

NEWSAGENTS & READERS

should kindly note that
the next issue of 'Pluck'
will be a Grand

DOUBLE
NUMBER.

PLUCK

THE MOOR-MEN.
A Powerful Ecce! Tale. By MICHAEL STORM.
THE POWER OF JU-JU.
A Thrilling Story of Adventure. By JACK NORTH.

1D



AT SOMETHING LIKE
FOURTEEN MILES AN
HOUR, MOSTYN AND
HIS CREW FLOUNDERED
DOWN THE GLIDE
HOPELESSLY.
(See "The Moor-Men," by
Michael Storm.)

GRAND SCHOOL TALE.

YOU CAN START NOW

THE RIVALS OF ST KIT'S

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

When Pat Nugent arrives at St. Kit's, an election is taking place for the captaincy of the school between Arthur Talbot and Eldred Lacy. Talbot gains the victory, but afterwards resigns his position on account of a mean plot instigated by Eldred Lacy and his brother, who is Squire of Lynwood. Soon after the election for and his brother, who is Squire of Lynwood, draws near, and Talbot's chum Brooke, who opposes Lacy, is elected captain of St. Kit's. One morning the Head discovers he has been robbed of 250. He calls a meeting in the hall, and Arthur Talbot is accused of the theft. His study is searched, and the notes are openly hidden beneath the carpet; but Arthur declares he is innocent. He is sent to Coventry by the whole school except Nugent, Blagden, and Greeno, three chums, who believe in his innocence, and who are determined to stand by him. However, Arthur Talbot decides to run away from St. Kit's. He leaves the school by night, and as he is passing over the bridge which spans the river he hears a splash, followed by a weak cry for help. He leaves from the lips of Seth Black, a tramp who has been bribed by Squire Lacy to claim Talbot as his son. When Lacy hears that Arthur is going to leave the school he knows that Black will be a hindrance to his plans, so on the night that Arthur leaves St. Kit's the Squire attacks Black on the river bank, and then throws him into the water. Arthur Talbot, however, eventually saves Black from drowning and takes him to the school, the next morning the Squire of Lynwood rides up to St. Kit's to see the Head. During their conversation the Squire hints to Dr. Kent to see the Head. The attack upon Seth Black, suspicion rests upon Talbot, and therefore he must remain at the school. The doctor interviews Talbot, and asks him if he knows anything about the attack upon Seth Black, or whether he had anything to do with flinging him into the river. "Am I an attempted assassin as well as a thief?" said the lad bitterly. "It is a question I never expected



you to ask of me, sir." "Arthur, my boy—" (Now go on with the story.)

Talbot remains at St. Kit's.

"I will answer it," said Talbot, with a bitter smile. "I did not harm Seth Black. Even if I had hated him intensely, even if I had been threatened by him, the mere possibility that he was my father would have prevented me from raising my hand against him."

"I was sure of it. I—"
"But, as a matter of fact, Black had ceased his demands, and was anxious to help me to get right at the school, and to remain here—at least, so he had told me at our last meeting. I never saw him on the bridge at all. My first sight of him was in the water, where he had been hurled by the man he met there secretly."

"I know it. I believe you—I believe you! It has been suggested to me—"

"By Squire Lacy?" asked Talbot, with quick intuition.

The Head did not reply.
Arthur Talbot burst into a laugh. It seemed grimly humorous that the man who had attempted Seth Black's life should have put this idea into the doctor's head.
"I hardly expected that," said Talbot. "However, I assure you on that point. I saved Seth Black's life, but I was not the one to put it in danger."

The doctor held out his hand.
"Forgive me, my boy, for allowing the thought to cross my mind for a moment. You would forgive me freely if you knew the misery it has caused me."

Talbot's face softened. But he did not take the outstretched hand.

"I cannot take your hand, sir, while you believe me guilty of a theft," he said quietly. "Don't think me ungrateful. But for you I should have grown up a beggar and an outcast. I owe everything to you. But—"

The Head looked him straight in the eyes.
"You are right, Arthur. But I do not believe you to be guilty of that theft."

