

HAVE YOU WON A FOOTBALL?

SEE
INSIDE.

The **GEM** 2^D



**GRUNDY
SEEKS
THE
TRUTH!**

—Read the Grip-
ping St. Jim's
Yarn, "Sherlock
Grundy, Esq."—
Within

HURRY! THE WHISTLE GOES NEXT WEEK!

500 FREE FOOTBALLS FOR COLLECTING "FOOTER-STAMPS"

HURRY up if you want to be in the running for one of the FIVE HUNDRED FREE FOOTBALLS offered to "FOOTER-STAMPS" collectors! As you will read on page 35, 262 readers have just gained prize footballs for "Footer-Stamps," and the call-over for the October prize-giving is coming next week. "Footer-Stamps" are still appearing every week, and consist, of course, of pictures of six different actions on the football field—the object of this great competition stamp-game being to score as many "goals" as you can with them by the closing date (November 5th) for this month's prizes.

TO SCORE A "GOAL" you collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.** (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a "goal.")

The more stamps you collect the more "goals" you can score, and this week there are ten more stamps below to add to your collection. Cut them out—there's another "goal" for you among them, and the other stamps will, no doubt, fit in with others you have left over from previous weeks (or even previous contests).

If you want to score some other quick "goals," remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in those other grand papers "MODERN BOY" and "MAGNET" each week.

The 500 Footballs in the October prize-giving are going to the 500 readers scoring the highest numbers of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month. Don't send any stamps until next week.

OVERSEAS READERS are in this great scheme also, and special prizes will be given for the best scores from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date, of course.
(The rules of this offer appeared in last week's GEM, and will be repeated next week.)

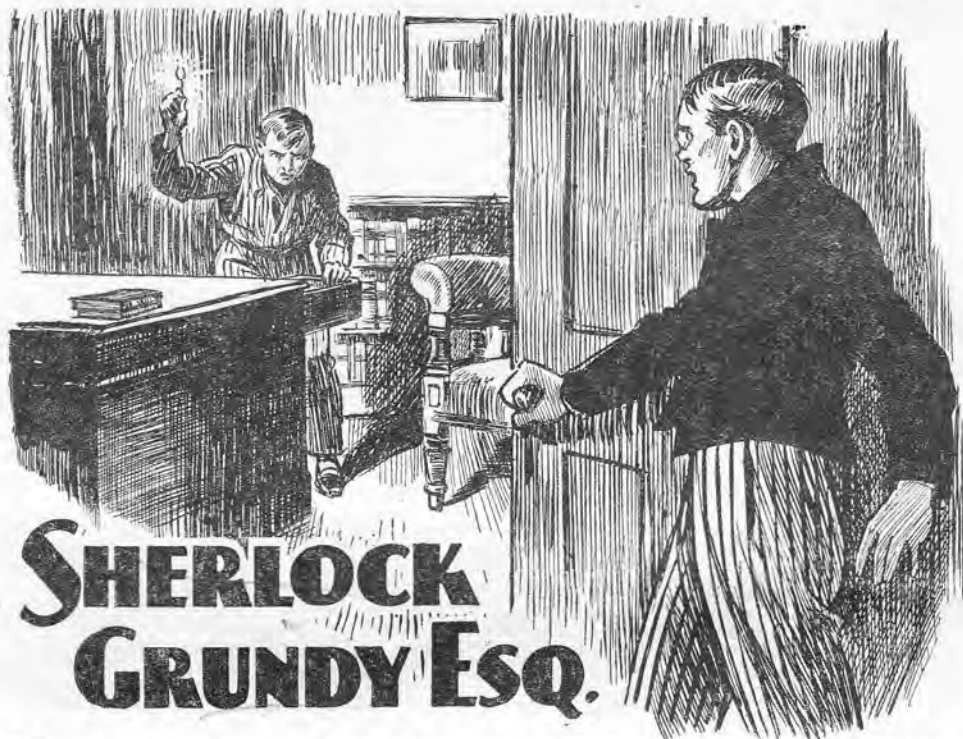
(N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: MODERN BOY, MAGNET, DETECTIVE WEEKLY, WILD WEST WEEKLY, BOY'S CINEMA, THRILLER, TRIUMPH, SPORTS BUDGET, and CHAMPION.)

TEN MORE "FOOTER-STAMPS" TO SAVE!



Over 250 FOOTBALLS WON!

(See Result on Page 35.)



SHERLOCK GRUNDY ESQ.

D'Arcy paused in the doorway. A figure in pyjamas was bending over the Head's desk, searching for something by the light of a match.

CHAPTER 1.

Trouble for Somebody!

"OUTRAGEOUS!"

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther looked round quickly as they heard that sharp, angry exclamation.

The Terrible Three of the Shell were studying the notice-board in the Hall when Mr. Linton's voice fell upon their ears.

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, had an open letter in his hand. The juniors had noticed him taking it from the postman a few minutes before. He was reading it now, with a face pale with anger, and eyes glittering under knitted brows.

"Shocking!"

Tom Merry & Co. could not help looking at him. Mr. Linton was a very quiet, reserved, and self-contained gentleman as a rule. It was but seldom that he betrayed emotion of any kind.

"My hat!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Something's up, my infant! Two to one it's a dunning letter!"

But Tom Merry and

"You need a fellow with brains to solve a mystery like this." So says George Alfred Grundy, wondering why St. Jim's takes so long in recognising that he's the ideal man for the job.

by

MARTIN CLIFFORD

Manners did not grin at Lowther's little joke. Judging by the expression on the Form-master's face, it was no time for jokes.

Mr. Linton finished the letter, and crumpled it in his hand.

"Outrageous!" he repeated. "Shocking! Infamous!"

He looked round him, and saw the surprised faces of the Terrible Three. With the letter crumpled in his hand, he strode towards them.

"Do you know anything of this?" he exclaimed.

"Of—of what, sir?" ejaculated Tom Merry, utterly astounded.

"This letter—this outrageous letter!"

"N—no, sir!" gasped Manners.

Mr. Linton looked at them angrily and searchingly, his hand gripping the offending letter till his knuckles were white.

"You know nothing of it?" he snapped.

"No, sir!" said Tom, in wonder. "How should we know anything about your letter?"

"Someone must know—someone in the school—doubtless in my Form!"

rapped out Mr. Linton. "You are head of the Form, Merry!"

He broke off.

"However, it shall be looked into. The culprit shall suffer for it. Bless my soul, I have never heard of such a thing! Outrageous! Shocking! Infamous! Unheard-of! Unprecedented!"

And after that series of startling ejaculations the master of the Shell strode away, with rustling gown, towards the Head's study.

The Terrible Three exchanged glances of wonder.

Monty Lowther tapped his forehead in a significant way. "Fairly off his crumphet!" he murmured.

"Wandering in his mind!" said Manners. "What the merry thunder should we know about his letter?"

Racke of the Shell came along the passage, and stopped to speak. "Anything the matter with Linton?" he asked.

"Off his rocker, I think," said Lowther.

"He's just passed me, looking like thunder," said Racke. "He's gone to the Head. It means trouble for somebody. He had a letter in his hand. You chaps been playing a joke on him?"

"Not guilty!" grinned Lowther. "I don't give Linton any of my humour. He doesn't seem to appreciate it."

"Bai! Jove, deah boys!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form came from the direction of the Head's study. "What's the mattah with Mr. Linton?"

"Dotty!"

"Weally, Lowthah, that is hardly a respectable way to speak of your Form-mastah! Somethin' is w'ong. I was in the Head's study when he came wushin' in without even knockin' at the door."

"He seems upset about a letter he's just had," said Tom Merry. "Blessed if I know why!"

"The Head was surprised," said Arthur Augustus. "He told me to cleah off—not in those words, of course—so I cleahed off. Linton is simply wavin' about somethin'."

"It's a joke of some sort on him," said Racke. "I shouldn't like to be the joker if Linton spots him. Rather awkward just now to have a reputation as a merry humorist."

"Bai Jove! Surely you haven't been playin' a joke on your Form-mastah, Lowthah! I should weward that as vewy bad form."

"I've already told Racke that I haven't," said Lowther, with an angry glance at the cad of the Shell. "If you can't take my word, Racke—"

Racke shrugged his narrow shoulders.

"The question is, whether Mr. Linton will take your word," he said.

"Linton will take my word, right enough—it is more than he would do with yours!" said Lowther disdainfully.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Yes, that's a fact," said Grundy of the Shell, who had come up with several other fellows. "You're known to be such a thundering liar, Racke."

"Oh rats!" growled Racke.

"Did you say rats to me?" inquired George Alfred Grundy, pushing back his cuffs.

