



The Mystery of Ravenscar

A Grand Story of
Westavon College

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By EDMUND BURTON

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THE FIRST CHAPTER

Who is the Thief?

IN all probability few of my readers will require to be told what and where Westavon College is. It is too well known as one of the "cock" schools of Great Britain to need any further introduction from me.

But at the time with which this story deals its atmosphere was being sadly clouded by something hitherto unknown. Master looked at master, boy looked at boy, yet for six or seven long weeks the shadow hovered over Westavon, seemingly never to be dispelled until the hitherto stainless reputation of the college was besmirched for good.

Waythorne, of the Sixth—you know, the eldest son of Sir John Waythorne, C.B., O.B.E.—was the first to suffer. He missed a gold watch and chain—a present from his father—and though he could remember exactly where he had left it, the watch seemed to have taken unto itself legs and walked away. Sampson and Brickett, two other members of the same Form, had reported the loss of a diamond pin and a silver match-box respectively; whilst others suffered more or less in the same mysterious manner.

The Head, Dr. Barton, was in a quandary. Such a thing had never occurred in his long

connection with the college, and eventually he was forced to the reluctant conclusion that a thief—or, perhaps, to put it more kindly, a kleptomaniac—had by some chance strayed in amongst his pupils. The neighbouring pawnbrokers were apprised and given a description of the missing articles, but all to no purpose; and additional mysterious disappearances gradually blotted out these previous losses.

Finally, the Head, after assembling the whole school together in big hall and appealing to the culprit, for the sake of the good name of Westavon, to confess—which appeal was received with stony, indignant silence—was forced to declare all freedom at an end until the affair was cleared up. No boy, he said, would be allowed beyond the limits of the quadrangle until further notice, and if the thief was not discovered before a certain short time had elapsed, the police would have to be informed. This was a course which Dr. Barton would not have adopted except as a last resort, on account of the scandal which must surely ensue; but the stainless reputation of Westavon must be preserved at all costs, and the only way to preserve it was to eradicate the bad patch from the otherwise sound whole.

Naturally, this decision caused great indignation, just though it undoubtedly was; yet

the anger of the school was not directed against the Head, but against the mean rotter who allowed a couple of hundred boys to suffer for his own misdeeds.

Several more days passed, however, without anything further coming to light. A couple of extra losses were reported, but that was all. Smyth minor remarked, as he stared dully from the window of Study No. 5, that it only needed a bowl of skilly and a lump of oakum to complete the picture!

"Might as well all be in quod together!" he growled to an unresponsive audience of three, as he nodded across to where the

weed-encumbered grounds of Ravenscar Manor ran right up to the quadrangle wall. "Look at old 'Robinson Crusoe' there, wandering about his domains with his monkey an' parrot! I almost envy the beggar!"

The others glanced dully in the direction

Smyth indicated, but made no audible remark. Ravenscar Manor—a rambling old house, which, like many other buildings of the same kind, was reputed haunted—adjoined West-avon College, its grounds being separated from those of the latter by a boundary wall.



"Look at old 'Robinson Crusoe' there, wandering about his domains with his monkey an' parrot! I almost envy the beggar!" (See this page)

The Manor had been deserted for years, but had recently been taken by a queer-looking old jossler who looked exactly like the miser of fiction, and who seemed mightily fond of pets. He was to be

seen almost daily pottering about the rambling wilderness of a garden, with a green parrot perched upon one shoulder and a small marmoset monkey on the other, to each of which he talked alternately as though they were children of his own.

His name, as the neighbouring village gossips could have told you, was believed to be Pendleby, and the man who had moved in his stuff could have added the information that most of the "furniture" consisted of heavy hutches and

cages, draped in cloth, from which came a variety of strange sounds; indeed, the village carrier was rather glad to get the job over and clear out, for, somehow, he didn't quite like carrying those articles, especially as something had poked its head out from beneath

one of the cloth coverings and made a vicious snap at his fingers.

Pendleby, therefore, was presumed to be a zoologist who kept a small private menagerie; but the Westavon boys had christened him "Robinson Crusoe," since he was rarely seen in the grounds unless accompanied by the green parrot and the marmoset monkey. He did not, however, interest the college pupils overmuch, as he never spoke to any of them; and Ravenscar Manor, being now occupied private property, was of course out of bounds.

"Look here, you fellows," said Smyth minor, suddenly turning from the window, "this kind of thing is apt to make a chap feel desperate. We simply *must* do something to create a diversion, or we'll go mad. What d'you say to a slap-up spread?"

"I think you've gone mad already!" snapped Jack Villiers sarcastically. "What about the Head's orders?"

"Orders be blowed!" exclaimed the desperate Smyth. "How much can we make up between us? I've three an' ninepence, if you fellows like to give me some pecuniary assistance?"

Nine-and-six was the ultimate total, after much pocket-rummaging; and a couple of hours later, when darkness had fallen, Smyth cautiously raised the window and grasped a hefty drain-pipe which ran down to the quadrangle below.

"It means expulsion if you're nabbed, old man!" warned Villiers, as the other's legs

disappeared through the window. "The Head's a clinker, but you know he's jolly strict if occasion demands——"

"You needn't worry; this is *my* funeral!" rapped back Smyth. "If one rotter chooses to be a blessed criminal, I don't see why the rest should be chucked into quod without any of the usual prison gratuities for good conduct!"