Talbot gave a joyful start.
"Doctor!"

"It is true. I have been shaken in my faith in you. I admit it, but—but I cannot believe you guilty."

Arthur Talbot gripped the doctor's hand.
"Thank you, sir, for those words. They will at least be a comfort to me, wherever I may go. Upon my soul and honour, I am innocent!"

"I believe you—I believe you. Heaven grant that we may be able to prove it. But now you will remain?"
Talbot shook his head.

"Impossible. The school believes me guilty. Hardly half a dozen boys have faith in me. I cannot remain as a pariah—as an outcast, cut by the school, sent to Coventry."

"You will live it down."
"A thing like that cannot be lived down," said Talbot quietly. "There is only one thing that can make it possible for me to remain at St. Kit's, and that is the discovery of the

rascal who robbed your desk and placed the notes in my study."

"That may come."

"I hope so. But, in the meantime, I cannot stay here."

"I will be frank with you, Talbot. You must remain. I have answered for you to Squire Lacy," said the Head.

Talbot started violently.
"What do you mean? Does Squire Lacy wish me to remain?"

"He insists upon it."

"How? Why?"

"Because he cannot regard you as clear of suspicion until Black recovers and gives the name of his assailant," said the Head gravely. "It is his duty as a magistrate, Arthur. If I had not promised for you, he would have spoken to Inspector Legge, and you would have been detained on suspicion."

"So Squire Lacy wishes me to remain at St. Kit's?"
Talbot spoke almost dazedly.

What had caused so sudden and complete a change in the squire's plans? What could possibly be the squire's motive for this? He had plotted and schemed with Eldred Lacy to drive Talbot from the school; now he had interfered in order to keep him there. What was the solution of this riddle?

"You will remain, Talbot?"

"If you have answered for me, I must remain," said Arthur. "At least, until Seth Black recovers himself sufficiently to denounce his assailant. I confess that I cannot in the least fathom Squire Lacy's motive."

"His duty as a magistrate."
Talbot smiled.

"Well, I shall remain, then, for the present."
The Head drew a deep breath of relief.

"And I hope, Talbot, that in the interval something will come to light to prove your innocence," he said. "Mind, I do not come to light to prove your innocence," he said. "Mind, I do not firmly believe in it now. I shall say so plainly to the whole school. Arthur, my lad, you have always been brave and steadfast; you can face this as you have faced other difficulties."

"I will try to, sir."

"You will find your position painful, I know. But there are already some of the boys who believe in you, and my declaration will carry weight."

"Undoubtedly."

"For the rest, you must be patient."

After a few more words, Arthur Talbot quitted the Head's study. He had plenty of food for reflection. The squire's change of plan was a surprise. It was useless to tell the Head anything of what had been discovered until he had definite proofs to give. His suspicion of the squire would be unuttered until Seth Black was in a state to confirm it.

The Sixth Form were coming out of their class-room, and Talbot met them a minute after leaving the doctor's study. He was the recipient of many curious stares.

"Hello!" said Rake. "I heard that you had left the school."

"I did leave it," said Talbot quietly.

"But you've come back, it seems."

"Yes, it seems so, doesn't it?"

"Look here," said Rake, "you may as well speak out. What does what mean?"

"What does what mean?"

"The coming back. Is the Head going to let you stop at St. Kit's?"

"You had better ask him."

"Well, I'm not going to speak to a thief," said Haywood. "If you had any proper feelings, Talbot, you'd clear!"

"If you had any proper feelings for a moment, Talbot's eyes burned for a word or two on that subject," he said. "I'd like to speak a word or two in my innocence, though I don't expect you to believe in my innocence, though I hope to prove it before long. But no fellow shall call me a thief without feeling the weight of my arm. That's a warning!"