"Oh, shut up, Grundy!" said Tom Merry. "Don't begin scrapping here! There's going to be trouble for somebody!"

"I don't allow anybody to say rats to me! I never stand any rot," said Grundy. "I'll trouble

you to put up your hands, Racke, you smoky, sneaking, pub-haunting worm!"

"You don't allow anybody to say rats to you?" asked Monty Lowther, interposing.

"No, I don't!"

"You lick 'em if they do?"

"Yes!" said Grundy, with great emphasis.

"Good! Rats!"

Grundy made a jump at Lowther. At the same moment everybody else made a jump at Grundy.

The great George Alfred smote the floor with a resounding bump, and roared.

"Better give him another," said Monty Lowther. "Oh my hat!"

Mr. Linton came rustling down the passage with a frowning brow.

The juniors crowded back from the sprawling Grundy.

"Cease this at once!" snapped Mr. Linton.

"Merry, kindly follow me to Dr. Holmes' study!"

"Yes, sir!"

Tom Merry followed his Form-master, wondering what was wanted, and feeling a little uneasy. Trouble was evidently in store for somebody, and it looked as if that somebody was Tom Merry.

CHAPTER 2.

By Whose Hand?

DR. HOLMES was looking very grave when Tom Merry entered the study at the heels of the Form-master.

On the desk before the Head lay the letter.

Tom Merry's eyes turned upon it at once. How that letter could concern him or any other St. Jim's fellow he could not guess. But it was easy to see that it was in connection with that mysterious letter that he had been sent for.

"Merry!" The Head's voice was deep and stern. "You are aware that Mr. Linton has received a letter this afternoon?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom.

"Do you know anything about that letter?"

"I have already told Mr. Linton that I do not, sir."

"Do not suppose, Merry, that I suspect you of having any concern in this matter. I am questioning you simply because you are captain of your Form."

Tom Merry was glad to hear that.

"You may look at the letter, Merry. The author of it must be discovered. Perhaps, after reading the letter, you may be able to let in some light upon the matter."

Tom Merry took up the letter from the desk at a sign from the Head. There was silence in the study while he read it.

"Mr. Linton," it ran,—*"Everybody is fed up with you. It's high time you retired. Why doesn't the Head give you the sack? He ought to!—*
Yours truly, *Nemo.*"

Tom Merry gasped. That anyone should have the audacity to write such a letter to a Form-master was astounding!

Naturally, the writer had not signed his name. Neither, evidently, had he written the precious epistle in his ordinary fist. The handwriting was carefully disguised, sloping backwards.

Tom Merry could guess that it was some member of the Shell who had written the anonymous letter—some young rascal who owed his Form-master a grudge, and had taken this method of paying it. Certainly, it must have been a St. Jim's fellow, and almost certainly one

of the Shell. There was no reason why a fellow in any other Form should bear a grudge towards the Shell master.

Tom laid the letter quietly on the desk when he had read it. Both the Head and Mr. Linton were watching him. Tom realised it, and the colour crept into his cheeks.

"What is your opinion of that letter, Merry?"

"It's rotten, sir," said Tom.

"Ahem!" The Head coughed. "Quite so!"

"It's a dirty trick!" said Tom. "Nobody in the Shell thinks like that about Mr. Linton. We all respect him!"

"Thank you, Merry!" said Mr. Linton.

"But some member of your Form, Merry, must have written that letter in order to insult his Form-master in a safe way!"

"I suppose so, sir," admitted Tom. "I can only say we should all be down on him if we knew him."

"You do not know the handwriting?"

"I've never seen it before, sir. I think it's disguised."

The Head smiled.

"It's very plainly disguised," he said. "If you could tell me anything as to the authorship of this letter, Merry, it would be your duty to do so. It is an insult, and an outrage!"

"I don't know anything about it, sir."

"Very well, Merry; you may go."

Tom Merry left the study.

His face was rather grim as he came down the passage. The crowd of juniors at the corner met him with inquiring looks.

"Well, what's the wow, deah boy?"

"It's a rotten trick on Mr. Linton," said Tom. "Somebody here has written him an anonymous letter, insulting him."

"By Jove!"

"What a rotten trick!" exclaimed Grundy. "Somebody in the Shell, do you mean?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"I wergard that as a wotten, caddish twick!" said Arthur Augustus. "Only a mean, cwawlin' wottah would wite an anonymous lettah!"

"Nobody in the Fourth would do it," remarked Digby.

"Wathah not!"

"Rot!" said Grundy at once. "My idea is that it was most likely a chap in the Fourth!"

"Wats!"

"Fathead!"

"Levison or Mellish, perhaps," said Grundy. "Nobody in my Form would do it, I'm convinced of that. This matter ought to be taken up. Of course, old Linton is rather a trial—"

"Shurrup, you ass!" muttered Tom Merry, spotting Mr. Linton at that moment coming away from the Head's study.

Grundy's back was towards the Form-master, and he did not see him. Grundy was not a fellow to shut up when he was told—not Grundy!

"Don't you jaw at me, Merry! I say old Linton is rather a trial, and a chap gets fed up with him at times; but writing an anonymous letter is a dirty, mean trick, and only a rotten cad would do it."

"Grundy!"

George Alfred spun round at his Form-master's voice.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. "Yes, sir?"

"Did you write that letter, Grundy?"

Grundy jumped.

"I, sir?"

"Yes, you, Grundy!"

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Grundy indignantly. "Haven't I just said what I think of an anonymous letter writer?"

"You have made use of a disrespectful expression towards me."

"I—I didn't know you were listening, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I didn't see you coming," stammered Grundy. "I—I didn't exactly mean fed up, sir; only a way of speaking—ahem! I—I—"

"You must find some other way of speaking of your Form-master, Grundy! You will take five hundred lines, and remain in this afternoon to write them out!"

"Oh! What for, sir?"

"For speaking disrespectfully of your Form-master, Grundy!" thundered Mr. Linton.

And he passed on, frowning.

Grundy blinked after him.

"Well, I like that!" he gasped. "Fancy giving me five hundred lines, when I was standing up for him, you know! Ain't it just like Linton?"

"I wergard you as an ass, Gwunday!"

"Five hundred lines!" growled Grundy. "And



"Somebody is thinking of me. My ear's burning."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Cooper, 1, Abbots Place, Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent.

I was going to play footer this afternoon! Just think of it! Five hundred lines! My hat!"

"Did you write that letter?" grinned Racke.

"Why, you rotten cad—here, lemme get at him!"

Racke beat a hasty retreat. He did not want to argue the matter out with George Alfred Grundy.

Tom Merry & Co. headed for the football ground. But footer was destined to be interrupted that afternoon. About a quarter of an hour later the order went fourth for the Shell to assemble in their Form-room.

Kildare and Darrell, and Langton and the other prefects shepherded the juniors into the School House. The story of the anonymous letter had spread, and most of the juniors knew what was coming.

The whole of the Shell, School House and New House fellows together, was assembled in the Form-room. There was little doubt that the culprit was among the assembled juniors, but which was the culprit was a deep mystery.

Dr. Holmes' expression as he entered the Form-room showed how deeply his anger had been stirred by the insult to the master of the Shell.

"My boys, you are aware of what has occurred," he began. "An insulting letter has been sent to Mr. Linton, doubtless by a boy in this Form. The culprit is here. I command him to step forward."

Nobody stepped forward. Some of the juniors grinned a little, in spite of the seriousness of the

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situation. The Head could hardly have expected that command to be obeyed.

"Very well," said Dr. Holmes, after a pause. "Merry, take this letter. Every boy present will make a copy of it and bring the copy to me, signed with his name."

For some minutes the Shell fellows were busy with pen and ink. Tom Merry collected the copies of the letter and laid them on the Form-master's desk; and the Head examined them one by one, comparing them with the original.

The examination ended, and the Head's expression showed that he had discovered nothing. The writing of the anonymous letter had been too carefully disguised.

"No one here has a confession to make?" he asked.

Silence.

"Very well. The culprit must be discovered, and he will receive a public and severe flogging. I shall send at once for a handwriting expert

HAVE YOU WON A FOOTBALL?

If you entered for our August "Footer-Stamps" Competition, your name may be in the list of prize-winners. Turn to page 35 and see.

from London, as the only means to discover the truth. You may go."

The Head left the Form-room, taking the papers with him.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "That looks like business!"

"Bow-wow!" said Racke. "What's the good of a handwriting expert? They don't know anything!"

"Well, chaps have been sent to prison on the evidence of handwriting experts," remarked Kangaroo.

"I dare say they have—while the guilty parties went loose," grinned Racke. "Handwriting experts are spoofters!"

