, whom you doubtless know well, was with me at the time."

"That is clear, then. But where is the money?"

"H'm! We had better review the facts. I will call the porter."

He pressed the push-bell, and a page-boy entered.

"Teil Burroughs I want him," he said.

"Yes, sir!"

"Oh, and you might ask Mr. Clancy to come here for a moment!"

The page-boy closed the door, and some minutes elapsed before the porter entered, followed by the master.

"Sit down, Clancy, please. Burroughs, there's a chair. Now, I wish to have the facts of that unfortunate affair last night, please."

"Burroughs, you heard the boys climb the wall, and followed them to the window?"

"Yes, sir. I heard them come over the wall, sir, and I said to myself, 'Ere's queer goings on,' sir, so I ups and dresses, and came out. And what does I see but them young rips on ahead. I creeps up, and one climbs on the other's back. 'It's open,' ses he, and pushes up the window. I waits till they both gets inside, 'cos when they're in they're trapped, and the one outside wouldn't be so difficult to 'old like, sir."

"Yes, yes."

"Well, sir, and then you came, and it all happened like."

"Then they were not in the room long before I came?"

"Lor' no, sir—not a minute or two!"

"Oh!"

"Just a second," interposed Kerr thoughtfully. "You said, I believe, that one of the boys mentioned the fact that the window was unlatched. Might it have been unlatched all the time?"

The porter scratched his head thoughtfully.

"Well, now I come to think o' it, sir, it must ha' bin. You see, sir, I didn't think much about it at the time, but now I remember it quite distinct like. That young rip tried to slip his knife to open the catch, an' e said it was open. So—well, it must ha' been open all the time."

Kerr sat up with a smile.

"How's that?" he said.

CHAPTER 8.

Thanks to Kerr!

"IMPOSSIBLE!"

Dr. Monk sat bolt upright in his chair.

"Impossible!" he repeated.

"Why, I distinctly remember fastening the window myself."

"Which only proves," smiled Kerr, "that we have a somewhat slippery customer to deal with. Surely, it is obvious that the window must have been opened before? And that only adds strength to the surmise that someone else was concealed in the room all the time the two boys were there."

"Then," said Dr. Monk, "the intruder must have come from without, for

the door was locked, and I had the key."

"Ah, there might be a duplicate! You see, the window was closed, though the catch was open. Suppose, for argument's sake, that a boy were concealed in the room—that he had come on some mission to your room, to steal, perhaps. Then, to throw suspicion on an outsider, what more natural than to open the window? To get into the study he would require a key. Once in the room, to lock the door would be safer than leaving it open. There would always be escape through the window should alarm be raised within. But he would not open the window until the last minute, of course."

"True," said Dr. Monk grudgingly, and Mr. Clancy and the porter nodded assent.

"That would explain why the notes were never found. Now, would it be possible for a duplicate of your key to be made?"

Dr. Monk gave a slight start.

"Good heavens!" he murmured. "I have just recollected. I lost my keys, and they were returned the other day by a Fourth-Former—Morris, I think."

"Then he, for instance, or someone before he found them, could have had a duplicate made, of course."

"Yes, I suppose they could."

"Picture the scene! The boy or the thief enters the room, robs the desk—having locked the door behind him and opened the window-catch. Suddenly he heard a noise without. He becomes alarmed as he sees a face at the window, and thinks it wiser not to open the door. Somehow, he finds a safe hiding-place here for himself and his loot. There he remains while you are talking to the boys. Afterwards he easily makes his escape, having a key, and goes back to his study or dormitory—after the others, of course—but he has left the money behind him. For if it were found it would merely serve to further implicate the juniors found here."

"You—you seem to have it very clearly," said the amazed Head. "Now that you have explained it all, I must say that there is a great deal of reason in your remarks. But what can we do?"

"First question the boy Morris as to where exactly he found the keys."

Dr. Monk pressed the bell-push again, and the page-boy was despatched for Morris.

A few minutes later the boy tapped on the door and entered.

He looked round the study from face to face with the look of a hunted rabbit.

"It's all right, Morris," said the Head kindly. "We merely wish to know where you found those keys of mine."

"I—I—I— Some fag found them. I think, if I remember rightly, sir, and—and I said they must be yours, so I brought them."

"Why did you think they must be Dr. Monk's?" asked Kerr.

"Oh, because they—I mean—well, I had seen him with them."

Kerr nodded. The explanation seemed very feeble, but plausible.

He looked round the room carefully, rose from his chair, and walked round several times. Then he tested the large cupboard.

"Is this locked?" he asked, watching Morris out of the corner of his eye.

"Yes, always. He could not have hidden there," replied Dr. Monk.

Morris looked more frightened than ever now, and edged nearer the door.

Kerr waved the porter to stand between the junior and the door.

"But suppose," added Kerr—"suppose the boy had a duplicate key of this, too? The key of this was on the lost bunch?"

"Oh, yes!"

“The boy would know they were your keys, but would not know which were for which door; therefore it would be safer to have a duplicate bunch.” How many were there on the bunch?”

“Er—six. It was only a small bunch—my own, the House, and here.”

“Yes. Well, this is such a small key-hole that, when someone appeared on the sill, to find the right key would not take half a second. Once inside, all was well.”

“Good heavens, yes! Perhaps, then, the notes—”

Kerr smiled.

“Yes, perhaps the notes are here.”

Morris’ tongue clove to his mouth. Never was guilt more plainly written on a thief’s face.

But Dr. Monk, producing his own keys, quickly flung open the cupboard door.

Kerr knelt down quickly. There was room in the cupboard for a boy, not for a man. In the cupboard were books, and, hanging up, an old coat or two.

Kerr struck a match. The notes were not there. He gave vent to a slight exclamation of annoyance, and Morris gave an audible sigh, which only deepened the headmaster’s growing suspicion of him.

“But the notes are not there!” exclaimed Mr. Clancy, who also was peering into the cupboard.

“They are not lying about. But, as I said before, we have to deal with a very wily customer,” smiled Kerr.

He fished in a pocket of one of the coats; then in another. As he put his hand into the third pocket he gave a satisfied shout: “Found!”

He drew forth his hand and the missing notes.

“They were there, then, all the time!” exclaimed the Head.

“Yes. And surely it is obvious that the thief must have had a key to this cupboard?”

“Yes, true.”

“Then, until other evidence is furnished, suspicion inevitably rests on this unfortunate boy here, who had the keys given him by some unknown other boy. What a pity he cannot remember what the other lad was like!”

Morris looked from face to face, and read condemnation in each.

His mind worked rapidly. He owed money to Banks, and Banks had threatened that, were the money not forthcoming, he would report the matter to the Head. That would undoubtedly mean expulsion—and this meant no less.

He took the easier course.

“I—I did it, sir! I’m sorry! It was Banks, sir, the bookie, who made me do it. I was a fool, sir! I backed horses, and owed him money. He threatened he’d report me, and I got frightened. Then—then I stole, sir!”

Here the boy broke down completely. Burroughs and Mr. Clancy left the miserable boy and the Head together with Mr. Lathom.