Haywood laughed mockingly. With so many of his cronies round him he felt equal to the task of defying the outcast, the Ishmael against whom every hand was turned.

"Well, I call a spade a spade," he said, "and a thief a thief. And it's no good your trying bullying, Talbot. That's no good. You can't bully a whole Form. You can talk about your innocence if you like, but we know very well what you are!"

Talbot stepped towards him.

"And what am I?"

The blaze in his eyes made Haywood wish that he had not made himself quite so prominent. But it was too late to retreat now.

"A blessed thief!" he retorted. "And you know it. Hands off!"

Talbot did not obey the latter injunction. Haywood's guard did not save him much, and a swift right-hander from Talbot sent him reeling and rolling among the legs of the Sixth.

Talbot's eyes blazed as he looked at the rest.

"If anyone else chooses to repeat Haywood's words, there's the same ready for him!" he said savagely.

No reply was made to that challenge.

"You have made up your mind that I am guilty," said Talbot, after a pause. "If I were a thief, I shouldn't be fit to be touched, so you're right in sending me to Coventry, if you believe me guilty. I can see that all right. But you might have waited a little; you might have had a little more faith in a chap who always played the game. But never mind. Go your own way, and I'll go mine. I ask nothing of any of you. Let me alone; that's all I want, and that's what I mean to have."

He strode away to his study.

"Sure, and he decan't spake as if he was guilty!" muttered Flinn.

Haywood staggered to his feet.

"A nice lot you are not to back me up," he said savagely. "Plucky lot, to let one chap bully you!"

"Oh, rats!" said Flinn. "I'm not going to fight your battles, for one. Even if he's guilty, I don't see why you should rag him. And I've got my doubts about it, and that's a fact. I can never quite believe that Talbot had the money."

And there was a murmur from some of the Sixth which indicated that Flinn was not quite alone in his opinion.

A Form in Coventry.

"I say, Nugent!"

Blane leaned over his desk in the Fourth Form class-room and whispered to Pat. Pat did not turn his head.

"Nugent!"

Pat Nugent's eyes were on his book, and he did not appear to hear the whisper. Blane nudged Hooper, who sat next to Pat.

"Tell Nugent I'm speaking to him."

Hooper obeyed.

"I say, Nugent, Blane is speaking to you."

Pat was stonily silent.

"Nugent!"

Mr. Slaney's eyes travelled along the class.

"Who was speaking there?"

Blane quaked, and was silent.

"Who was speaking there?" repeated the Form master, in a leader tone. "If I hear any more whispering the whole class will be detained."

Blane was silent for a while; but only for a short time. As soon as Mr. Slaney's eyes was turned from the spot he leaped up and tapped Pat on the shoulder.

"Nugent, old fellow, what's that you were saying about Black? What is—"

Pat shook the hand from his shoulder. But never a word did he reply.

The sentence of "Coventry" was still in full force. The Fourth Form showed some desire now and then to retreat from the position they had taken up. But the chums of the end study did not.

Far from that. Having repaid the "Coventry" in kind, and exasperated the Form into wanting to get on speaking terms again, they rather enjoyed the situation, and were in no hurry to end it.

Blane was furious. That he should be willing to overlook the fact that the three chums were in Coventry, and that his advances should be met with such profound contempt, was irritating in the extreme.

It was evident that he could not get a word out of Pat Nugent. It was about the tenth time he had tried, and each time with the same result. So far as the Form were concerned, Pat might have been possessed by a dumb demon.

"Nugent, you rotter, you can hear me speaking perfectly well. Are you going to answer?"

Dead silence.

Blane had had enough of it. He took a pin from his jacket, and, leaning down under his desk, fastened it in the toe of his boot in the fashion known to schoolboys. Unfortunately, as he was thus engaged the Form master's eye lighted upon him.

"Blane!"

Mr. Slaney rapped out the word. Blane sat up again, looking red and rather sheepish.

"What are you grovelling under the desk for, Blane?"

"If you please, sir, I dropped a—a pencil!"