"Well, I rather agree with Racke for once," remarked Grundy. "Experts are silly asses as a rule. Somebody a bit keener than an expert is wanted for this job, and I dare say somebody will turn up."

And, with that mysterious remark, Grundy of the Shell walked away, a deep and thoughtful frown upon his brow.

CHAPTER 3.

Grundy Takes the Matter in Hand!

"HARD lines, old chap!"

"Very hard cheese!"

Wilkins and Gunn were sympathetic.

The great Grundy had to stay in his study that fine, frosty afternoon and grind out five hundred lines for his incautious remark concerning Mr. Linton.

"I'd do some of the lines," said Wilkins generously, "only old Linton is so jolly keen; he'd spot my fist at once."

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"Same here," remarked Gunn.

"We'll look in on you presently, Grundy."

"Don't go," said Grundy.

"Ahem! We were thinking of footer."

"I want you."

"Look here, we can't sit about the study like hens; watching you do lines, you know," said Gunn.

"I'm not going to do any lines," explained Grundy. "Levison of the Fourth will do them at one-and-six a hundred. I can afford it, I suppose."

"Oh, I see!"

"I've asked him to come here— Oh, here he is!"

Levison of the Fourth entered the study and nodded to the Shell fellows.

Levison's peculiar gifts of imitating handwriting had got him into trouble sometimes, but at other times it was a source of income to him. Fellows who had plenty of money—like Grundy—were quite willing to get their lines done at eighteenpence a hundred, and the needy Fourth Former was glad of the chance of earning a dishonest penny in his peculiar way.

"Here you are," said Grundy. "Five hundred lines, Levison. I suppose you've got time to do them?"

"Certainly! That's seven-and-six."

Grundy tossed three half-crowns upon the table, and Levison picked them up.

"Give us a sample of your fist," he said.

Grundy scrawled a couple of lines on a sheet of impot paper.

"By the way, I suppose you didn't write that letter to Linton?" he asked.

"No. Did you?"

"You cheeky ass—"

"Well, you asked me," said Levison.

"That's different. You're the sort of worm to do a thing like that!" said Grundy. "And you're so clever at disguising your hand, too."

"Well, I can't say as much for you; you're not jolly clever at anything," said Levison. And he left the study grinning.

Wilkins and Gunn grinned, too.

"I don't see anything to snigger at in Levison's cheek!" growled Grundy.

"Ahem! No. Coming out, old chap?" asked Wilkins. "Might as well get down to the footer, as Levison's doing your lines."

"Something else on," explained Grundy. "Of course, Linton is a bit of a tartar in some ways, but I don't believe in disrespect to a Form-master; I think it's bad form."

"Well, if you think so, that settles it," remarked Wilkins, closing one eye at Gunn.

"Exactly!" assented Grundy. "The chap who wrote that anonymous letter is a sneaking cad. I don't believe it was anybody in the Shell."

"Looks as if it was, though."

"Somebody Linton has been going for," remarked Gunn. "He was ragging Crooke and Racke yesterday, I remember, no end for missing prep. Racke was caned. And Clampe was licked the other day for having cigarettes in his pocket. Some chap Linton has been going for—"

"Rot!"

"Look here, I don't think it's rot; I think—"

"Rot!" repeated Grundy. "Linton goes for me more than anybody else. If you go to work in that fashion you'll work out that it was I who wrote the letter—and that's silly rot! See?"

"Oh!" said Grundy's chums, rather taken aback.

"Why, only yesterday Linton was jawing me blind about my construe," said Grundy. "He was ratty because I hadn't done my prep. I told him plainly that I hadn't had time, and that only seemed to make him more waxy. He's rather an unreasonable old merchant. Now, I've got the honour of the Form at heart, and I'm going to prove that it wasn't a Shell fellow who wrote that letter."

"But suppose it was?"

"I've already said it wasn't."

"But how do you know it wasn't?" demanded Gunn.

"There's such a thing as intuition," explained Grundy.

"Into which?"

"Intuition, fathead! I've satisfied myself that it wasn't a Shell chap. I can depend on my own judgment, I suppose? My idea is that it was some cad in another Form. Perhaps Linton has trod on his toes some time. Linton is a bit of a coughdrop sometimes, you know. For the honour of the Form, I'm going to find out who it was, and show him up. I regard it as being up to me."

"Oh, I—I see!"

"That's it. I don't mind showing you chaps my method—"

"Your—your method?"

"My method," said Grundy. "First of all, there's the process of elimination."

Wilkins and Gunn looked at one another.

"That means that you eliminate the fellows who couldn't have done it," explained Grundy. "I eliminate the Shell—I'm sure that nobody in my

Form played a dirty trick like that; and, for the honour of my Form, I'm going to prove it. Now, as it wasn't a Shell fellow, it was somebody else."

"Go hon!" murmured Wilkins.

"I eliminate the fags next. They never have anything to do with Linton, and a fag in the Third or Second wouldn't think of a caddish trick like that."

"Hadn't you better eliminate the rest of the school while you're about it?" asked Wilkins.

"Don't be a funny ass, George Wilkins! Having eliminated the Shell and the fag Forms, that leaves us the Fourth and the seniors. It's unlikely that it was a chap in the Fifth or Sixth—not impossible, mind, but unlikely. So we'll begin on the Fourth."

"I think I'd rather begin on footer."

"We'll start on the Fourth," said Grundy, unheeding. "First of all, I've got to have the letter. I saw it in the Form-room when I copied it out. But that was only for a minute or so. There may be finger-prints on it—"

"Did you take hold of it in the Form-room?"

"Eh? Yes!"

"Then very likely there are finger-prints on it."

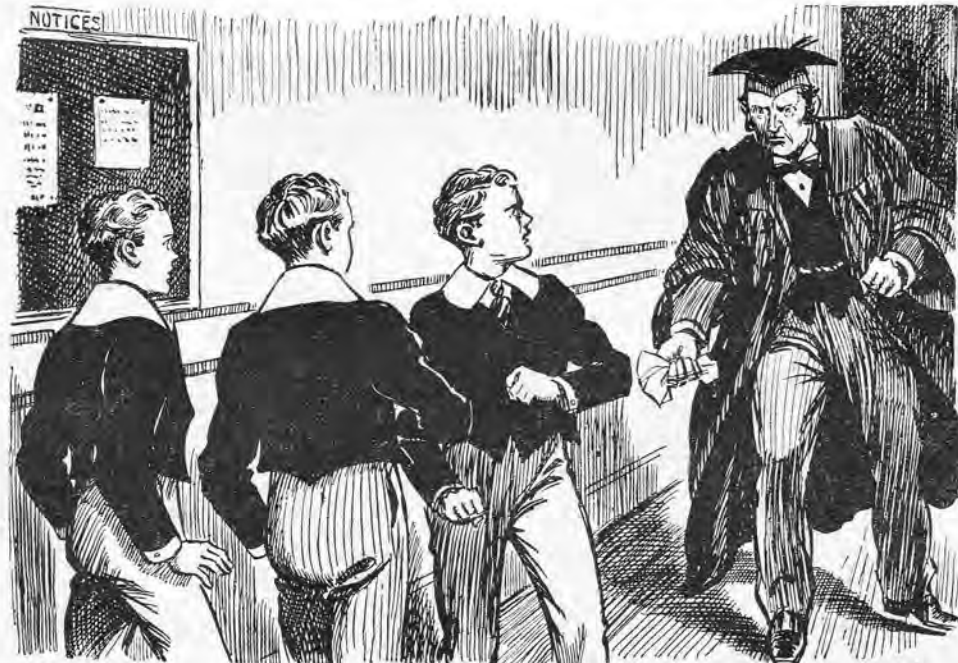
"I may as well warn you, Wilkins, that if you start being funny on a serious subject, there'll be a row in this study!" said Grundy darkly. "Now, you fellows stay here while I go and get the letter."

"You are going to the Head for that letter?"

"Of course. I need it for my investigations."

Grundy left the study. Wilkins and Gunn regarded one another speechlessly for a moment or two.

"Well, this beats it!" said Wilkins at last. "I



The Terrible Three looked round with surprised faces as Mr. Linton strode towards them, the crumpled letter clutched in his hand. "Do you know anything of this?" he demanded furiously.

say, Gunny, are we going to waste a ripping afternoon watching Grundy playing the giddy ox?"

"No jolly fear!" said Gunn emphatically.

"Let's get down to footer."

"You bet!"

And they went.

CHAPTER 4.

Under Suspicion!

"COME in!" said Dr. Holmes, as a tap came at his door.

The Head was thinking over the mysterious affair of the anonymous letter when Grundy of the Shell arrived.