Finally, the Head sent the boy to his study, with expulsion to await him on the morrow.

He turned to Mr. Lathom.

“I cannot express how deeply I am indebted to you, sir. You have saved me from committing a grave injustice, and I must at once make reparation to the unfortunate boys whom I have wronged. I will phone Dr. Holmes at once, and tell him the good news. Tomorrow I will pay the school a visit, and apologise to the boys.”

Kerr shook hands with the headmaster, and, once outside the study, executed a somewhat erratic hornpipe, much to the surprise of the page, who was bringing the Head a message.

But Kerr had no thought for pages.

By now dusk was beginning to fall, and he made his way back in safety.

But the telephone message had forestalled him, and already Grundy and his two chums were free.

Figgins and Kerr were waiting at the gate with Blake & Co. and the Terrible Three. They alone knew of Kerr’s visit, for it would not have done to make it public.

“We’ve heard!” shouted Figgins. “Good old Kerr! Good old New House!”

And Kerr, in duty bound, shook hands all round.

Taggles, round-eyed with astonishment, watched it all from his lodge. Never in his long, eventful life had he seen juniors patting a master on the back; and, shaking his head sadly, he returned to his comfortable room, where the talons of Pussfoot had not stretched.

The next day Kerr telephoned the Grammar School headmaster, and requested that his name—Mr. Lathom—should not be mentioned in the matter. He explained that he had private reasons, and would deem it a special favour.

So when Dr. Monk made his promised arrival, Kerr saw to it that Mr. Lathom was kept in his study. In fact, Kerr kept him there at his own expense, by joining Mr. Lathom in singing the praises of William the Bard of Avon.

Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn held a celebration feed in Kerr’s honour when they learnt their rescuer’s identity, and there was much revelry by night in the Shell corridor. But the masters and prefects, knowing the circumstances, turned a deaf ear, and all went as merrily as a wedding-bell.

But Dr. Holmes never knew the real history of the case, nor did the whole school; but Grundy knew, and was grateful.

Morris left the Grammar School quietly that day, and was never more heard of by anyone at either school. Banks, the bookie, after a brief interview with the Head, deemed it preferable to hide his light under a bushel than be hidden by authority in a police-cell. So that was one good result of Grundy’s Great Raid!

THE END.

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CHAPTER 1.

Roger Solves a Mystery!

MR. ROGER BLUNT was puzzled. He was also perplexed and vaguely uneasy, and queer suspicions were floating about in his mind.

Quite a lot of things had led up to this sad state. It was all the result of having an eagle eye and a swift, alert mind. Jolly Roger had heard, and seen, and noted, and the end of it all was that he knew there was a mystery knocking round in the Transitus.

It was a difficult and delicate mystery, too. Roger wasn't the sort to start imagining things, but he felt sure that once he began probing into this mystery he might discover quite a lot of things he didn't really want to discover.

The beginning of the mystery, so far as Roger was concerned, lay in the fact that he had just bought a new cricket-bat.

He didn't really want a new bat, but he happened to try Bill Strong's willow blade one bright day, and it was just the sort of bat Roger had been looking for. It was the right balance, and had the right feel about it altogether.

Roger examined it, but didn't know the make, so he inquired from Strong. Bill explained that he got it from a little shop in Dulchester which was run by one of the players belonging to the Dulchester City Cricket Club. He was a very old man, and made the bats himself.

"If you can get one for me exactly like yours, Strong," Roger said, "I'd be very glad. I've never handled a bat I like better!"

Bill felt rather bucked about that, and as soon as he could he went off into Dulchester, and got the twin brother to his own bat. He got it, so to speak, on approval, as he knew old McIlvena well.

He carried it back himself, and took
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it to Roger at the earliest opportunity. Roger felt it, tested it, and balanced it, and confirmed his previous opinion that it was the sort of bat he'd dreamt about for several years, and he told Bill one or two stories about bats he'd had in his young days which were just like this bat.

Before Bill went out Roger tactfully squared the little matter of payment for the bat. He took out a nice, neat note-case and extracted two perfectly clean and brand-new Bradburys, or Fishers, and Bill handed him a certain amount of change.

It was four days before Bill actually handed Mr. Blunt the correct and formal receipt signed by Mr. McIlvena, but that was because the week-end intervened, and it wasn't until Tuesday that Bill was able to go into Dulchester.

The reason why Bill didn't go into Dulchester on the Monday was because there was a certain amount of excitement on about a pocket-wallet that Brontroux of the Transitus had lost about a week ago. The Kid had organised a search-party, and, as luck would have it, Bill Strong was the fellow who found the wallet in the water under the boathouse where it had fallen.

This missing pocket-wallet of the Bronto's had caused a lot of discussion in the school. If you recall the matter, you'll remember the part that Smithy of the Fifth and the Kid played in it. You may also remember that Jolly Roger didn't figure in the business at all.

But Roger knew all about it, of course, and he had taken a particular interest in it. Privately and secretly he had himself searched for that wallet, and he was just getting ready to do some first-class detective work when news came that the wallet was found.

Jolly Roger was just about as delighted as the Bronto, because it washed out any idea of underhand work. He went along to the Bronto's study and saw the wallet. He also saw the notes,

some of them quite damp, and some of them only soaked at the edges, which the Bronto was trying to dry.

"I'm very glad indeed, Brontroux!" Roger said, and, of course, his eagle eye almost unconsciously took in every detail. He saw the notes—some of them rather ancient and looking a lot worse for their dampness, and some of them quite new and scarcely affected by their soaking.

And his eye caught sight of the number on one of these new notes. "B22/505050," he read, and his remarkable brain began to rotate, even before he realised it.

He looked quickly over the notes, and his eye caught another: "B22/505051." Roger picked them up and examined them, then, putting them down, listened once again to the story of how they had been discovered by Bill Strong.

"Dexter said we ought to search there, sir," Brontroux explained, anxious to do full justice to the Kid. "He organised a party, sir, and Strong found the wallet."

"I'm very glad," said Roger—but it wasn't quite so glad this time.

Back in his own sitting-room Jolly Roger took out his note-case. There were eight brand-new notes which Roger had obtained at the local bank last Wednesday. The cashier at the bank liked Mr. Blunt, and had gathered once or twice that Roger's sole objection to pound notes was that they got so terribly dirty. And Roger, as you can imagine, was the sort of man who liked everything very clean and spotless.

Wherefore, when he could, the cashier always handed him ten which were the freshest and cleanest that ever were. Without any effort Roger had noted that they ran consecutively, from B22/505050 to B22/505059.

The first two notes he handed to Bill Strong on the Friday to pay for the bat. So far, he hadn't touched the remainder, and their numbers were B22/505052 to B22/505059.

But you can see that Roger had something to think about! Brontrox's pocket-wallet had been lost a day or two before even Roger had drawn his notes from the bank. Yet when it was found the wallet had in it two notes which Roger had handed to Strong on Friday!

For nearly a whole day Jolly Roger pondered on the problem. On the Tuesday afternoon Strong came to Roger and handed him the formal receipt from Mellvena for the bat.