That was the truth, only he had not stooped to pick up the pencil, and that article was still on the floor under his seat.

"H'm! You will keep your place, Blane."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Slaney turned his head again. He was occupied with the head boy just at present, and that youth was at a considerable distance from Blane. Blane was on the watch, and he thought he saw his opportunity now.

"Nugent, you beastly cad!"

Pat heard the whisper plainly enough, but he gave no sign of it. Never did a dutiful Fourth-Former attend to the work in hand more diligently than Pat Nugent at that moment.

"All right!" muttered Blane. "I'll make you sit up!"

He reached cautiously forward with his foot.

Pat was far from expecting what was coming. He was inwardly intensely amused by Blane's unsuccessful attempts at conversation.

Blane cautiously felt his way, as it were, and then made a jab forward. The pin stuck into Pat, and the wound was in a fleshy and tender part of him.

The sudden pain quite upset Pat's equanimity. He gave a startled yell and sprang to his feet. Mr. Slaney whirled round on him like lightning.

"Nugent! What do you mean? How dare you?"

"I—I—I—"

"How dare you, sir?" roared the master of the Fourth.

"I—I—I—I was a sudden pain, sir," stammered Pat.

"A sudden pain? Nonsense! What do you mean by a sudden pain?"

"I—I—I felt a sudden pain, sir."

"Where?"

"Er—it was—was behind me, sir."

"Nugent, this is not the first time I have had to speak to you this morning. Unless you can explain more clearly, I shall impose fifty lines. Now, what was the cause of this pain?"

"Do you mean," went on Mr. Slaney, a new idea coming into his head, "that you have been molested by one of the boys sitting behind you?"

Pat was silent. He knew, of course, the cause of the sudden pain, and to whom to attribute it, but the last thing in the world Pat would ever have been guilty of was sneaking.

"Nugent, answer me! Is that the state of the case?"

"It's all right, sir. It doesn't hurt now."

"That is not the point. What caused that pain you speak of? Was it a pin, for instance?"

"It—it felt something like a pin, sir. But it might have been a—"

"It might have been a what?"

"A needle, sir," ventured Pat.

Mr. Slaney frowned darkly as the whole class giggled.

"Nugent, am I to understand that one of the boys behind you stuck a pin into your person?"

"I—I—I—"

Pat turned red, but he was determined not to answer. The Form master looked angry for a moment, and then his face cleared. He smiled grimly.

"I understand your scruples, Nugent, about answering that question, and I excuse you. You may sit down. Blane, have you a pin in your hand?"

The First Recruit.

"No, sir."
"Have you had a pin in your hand during the last few minutes?"

"No, sir."
"Once and for all, did you stick a pin into Nugent?" exclaimed Mr. Slaney, taking up a cane.

"I—I—I—"
"You did, Blane?"
"Ye-es, sir."

"Then what do you mean by telling me that you had not had a pin in your hand, Blane?" said the Form master, in a voice of thunder.

"It was true, sir. It's fixed in my boot."
There was another joyous giggle from the class.

"Ah!" said Mr. Slaney, smiling grimly. "It's fixed in your boot, is it, Blane? Come out here, sir! You need not trouble to remove that pin, Blane. Leave it exactly where it is, and come out here at once."

Blane reluctantly obeyed.
"Now, sir, show me the boot in which that pin is fixed."

Blane, standing awkwardly on one leg, held up his right foot for the inspection of the Form master.

Mr. Slaney inspected it.
"Ah, admirable," he said—"so admirable that you had better let the whole class see it, Blane, as an instruction to them. In short, you will kindly stand in that attitude until the end of the lesson. If you put your right foot down to the floor, Blane, I shall cane you severely. Your clever handiwork will be on view for ten minutes."

Mr. Slaney turned to the class again.
Blane was as red as a turkey-cock. His utterly ridiculous aspect, standing there on his left leg, with his right held high in the air, tickled the Fourth Form immensely.