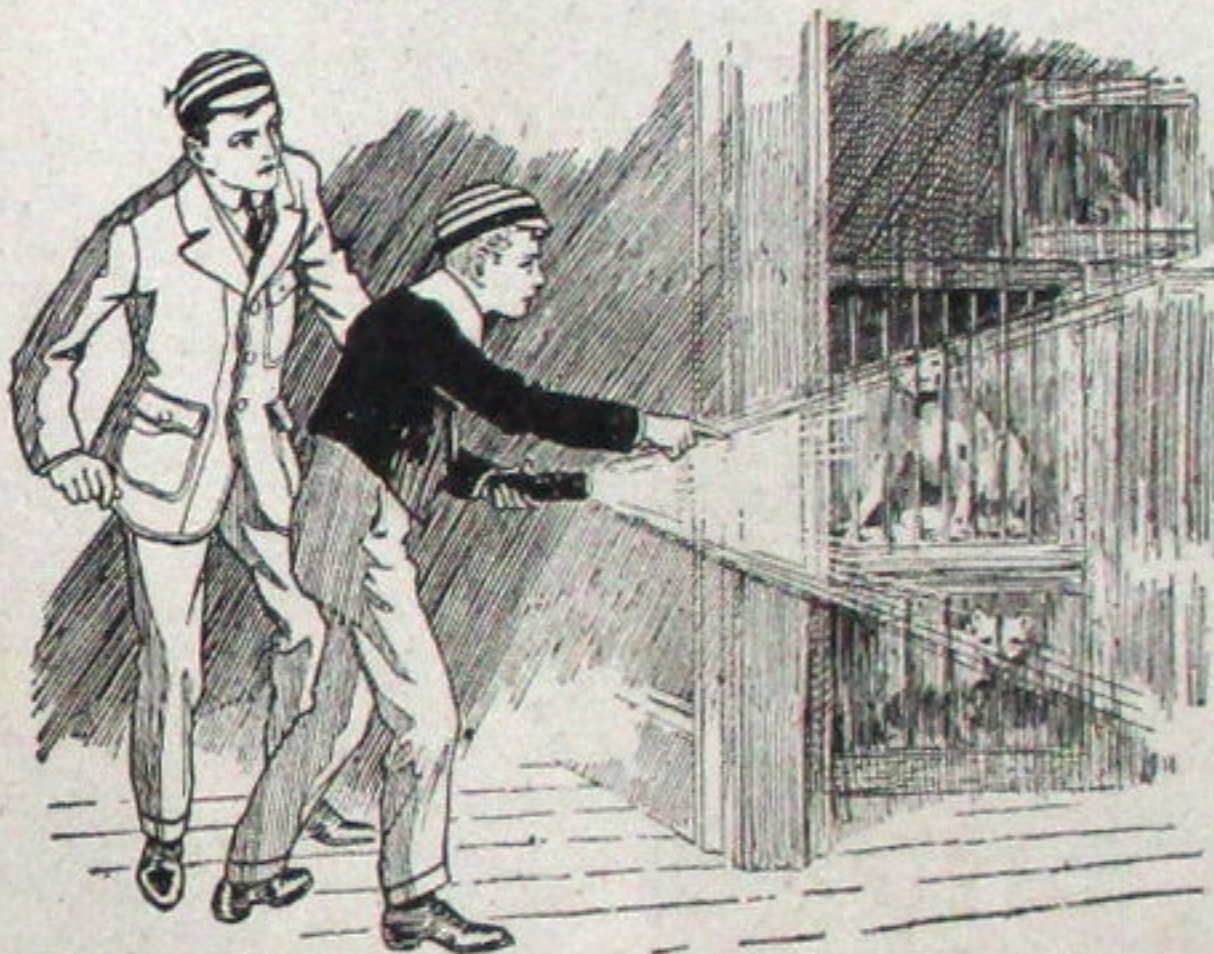
He vanished from sight, and half an hour later returned triumphant, carrying a well-stocked bag suspended from his shoulders, a bag upon which the other hungry occupants of Study 5 fell like so many ravenous wolves.

"Got through all right, you see!" said Smyth. "Fall to, my merry men, for the fare is fair, and—— Oh, by the by, one of old 'Crusoe's' beasts has escaped. I don't know what it was, but it was something pretty big—at least, bigger than what we've seen him with. I spotted it against the

moon on the roof of Ravenscar, as I was passing, but it moved into the shadows almost before I had properly noticed it."

This intelligence aroused little or no comment from the rest, for the tuck was good, and they were already busy "making little" of it in another sense. In a very short time only a few crumbs remained to tell the tale of the night's escapade, whilst a tightened feeling in the region of four waistcoats did ample homage to the success of Smyth minor's expedition.

Next morning Jeremy, of the Fifth, reported missing a set of gold sleeve-links and



They stole forward until a row of small wired hutches confronted them, from whence several pairs of beady eyes blinked in the glare of the torch. (See page 187)

a most valuable medal which had once belonged to his father; but these, like the rest of the thefts, were soon placed on the list of "unexplained crimes" which was steadily growing more formidable.

Ultimately, some of the boys having written home about it, parents began to ask awkward questions as to what was being done in the matter, saying that they could not permit their sons' belongings to disappear in such a mysterious fashion, and, unless the affair was cleared up at once—well, there were other places of instruction where the property of the pupils might be safer!

The Head now wore a perpetually worried look—almost a look of desperation—and the boys unanimously pitied him. He was a kindly man, if stern, and immensely popular with the majority since he had come to Westavon. He had made tireless efforts to trace the affair to its fountain-head, but, though a further scandal would surely mean complete smash to the already tottering reputation of the College, everyone inwardly felt that Doctor Barton's threat would have to be carried out without much delay—i.e., the police were almost daily expected on the scene, which meant long columns in the newspapers with big black headlines, and all the rest of it. It was, indeed, a bitter pill for those who loved the old school to be forced to swallow, but it seemed that little short of a miracle could prevent it now.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

"Young Sherlock!"

OF all the well-supplied pockets at Westavon, those of Aubrey Montgomery Conyers were perhaps the fullest. Aubrey Montgomery would one day enjoy a rent-roll running well into four figures, and, in anticipation of this, his people evidently thought he should learn how to spend it. In any case, Aubrey was banker, treasurer, and chancellor of the exchequer to such unfortunate beings whose desire for "tuck" was greater than their capital, and, keen business man that he promised to be, he did well out of sundry little advances which increased his own income by interest next pocket-money day, when the loans were

invariably repaid. On this particular Saturday, Aubrey's takings were rather larger than usual—a fact that was borne out by his satisfied grin as he counted the shekels scattered over his bed.