“Ah, thanks very much, Strong!” Roger said cheerfully. “You’ve been down to pay him to-day?”

“Yes, sir,” Bill said. “At least, sir, I paid him the balance. You—I mean, he likes you to leave a deposit when you take a bat on approval, so I’d paid a pound last Friday.”

“Yes,” Roger said lazily. “I was interested, because— You couldn’t tell me off-hand just what happened to the two particular notes I gave you on Friday? It’s merely a matter of curiosity.”

But he watched Bill’s face intently, expecting to see him flush, or begin stammering, or showing some signs that the question had gone home.

Instead, Bill didn’t appear in the least uncertain. He took out his own case and opened it, glanced in it, and then looked Roger quite fairly in the face.

“I believe I lent those to Dexter, sir,” he explained apologetically. “He was wanting some money rather urgently, sir.”

Bill had no cause to hide the fact, because the reason was quite a sound one, and even Roger couldn’t take objection to it. When, very casually, Roger asked further questions, Strong answered him truthfully.

“It was only to get some money to lend to Smith in the Fifth, sir,” he explained. “Smith was going home yesterday, and wanted to buy a present which would cost more than he’d got with him, so he asked Dexter, who’s always been a friend of his, and Dexter just borrowed it from one or two of us, sir. It’s quite all right, sir!”

“Of course!” Roger laughed. “I’m an inquisitive sort of person at times, Strong. Thanks very much!”

Bill went out, and never thought about the matter again, because he knew quite well that Roger wasn’t out to catch anybody unfairly, and he often asked queer questions because he liked to compare the customs of St. Katie’s with other schools he knew. That was all!

To Roger, however, the mystery was getting deeper. Strong had given Dexter the two notes on Saturday night or Sunday morning, and Smith had gone away on Monday morning very early.

What had happened exactly? Either Smith or Dexter knew a great deal more about Brontrox’s pocket-wallet than had yet been made clear, or there was some strange trickery going on somewhere!

Yet both Smith and Dexter were, as Roger knew, as honest and straight as could be. Why had Dexter borrowed the money? Had he really borrowed it for Smith?

At this stage Roger rather felt inclined to try and forget the matter. On the other hand, he felt that if he knew the full facts he might help someone who was in an awkward corner.

He proceeded cautiously, but his eye watched Dickie Dexter’s every movement. And somehow Roger felt that Dexter hadn’t got any secret sorrow on his chest.

On the Wednesday Smith of the Fifth returned to the school, and fixed up with the Head his programme of work for the Holmes Scholarship. One item in this

was that he had to join the special class which Jolly Roger was taking on two afternoons of the week for the benefit of various fellows who were going in for exams, and were a little weak in English.

Smith came to see Roger about it on the Thursday; and here, again, Roger observed that Smithy was as blithe and self-confident as ever. It was pretty plain that he hadn’t got any secret sorrow hanging round, either.

So Roger asked him point-blank, but quite casually and politely, whether he’d had a good time at home, and whether he’d got the present he meant to take, and whether it was quite correct that Dexter had lent him several pounds?

“Yes, sir,” he said, “I repaid Dexter the sum of eight pounds last night, sir.” Then he stood very stiffly, and his eyes met Roger’s quite squarely. And Roger had the feeling that he was butting in on something that didn’t concern him.

“That’s all right, Smith!” Roger said genially. “You’ll think I’m asking questions outside my province, but the fact is I am mightily intrigued over a little problem which I cannot for the life of me explain. It’s really nothing to do with you at all, but— You’re a friend of Dexter’s, so I’ll tell you. This is quite in confidence, of course!”

He told Smithy the progress of the two notes, and Smith listened attentively.

“Yes, sir,” he said, when Roger had finished. “You don’t suspect Dexter of any underhand work, sir?”

Roger waved his hand with a little gesture of hopelessness.

“Frankly, I don’t know, Smith,” he said. “I feel that I ought to know more about it, and yet— However, I’ll speak to Dexter—”

“I don’t think I should, sir,” Smith said. And Roger suddenly noticed that his face had gone very white, and that he was clenching his hands by his side. “I—I can explain everything, sir!”

Smithy sat down, but held himself very stiffly. Then he plunged right into the story.

He told how he had picked up the wallet, meaning to return it, and how he had been in a hole for some time past, and the notes gave him a chance to leave the school decently.

He explained how he meant to pay Brontrox back, after he had left Katie’s, and how Dexter knew all the time that he, Smith, had got the wallet.

“Dexter simply told me that for the sake of the school and for my own sake I’d got to let him manage the whole thing,” Smith said. “He arranged it so that there was no hint of scandal. He borrowed enough money to put back the eight notes in the wallet which I’d borrowed, and then I suppose he hid the wallet and persuaded the others to search for it, so that when they found it everybody thought Brontrox had knocked it there himself. Nobody suspected that I—”

Smith rose, still curiously calm, but Roger guessed what an effort he was making to keep control of himself.

“Of course, it will have to be reported to the Head now, sir,” Smithy went on. “But I hope you will understand why Dexter helped me. He—he was a real brick, sir! You won’t blame him at all, sir?”

Roger had listened in amazement, but he rose now, and put his hand on Smith’s shoulder.

“I’m sorry, Smith!” he said abruptly. “I almost wish I hadn’t tried to solve the little mystery, yet I’m very glad to know. Let me say at once that I shall never mention the matter to anyone! I hope you will also keep our conversation quite secret. There’s just one

point. If ever you find yourself in a serious difficulty again—though I hope you never will—come and see one of the masters. We’ll help you. That’s all!”

“But what do I do, sir?” Smithy asked, his face still set.

“Work like a black for the Holmes Scholarship!” said Roger. “As for Dexter—”

“He is a brick, sir!” Smith said, as Roger paused.

“He is a very good fellow!” Roger agreed. “But, like one or two good fellows, he needs guidance at times. Good-bye, Smith! You will be at the English class at two-thirty to-morrow? Good!”

CHAPTER 2.

Sniffy the Swot Comes In.

OF course, the events recorded in the foregoing chapter were utterly and completely unknown to the occupants of Study No. 10.

The Kid paid back the two pounds he had borrowed from Bill Strong, and paid back the other pals who had been good enough to lend him money to lend to Smithy. And with that the matter closed. The affair of Bronto’s lost wallet was already forgotten.

Other interests had arisen. The time was rapidly approaching when the school exams would be in full swing. Apart from the ordinary Form exams, there were exams for special essays, for scholarships at the school, for exhibitions at one of the Varsities—these were confined to the Sixth, of course—and for a few odd things which didn’t really come into the ordinary school routine at all.

For instance, there was the Oliver Photographic Prize, offered for competition among the members of the Upper School who belonged to the Photographic Society.

This was given every year by an old St. Katie’s boy who was one of the original founders of the Photographic Society. Ten pounds’ worth of photographic instruments or materials and a silver medal was the prize, and there were two or three consolation awards.