The affair had disturbed the Head very much. It was a painful shock to him to find that there was any boy in the school who was audacious and disrespectful enough to insult his Form-master in that underhand way. He did not look pleased at the sight of George Alfred Grundy.

Grundy came in full of confidence. George Alfred lacked many things, perhaps, but he had never lacked confidence in himself.

"Excuse me, sir!" said Grundy. "It's about that anonymous letter, sir."

The Head fixed his eyes upon him.

"Have you come here to confess, Grundy?"

Grundy jumped.

"Confess? My hat! Oh, no, sir! Not at all!"

"Then what do you want?"

"I should like to have that letter, sir."

"What? What do you mean?"

"I'm going to find out who wrote it, sir," explained Grundy. "I regard that as my duty, for the honour of the Shell."

"Indeed?"

"Exactly, sir! I hope to be able to get a clue from the letter itself—"



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"A—a clue?"

"That's it, sir; perhaps finger-prints, or something. I'm rather a keen chap, sir, and I'm pretty certain I shall find out the rotter! May I have the letter, sir?"

"You may not have the letter, Grundy! I intend to place it in the hands of the expert, who arrives to-morrow."

"Of course, sir, I shall take every care of it."

"Possibly," said the Head dryly.

"May I see it, then, sir, if I mayn't have it?"

The Head was looking very intently at Grundy. Naturally, he knew nothing of Grundy's mighty brain-powers which had led him to take up the matter; Grundy had never exhibited any unusual intellectual powers—rather the reverse. To the Head, this seemed a barefaced attempt to get at the incriminating letter for the purpose of destroying it before it could reach the hands of the expert, which meant, of course, that Grundy was the writer of it.

"You may see it," said the Head at last. "There!"

Grundy took the letter and examined it carefully. The Head watched him equally carefully. There was little doubt left in his mind as to the identity of the guilty party. Grundy's keen interest in the letter seemed to him to have but one possible explanation.

"I should like to take this with me, sir," ventured Grundy.

"Very probably. You will, however, do nothing of the sort!"

"Oh! May I see the envelope it came in, sir?"

"For what reason?"

"I want to see when it was posted, sir. There may be a clue in that."

"You may see the envelope, Grundy," said the Head grimly.

Grundy took the envelope and examined it minutely. It was addressed in the same back-sloping hand as the letter, and the postmark was "Rylcombe," the date that of the previous day—Tuesday—and the hour of collection 9.30.

"Posted last night, sir," said Grundy, making a note in a big pocket-book.

"Undoubtedly," said the Head. "Were you absent from the school last night, Grundy?"

"I, sir? Oh, no!"

"Did you give that letter to someone else to post for you?"

"I, sir?" said Grundy dazedly. "I never saw the letter, sir, till you showed it to all of us in the Form-room this afternoon!"

"I trust you will be able to prove as much, Grundy. Your conduct is very suspicious!"

"M-my conduct suspicious?" gasped Grundy.

"Yes. I cannot believe that you were guilty of mere folly and impertinence in coming here, Grundy; I fear that you had a deeper motive. However, I shall leave the matter over till Mr. Spother arrives. You may go!"

Grundy left the study almost dazed. The Head suspected him—him, of all fellows! What possible grounds could the Head have for suspecting him? Grundy couldn't see any.

"Well," murmured Grundy, as he went down the passage, "of all the silly idiots—"

CHAPTER 5.

Grundy Sees It All!

"BAI Jove, here's Gwunday!"

There was a general grin as Grundy arrived on the football ground.

Wilkins and Gunn were to blame. They con-

sidered that Grundy's new effort in the detective line was too good a joke to keep, so they had generously let everybody else in on it.

"Found the assassin yet, Grundy?" asked Jack Blake affably.

Grundy stared.
"I'm not looking for an assassin, you young ass! I'm hunting for that anonymous letter writer. And I've got a clue—several clues, in fact."

"From the bloodstains?" asked Herries.
"There weren't any bloodstains, Herries."

"Have you found the weapon the crime was committed with?" questioned Digby with owl-like gravity.

Grundy looked puzzled. It always took Grundy a considerable time to discover when anybody was making fun of him.

"You don't seem to understand," he said. "This isn't a murder case. It's about that anonymous letter—"

"Did anybody hear the report of the pistol?" asked Julian of the Fourth.

"There wasn't a pistol in the matter."
"What about the body, then?"

"There isn't a body in the case, you young asses!" he laboured to explain. "It's simply a matter of an anonymous letter, written by some chap in the Fourth."

"Hallo! What's that?" exclaimed Blake.

"I've taken up the matter, and by my methods I have eliminated the other Forms. It was some kid in the Fourth."

"Some what, you cheeky ass?"
"Kid!" said Grundy.

"I refuse to be called a kid, Gwunday! I regard you as an impertinent duffah!"

"Don't hedge, D'Arcy."
"What?" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"I've come here to question you, and I warn you not to hedge."

"Bai Jove! Will you hold my eyeglass, Blake, while I give that howlin' ass a feaful thwashin'?"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Grundy. "This begins to look rather suspicious to me, D'Arcy. Where were you last evening?"

"Where—where was I?" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, you," Grundy pointed an accusing finger at the swell of St. Jim's. "Mind, I'm not accusing you yet."

"Accusin' me! Gwast Scott!"

"But I require particulars of your movements last evening. Did you post a letter in Rylcombe for the nine-thirty collection?"

"I refuse to weply to your impertinent questions, you uttah ass!"

"You admit it?"

"No, you cwass ass!"

"Do you deny it?"

"Wathah not! I don't deny anythin', you burblin' chump!"

Grundy made a note in his notebook, Arthur Augustus looking at him the while as if he would eat him. Other fellows were gathering round now, to look on with grinning faces.

George Alfred Grundy pursuing his investigations was a sight worth seeing.

"Blake!" rapped out Grundy, when he had made his notes.

"Hallo!" said Blake.

"Are you aware whether D'Arcy went out of gates last night?"

"Certainly!"

"Well, did he, or did he not?"

"Is that a conundrum?"

"Of course it isn't, you young ass! You don't seem to have any sense," said Grundy impatiently. "I require to know whether D'Arcy went out of gates to post a letter. Did he, or did he not?"

"Ask Gussy!"

"Trying to get out of answering, eh?" said Grundy fiercely. "I can see that you are backing up D'Arcy. That makes it pretty clear. I suppose it's no good asking you, Digby, if D'Arcy went out of gates last night?"

"No good at all," grinned Digby.

"Or you, Herries? Do you know anything about it?"

"I know I'll dot your silly eye if you say that D'Arcy wrote that rotten letter, you potty chump!" grunted Herries.

"Prevarication all round!" said Grundy, closing his notebook with a snap. "I think I've worked



"A lion's escaped? Well, that's your worry!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. Ralph, The Dawn, Little Burstead, near Billericay, Essex.

it out pretty clearly. I rather suspected Levison at first, but it's pretty clear now that it was D'Arcy. A fellow doesn't hedge unless he's got something to hide."

"If you accuse me of lying, you astounding ass—" began Arthur Augustus sulphurously.

"Come with me!" said Grundy magisterially. "Eh?"

"I'm going to take you to the Head."

"Take me to the Head?" stuttered Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, now I've found you out! Come on!"

Grundy dropped a heavy hand on the shoulder of the dazed swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus simply blinked at him.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "Mad as a hattah! Bai Jove! The poor fellow ought to be undah westwaint."

"Come on! Here, hands off, you cheeky fags!" yelled Grundy, as a crowd of the Fourth closed in on him. "Don't you dare to interfere with—Yaroo! Hands off, I say! Yah! Oh—oh jiminy!"

"You've been funny long enough," grinned Blake, as the crowd of juniors swept George Alfred Grundy off his feet. "Frogmarch, you chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take him in, and lock him in his study!" chuckled Reilly. "Sure, the gosssoon isn't safe to be let loose!"

Hands were laid upon the struggling Grundy. Grundy was struggling with all his strength, in a fury of rage and indignation. After discovering the guilty party in such a masterly manner,

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Grundy had rather expected admiration; certainly he had not expected the frogmarch.

With yells of laughter, Grundy of the Shell was rushed up to the House. It was somewhat unfortunate that Mr. Railton stepped out of the House just as the merry juniors reached the step. The procession halted suddenly.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Housemaster. "What does this mean? What are you doing? Release Grundy at once!"

George Alfred Grundy was dropped like a hot potato. He gave a roar as he landed on terra firma. Grundy's head was hard, but terra firma was harder still.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Only—only a little game, sir," stammered Blake. "Grundy's been—ahem!—playing the giddy ox, and we were—ahem!—taking him home!"

Grundy got up, gasping.