"How's that?" he said, turning his head towards his bosom pal, Wilkins, who was standing just behind him.

"Not bad," replied Wilkins. "Think I might do worse than start this game myself, if I could only get enough to commence with."

Conyers sniggered disdainfully.

"You!" he said. "Get out! You haven't the business brain, and you haven't a shred of reputation!"

"Perhaps not—but, though I may be dull, I guess I shouldn't let the whole school see what I've netted. There are three idiots standing at the door now, and maybe the thief's one of 'em!"

"Pshaw! What if he is? I guess I know how to look after myself. The door's got two bolts and a lock, and I'll sleep with the stuff under my pillow."

"And leave the window open, I suppose?"

"Why not? Look out and tell me why not, you ass! Forty feet to the ground, with a wall as bare as your hand, and only a broken, rust-eaten drainpipe within a yard of the sill! You don't suppose anyone's goin' to risk his life on *that*, do you?"

Wilkins murmured something unintelligible, and turned away. So far, he had lost nothing, and Conyers' business was—well, his own business.

Aubrey Montgomery, being a Senior, had a room to himself, and, after retiring that night, resumed his counting as though it had become second nature to him. With the coins—they were all silver, ranging from a shilling to a crown-piece—spread out on the coverlet before him, he sat up in bed until long after the rest of Westavon College were in the arms of Morpheus.

But even the astute Aubrey was not proof against the wiles of Nature, and ultimately his own head nodded forward, jerked up, and nodded again. Presently he was sleeping soundly amid his wealth, and dreaming of more to follow.

Pleasant though his dream was, however,

the awakening was distinctly the reverse. Roused by the first clang of the rising-bell, he sat up, scattering a few coins over the floor—but only a few. The vast majority had mysteriously vanished, although the door was still fast-locked and bolted.

Conyers tore his hair and came as near swearing as any respectable schoolboy can, but all in vain. More than three-quarters of the money had disappeared, and though he searched every inch of the bed and its surroundings, not one extra coin could he discover.

"Told you so!" said Wilkins triumphantly, inwardly glad that his bosom pal would not be so ready to call him an ass in future. "The rain-pipe did it, as I said, and——"

"But, you utter chump, it wouldn't bear an *infant*, and, what's more, the window's only open a foot or so!" replied Conyers disgustedly.

"Well, how was it done, then? If the door was still fastened nobody could have come in that way. And unless there's a secret panel——"

"Secret grandmother!" gasped Aubrey furiously. "Go and chew coal. Stay! No, don't bother about the coal, but ask young Sherlock to come to me."

"Young Sherlock," though his Christian name was plain "James," thought his surname sounded sufficiently detective-like to warrant his believing himself a crime-investigator of no ordinary prowess. He had read all sorts, sizes, and descriptions of detective stories—from Sexton Blake to Lecocq—and the mystery of Westavon had given him "food for thought," though he had not as yet collected sufficient evidence to "make an arrest."

But the miraculous way in which this latest theft had been perpetrated caused Conyers to wonder if anything could be discovered, considering that the scene of operations was strictly confined to a small room by the door still being secured on his awakening; and, possibly, with his knowledge of detective methods culled from the literature he had imbibed, young Sherlock *might* hit upon a clue which would throw some light on the matter. Any port in a storm—and Aubrey was ready to snatch at straws.

James, swelling with pride at his small person being recognised by so great an individual as Aubrey Montgomery Conyers, hurried towards the latter's bedroom, and glanced round with the eye of a Holmes, Lecocq, and Pinkerton rolled into one.

"Now, kid, not so much of the theatrical!" snapped Aubrey bad-temperedly. "Get busy, and see if you can find anything—if not, get out! I don't suppose you'll do much except waste my time, but should you succeed I'll—I'll give you half a quid!"

This magnanimous offer—for Sherlock was none too rich in this world's goods—did much to dispel the "cold-water" feeling which had possessed him at his chilling reception, and he attacked his task with a will. From the bed to the floor, from the floor back to the bed, he crawled, examining each minutely by the aid of a small magnifying-glass, but for some time dead silence reigned in the room.

"Hang you!" cried Conyers, at length. "Look at my pillow, you dirty beast! Why didn't you wipe your feet on the mat—Eh, what?"



"Well, Pongo, any luck to-night? Your bag, sir!" (See page 188)

He broke off as Sherlock uttered a sudden exclamation of triumph, and stood erect holding something up to the light between his finger and thumb.

"Wh-what have you found?"

James did not reply for a full minute, but when he did his question seemed rather a foolish one:

"You haven't any grey hair, have you, Conyers?"

Aubrey gasped. His hair was almost as red as a pillar-box!

"Grey hair—my stars! Not yet, but I'll have a fine crop of it before *you* leave, I'm thinking! Here, get out, if you've nothing further to say!"

"But I *have*—quite a lot!" persisted James doggedly. "I have to tell you that whoever took your money has grey hair, yet it's a peculiar shade of grey—half brown."

"There's nobody here with hair that colour at all," replied the other. "The Head's grey, so is Mr. Watson of our Form, so is Tompkins, the porter, but not quite like that. What's more, they're absolutely above suspicion——"

"No one is above suspicion—to *me*!" retorted James professionally. (It was Blake who used to say that—or was it Holmes?) "I must suspect *everyone* until I discover the guilty party. I have found half a dozen stiff, greyish-brown hairs on the floor beside your bed, and two or three on the bed itself. When I find the owner of those hairs, all will be in order. I shall now examine the outside of the window and the flower-bed below."

He crossed the room, staring reflectively at the sill and the fragile rain-pipe, but then shook his head gloomily.

"No luck—no sign of a ladder having rested here, and no finger-prints on the glass; but, of course, we sha'n't get disheartened, shall we? Let's go down!"

The soft earth of the flower-bed immediately beneath the window held more success for the budding detective, for here a couple of distinct impressions of a bare foot were discernible, whilst, on the slime near the base of the spout a hand had evidently encircled

the metal work, leaving traces of four fingers and a thumb behind.