Dobbin, of course, was a hot favourite for the prize, and Study No. 10 rejoiced in the thought. It was pretty certain that this term there wouldn’t be any other prizes coming their way, and they looked to Dobbie to supply a little bit of gilt-edging for the Transitus on Prize Day.

And then came bad news. Dobbie himself brought it.

“I knew as soon as the little toad joined the society!” Dobbie wailed. “He simply came in to pick up another prize! He’s a worm—a miserable, sneaking worm!”

“But he can’t beat you with a camera, Dobbie,” Curtis said hopefully. “Who’s Sniffy, anyhow, even if he is in the Fifth?”

But Dobbie shook his head, and explained more fully.

Snelson of the Fifth, otherwise known as Sniffy, was not a popular chap at Katie’s. It wasn’t just because he was a horrible specimen of the pure and unadulterated swot, and it wasn’t because he snaffled all the prizes, as he generally did.

Nor was it because he never played games, except when compulsory. It was probably because, being a swot, he made himself so superior about it, and drawled out sneers about flannelled fools and that kind of drivel.

He hadn’t been a member of the Photographic Society very long, but, of course, he’d gone on his usual principle, and stayed behind the rest in order to ask special questions of old Tagg, the

science-master, who was the president of the camera crowd.

And Mr. Tagg had lent him his own special architectural camera to take photos of the churches of Dulchester. Sniffy had simply swotted at the camera business, and Dobbie admitted that his interiors were really good.

"But he ought to use his own camera," Dobbie argued. "It isn't in the rules, but it says it must be your own unaided work. Tagg's probably put him up to the church stunt. That's the sort of thing the judges will like. And, of course, Sniffy'll beat me on the written part of the job!"

Bill Strong and the Kid nodded sympathetically. For the photographic prize you had to write an essay on "A Day with the Camera," and put in six prints; in addition to this there was a sort of general knowledge paper, which you had to do just like an ordinary exam. This was to show that you really did know something about photography.

So both Bill Strong and Dexter felt that although Dobbie could really wipe the floor with Sniffy when it came to taking a snapshot of something really happening, Sniffy would turn the tables when it came to an exam where swotting would count. And if old Tagg had really given him the tip about the "Architectural Beauties of Dulchester," it would probably knock Dobbie's ripping series which illustrated a day with the camera. "Among the Sportsmen of St. Katherine's."

"He's a prize-hog!" the Kid agreed. "My giddy aunt! He'll rake in most of the Fifth prizes, unless old Smithy knocks him out for a few, and he'll snaffle one or two others. And then he tries to knock old Dobbie out for the camera stakes! Fancy swotting for a thing of that sort! Makes me weep!"

He rose, and Curtis followed his example. Together they wandered out for a gentle stroll.

Half an hour later, as they were returning in time for prep, they met a youth who wore pince-nez, with a broad ribbon attached to them. One hand was in his pocket, and the other held a small volume, which he was reading as he strolled along.

"Hallo, Sniffy!" the Kid called to him. "I say!"

Mr. Snelson of the Fifth was evidently deaf, for he took no notice whatever of the cry.

"Sniffy, I want you!" the Kid repeated. But Sniffy sauntered on, utterly oblivious.

"Snelson! I say, Snelson!" The Kid became more intent on the job now.

"Were you addressing me?" Snelson looked up and surveyed the two, with a feeble sort of smile playing about his thin lips.

"I just wanted a gentle word with you, Sniffy," the Kid answered. "I wanted to ask—"

"When kids of the Transitus speak to men in the Fifth they should address them in proper manner," said Sniffy. "My name is Snelson to you, Dexter!"

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" sighed the Kid. "I'm so sorry, Mr. Snelson! But what I wanted to pow-wow with you about, old son, was the interesting subject of the photographic prize. We've had a meeting of all the pots, and it's suggested that you ought to leave the course clear for some of the lesser lights. We all appreciate the fact that when the mighty Sniffy brings his colossal old intellect on to the job everybody else can take a back seat. So what we want to suggest, Sniffy—"

"Your impertinence is only equalled by your ignorance!" Snelson said calmly.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 650.

"Go away! You annoy me! You ought to be in prep by now!"

This was rather a nasty knock, because it was always a sore point that preparation school was compulsory for the Transitus, while the Fifth could do their evening swot in their own studies. And Sniffy put a nasty little sting into the way he said it.

"All right, Sniffy!" said the Kid, with a touch of dignity. "I merely wanted to know whether you seriously intend to go in for the photographic prize, because if so—"

Sniffy put his hand up to his eyeglasses with the air of one who is about to get a better view of a microbe.

"I'm afraid I am not in the habit of discussing my plans with children," he said, and seemed to be brightly bucked at his own cleverness. "Of course, I quite understand that the Transitus don't want to make asses of themselves by competing with the Fifth; but on the other hand the notice-board will inform you officially! Run away now, little ones, or Roger will smack you for being late!"

He turned and sauntered on. The Kid's remarks once again fell on deaf ears.

"Jumping snakes!" said Curtis. "I feel I'd like to dust the earth with that reptile! Is it always so beastly superior?"

"It is!" said the Kid bitterly. "And that's the sort of microbe some of the masters make a pet of! It's a fact! That's what's upsetting old Dobbie. He knows that if Sniffy enters for the photo prize old Tagg, and one or two others, will be buzzing round him and giving him all the tips, and looking after him like a pet canary! It isn't good enough!"

"I wish," said Curtis, "I wish we could screw his little neck round!"

"I wish old Dobbie could get that prize," went on the Kid. "I feel I want Dobbie to win. Dobbie's a real man compared with that crawling, pimple-faced microbe Sniffy! I wish— But what's the good of wishing?"

"We ought to think about it," suggested the Kangaroo hopefully.

"Yes; but— We'll have a talk with old Dobbie," the Kid said reflectively.

During the next few days they often talked about the photographic prize, and learned all the details of the competition. And the more they learned the more they realised that the odds were on Sniffy palming himself off as the best photographic merchant at Katie's.

Dobbie could tell them of how Tagg was giving Sniffy special hints on toning bromides. And Sniffy had spoken sarcastically to Dobbie about taking little snapshots of children at play, and that sort of drivel.

"Look here, Kangy!" the Kid said to Curtis a day or two before the date of the photographic competition. "Old Dobbie's got to win that prize. I've been thinking. You know what Sniffy is? A miserable little worm, who's got no more pluck than a kitten. Well, I've been thinking!"

"Right-ho!" said Curtis cheerfully. "Tell me all about it! I'm in this, old son!"

"You are," said the Kid, and proceeded to tell him just what he'd been thinking about.

"My ancient uncle!" gasped the Kangaroo, when the Kid had finished his great thoughts. "But, there'd be no end of a row—"

"Oh no, there wouldn't!" retorted the Kid. "I mean—nobody will know. And if they find out, we could explain it was only a lark. You know what Sniffy is? He'll pitch a frightful yarn,

and nobody'll ever guess—and, anyhow, it's the only hope we have of keeping the microbe from crawling into that exam-room. We can't let old Dobbie down."

"No, of course not," agreed Curtis. "You won't tell him till it's all over?"