Suppressed giggles broke out time and again during the remainder of the lesson, while the unfortunate joker stood on one leg, twisting and squirming with the fatigue caused by that unusual attitude.

For ten long minutes the ordeal lasted.
Whenever Blane ventured to allow his elevated leg to sink towards the floor, he found the eagle eye of Mr. Slaney upon him, and it came up to a level again as if moved by a spring.

When five minutes had ticked off the class-room clock, Blane ventured an appeal.

"Please, sir—"
Mr. Slaney whisked round.

"Did you interrupt me, Blane?"
"Please, sir, may I change legs now?"
"No, you may not."
And the ordeal continued.

Blane was aching in every limb by the time the clock indicated the time to dismiss. Never had any junior at St. Kit's been gladder at the end of a lesson.

Mr. Slaney made the class a sign to dismiss, and the boys rose to file out. He turned a grim glance upon Blane.

"Blane, you may put your foot down now."
With a gasp of relief Blane allowed his right boot to clump on the floor. The next moment he was clasping his right leg with his hands, and wriggling in a most absurd manner.

"What is the matter with you, Blane?"
"If you please, sir, it's the cramp—the pins and needles, sir."

"Indeed! I hope this will be a lesson to you, Blane. Do you think you are likely to affix a pin to your boot in the class-room again?"

"N-no, sir."
"You are quite sure?"
"Yes, sir—oh, yes, sir!" gasped Blane.
"Then you may go."

The junior skipped out of the class-room after the rest of the Form. He found scant sympathy among his Form fellows.

"Hallo!" said Hooper. "You did look funny, Blane, standing there like a moulting old hen on one leg—you did really."

Blane shoved him aside with a considerable degree of roughness, and hobbled on after Pat Nugent. The leg was still very stiff and crampy.

"Nugent, you beast, I'll wring your neck for that!"
Pat walked on without a word, out into the close. Blane grasped him by the shoulder and swung him round, and thrust his red, excited face full into the calm countenance of the imperturbable Irish lad.

"Nugent, you beast, I'll—"
Pat, still without a word, put his hands on the excited junior's chest, and gave him a shove that made him sit down suddenly in the close. As Blane sat there gasping, Pat Nugent walked away, still without a word.

Pat Nugent came into the end study with a bag of oranges under his arm, from the school shop. He was grinning with satisfaction.

"Sure, and I told ye that the Form would get sick of the Coventry before we did," he remarked. "And it's trust come round to our way of thinking."

Blagden nodded.
"I believe you. Chuck us an orange. I—I— Oh, you saw I didn't say chuck it at me!"

The orange plumped up on Blaggy's nose.
"Never mind," said Pat cheerfully. "You've got it, and that's the chief thing. Here you are, Greene, old kid!"

"I've noticed," said Blagden, "that some of the Form are already saying that Talbot may be innocent after all. That's due to us."

"About everything the Fourth Form does with any sense it is due to us," Pat remarked modestly. "But, as you say, they are showing signs of coming round. Trimble is all along was, that it we stuck it out, we should get a party in the Fourth to back us up, and that would be the beginning of the end, as they say in the novels. Anyway, the Coventry worries them more than it does us."

"You're right! Hallo, what's that fearful row?"
There was a sound of scuffling and exclaiming in the corridor, then a bump against the door of the end study.

Faintly from the outer side of the door could be heard the voice of Harris, a junior of the Lower Fourth.

"Look here, Trimble, I shall go in if I want to."
"No, you won't!"
"I shall! I—"

"You know they're in Coventry, young Harris," said the captain of the Upper Fourth. "Lucky for you I caught you in time! Now you'll get off with a clump; but if you had gone into the end study, you'd have had a dormitory licking!"

"I'm not going to—"
"You're not going into that study. Come along!"
"I won't! I—"

"Yes, you will! Come on!"
There was a yelp of pain, and a sound of dragging feet.