"I'm sorry to have to accuse D'Arcy, sir!" he spluttered; "but I feel it my duty to remove suspicion, sir, from innocent chaps. There's no telling whom that expert would pick on when he gets here. I feel it my duty, sir—groogh!—to report that D'Arcy wrote that anonymous letter, sir!"

"And what proof have you, Grundy, of this statement?" said Mr. Railton sternly, motioning the indignant Arthur Augustus to be silent.

"I've worked it out, sir. That letter was posted in Rylcombe last evening, and D'Arcy was out of gates—"

"Were you out of gates, D'Arcy?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"He refused to answer when I questioned him!" hooted Grundy.

"I refused to answer the ridiculous questions of a howlin' idiot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, please!" said Mr. Railton. "If you have no other grounds for your statement, Grundy—"

"It's proved that it was somebody in the Fourth, sir!"

"Indeed! How?"

"Because it wasn't anybody in the Shell, sir!"

"And how do you know that?"

"Oh, I'm sure of it!" said Grundy confidently.

"My judgment, sir—I may say that my judgment's never at fault!"

"Grundy, you have made a foolish and wicked accusation against a perfectly innocent person!"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Grundy in astonishment.

"You must be more careful, Grundy! In order to impress the necessity for care upon your mind, you may follow me to my study!"

"What for, sir?"

"To be caned!"

Grundy followed the Housemaster like a fellow in a dream, leaving the Fourth Formers grinning. It was enough to discourage any fellow less determined than George Alfred Grundy.

CHAPTER 6.

Sticking To It!

RACKE of the Shell met Grundy as he came away from the Housemaster's study, rubbing his hands.

Grundy was in a bad temper. The licking did not hurt him very much—Grundy was hard as nails. But the injustice and misunderstanding did. He felt bitterly—as he had felt a good many

times before—that there was nobody at St. Jim's who really understood him. It had been just the same at Redclyffe, his previous school—nobody had really understood Grundy.

Racke looked sympathetic. As Racke of the Shell did not care two pence for anybody in the wide world but his own precious self, anybody but Grundy might have guessed that Racke had a motive for pretending sympathy. But Grundy did not guess it—he was not quick at guessing. Sympathy was grateful and comforting to George Alfred at that moment.

"Too bad," said Racke. "I couldn't help admiring the way you dealt with the matter, Grundy. Railton didn't seem to see it, though." Grundy smiled bitterly.

"Railton isn't a bad sort in his way," he said. "Otherwise, I think I should have dotted him on the nose this time—I do, really! He's a born fool! He doesn't understand me in the least!"

"It's too bad! And you had worked it out that it was D'Arcy of the Fourth who wrote that letter."

"Well, on the whole, I don't exactly say it was D'Arcy, as he denies having been out of gates last evening. You see, when I mentioned it to him he scouted the question—that was what made me suspicious. It may or may not have been D'Arcy—certainly it was somebody in the Fourth. Did you see any Fourth Form kid out of gates last evening, Racke?"

Racke started.

"I? I wasn't out!" he said.

"Yes, you were! Don't you remember? Crooke barked you up over the wall soon after calling-over—I came along when he was doing it!"

Racke drew a sharp, quick breath.

"I—I remember! You needn't mention that to anybody, Grundy. Fellows might jump to the conclusion that—"

"I shan't mention it, of course. I know it wasn't you wrote to Linton."

"You—you know that?"

"Certainly; it wasn't a Shell chap. Upon the whole, I rather think it was Levison of the Fourth. He's that sort!"

"I shouldn't wonder," assented Racke, his eyes gleaming curiously. "I suppose you haven't got any proofs against Levison yet?"

"I've got the matter in hand!" said Grundy loftily.

"Er—yes! I understand you've got the letter from the Head—that letter old Linton got to-day?"

"No; the Head wouldn't give it to me for some reason. I could see that he suspected me," said Grundy, more in sorrow than in anger. "Me, you know! I suppose he thought I'd written the letter, and got scared about the handwriting expert seeing it, and wanted to get rid of it. Me, you know!"

"The expert is pretty certain to spot the writer, don't you think?" said Racke.

"I don't believe in those blessed experts," replied Grundy.

"Still, he might."

"Oh, he might, of course! More likely to spot the wrong chap, in my opinion," said Grundy scornfully.

"I suppose the Head wouldn't part with the letter till the expert's seen it. I—I don't suppose the chap who wrote it foresaw about an expert being sent for. It—it's rather a queer sort of thing for the Head to do," muttered Racke.

"Just the thing he would do, instead of leaving it in my hands!" sneered Grundy.

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

If you see a rainbow, a shower of shooting stars, and then a total eclipse, what does it mean? asks a reader. It usually means that a straight left has just connected with the point of your chin.

Scots story: "I've been here seven years now, sir, doing the work of three men—and I want a rise," said the assistant. The Scots employer wrinkled his brow. "I dinna ken how I can give ye a rise just now," he replied, "but if ye'll tell me the names o' the other twa men, I'll dispense with their sairvices."

A publicity expert says some hoardings he saw in the country had a definite leaning towards beauty. Must have been due to the recent gale.

Hot news: A Hindu yogi who has just walked into Wayland Police Station is described as a complete riddle. He gave himself up.

Beware of the man who has a habit of dashing off a couple of lines in a slipshod way, warns a handwriting authority. Especially when he's driving a railway engine.

"Cream of Society Collect at Aristocratic Race Meeting." Not if the bookmakers can help it.

As the "Wayland Gazette" puts it: "A very fitting end to a very wet afternoon

came when the Head of St. Jim's gave away the prizes." Damping!

Third Form Flash: "Why don't you write with your right hand, Gibson?" asked Mr. Selby. "Can't sir," replied Gibson, who is left-handed. "It's on the wrong side!"

Overheard in the school swimming-baths: "Can you swim yet, Jameson?" asked Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's. "Well," replied young Jameson cautiously, removing his water-wings, "my top half can."

Gussy tells me they pressed the butler at Eastwood House into service as an umpire during cricket week last August. The butler absolutely refused to say "Out." He invariably said: "Not at home."

I hear Mr. Lathom mislaid his glasses the other day and couldn't look for them until he found them.

Wally D'Arcy has just come to me in a quandary. He says Mr. Selby has told him to write an essay on a horse, but he doesn't know how to keep the animal still.

A sports writer states that everybody is itching to fight Joe Louis. Personally, I'd just as soon leave him to a fellow like Guy Fawks.

Summer Reflection: Many a camper has had to stay up half the night because the tent didn't.

"New Zoo for Oxford," we read. A Yag at Oxford?

"Man Who Cycles to Work at Seventy" runs a headline. Gosh, he must be in a hurry to get there!

Misprint from police report: "The wanted man came out of the cinema at 8 p.m. and has been hissing ever since." I feel sure I've seen that film.

Be seeing you!

"And so the Head's got the letter, not Linton?"

"The Head's got it," assented Grundy.

"I suppose he keeps it in a safe place? Did you see?"

"He put it back in his desk," said Grundy. "Are you thinking that I may take it, all the same? I wouldn't do that."

"No. I suppose the desk's kept locked?"

"Not that desk. I mean the desk he writes on," said Grundy, "not the big one he locks. He put it in the top drawer, you know. But I shouldn't think of taking it without permission."

And Grundy went his way.

CHAPTER 7.

Gussy's Great Wheeze!

"I HAVE an idea!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that announcement in the Fourth Form dormitory when the juniors were turning in.

To Arthur Augustus' surprise, there was no outburst of enthusiasm. There was not even a reply. The Fourth Formers went on taking their boots off.

"I made a remark, Blake," said Arthur Augustus stiffly.

"Well, don't make any more, there's a good chap!"

"I regard you as a wude ass, Blake. I wepeat that I have an idea!"

"Whose?" asked Julian.

"My own, of course, you duffah! Any of you fellows feel inclined to get up to-night and jape Gwunday?"

"Too jolly cold!" said Blake. "Better go to sleep."

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort! I considah—"

"Shush! Here's Darrell!"

Arthur Augustus "shushed" as the prefect came into the dormitory.

Darrell of the Sixth saw lights out when the

juniors had turned in. But when the door had closed behind Darrell, Arthur Augustus sat up in bed.

"Pway don't go to sleep yet, deah boys! I have an ideah for pullin' Gwunday's silly leg!"

"Oh rate! Good-night!"

"I do not wegard that as an intelligent we-mark, Blake. I wegard it as bein' up to me to make Gwunday sit up. The silly ass is playin' the detective, and I'm goin' to give him some-thin' to detect, see?"

"No, I don't see," mumbled Blake sleepily.