"No fear!" said the Kid. "Just a cheery word to let him know that we know he's going to win. Good old Dobbie!"

"If Jolly Roger got to know—"

Curtis began. "In this act," said the Kid calmly, "Jolly Roger is dead! There are some things, my lad, that even Roger's eagle eye fails to observe. I could tell you one or two little stories, but I refrain. You trust your Uncle Richard. Old Dobbie gets the photographic prize! Waugh! I have spoken!"

CHAPTER 3.

Without the Aid of Dexter!

IT was a peaceful summer evening. At St. Katie's most of the big fellows had already settled down to an hour or two's hard swotting. The juniors were getting ready to go to prep, for in ten minutes the bell would go.

The Transitus, of course, generally waited till the last minute, for a certain amount of grace was allowed them. Bill Strong and Dobbie lazed comfortably in Study No. 10, and wondered why on earth Dexter and Curtis wanted them to bring down their books to Big Hall.

Here and there about the playing-fields were one or two bigger fellows, wandering round with book in hand. It was just as pleasant to work in the open air as in the study.

Right away beyond the pavilion a solitary figure sauntered slowly along, his head bent over the book he held open. His pockets were bulging with other books, for Snelson was a mighty swot.

And it was Snelson's custom on these bright evenings to walk down as far as the river. He was free even from his study companion, whom he disliked, and could work to his heart's content.

He entered the little copse which ran gently down to the bank of the river. Down the pathway he went, even more slowly than ever, but his eyes were glued to the book.

Then, suddenly, the book was jerked from his hand. A bag seemed to come over his eyes and face, and he was pulled backward.

Almost before he could utter a sound a voice hissed in his ear, while something was pressed into his back.

"Utter a sound, and 'twill be your last! Gr-rh!"

Sniffy was on the floor, but he hadn't any idea of resisting.

"Your money!" a harsh voice demanded. "Ar-rh! Sear-rch him! Bind him up!"

His arms were forced behind him, and he could feel the bonds tightened about his wrists.

"Pah! A schoolboy! Nought but coppers! Pooh!" came the fierce voice again.

They forgot to feel in Sniffy's inside pocket where he had a wallet, and, apparently, the odd silver and copper were of no use to them.

"Drug him!" ordered the voice again, and in the same instant Sniffy felt a sharp point pressed into his arm just above the bonds.

"In ten minutes—pah! Safe for four-and-twenty hours. Gr-rh!" And Sniffy was suddenly rolled over, and knew that he was being forced into the copse away from the path.

He heard a scuffling sound, and

gathered that his assailants had disappeared just as swiftly as they had come. But for a few moments Sniffy was too hopelessly beaten to do anything. Then the thought that in ten minutes—Oh, horrors! Sniffy struggled to his feet.

And, meantime, the harsh-voiced villains had dashed madly through the copse, struck across below the brow of the hill, and made for the drive. A quick run brought them to the front of the school, and, dashing round to the court, they walked steadily and calmly into preparation school.

No one commented on the fact that they were a couple of minutes late, and their books were already laid out for them by Bill Strong and Dobbie.

“Did I hide my voice all right?” Curtis asked the Kid anxiously.

“Ripping!” whispered Dexter. “Sniffy’ll be lying there yet! Then he’ll crawl home. Oh, my hat!”

He wanted to laugh. Already he fancied he could see Sniffy telling the story of his terrible adventure. Most certainly Sniffy would have to stay in bed all day to-morrow. He’d never be fit to go in for any competition or examination. Most likely he’d sleep all the day, under the impression that he’d been drugged!

It was a simple plan, but almost as soon as they came out from prep they had confirmation of its complete and unqualified success.

The story was already all over the place. Sniffy had been walking down towards the river when he was suddenly attacked by two desperate men. Despite his resistance he was overpowered, and a bag tied over his head, while his hands were secured behind him.

Disgusted at not finding the money they required, and afraid lest he would give the alarm, one of the men had taken out a hypodermic syringe and pressed the needle into Sniffy’s arm while the other held him down.

“He’ll be safe for twenty-four hours,” one of them had said before they dashed away, leaving Sniffy helpless and on the verge of unconsciousness.

With a terrific effort of will Sniffy had struggled to his feet, and managed to climb back to the top, where his cry for help had been heard.

The only weakness in the story was the fact that the school doctor, hastily summoned, pronounced that Sniffy wasn’t drugged, and that it was only a pin scratch on his arm.

The two fellows who had rushed to help Sniffy indoors had also testified that his wrists weren’t really tied at all, and the bag over his head could have been shaken off quite easily.

But Sniffy had gone to bed suffering, so the doctor said, from shock, and he was going to come and see him in the morning.

The Beak had reported the whole affair to the police, of course, and detectives from Scotland Yard were coming down at once.

“Oh, my hat!” the Kid gasped, when he heard this piece of news.

This was the first time he had considered the Head in the matter at all. He had been so interested in the thought of how Sniffy would get the wind up, that he’d quite omitted to calculate the effect of the story on the Head and the masters generally.

“We’re in it now, Kid!” said Curtis. “Right up to the neck! These jolly detectives will come and get a clue. Did we leave any clues, laddie?”

“Finger-prints,” said the Kid. “That’s the thing to be careful about. We didn’t leave any finger-prints, did we?”

They joined a little group who were discussing the mystery. Smithy of the

Fifth was there, and he knew all about it.

“Sniffy got the wind up too quickly, and therefore his evidence cannot be absolutely relied upon,” said Smith, in his best speechmaking manner. “My own impression, based upon careful observation, is that it was a practical joke, carried out by someone in this school.”

“Oh, my Jeremiah!” murmured the Kid.

This was getting worse. He wished Smithy would shut up.

“Probably by some of the Sixth fellows,” Smithy went on. “One or two of them are up against Sniffy because of his autocratic manner, and my own opinion is, frankly, that a little bumping is just what Sniffy wants.”

“Hear, hear!” said Curtis, and then wished he hadn’t.

“Isn’t Sniffy in for the photographic prize to-morrow?” Bill Strong asked; and the Kid tried to kick him and tell him to shut up.

“He is not!” said Smithy emphatically. “He’s pottering about with some photographs he’s doing for a bazaar, or jumble sale, or something in connection with his revered father’s church. Old Tagg’s been helping him. You can take that from me, because Sniffy himself told me that he was having no end of a joke with young Dobbie. I cannot explain how, because Sniffy’s sense of humour is something utterly beyond my meagre intelligence.”

“Jumping snakes! Take me gently away, Kid!” Curtis whispered. “This is the last straw! Detectives from Scotland Yard—suspicion falls on someone in the school, and after all the microbe wasn’t going in for the giddy prize! Oh, my hat—my ancient straw chapeau!”

They staggered upstairs together, and, despite the crimes upon their consciences, they slept well that night. And the sun rose on a new day which was filled with forebodings—detectives, the Beak, clues, and policemen. Goodness alone knew what might happen before night came round again.

It was reported that Sniffy had passed a good night, that he had no pain, and that it was pretty evident he was talking hot air when he said he would be unconscious for twenty-four hours.