Trimble, the captain of the Upper Fourth, was evidently removing Harris by main force.

Pat had sprung to his feet.
"That's the first recruit," he grinned. "Sure, and what did I tell ye? Ain't I a giddy prophet, kids?"

"You are," said Blagden. "But what are we going to do—interfere?"
"Arrah, rather! Trimble has no right to come down like that on a visitor to our study. Follow your uncle."

Pat tore open the door and dashed out into the corridor. Trimble had hold of Harris by the ears, and was dragging him along, with many protests and woeful sounds from Harris.

Pat Nugent did not speak to Trimble. Even in a moment of excitement he did not forget the cast-iron rules the end study had laid down for themselves.

He dashed along the passage, gripped Trimble by his ears, and with a powerful twist forced him to release his captive.

Blagden seized Harris by the arm, and ran him into the study.

Pat shoved the captain of the Upper Fourth against the wall, and left him gasping there, and followed the recruit into the end study in a leisurely manner.

Harris stood rubbing his ears, which were very red after Trimble's rough handling of them.
"I say, you chaps," he said hurriedly, "I came here to—"

Trimble burst into the study. He was red with rage, and for the moment quite reckless. He rushed straight at Harris, who promptly dodged behind Pat Nugent.

"Let me get at that mongrel!" roared Trimble.
Pat did not speak.

"Let me get at him!"
As Pat neither spoke nor moved, Trimble seized hold of the him to shove him aside. Pat gave grip for grip, and the next moment Trimble was on the floor. Pat sat on his chest.

The lanky captain of the Upper Fourth wriggled and kicked. Quietly, silently, solemnly, Pat squeezed his orange over Trimble's face, and rammed what remained of it into his open mouth. Trimble gasped and spluttered.

"Lemme getup! I'll skin you!"
Pat glanced at his chums.

In solemn silence they seized Trimble, and yanked him out of the study, and plumped him down into the passage, none too gently. Then they retired into the study. Pat shaking a warning finger at the bully of the Upper Fourth, who had closed the door.

Talbot jumped up and made a step towards that door. But he thought better of it, and, with a savage face, went down the passage.

Within the study the three chums grinned at one another. Young Harris was cackling bluely.

"Serve him jolly well right," he said. "I say, you fellows, I've had enough of Trimble, and so have a good many of the rest. Blane says you know something about that affair—something the rest of us don't know."

Pat broke his long silence at last. "We do. We know that's true for you," he said. "We do. We know Talbot's innocent, and the truth will be out before long, when we've finished our investigations."

Harris was duly impressed.

"Well, I never liked to think that of Talbot, you know," he remarked. "and I tell you, a good many of the fellows are coming round."

"It doesn't matter much to us."

"Oh, I say, you don't like being in Coventry, do you?"

"My dear kid, we enjoy it."

"Rather!" said Blagden. "Jolly nice, I assure you, kid!"

"Ripping!" said Greene.

"Well, some of the fellows are coming round," said Harris. "I'm one of them. If you'd only say out plainly to the whole Form what you know—"

"See thing to ask a committee of investigation to do?"

"That's not going to do anything of the sort!"

"But look here—"

"You can come into our party or not, just as you like," said Pat. "But we're not going to say a word till the time comes, and that's flat."

"That's right," said Blagden. "Suit yourself; we don't care."

"Well, I'm with you, anyway," said Harris, "if you'll have me."

"We'll take you in," said Pat condescendingly. "Mind, you'll have to take up the same position we do, and cut the rest of the Form until they come round."

Harris chuckled.

"Well, that will be awfully good fun, won't it?"

"That depends. But anyway, you know what you've got to expect."

"I'll do it. Only, if Trimble licks me—"

"If Trimble lays a finger on you," said Pat impressively, "just you tell me, and I'll give Trimble the hiding of his life. That's understood."

"Jolly good," said Harris. "That settles it."

He grinned as he left the study. He kept a wary eye open for Trimble, but Trimble was gone. Blane, however, spotted him coming out of the end study.