"I am goin' to visit the Shell dorm when all those boundahs are asleep, and play a twick on Gwunday. As he is so awfully clevah at detectin' things, I think it would be wathah amusin' to set him detectin' who took his clobbah away, and hid it in the box-woom—what?"

Blake gave a sleepy chuckle.

"Wathah a wippin' ideah—what?" chortled Arthur Augustus.

"Topping!"

"You can come if you like, deah boy."

Blake yawned portentously.

"It's jolly cold!" he said. "You can tell me all about it in the morning. That will be just as good."

"Don't be a slackah, Blake!"

Snore!

Arthur Augustus sniffed, and laid his head on the pillow. Evidently, ripping as the jape was, nobody wanted to leave his bed on that bitter night to carry it out. But Arthur Augustus was determined. Grundy's absurd accusations had made the swell of St. Jim's wrath, and he felt that one good turn deserved another.

He settled down to sleep, intending to awaken at eleven sharp. As a matter of fact, midnight was striking when he opened his eyes again.

He sat up at once and rubbed his eyes.

He shivered a little. It was very cold. For a moment or two he thought of giving up that joke on Grundy, ripping as it was. But the anticipation of being chortled at in the morning stiffened his resolution. He slipped out of bed, and hurried on his clothes, and a pair of slippers. Then he approached Blake's bed, and shook Blake by the shoulder.

Jack Blake came out of the land of dreams with a start, and blinked round in the darkness.

"Wha-a-at's that?" he stuttered.

"Don't be alarmed, deah boy. It's only I," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy reassuringly. "If you would like to come with me, aifah all—"

"You frabjous ass—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Go back to bed, fathead, and let a chap sleep!"

"I will let you sleep if you choose to be a slackah, Blake, but I am not goin' back to bed. I am goin' to jape Gwunday."

"Br-r-r-r!"

Arthur Augustus left his chum to repose, and tiptoed out of the dormitory.

The passage was pitchy dark. There was not a light in the whole building. The last door had closed for the night.

"Bai Jove, it's feahfully dark!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "I twust I shall not wun into anythin'!"

He groped his way along the passage. Fortunately, he knew every inch of the old School

House. His slippers made no sound as he trod softly towards the Shell dormitory.

Suddenly he stopped.

From the direction of the stairs there came a sound as if a stair had creaked under a foot-fall, and then a slight bumping noise.

Then there was a muttered suppressed exclamation.

Arthur Augustus stood stock still.

His heart thumped wildly.

There was somebody on the stairs—somebody creeping about silently in the dense darkness.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, under his breath. "Burglahs!"

CHAPTER 8.

Gussy Makes a Discovery!

BURGLARS!

Arthur Augustus' heart thrilled at the thought.

It was the only possible explanation. Certainly, some other junior might have been out of bed on a japing expedition like himself, but such a japer would not go downstairs. And the unknown was on the stairs.

Arthur Augustus listened intently.

His first impulse was to call Mr. Railton and give the alarm; but if the mysterious night-walker turned out to be one of the blades of the School House, that would certainly not do.

Arthur Augustus did not want to betray even a rank outsider like Racke or Crooke to punishment. He felt that it was necessary to be cautious.

But it was easily put to the proof. A burglar, certainly, would head for the room where the safe was. Arthur Augustus, on tiptoe, and in dead silence, made for the stairs, quite forgetting his intended jape on Grundy of the Shell.

Slowly, silently, he trod down the stairs, and his ears strained to listen.

There was a faint sound below, and he knew it came from the wide corridor upon which Dr. Holmes' study opened.

"It must be a burglah!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "He is makin' for the Head's study, the wottah!"

He reached the lower corridor. A door opened softly. The unknown had gone into the Head's study.

Arthur Augustus trod softly along the passage. He heard a match scratch, and there was a glimmer of light from the open room.

"Bai Jove, that's queeah!" murmured the junior.

It was strange that a burglar should strike matches.

He reached the open door, and kept carefully out of sight.

A figure in pyjamas was standing by the Head's writing-desk, with a match burning in his fingers.

The top drawer in the desk had been pulled out, and the figure was bending over it, scanning the contents.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard with wrath. Evidently it was not a burglar. It was a junior in pyjamas, and D'Arcy recognised the loud pattern of the pyjamas. He had seen those striking garments before. It was Racke of the Shell who was rummaging in the drawer.

"The uttah wottah!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

The match went out.

Arthur Augustus strode into the study and turned on the electric light. The room was flooded with light.

Racke of the Shell spun round with a gasp of terror. There was a letter in his hand—a letter he had taken from the drawer of the table. Arthur Augustus did not need telling what letter it was.

"You—D'Arcy!" stammered Racke, in breathless relief.

For a moment he feared that it was the Head. The swell of St. Jim's regarded him scornfully.

"You uttah cad!"

"Hang you!" muttered Racke. "What are you spying on me for?"

"I wefuse to shut the door, Wacke!"

"The—the light may be seen—"

"Possibly," assented Arthur Augustus calmly.

"You have stolen a lettah belongin' to Dr. Holmes, Wacke—"

"I—I haven't! It's nothing—you don't understand—"

"I undahstand perfectly well, Wacke. This is the lettah to Mr. Linton, and you are takin' it away."

"I—I—I—"

"I undahstand, you scoundwel!" pursued Arthur Augustus, with rising indignation. "You w'ote that lettah to Mr. Linton."

"I—I—I—"



"I should like to take the letter, sir," said Grundy complacently. "What?" exclaimed the Head incredulously. "I'm rather a keen chap, sir," went on Grundy, unabashed. "I expect to get a clue from it."

"I am not spyin', you uttah wascal!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I thought at first it was a burglah!"

"Don't shout, you idiot!" hissed Racke. "Do you want to wake the House?"

"Weally, Wacke, I am quite indiffewent on that point."

"Turn out the light."

"Wats!"

"It may be seen!" gasped Racke, in an agony of apprehension.

"I wefuse to turn out the light, Wacke! You have taken a lettah fwom the Head's dwawer. You are a sneakin' thief!"

"You—you don't understand! Shut the door!" panted Racke. "If we're found here—"

Racke gave the swell of St. Jim's a savage look. "Well, you are not goin' to steal it!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wefuse to allow anythin' of the sort. Aftah postin' a lettah, Wacke, it is no longah your p'perty. Weplace that lettah at once!"

Racke's hand closed convulsively on the letter. "I'm going to burn it, you fool!"

"You are going to do nothin' of the sort, Wacke! For one thing, there will be a feahful wow if the Head misses it, and somebody will be blamed for it. And I wefuse to allow a theft to be committed. I should wegard myself as a party to it, undah the cirs. And— Oh, you uttah wottah!"

Arthur Augustus broke off. He made a stride forward and picked up a handkerchief that lay on the floor. There was a monogram in the corner of the handkerchief, with the letters "M. L."

Racke shrank back from the look on D'Arcy's face.

"You fwrightful beast!" panted Arthur Augustus. "You brought this here. You were goin' to leave Lowthah's handkerchief here so that he would be suspected."

"I—I—"

"Bai Jove! I think I ought to call the Head at once—"

"You ass!" panted Racke. "Dry up, I tell you! I—I should get the sack! I—I—"

"Yaas, wathah! And you ought to get it, you uttah wascal! Put that lettah back in the drawer, Wacke, or I will shout out at once for the Head!"

"You—you fool! I—I—I—"

Racke panted with terror and rage.

"You—you can take the handkerchief away!" he stammered. "It—it was only meant as a joke—"

"Liah!"

"But—but I'm going to take the letter—"

Arthur Augustus stepped to the door and opened his lips to shout.

Racke gave a gasp of terror.

"Quiet—quiet! I'll do as you say. Quiet!"

"I'll give you one second then."

The letter dropped from Racke's trembling fingers into the drawer. Arthur Augustus crossed the room to him and closed the drawer.

"Now get out, you cad!" he said.

Racke gave him a look of hatred.

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"Get out!"

"It isn't your business, you—"

"Do you want me to throw you out of the study on your neck, Wacke?"

Racke clenched his fists convulsively, and moved towards the door.

Arthur Augustus followed him out of the study. He changed the key to the outside of the lock.

"What are you doing?" muttered Racke, eyeing him with eyes of hatred.

"I'm goin' to lock the door, you thief!"

Arthur Augustus turned off the switch, closed the door, and locked it.

Racke muttered something indistinctly and moved away.

Arthur Augustus followed him upstairs. The cad of the Shell went back to the dormitory, his object in leaving it quite frustrated.

The Head's study was locked and the key in D'Arcy's possession and there was nothing more to be done.

Arthur Augustus returned to the Fourth Form dormitory. After what had happened, he did not feel inclined to carry out the intended jape on the great Grundy.