"Ah!" said Sherlock, his eyes gleaming. "Now we are getting on! Say, Conyers, d'you know if anybody here is a somnambulist?"

"A—what? Weatherly's pater is a spiritualist, but——"

"A somnambulist, I said—a fellow who walks in his sleep."

"Oh! N-no, I don't think so. Why?"

"Because this is the print of a bare foot, of course. Yet, it looks outlandishly small, and—— *Phe-e-ew!*" Sherlock broke off with a subdued whistle.

"Well?"

"No matter now, but I've got my suspicions, which can only be confirmed or removed in one way." James seized his companion's arm, gripping it tightly. "Say, are you game to run a bit of a risk?"

"If it gets my money back—yes."

"Then I'm going to Ravenscar after 'lights out' to-night, an' you're coming with me——"

"What the pip has Ravenscar to do with it——"

"Nothing—perhaps; but if those marks on the drain-pipe and flower-bed aren't the imprints of a monkey's paw and foot, I'll eat my hat! Look at the length and narrowness of the footprint in particular, and notice the shape of the toes."

"I see," nodded Aubrey, slowly beginning to realise that there might be something in his companion's brain, after all. "'Old Crusoe' certainly has a small monkey, for we've seen it, and he may have a bigger one in that giddy zoo of his which he's said to keep somewhere in the Manor yonder."

"That's the theory," confirmed Sherlock; "though it's, of course, only a theory, and we'll have to break bounds to sift it."

"All right, I'm with you!" agreed Conyers. "But if we're twigged there'll be trouble."

"Which you shouldn't salute till you meet it!" grinned James. "What time, then—eleven o'clock? Right!"

And so they parted, well satisfied with their discovery.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

The Solving of the Mystery

BEING such a tumble-down building, Ravenscar Manor presented few difficulties to even such inexperienced housebreakers as Conyers and Sherlock, and just as the school clock boomed the quarter after eleven they crawled through one of the lower windows, the hasp of which had easily succumbed to the gentle persuasion of a strong clasp-knife, landing noiselessly on the floor within. The small electric-torch which Sherlock flashed round revealed nothing but bare, damp-stained walls, but the adjoining apartment was certainly furnished after a fashion. A dusty carpet lay on the floor, and a few sticks of rickety stuff which any self-respecting furniture-dealer would have turned up his nose at were scattered here and there, without any apparent effort at order. If old Pendleby had taken the house with a view to living comfortably therein, he had evidently failed, since he did not seem to have sufficient stuff to make even a small cottage look anyway like home.

Possibly, the boys thought, he had bought or rented the place on account of its roominess, which would give him adequate space to distribute his private zoo without cramping, and had put personal comfort last. There was no knowing what these curious old fossils would do, when they were wrapped up in a craze or hobby to the exclusion of everything else.

The pair passed from room to room, their footsteps now and then creaking on the unsound boards despite their caution; but if "Old Crusoe" was on the premises, he

evidently didn't hear them, and presently they reached the great entrance-hall unmolested.

"The jolly menagerie must be upstairs," whispered Conyers. "There's not a sign—or smell—of it here."

They ascended the wide staircase, which might easily have permitted the passage of a coach-and-four, soon arriving at the first landing. Here, from an open door on the right, came a strange shuffling, scratching noise, telling them that they had at last found what they sought.

"It's in there!" breathed Sherlock, pointing. "Quiet, now! Don't let's disturb the whole giddy circus!"

They stole forward until a row of small wired hutches confronted them, whence several beady eyes blinked in the glare of the torch. Flanking these were some larger cages, towards one of which both boys suddenly looked, and exchanged meaning glances.

"Your theory looks promising, then," muttered Conyers. "You see what's yonder?"

Sherlock nodded.

"Just as I expected," he said.

"We're getting on famously!"

A large monkey—a chimpanzee—rustled the straw carpeting the end cage, and yawned in a strangely human fashion; but it was evident that he found little interest in the intruders, for he settled himself down to sleep again almost immediately.

"But what's become of the stuff—that is, if you're really right about this beast, or one of a similar kind, being the thief?" asked Aubrey Montgomery, rubbing his hand in perplexity through his red hair.

But ere his companion had time to reply a sound came from below—a sound like the opening and shutting of a door.



"Sherlock" withdrew his hand, grasping a miscellaneous collection of articles, among which silver coins, sleeve-links, studs, and other bright articles played a prominent part. (See page 188)

"What's that?"

Sherlock clapped his hand over the other's mouth, and, switching off the torch, drew him back into the shadows. Both stood absolutely still, every nerve strung up to concert pitch; then someone ascended the stairs, and a gleam of light crept across the landing outside.

Instantly the chimpanzee became very much awake, gripping the bars in front of the cage, and staring expectantly through. Then a lighted candle appeared in the doorway, the beam shining full upon the animal.

"Well, Pongo, any luck to-night? Your bag, sir!"

The newcomer drew open the cage-door, which the boys now realised had not been quite shut, and took a small calico bag that the chimpanzee intelligently passed to him, having detached it from its own shoulders where it had hung by a cord.

"Ah! None, I see! Well, Pongo, we can't expect good fortune every time, can we?"

He gave the beast a handful of nuts and an affectionate pat, then withdrew, having shone the light swiftly over the other cages, but luckily not in the watchers' direction.

Not until the sound of footsteps had died away below did the boys dare shift their position, but when Sherlock spoke his tone was triumphant—and pardonably so.

"Got him, the blackguard! My stars! Who would have thought it, to see him pottering about his grounds like a gentle, simple old oddity—but that's not the point; we must see if any of the stuff's hidden about here. If not, we'll have to get the police to fill in a search-warrant and raid the place."

A careful search, however, presently revealed a small Gladstone bag, concealed beneath a pile of empty packing-cases and straw in one corner of the room. The bag was locked, but Sherlock was by now

wound up to such a pitch of confidence that he wasted no time over a little matter like that.