Morning school was something of a trial to Dexter and Curtis. Every time the door opened they expected to see the detectives walk in. Of course, the rotten part about the whole business was that Snelson had been pulling their leg about sitting for the photographic prize this afternoon; and so, although it needn’t have happened, it jolly well served him right, only they’d probably get into a frightful row for doing Sniffy a bit of good.

It was the idea of detectives that put the wind up them. They felt pretty confident that if the Beak hadn’t sent for Scotland Yard they would never be discovered.

Jolly Roger took lessons that morning at breakneck pace, and it seemed to the two that he concentrated his eagle eye upon them. Oh, but it was a trying time!

Just before the morning ended Roger strolled down the Form-room and stopped the Kid.

“I’d like to see you for a few moments after school,” he said, very quietly; and then turned to Curtis: “And you, too, Curtis!”

They remained behind, puzzled and expectantly despondent. Yet how could Roger know anything yet?

When everyone had gone, they walked up to Roger’s desk. He was leaning back,

and even the smile on his face had a weary touch.

“Ah, Curtis!” he said, and picked up a neatly-folded black cotton bag. “This is yours, I think? At least, it has your name inside it. It was found last night—over Snelson’s head!”

He handed it across the desk to Curtis. It was an odd bag, which the Kangaroo never used nowadays, but they had decided it would serve them excellently for the game with old Sniffy. The fact that a white band, with Curtis’ name clearly printed on it, was carefully stitched inside the bag, was a detail they had overlooked.

Jolly Roger held out a large white handkerchief, and pointed to one corner, where certain symbols and figures were inscribed in black marking-ink.

“I understand that these marks indicate the fact that this ancient handkerchief is your property, Dexter?” Roger said, in a tired voice. “It was found very lightly tied round Snelson’s wrists last night!”

He sighed, and they had the feeling that Roger was really bored.

“It isn’t so much the utter foolishness of your practical joking which annoys me,” Roger went on, “as the fact that you seem to profit so little by the excellent lessons which I give you. I beg you to concentrate, to observe every detail; and even in your childish jests you fail to note your own names on the articles you employ!”

This was a queer sort of line to take, and they wondered what was coming next.

“Within five minutes after Snelson came in I knew exactly what had happened, and who was responsible,” Roger said. “The Head is very pained, and were it not for the utter childishness of the whole thing he would take more serious notice of it. As it is, you will spend your afternoon in this room, Curtis! You have no objection? You have no questions to ask?”

“I—the detectives, are they—” Curtis was hopelessly puzzled, and was feeling unpleasantly small.

“Ah!” Roger smiled more cheerfully. “You heard that little rumour? I suggested it myself, but scarcely thought even you would take it seriously! Do you really think a detective is necessary to find out your puerile plot? You flatter yourself, Curtis!”

He nodded, waved his hand lightly, and Curtis retired—hurri!

Jolly Roger concentrated on Dickie Dexter alone.

“You had also better keep Curtis company in the Form-room this afternoon, Dexter,” he said, more cheerfully. “It may help to impress upon you the fact that you are but a child, and that I am trying to make you into a man. I know a great deal more about you, Dexter, than you know about yourself. Do you really think you are clever enough to deceive me in anything, Dexter?”

“No, sir,” Dexter admitted.

“I am glad,” said Roger cheerfully. “Otherwise I should feel tempted to extend this meeting in order to tell you of things which, wisely, you are endeavouring to keep secret. There was the affair of Brontroux’s pocket-wallet, for instance. Ah!”

For Dexter suddenly gasped. How on earth did Roger know about that?

“That’s all right, Dexter!” Roger said. “Forgive me for mentioning it, but I wondered if you thought I was asleep during that business? I know, Dexter! I may also add that I entirely approve of the way in which you

arranged the matter, and so far as I am concerned the incident remains a secret. You and I have one or two secrets which we shall always preserve inviolate. But the admiration which I was tempted to feel for you in that case is weakened by this later exhibition of childish foolishness. In future you will endeavour to behave in a manner which will not disappoint me?"

"Yes, sir," whispered Dexter. "Good-bye, Dexter!" Jolly Roger rose and beamed upon him. "Two o'clock this afternoon! You won't forget? I am sorry, of course, but one cannot entirely overlook these childish jests. And there won't be any detectives about, but I shall be somewhere in the vicinity!"

"Yes, sir," Dexter murmured, and wandered forth. In the study Curtis was waiting with Strong and Dobbie to hear what had happened.

"What's he said?" repeated the Kid dazedly. "Nothing! Just nothing! I— Hold me, Bill, for I feel faint! He's a detective and a thought-reader, and a second-sighter and a nightmare all rolled into one! I'm going to be good, Bill!"

"Did he say anything about the photographic prize?" asked Dobbie anxiously. "He won't disqualify me, or—"

"You?" asked the Kid. "He never mentioned you, Dobbie. You just walk into the exam-room this afternoon and snaffle that prize. That's all!"

And Dobbin did! Sniffy didn't sit for it, and anyhow, if he had, he wouldn't have got it, because the judge said about another fellow, who put in photographs of churches, that what they really wanted was pictures of school-life, and, for the guidance of future competitors, the excellent series by the prize-winner, J. Dobbin, could be taken as a typical example!

THE END.

(Another grand long story of the chums of St. Katie's next week, entitled "THE DUFFER!" Make a point of ordering your copy EARLY.)

A NEW CHUM IN AUSTRALIA!

By "COOEE."
(Continued from last week.)

"When these young mallee birds leave the egg," said Jack, "do the old birds take no notice of them, or help them to find food?"

Uncle Jack laughed.

"They have another mother, called Nature, who makes these mounds the home of thousands of white ants, which like particularly to crawl over the eggshells. The result is that the moment the young birds appear there is plenty of food for them all. No rationing there. It is just 'help yourself.'"

"I should think," said Jack, "that the great heat of the sun would dry up the decaying vegetable matter in the mound, and so take its heat away."

"No, no," said Uncle Jack. "Look at this mound." It is in the shade, another sign of the wise instinct of the bird. These mallee hens are called megapodes by the learned people, not a very complimentary name, for it means "big feet," but they make good use of their feet, and you must admire their beautiful black-and-white plumage, and pheasant-like build.

"Now," said Uncle Jack, "if you are not too tired, I'll take you to see another surprising fellow. Let's cross this paddock and cut into the scrub a little way, and we shall get nearer home."

When they were within sight of the house it was getting close to dinner-time, and Harry was astonished to see a number of great tall grey birds walking about as if the place belonged to them. They were about four feet high, and must have weighed about twenty pounds. The top of the head was green, and the male bird had a long pouch hanging from his throat.

"What on earth are these?" said Harry.

"What do you think?"

"Well, they look like cranes, but I did not think cranes got tame like these."

"Right, you are, Harry. They are a kind of crane, but as they are so very sociable we call them Native Companions. They are very playful with children, but we are a little afraid of letting the younger children play with them, for the long bills of the birds might get into the children's eyes. Stop a minute. Hey, Tommy and Jessie, come here and let your cousin see how they play with the Native Companions."