"Hallo, Harris!" exclaimed Blane. "You've been in to see those fellows?"

"I—"

blurted Harris. Then he remembered, and shut his lips tight.

"You what?" asked Blane, looking at him curiously.

Harris did not speak.

"You silly image! Why don't you answer me?"

Harris did not reply, and Blane seized him by the shoulder.

"What's the matter with you? If you don't speak, I'll bang your napper against the wall! Now, then! Go on!"

"Pat Nugent!" roared Harris.

Pat came out of the study. He saw the state of affairs, and went for Blane at once. Blane did not wait to argue. He released Harris, and scudded along the passage. And the new recruit to the end study cackled triumphantly.

In the Dead of Night

Pat Nugent started and awoke. It was night—dark night—and silence and slumber reigned in the Lower Fourth dormitory in the ancient college of St. Kit's. Pat Nugent was a light sleeper. Some sound in the dormitory had awakened him; he hardly knew what as he sat up in bed and glanced round the sleeping dormitory.

A faint gleam of starlight came in from the high windows. What had awakened him: the chime from the clock-tower, or some sound nearer at hand? Pat looked about him keenly, his faculties all on the alert. It was not an uncommon occurrence for a dormitory to be visited by foes during the dark hours, and Pat would not have been at all surprised to see Trimble and a party from the Upper Fourth in the room, bent on paying off old scores.

But there was no enemy to be seen. Pat glanced towards the door, and he started as he saw dimly that it was moving. Some dim figure was visible for a moment, and then the big door shut silently, and all was silent and still again. The truth had been now what had startled him from his slumber. One of the occupants of the dormitory had quitted it, and his faint footfall in passing Pat's bed had been sufficient to catch a light sleep.

Who was it that had left the dormitory at that hour, considerably past midnight, as Pat knew—left it so cautiously, without a light? The door had been closed so silently and cautiously that it was evidently the night-wanderer's wish not to wake anyone else in the dormitory. What was the little game? That was the question put to himself.

He determined to know what was "up," at all events. In a moment he was out of bed, and looking to see which of the long row was vacant. He soon found it.

"Cleeve's bed!" he muttered. "So it was Cleeve! This will want looking into." He crept back towards Blagden's bed, and shook his chum by the shoulder. "Wake up, Blaggy!"

Blagden yawned. "Tain't time ter gerrup!" he grumbled, without opening his eyes.

Pat shook him again. "Blaggy! Wake up, fat-head! Important!"

Blagden opened his eyes, and stared up at his chum.

"Hallo! Who's that? Pat, what are you doing out of bed at this time of night?"

"Trying to wake up a sleepy fat-head!" replied Pat.

"Get your wits about you, for goodness' sake! I tell you, something's up!"

"Yes, you are, I see. I'm not going to be, though."

"Yes, you are!" Pat jerked the bedclothes off him, and he gasped and shivered. "Now, get out of bed, lazy-bones!"

"What's the row?" asked Blagden, sitting up at last, and putting one leg over the side of the bed. "Sure you're not off your rocker?"

"Get your clothes on while I wake Greene."

"But, I say—"

"Oh, do as you're told!" said Pat. "Don't argue!"

Blagden, greatly wondering, proceeded to dress himself. Pat Nugent awakened Greene, and Greene, after some preliminary grumbling, got up also.

"But what's the beastly row?" he asked sleepily, as he thrust his legs into his trousers. "It's beastly cold, Paddy, and I'm beastly sleepy!"

"You seem to be in a beastly state altogether," said Pat.

"Listen to me, Cleeve has just gone slipping out of the dormitory on tiptoe like a giddy burglar!"

"What's that got to do with us?"

"You know what happened once before—how Trimble and Cobb got us into a fearful row, and Cleeve knew all about it, and never let on. Supposing there's something of the same kind in the wind again now," said Pat sagely. "Cleeve is always up to some mean trick, and it will be only safe to keep an eye on him."