Opening the strongest blade of his knife, he slit the leather from end to end, and thrust his hand through the opening. Then he withdrew it, grasping a miscellaneous collection of articles, among which silver coins, sleeve-links, studs, and other bright articles played a prominent part.

"How's that?" he gasped delightedly. "Sort of giddy safe-deposit, isn't it? Nice, benevolent-lookin' old ruffian—Pendleby—but his little game's played out now!"

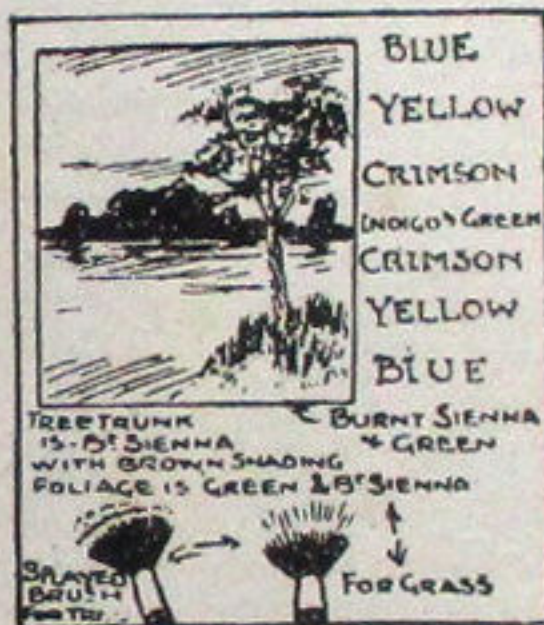
As it transpired later, it had really been the chimpanzee's fault in the first instance. That is to say, only for the monkey happening to escape a couple of nights after Pendleby had taken up residence in Ravenscar Manor, and wandering into the college, where it had strayed into Waythorne's bedroom and been attracted by the glittering gold of that young gentleman's watch and chain, its master would certainly never have embarked upon this clever scheme of wholesale pilfering. But the animal had repeated the process upon a couple more occasions soon afterwards, and this gave Pendleby the idea of allowing the monkey every liberty, and providing it with a calico bag in which to carry anything it happened to come across. Pongo warmed to his work, and there were few nights he returned empty-handed.

But, though the monkey may have been the guilty party at first, and tempted Pendleby, who was not really a criminal at heart, to continue the game, the British law so far does not admit animals to convict prisons; so "Old Crusoe" had to stand the racket. He is now staying at a certain "hotel" where private menageries are taboo, and no doubt he will benefit by the change.

TRIFLES FOR THE FIRESIDE

No. 1—Painting a Sunset

MOST boys and girls own a box of water-colour paints, and therefore I am sure all my chums will be interested to hear how they can paint a lovely sunset quite easily, and yet in a manner that will surprise themselves. Get a piece of drawing paper, soak it in water, and pin it down on a sheet of blotting-paper. Prop the blotting-paper up to a slight angle and, with a large brush, paint as



No. 1

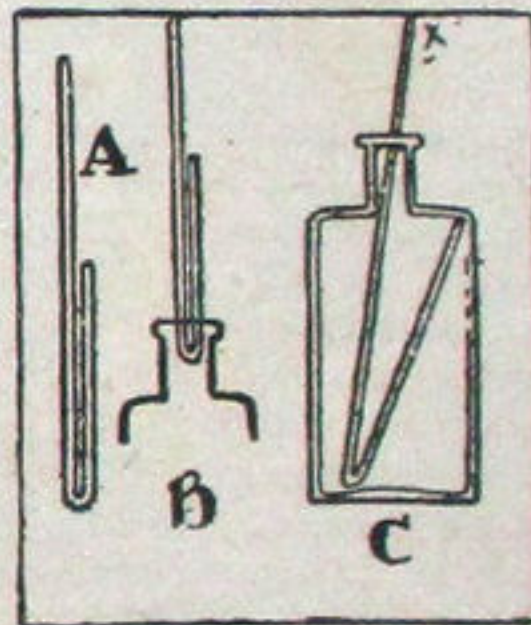
shown in the sketch: First the two blues top and bottom, then the two yellows, and then the two crimsons. Wait a few moments and then, with a dark mixture of indigo and green, paint in the bushes across the centre of the picture, making reflections underneath on the water as shown. Now wait until the picture has dried.

Next paint in the piece of ground in the bottom right-hand corner with the colours described, and also paint in the tree. For the tree, dab the brush from side to side; and, for the grass, work the brush up and down. (See the arrows on the diagram.) To complete this beautiful little picture, place a few lines of white over the tree reflections on the water.

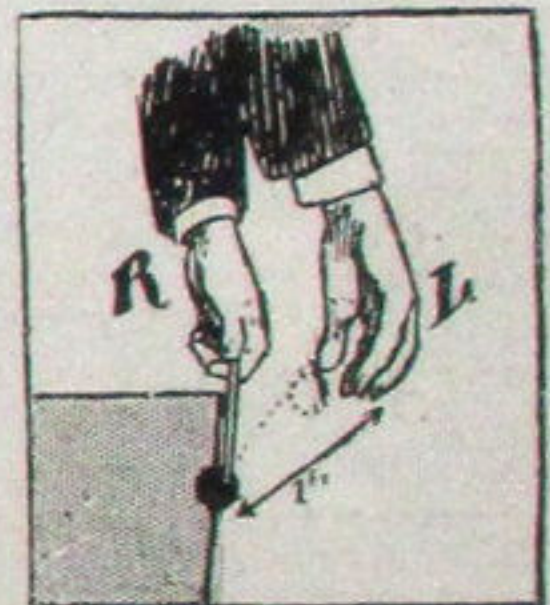
No. 2—A Straw Trick

DO you think it possible to lift a bottle with a straw? It doesn't seem so, does it? Yet it can be done quite easily. Obtain a long straw and bend it as shown at A. Next insert it into the neck of a bottle as shown at B. Push the straw down to the bottom and let the smaller section of the straw spring into the side of the bottle as depicted at C.