Tommy was twelve, and Jessie ten, and each brought a piece of bread. When the great cranes saw them they went to meet them, took a piece of bread from their hands, then the children ran away, and the birds followed. It was a case of "catch me if you can." The children would make believe to run one way, and the birds would swerve to stop them. Then the children would run round and round and round the birds, and as the Native Companions were not very clever at right about face, the children had much fun with them. In the end, after a good deal of laughing, in which Harry heartily joined, the birds got the bread.

"Try to get them to dance," said Uncle Jack, to the children. He whistled a lively tune, the children started a kind of a jig, and did all they could to persuade the birds to join in, but it was of no use. Too many people were present. However, while the family were at dinner, one of the ploughmen came in and said the Companions were dancing, and Harry and the children tiptoed to a place where they could see the birds without being seen. There they were, bobbing and bowing, prancing and curvetting round each other, and for all the world performing as if they were at a quadrille. Harry was so tickled that he laughed aloud at their antics, and in a moment the dancers stopped as if they had been insulted.

Another wonderful sight awaited Harry's enjoyment. Uncle Jack told Tommy to saddle two ponies and take his cousin Harry to see some emus at a place about three miles away. On the way Harry asked Tommy if the farmers liked the emus.

"I should think not," was the answer. "They eat up the grass and knock down our fences."

It was not long till they heard a low booming note, something like the cry of the bittern. The emus were seen standing near a clump of trees, and as they are by no means shy, they did not run away when the boys rode up. Some of them seemed over six feet high.

"What is the difference between the emu and the ostrich?" asked Harry.

"Well," said Tommy, "the emu has no beautiful feathers like the ostrich, and it has three toes, whereas the ostrich has only two. What we call emu feathers are more like hairs."

"Where does it lay its eggs?"

"Oh, just on the ground, in a little place hollowed out and lined with scraps of fern or grass."

"Is it of any use at all?" asked Harry.

"Oh, yes. Its eggs are worked up into ornaments, and its skin will yield several quarts of oil which is good for rheumatism."

"Are they able to go faster than a horse?" said Harry.

"Suppose we try," said Tommy.

He had a long stock-whip with him, and, giving a loud crack with it, he scared the emus into a run, and in a

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minute the ponies were after them helter-skelter. For a little it seemed as if they would catch up; but the emus gradually drew off into rough ground, and the boys gave up. The ponies were sweating, and the boys laughing at the fun of it all.

"Well, Harry," said his uncle that night at supper, "have you had a good day?"

"Oh, the best!" said Harry. "This is a wonderful country! Something astonishing is always turning up. I'm just curious to know what surprising thing I'm to see next."

MR. THORNTON had often spoken of doing what many Melbourne people do, go off for two or three months to Queensland or the South Seas, so as to escape the colder winter of Victoria.

As Mrs. Thornton was not a good sailor, she suggested that Jack should go as Mr. Thornton's guardian angel, and Jack presently became as excited as he was grateful for all the good times he was having.

"Very well, Jack. Get down the atlas, and tell me how far it is from south to north along the east coast of Australia."

Jack made his measurements very carefully, and said he thought it would be about two thousand miles.

At his uncle's request he then calculated that the distance round all four sides of Australia would be over eight thousand miles.

"Now," said Mr. Thornton, "if a steamer were to go the round trip at fifteen miles an hour, how long would it take?"

"Over three weeks."

"One more sum, and we're done. Look up the area of the United States of America and the area of Australia, and say which is the greater."

Jack looked up the figures, and found that Australia is bigger. He was astonished.

"Very few people know that, I think," he said.

In a few days the two were on board the Bandilla, steaming west from Melbourne, passing the spot where the Germans had laid mines, and, rounding the south-east corner of the Commonwealth, made a straight course for Sydney.

In a couple of days they were steaming up one of the finest harbours of the world, with its lovely green bays on every side, its red-roofed houses to the water's-edge, its gardens, its yachts, white-winged, and its glorious sunshine. They had only time to look round the city, for the steamer left that evening for Brisbane, and Jack had found from his atlas and geography-book that the Great Barrier Reef, sixty miles off this coast, ran parallel with and south for over twelve hundred miles—that Australia had a compact, almost unbroken coast-line. And as the steamer crept up to Brisbane he wondered what that city would be like.

It was hot when they landed, though the month was June—the middle of the winter—and one of Jack's first questions was, "Why do the wooden houses stand so high?"

He learned that one of the drawbacks of the beautiful climate is the white ant, that it devours wood rapidly, and it is no uncommon experience for a house to collapse like a house of cards.

Inside some of the houses tables, pianos, and most stationary pieces of furniture had their feet in tin vessels, in which kerosine or paraffin-oil had been placed, to prevent the ants from climbing up and destroying them and getting at the food.

Next day the steamer was plugging its

way northward, and, when it rounded Cape York and was getting along the Gulf of Carpentaria, Mr. Thornton began to tell Jack how up in this land of sunshine the people cultivated dates, bananas, arrowroot, sugar-cane, pine-apples, guavas, mangoes, and other fruits which could not be grown in the colder South.

"You speak of arrowroot, uncle. Is it a vegetable?"

"It's just a bulb, as a mangel-wurzel or a turnip, and when it is ready it is shredded, grated, pulped, stewed, sieved, run into vats, allowed to settle, raked up again, screened, and dried, and is at last the beautiful and nourishing food doctors prescribe for invalids."

When the steamer at last reached Port Darwin, what Jack saw was a town composed of wooden buildings, with corrugated iron roofs; then on the wharf and in the streets, wearing white suits and white helmets, a few natives and a good many Chinese.

Mr. Maldon, whose guests they were to be, received them very warmly; and although Jack was beginning to think he was getting used to Australia, he found it was so large that he had more to learn every day. And certainly it was very hot in Darwin.

"Now," said Mr. Maldon, "you'll have a good rest to-night, and perhaps tomorrow we shall be able to give you some sport among the crocs."

Jack knew that he was speaking of crocodiles, and that night could scarcely sleep for thinking he might actually have a shot at such big game. At last he did drop off, but it was only to dream that he was knocking over crocodiles as long as the main street in Darwin.

He told them at breakfast what he had been dreaming, and Mr. Maldon slapped him on the back and told him he was a good sport, and, if he could do those wonders in the dark, they would expect him to distinguish himself in the daylight.

About midday they reached the bank of the river where the crocodiles were often seen, and, with rifles ready, they lay down quietly under a tree.

"Keep your eye on those ducks and gulls you see out on the water yonder," said Mr. Maldon.

After a while, he asked:

"Did you notice anything?"

"Yes," said Jack. "I saw a duck disappear very suddenly. But I thought it had dived after fish."

"Watch another one."

Jack saw another disappear, and watched for it to come up again. But as there was no sign, he told Mr. Maldon. That gentleman smiled.

"Watch more keenly, Jack, if you see anything strange about the spot where the next duck disappears."

This time he had to wait longer, and at some distance, for the ducks took fright, and made off.

"Oh," cried Jack presently, "another duck's gone, and there's a swirl in the water!"