"Hallo!" came Blake's sleepy voice. "Is that you, fathead?"

"I wefuse to be called a fathead, Blake—"

"What have you done with Grundy's clobber?"

"Nothin'!"

"Then you haven't been and gone and done it, after all, duffer?"

"Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus went back to bed and slept with the key under his pillow. But the swell of the Fourth was up before rising-bell in the morning. He scuttled downstairs before any-

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one else was about, and unlocked the Head's study, and replaced the key on the inside. And he sauntered along the corridor until the housemaids came down, "when it was too late for Racke to make any further attempt on the study."

CHAPTER 9.

Grundy is Called In!

"THAT must be the merry expert!"

Morning lessons were over, and the juniors had come out of the Form-rooms when the stranger arrived at the School House.

The Terrible Three regarded him with some interest. They knew that the handwriting expert from London was expected at the school that morning, and they had no doubt that this was Mr. Spother.

He was a tall, thin gentleman, with gold-rimmed glasses perched upon the bridge of a long, thin nose. He had the manner of a gentleman who realised that he was a person of some consequence. He was evidently not "small-potatoes" in his own eyes, as Monty Lowther remarked, seeing Toby showing the visitor into the Head's study.

"Now the circus is about to begin!" remarked Monty Lowther. "I suppose you really haven't left anything for the chap to do, Grundy—what?"

"Well, I haven't exactly finished the case," said Grundy. "I've worked it down pretty narrowly, however. It was either Levison or Mellish."

"Why, you silly ass!" ejaculated Levison of the Fourth.

"You howling idiot!" said Mellish.

Grundy gave them a lofty look.

"No good trying to wriggle out of it!" he said.

"I've practically got you nailed! On the whole it looks blackest against Levison."

"You shrieking idiot!" said Levison.

"Any evidence?" grinned Blake.

"Lots! Levison is so jolly clever disguising his hand—that's a very strong point. Then he's the kind of worm who would do such a thing as writing an anonymous letter—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then I've discovered that he was late for calling-over on Tuesday night," went on Grundy.

"That looks very suspicious. Of course, he was down in Rylcombe, posting the letter."

"I was helping my minor with his Latin, you howling ass, and forgot the time!"

"Perhaps your minor will bear witness, when you're had up before the Head!" sneered Grundy.

"Oh, go and eat coke, you dangerous lunatic!"

Levison strode away angrily.

"Gwundy, I wegard you as an uttah ass!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It was not Levison who wrote that letter to Mr. Linton."

"Do you mean that you confess, D'Arcy?" demanded Grundy.

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, come away," said Wilkins, seizing his chum by the arm. "You're getting dangerous, Grundy. You'll be suspecting me, next."

"I might," said Grundy. "Only you're in the Shell, and I know it wasn't a Shell chap."

"Wats! As a mattah of fact, it was a Shell chap, and I twust he will be discovahed," said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard him as an uttah cad!"

Racke joined the swell of the Fourth as he went into the quadrangle. Racke was looking pale and harassed. He received a glance of withering contempt from D'Arcy as he came hesitatingly to him.



Detective Kerr Investigates

No. 14.

THE BURNT HAYRICK!

WHEN Farmer Blunt came raging to St. Jim's to accuse two St. Jim's juniors of setting fire to a hayrick on his farm, the Head asked him to identify the boys. Farmer Blunt said he had not seen them sufficiently near to recognise their faces, but he was positive that, when he approached the blazing rick, two boys wearing St. Jim's caps were making off over a stile. A farm-hand had since found several cigarette-stubs near the rick, suggesting that somebody had been smoking there. Careful inquiry accounted for the whereabouts of everybody in the school at that time except Racke and Crooke of the Shell. Confronting them, Farmer Blunt said he recognised them as the pair. They had been sentenced to a severe flogging the next day, when Crooke appealed to "Detective" Kerr.

CROOKE: Look here, Kerr, we've come to you because you're the only fellow who can help us.

RACKE: I know we're not pals of yours in the general way, Kerr, but, don't you see, we're in no end of a jam—

CROOKE: And you usually do manage to get to the truth somehow, Kerr.

KERR: So for once you two are eager to come right out in the open?

RACKE: Well, we don't want to tell more than we actually must—

CROOKE: Oh, don't be an ass, Racke! If we want to get out of this scrape, we shan't do it by telling half-truths.

KERR: I'll help if I can. It seems clear that Farmer Blunt actually saw you near the burning hayrick?

CROOKE: We admit that. It was a nice afternoon, and we thought it would be very pleasant to sit by the rick and have a little game of nap.

KERR: Quite in your line, of course, on a half-holiday.

CROOKE: Well, we had our game, and Racke suggested putting on a cigarette—

RACKE: You fool, Crooke, to admit that!

CROOKE: I'm telling Kerr the truth. You know we smoke sometimes on the quiet, Kerr. As I say, Racke suggested it; but I said: "No. What if the rick caught fire?"

RACKE: So I shoved the cigs back in my pocket.

CROOKE: And that's the fact. We rather dawdled crossing the field when we left, and we sat on the stile for a bit, with our backs to the rick. Then Racke suddenly glanced round and gave a gasp, and when I looked round the rick was ablaze. We saw Farmer Blunt coming up, and, like fools, we ran!

KERR: If it wasn't you set fire to the rick, who could it have been?

CROOKE: I suspect Yode, a farm-hand. He's not much older than ourselves; but one day he ordered us off a footpath across the farm. We dumped him in the hedge—and he's the chap who found several cigarette-stubs near the rick. He suggests that they were thrown down by us and started the fire!

KERR: Perhaps if I stroll up to the farm, I might see this chap Yode.

KERR: Your name's Yode, isn't it?

YODE: Yezzur. Oi don't know whoi you should be a-talkin' to me, though, young zur—

KERR: Oh, I'm interested in the rick that was burned down. Is that where it stood—over there?

YODE: Yezzur. And a main good blaze it were, too! All the fault o' them two young gentlemen from your school, zur. I found the cigarette-stubs that they'd throwed down quite close to the rick. That's what it was started the fire, ye see?

KERR: Sounds probable. You don't smoke yourself?

YODE: No, zur. Ain't never had a puff yet. Don't like they things.

KERR: Lucky the fire didn't spread any farther.

YODE: 'Twould have done, but the grass had been cut, d'ye see? But the rick was burned to the ground, and the grass scorched black for several yards round, as it were.

KERR: Bad enough. These two St. Jim's chaps—you say you saw them getting over the stile?

YODE: No, zur; that weren't me. Farmer Blunt, he saw 'em; I only found the cigarette-stubs after, like.

KERR: Well, Yode, I'll see Farmer Blunt next, and you may hear more from him later—

(Who set fire to the hayrick? Turn to Kerr's solution on page 35.)

not understand or share Arthur Augustus' scruples of honour, but he knew that D'Arcy's word was as good as his bond. He was safe in that direction at least.

"But I wufuse to have anything to do with you, Wacke! You will oblige me by keeping your distance."

Racke moved away, scowling.
"Bai Jove! I can't stand that chap!" said Arthur Augustus, as he joined Blake and Herries and Dig. "He makes me quite ill, you know. It's wathah disgusting to have to keep his wotten secwets!"

"Whose secrets?" demanded Blake.

"That wottah Wacke's!"

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"Don't speak to me, you wottah!"

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"I wufuse to have anythin' to say to you, Wacke!"

"Look here, I—I don't want you to say anything about last night," muttered Racke huskily. "You know what they would think—"

"I know what they would conclude, you mean," said Arthur Augustus scornfully. "But you need not be afraid that I shall betway you, Wacke. I am not a sneak."

"You won't say anything?" muttered Racke.

"Certainly, I shall say nothing. I should wufuse to sneak even about such a cawling worm as you, Wacke!"

Racke drew a deep breath of relief. He did

"What the dickens secrets of Racke's are you keeping?"

"I am afraid I cannot answer that question, Blake, as I have told Wacke that I will say nothin'," said Arthur Augustus cautiously.

"Oh!" said Blake, comprehending. "You bowled him out last night, I suppose. Found him breaking bounds when you were out of the dormitory—what?"

"He was not breakin' bounds, Blake."

"Then you did find him?"

"I feah I cannot weply to that question, Blake. I do not intend to mention to anyone, even my own pals, that I found Wacke out of the dorm last night."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake and Herries and Digby.

Arthur Augustus put his eyeglass into his eye and surveyed his hilarious chums frigidly. "I fail to see any cause for wibald mewment," he said, and walked away with his noble nose in the air.

Meanwhile, the juniors were discussing the expert, who was still shut up with the Head and Mr. Linton, doubtless examining the various fists of the Shell fellows.