Now, by holding the top of the straw (marked



No. 2



No. 3

by a cross in the diagram), you can lift up the bottle. Try this little trick for yourselves.

No. 3—Tipping the Penny

AS you know, there is more than one way of tipping. If you give a boy a penny for carrying your bag, it is known as tipping. But people who have to do that sort of tipping get tired of it, like the American who, after tipping the waiters, porters, boot-boys, and other servants at the hotel in which he was staying, saw the notice: "Tip the basin." Then he fainted. But that isn't the sort of tipping you have to do in the trick I am going to tell you about.

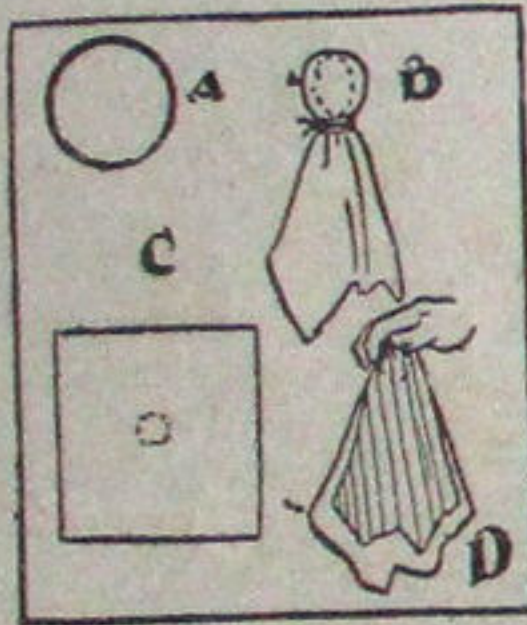
To perform this trick balance a penny on the edge of the table and stand to one side

with the left hand over the right. The left hand must not be nearer than twelve inches from the coin. Now, with a pencil held in the right hand, tip the penny and catch it with the left hand. (See the diagram.) While you and your chums are practising this trick together you can have a jolly game. Take it in turns to tip the coin, the one who catches it the most times being declared the winner.

No. 4—The Magic Ring

FIRST of all obtain two slender brass rings, and file through one of them and sharpen the cut place into two points, as shown in A. Next take two handkerchiefs exactly alike, and sew them together with the whole ring between the two.

To perform the trick, show the cut ring to your audience, keeping your finger and thumb over the two sharp points. Then place the ring in an old handkerchief, or a square of some thin material, and get someone to tie a piece of string round the handkerchief under the ring, as depicted in diagram B. The little arrow at B points out the cut ring inside the handkerchief. Next take up the other handkerchief with the whole ring sewn inside, and place it over the tied-up handkerchief.



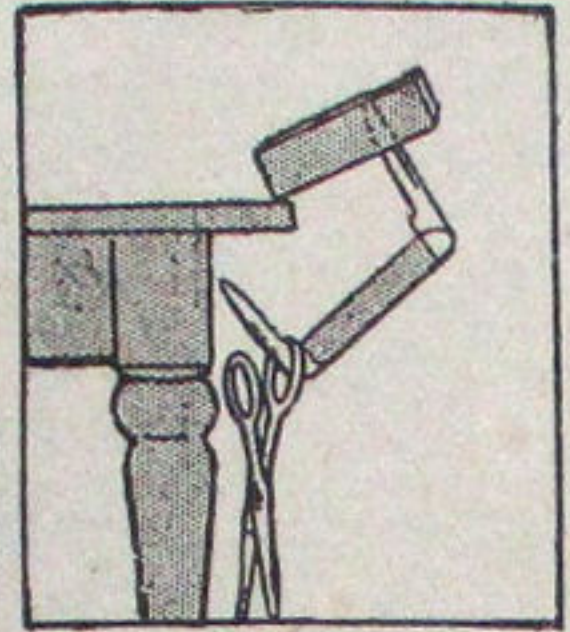
No. 4

Hold one handkerchief with your right hand and the other with the left, and, while you chat to your audience, work out the ring from the tied-up one by means of the sharp points. Of course, you keep the other handkerchief over the top all the time so that your chums cannot see you do this. Now, having worked the ring into the palm of your hand, which is under the outer handkerchief, ask some one to feel that the ring is still in its place. He will feel the ring which is sewn up inside, but will think it the one that was tied up in full view of the audience. As he goes to his seat

suddenly flick the outer handkerchief away. Show them the tied-up handkerchief. Although the string is still in position, the ring has gone.

No. 5—A Wonderful Balancing Trick

HERE is a balancing trick which, from the sketch I am giving in this column, you would think almost impossible to perform. Yet it can be done, as you can test for yourselves. Take the outside part of a matchbox, a penknife, and a pair of scissors.



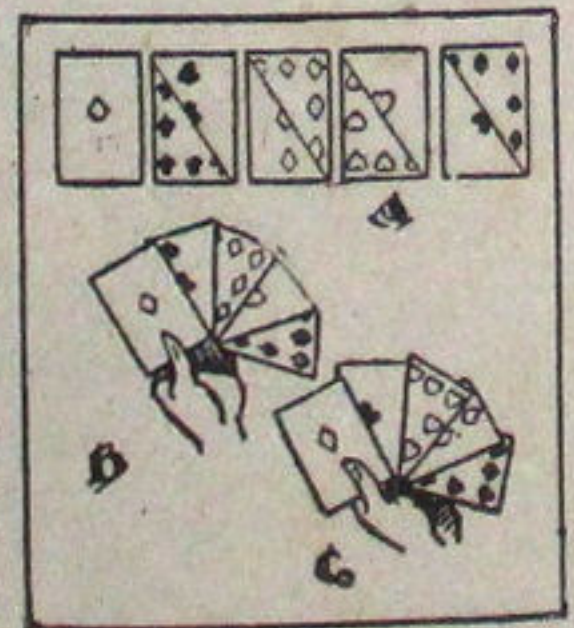
No. 5

Open the blades of the penknife in manner shown, and stick the larger blade through the box about three-quarters of the way from the end. Hang scissors on lower blade. You can balance the matchbox either on the thin top of a table or your hand, but before doing so make sure that the point of the large blade of the penknife grips into the top of the box, otherwise it will slip. The heavier the weight you hang on the lower blade the more upright will the matchbox stand on the table.