"Don't see why you couldn't have done that without waking me," said Greene. "However, as we're up, let's go. How long as he been gone?"

"Only a minute."

"Come on, then!"

The juniors bundled on their clothes, and went quietly to the door. Pat Nugent opened it without a sound, and they stepped out into the corridor. Pat closed the door behind them, and they stood listening and straining their eyes into the darkness.

There was a faint sound from the direction of the Upper Fourth dormitory.

"He's gone to Trimble!" whispered Pat. "I guessed it!"

"But what's his game?"

"Sure, and that's what we're going to find out!"

They stole on tiptoe along the corridor. That there was something "up"—very probably something against themselves—was now certain.

The sound of whispering voices came to their ears in the dead stillness of the house.

"Is that you, Cleeve?"

"Yes, it's me, Trimble—it's m-m-me!"

"What are you shivering about, you young ass?"

"I'm—I'm frightened."

"What are you frightened at?"

"N-n-nothing!"

"Then, stop it, you silly cuckoo! There's nothing to be scared at. You didn't let anybody in the Lower Fourth room know you were coming out, did you?"

"Of course not, Trimble!"

"I mean, you didn't wake anybody up—especially that beast Pat Nugent?"

"N-no. I was v-very careful, Trimble."

"That's right. All the fat would be in the fire if Pat Nugent got hold of this."

"I sup-suppose so."

"Oh, stop that stuttering! You set my nerves on edge!"

said Trimble irritably. "There's nothing to be afraid of. Come on!"

"How are you going to get out, Trimble?"

"Out of a window, of course, and you're going to help me; then I'll help you. It's all easy enough. It won't take us many minutes to get to the old chapel."

"It's such a—such a—silly place at night, Trimble."
 "All the better for us, silly!"
 "Yes; but I'm—I'm—"
 "You're afraid of ghosts, I suppose? You wish you hadn't said a word to me about the money, I suppose?"
 "Oh, no, no—no, not that! Only I—I—" said Trimble contemptuously. "Only you're a white-livered funk!"
 "Only you're a white-livered funk!" said Trimble contemptuously. "Yes, I know. Well, it's too late to think of that now. You're in for it, and you've got to come and guide me, and the cash is ours. It will be rather a joke on Lacy when he goes for it."
 There was a sound of faint footsteps receding down the passage. In the gloom the chums of the Lower Fourth stood silent, breathless. Not till Trimble and Cleeve were quite gone did Pat make a movement or a sound.
 "You heard that?" he whispered tremulously. "What do you make of it?"
 "Blessed if I know!" muttered Hagden. "They expect to find some money in the old chapel—some cash hidden there by Lacy, from what I can make out."
 "Yes, that's it. Don't you understand— Think. There was cash as well as banknotes stolen from the doctor's desk. The notes were found in Talbot's study, but the money has not turned up yet."
 "My only hat!"
 "The money was hidden somewhere. We already knew that Lacy had fixed this on Talbot. He hid the money in the old chapel, I suppose, for safety. Cleeve has got wind of it, and told Trimble, because he dare not go there alone."
 "My Aunt Maria Jane!"
 "They're going to collar it now. Come on!"
 "Are you going to follow them?"
 "Yes," said Pat grimly; "and catch them in the act."
 "I'm on!"
 And the juniors hurried swiftly but silently downstairs. Trimble and Cleeve were gone, but it was easy to find the unfastened window by which they had left the house.
 In a minute more the chums were in the open air. Pat Nugent looked keenly round him; the two were nowhere to be seen. In the close starlight glimmered faintly, and the shadows were thick round the old buildings.
 "Come on!" whispered Pat. "They're in the old chapel now."
 The chums hurried towards the ruined chapel. The clink of a falling stone caught their ears. Keeping in the shadows, they caught sight of two forms at the entrance of the old crypt. Pat nudged his companions.
 "It's the crypt, lads. Look!"

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