"Very well, then," said Mr. Maldon, "we'll have some sport. The crocs come quietly up, like a German submarine, and snap up the poor duck before he can even say 'quack!' Keep your eyes wide open, and watch that bit of shelving rock near the head. That's where our friends sun themselves usually."

As they waited under the tree Mr. Maldon told them that the crocodiles had many advantages over man. Their teeth kept growing in if they chanced to be torn out. No need for the dentist in the croc world. One result is that when an old crocodile is killed it is noticed that its teeth, which are sharp and conical, are of different sizes. Not only so, but this highly-favoured gentleman can close both his nostrils and his throat to keep

himself from being drowned while he holds his victim under water.

"Look, look!" said Jack. "There he is!" And he got his gun ready.

A crocodile was getting up out of the river to have his sun-bath.

"Now," said Mr. Maldon, "we better all take aim, and fire at once. You must aim at his eye or just under his forearm. If you hit him anywhere else you are wasting good powder. Now, ready! I shall say, 'One—two—three.' And at 'three,' we all fire!"

There was a tremendous report, and, to the astonishment of them all, the great creature merely slipped lazily off his perch into the water, and disappeared.

Mr. Thornton and Jack were amazed, but Mr. Maldon roared and laughed.

When he could speak, he said:

"We are nice shots! Not one of us can have hit him in a vital spot. Now, we must keep a look-out for a bit longer. Another chance may come along."

They were more successful about half an hour later, and had the pleasure of seeing a huge crocodile lying dead at their feet.

"We must not wait here; it is dangerous," said Mr. Maldon. "Look, he is about twenty feet! We hit him one in the eye that time. Did you ever hear the difference between a crocodile and an alligator? This is a crocodile. Look at his mouth. Notice how those two canine teeth in the lower jaw can be seen when his mouth is closed, and how they fit into a groove in the outside of the upper jaw. An alligator has not that dental arrangement. Now, let's go, or his uncles and cousins may call to hold an inquest."

On the way home, and at home after dinner, Mr. Maldon told them all about crocodiles. They kill calves, sheep, and human beings by dragging them suddenly under water. Only the big ones attack men. One crocodile head, three feet long, is still preserved at the Endeavour River, where it had killed several men, and was so old and cunning that it could not be shot, and had to be poisoned with strychnine. They are said to live a hundred years. They bark or croak. The female lays about sixty eggs in the sand. The eggs are white, and about the size of those of a goose. Crocodiles have glands which secrete musk, to attract their mates or their prey. The stomach is small, but the croc can stow away surplus food in the wide gullet, make it stand in a queue, so to speak, and his digestive powers are so great that he can easily dissolve bones. I suppose he never suffers the pangs of indigestion.

All this was most interesting to Jack, who asked innocently:

"You call him a reptile, Mr. Maldon. What is a reptile?"

"Well, my boy, a reptile is an animal with a backbone and lungs, and cold-blooded. The name includes crocodiles, tortoises, lizards, snakes."

"If a crocodile drags a man under water, has he any chance to defend himself?"

Mr. Maldon laughed, and answered:

"Yes, if he can keep cool, and has the use of an arm. His only hope is to gouge out the eye of the brute. The crocodile, in his agony, opens his mouth, and the man escapes. Cases are on record that this has been done, not merely by natives, but by white men. All the same, I hope none of us will ever need to do that!"

What a day it had been for Jack! Next morning he found the native servants had brought the skin home.

(This interesting article by "COOEE" will be continued in next week's issue of the GEM LIBRARY. Avoid disappointment by ordering your copy EARLY!)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 650.

The **Editor's Chat.**

Note:—Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Address Editor, The "Gem," The Fleetway House, Farrington Street, London, E.C.4.

Next Wednesday's Attractions:
"THE ST. JIM'S OVERALL CLUB!"
 By Martin Clifford.

The grand long complete tale for next week, which will appear under the above title, is one of Martin Clifford's best efforts, and abounds in humorous incidents and unexpected developments.

Because of the high prices of clothing, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy takes the matter into his own hands, and decides to form a club in the Fourth to supply the juniors with overalls at a cheap rate, and thus fight the profiteers. The scheme is taken up wholeheartedly, and the juniors carry out the tailoring in a workmanlike fashion. Some trouble is caused by Baggy's inept assistance.

Lively times ensue, and the customary quiet of Rylcombe village is rudely disturbed.

The next item on the "bumper" programme will be a splendid long tale of Dickie Dexter & Co. at St. Katie's entitled:

"THE DUFFER!"
 By Michael Poole.

In this story Jack Duff, the bottom boy in the Transitus Form, makes his debut as Dickie Dexter's companion in an unusually exciting, not to say reckless, escapade. The peculiar methods of the "Duffer" and his iron nerve upon Dex-

ter's eyes considerably, and bring him to the conclusion that the "Duffer" is not really such a duffer after all! You will thoroughly enjoy this story!

"A NEW CHUM IN AUSTRALIA."
 By "Cooco."

"MY READERS' OWN CORNER!"
 with another batch of half-crowns given away, are two other popular features in next week's splendid issue.

THE CINEMA.

Sid Kingston, 11, Valley Bridge Parade, Scarborough, is moving with the times, and is starting a cinema-goers' club for readers of the Companion Papers. The club is intended to foster an interest in the film, and there will be a critic of the reels who will let others know what is extra specially worth seeing.

BEING A PAL.

Genuine friendship cannot possibly be confined to the chance people we meet on the road. It stands to reason this is not so, does it not? There are others who would be wonderful friends if the lines of route happened to cross. Their friendship is there all right and is worth having, though you never have practical experience of it. There are individuals whom you meet once in a life, and something tells you they are the real friends.

NEVER BEING SURE.

A chum of mine tells me that he cannot rely on his own accuracy, so to speak. It is a pretty common trouble, oftentimes conquered by overdoing the careless side of life. But there are nervously conscientious folks who do not seem able to trust themselves in what they do. They will go back to make sure

that they have locked a door or a desk. This not being decently civil to self. The same way with paying a sum of money or posting a letter. The thing has been done, but the silly, weak-kneed doubt is allowed to creep in and suggest that perhaps there was a mistake. It is a mood to be taken out in the back garden and stamped on.

THE ARMY RECORD.

Harold Marshall, 177, Reeder Avenue, Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., is good enough to send me a cutting from an American paper concerning a record of the British Army. Without going into figures, it may be stated that the report is magnificent, and rather extra good reading in a paper overseas. But then, we knew of these things before, and of what the British Army—big or little—is capable when there is stern work to be done.

HOLLAND.

It is worth while taking a glimpse of the Netherlands. Of course, I don't mean packing up your things and crossing the sea to the land of the tulips. We hear something these days concerning the Pays Bas, as the French call Holland, but it is not the news one cares about. We are not extra specially interested in the ex-Kaiser, but everybody likes to hear about how they grow bulbs, and of the vast shipping, and the milk and butter farms which prosper amidst the rich grass country of the land of the solid Dutchman, with his long pipe or cigar and his philosophy.

Your Editor

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