No. 6—Changing the Cards

SELECT eight cards from an old playing pack and cut them across from corner to corner.

Throw away half of each card, and join the other eight halves in such a way as to form four playing cards. This can be done by gumming the cut edge of each card, and if care is taken a firm job can be made of it. Now take the ace of



No. 6

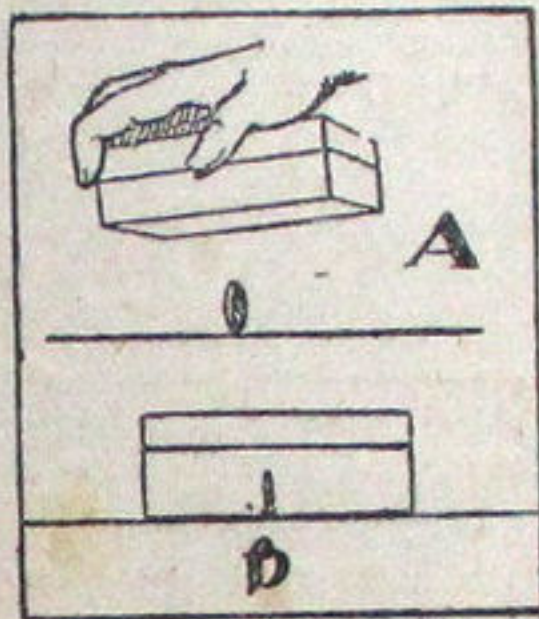
diamonds from the pack and place it with the made-up cards. You will now have five cards which look something like those shown at A.

Take the five cards and drop them face

downwards. If they are joined properly your audience will think they are normal playing cards. Pick them up and spread-eagle them in your hand, as shown at B. Tell your chums to have a look at them while you hold them thus. Close them up, wave your wand over them, and open up the opposite way, as shown at C. It appears as though the cards had been changed.

No. 7—The Box and Sixpence Trick

TELL your chums you can put a spinning sixpence in a box without touching the coin.



No. 7

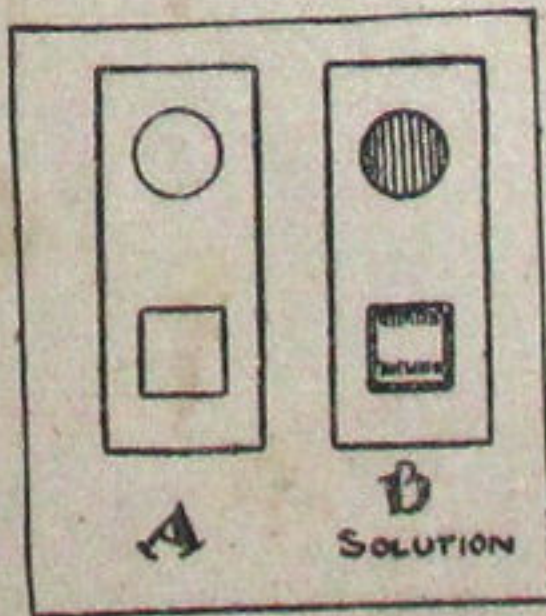
To do this you must get a thin cardboard box—an empty cigarette one will do. Twist the sixpence in your fingers so that it spins; then hold the box over it, as shown at A. Jam the box down on to the coin, which will cut

through into the box, as shown in diagram B.

This trick must be done very smartly, and a little practice should be undertaken before you show it to others. When you can do it well, it will appear to be a very clever and amusing trick to those who have never seen it before.

No. 8—The Square Hole Trick

OBTAIN a broom-handle an inch in thickness, and ask your father or big brother to saw you off a piece an inch long. Take a thick piece of cardboard and in it make a round hole



No. 8

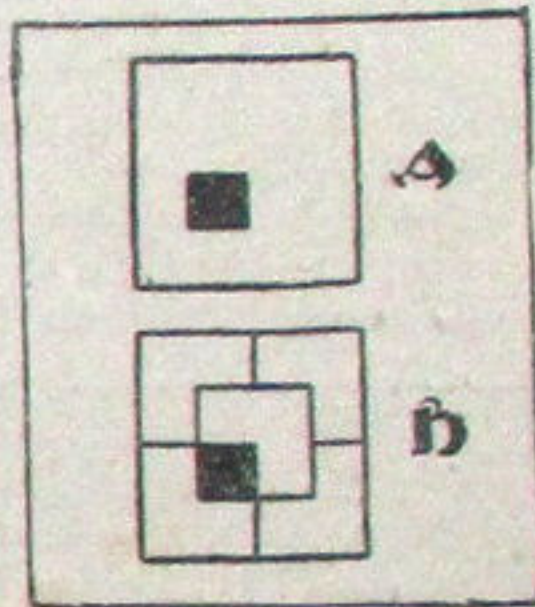
an inch across, and another an inch square—that is, each side must measure one inch—see diagram A. The trick is to put the small piece cut from the broom-handle into each hole in turn so that no light can be seen through the openings.

As far as the round hole is concerned, this is very easy. The difficult question is: How would you do it with the square hole? Diagram B shows the solution of this little problem. As you will see, the flat ends of the piece of broom-handle are placed against two of the sides of the square hole, and thus the opening is filled up.

No. 9—The Garden Problem

A MAN once sold a large house and garden to five people. Each of the purchasers had

three rooms, but the question arose how they were to divide the garden so that each one should have an equal share. Now how did they do it? Glance at diagram A for a moment. The small black square represents the house, while the



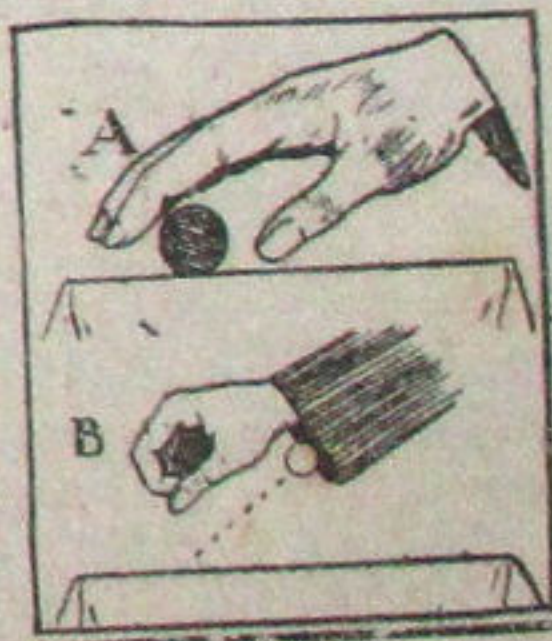
No. 9

space between it and the large square represents the garden. Now, by glancing at the lower diagram, B, you will see the solution. In this illustration the garden is divided into five parts, all equal in size. See if your chums can solve this interesting little problem.

No. 10—The Flying Coin

UNLIKE the above trick, this is one which requires not a little practice before you can perform before an audience. Take a coin—a penny, or a coin of similar size—and spin

it as fast as you can. Place your hand over the coin, as marked in the diagram A, taking care that your fingers are nearly touching the table, close the hand sharply, and the coin will fly towards the performer and into his sleeve.



No. 10

No. 11—Do This!

ASK your friends if they can make a six-penny-piece spin round and round without touching it with their fingers! I don't suppose they will be able to do it. If you



No. 11

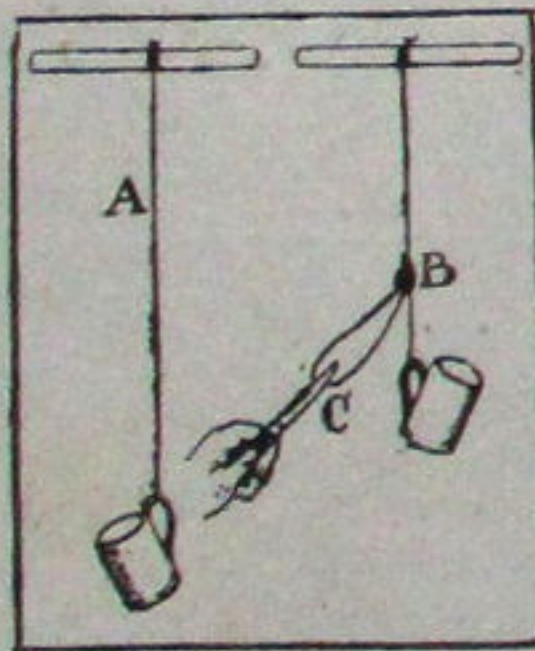
want to show them how to do it, just study this little trick.

Place a six-penny-piece on the table, and then place against it two pins as shown in the sketch A. Press slightly against the sides of the coin and lift it towards you, as

shown in the drawing. Then all you have to do is blow gently on to the sixpence. It will spin round. You must press the pins fairly hard against the coin—the real trick is knowing just how hard to press. Try it, boys and girls!

No. 12—The Mug "Catch"

THIS is a neat little trick—or, rather, catch—and needs no practice. Procure a mug, and attach a piece of string to the handle. Tie the end of the string to the gas-bracket,



No. 12

or any other place above your head.

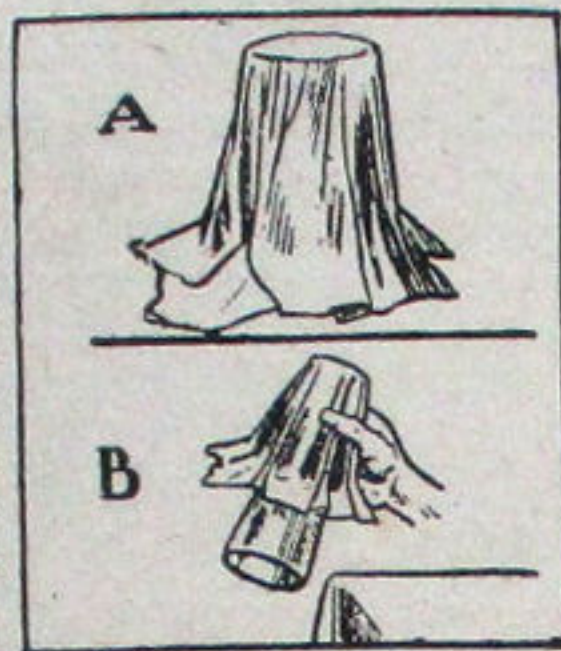
Now tell your friends that you can cut the string in half without making the mug fall to the floor. They will turn round promptly and tell you that it is bound to fall if you cut the string.

But not so. Tie a loop in the string as shown in the accompanying diagram, and marked C. Then, if you cut the loop marked B in the sketch, the mug will remain hanging up.

No. 13—Through the Table

PROCURE a tumbler and place it on the table—see that your audience is on the other side—and, with a piece of paper, you are ready to perform. You are going to push the glass through the table.

Cover the glass with the paper, moulding the latter to the glass, as indicated by the diagram, and marked A. Take hold of the glass and paper, as shown by sketch B, and, moving it towards you, let the glass drop into your left hand.



No. 13

Then, placing the paper mould on the table, hit it hard with your fist, and, bringing your left hand from under the table, produce the glass. It will appear that the glass has gone through the table.

No. 14—Try this Simple Game

"NAME your friend" is an amusing little game to try when you have not time for one of the big summer sports. It is best played by five people. One should be blindfolded and stand

as shown in the sketch A. The other four should be grouped about him as depicted by both the diagrams. Then the player, facing the blindfolded boy, must call out his name. Then the others state their names and where standing—that is,



No. 14

to his right, left, or behind him. Now the blindfolded boy must turn round three times, stop, and name the player he thinks he is facing. It's not so easy as it sounds. Try it.