Grundy was holding forth on the subject to a grinning group of juniors, when Mr. Linton looked out of the School House, with a grim brow.

"Grundy!"

His voice was hard as iron. Grundy looked round.

"Follow me to the Head's study at once!"

"Certainly, sir!" said Grundy brightly. "I suppose the expert wishes to consult me, sir."

"To—to what?" ejaculated the master of the Shell.

"To consult me, sir. I have been investigating

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the matter, sir, and I think I could render very valuable assistance."

"If this is effrontery, Grundy, it will not serve you. Follow me at once!" snapped Mr. Linton.

Grundy, considerably surprised at his Form-master's manner, followed him.

Grundy did not seem to have the slightest suspicion what he was wanted for. But the other fellows knew what Mr. Linton's look and tone meant.

Grundy was in for it!

CHAPTER 10.

Very Expert!

DR. HOLMES greeted the somewhat pompous Mr. Spother cordially, and explained the circumstances to him. Mr. Linton joined in with a word or two, and the famous expert was soon in possession of the facts.

"As there seems no doubt in my mind that the anonymous letter was written by a member of Mr. Linton's Form, I have collected specimens of the handwriting of every boy in the Shell," said the Head. "They are here."

"Very good, Dr. Holmes," said Mr. Spother.

"As you see, the writing of the anonymous letter is disguised—"

"That is easily apparent!"

"I have compared it with the handwritings of all the Shell boys, but I cannot trace the slightest resemblance."

Mr. Spother smiled a superior smile.

"That is quite natural," he said. "The trained eye of an expert, however, is quite a different matter. What appears to you difficult—if not impossible, sir—is child's play to me."

The Head coughed.

Mr. Spother's confidence in his powers was unbounded, and the Head could only hope that it was well founded.

"I should like you to examine this paper first," continued the Head, taking up Grundy's copy of the anonymous letter. "The boy—Grundy—who wrote this paper has laid himself open to very grave suspicion by an attempt to obtain possession of the letter."

Mr. Spother nodded, with a very wise look.

"Was the boy aware that you had sent for me?" he asked.

"Yes. I informed them all of my intention."

"Then he knew what to expect," smiled Mr. Spother. "Doubtless, it seemed to him the only resource to obtain possession of the letter and destroy it. Of course, when writing it, he had not foreseen this step on your part."

"That is certainly how it appears to me," said the Head. "But an examination of the handwriting will put the matter to the test."

"Undoubtedly!"

Mr. Spother, seated at the writing-table, proceeded to make the examination, the two masters watching him in silence. The anonymous letter, which Arthur Augustus had so narrowly rescued the previous night, lay before him on the table.

The examination was not a brief task, and the Head was conscious that it was getting very close to lunch-time; but he did not venture to interrupt the great London expert.

Having examined all the papers in turn, Mr. Spother came back to Grundy's copy, and spent another five minutes upon it. He extracted a magnifying-glass from a pocket, and examined both letters again by its aid.

There was a deep silence in the study.

Mr. Spother turned to the Head at last.
"I have done it!" he said.

"You have ascertained—"

"The anonymous letter was written by the person who wrote this," said Mr. Spother, laying his finger upon Grundy's copy of the letter.

"Grundy!" exclaimed Mr. Linton.

"And—and there is no doubt upon the matter?" asked the Head.

Mr. Spother regarded him with a look of pained surprise.

The Head coloured slightly.

"I—I beg your pardon, Mr. Spother! Of course there is no doubt, if you assure me that such is the result of your examination."

"My opinion is not usually questioned, sir!" said Mr. Spother, with chilling dignity. "I am accustomed to giving evidence in courts of law. Men's liberties, and even lives, have depended upon the accuracy of my expert evidence. I should scarcely be likely to make a mistake."

"I am sure I beg your pardon! I did not mean to imply a doubt," said the Head hastily. It was evident that the great man was offended. "But—but to my eye—untrained, of course—there is not the slightest resemblance between this writing and that of Grundy."

Mr. Spother condescended to smile slightly—very slightly.

"My dear sir, the lack of resemblance is one variety of proof that it was written by the same hand."

"Oh!" said the Head.

"In disguising his hand, the writer has carefully avoided every familiar attribute of his own natural caligraphy."

"Ah, quite so—quite so!"

"But under a lens, sir, certain resemblances appear which have escaped your observation. In certain slight details the writer has been unable to avoid betraying himself. I should have no hesitation in swearing an affidavit that Grundy was the writer of the letter, even if his life were at stake before a judge and jury!"

"Then there is no more to be said."

"Quite so," assented Mr. Linton. "Grundy is certainly not the boy I should have been inclined to suspect. But it is a fact that I had occasion to punish him severely on Tuesday, and there is no doubt, of course, that this letter was written from a spirit of revenge."

"Will you call Grundy here, Mr. Linton?"

"Certainly, sir!"

The master of the Shell left the study. Mr. Spother rose to his feet.

"My business here is concluded," he remarked.

"And I thank you very sincerely!" said the Head. "You have enabled justice to be done, sir, in a matter that baffled me completely."

"My profession is to serve the ends of justice, sir," said Mr. Spother, quite gracious again now. "If you prefer—ahem!—to send on your cheque, I—"

"One moment, sir!"

The Head took his cheque-book from his desk, and Mr. Spother left the study with his cheque in his pocket-book. Mr. Spother's fee was a somewhat heavy one, being in proportion to his celebrity; but the Head felt that it was more than worth it to clear up an unpleasant mystery and visit punishment upon the right shoulders.

Mr. Linton arrived with Grundy as the expert gentleman left the study. Grundy came in with a very cheery and confident manner.

"You—you sent for me, sir?" he said.

"Yes, Grundy."



PROFESSOR SKIMPOLE'S HOROSCOPE

This Week:

ETHEL CLEVELAND
(COUSIN ETHEL).

IT was D'Arcy himself who asked me to take the opportunity offered by a visit from his cousin, Ethel Cleveland, to St. Jim's, to cast her horoscope. "This is Skimpole, Ethel, our pwise astwologah," said D'Arcy, introducing us. "All you have to do is to tell him when you were born, and he will tell you the most astonishin' things about yourself. Some fellows say Skimmy makes it all up, but his chawatah-aweadin' is often vewy true." "I'm sure I shall be delighted if you can give me a good 'character,' Skimpole," said Cousin Ethel graciously.

I was not surprised to discover that she was born under the sign of Aries, the Ram (which includes birthdays from March 21st to April 20th) with the Moon strongly influencing the horoscope. A lovable personality was clearly shown, suggesting that Cousin Ethel has that charming feminine ability to encourage and inspire others, and to wipe out the memory of defeat in the enthusiasm for fresh ventures. Hers is the symbol of an idealistic nature, yet she is by no means only a dreamer. A staunch and loyal helpmate.

"Suppose I had been a boy?" suggested Cousin Ethel mischievously. "Would you have said the same then?" "A boy born under the same sign would be what I believe is termed a rattling good fellow," I replied. "That is what I always try to be—as a girl, of course," smiled Cousin Ethel.

"If I can be of any assistance, sir—"

"Of—of any assistance?"

"Yes, sir. I am quite willing to collaborate with the expert, if necessary. I have no doubt—no doubt whatever—that I should be of the greatest service—"

"Cease this impertinent nonsense at once, Grundy!" said the Head sternly.

"Eh? I—I beg your pardon, sir!"

"You have been sent for, Grundy, to receive your sentence!"

"Mum-mum-my sentence, sir?" stammered the astonished Grundy.

"Yes, sir!" thundered the Head. "Your guilt is proved!"

"Mum-mum-my gig-gig-guilt!" stuttered Grundy.

"Wha-a-at have I done, sir?"

Dr. Holmes pointed to the anonymous letter.

"You wrote that infamous, insulting letter to your Form-master, Grundy!"

Grundy staggered.

"I did?" he gasped.

"Yes, you!"

"B-b-but I didn't, sir!" Grundy managed to articulate. "I've got my suspicions about some fellows—"

"You wrote that letter, Grundy! Doubtless you did not anticipate when you wrote it that I should employ a celebrated handwriting expert to detect the writer. But no trouble or expense was too great in order to place the guilt upon the right person's shoulders. I was quite aware, Grundy, when you visited this room yesterday that your audacious attempt to gain possession of the letter was dictated by a fear of the expert's examination of it."

"N-n-not at all, sir!"

"In any case, Grundy, the matter is now proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. I trust you will not add falsehoods to your guilt."

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"But—but I didn't do it, sir!" yelled Grundy, in utter dismay. "The expert must be a silly fool, sir——"

"What?" thundered the Head.

"Why, he must be a howling idiot!" exclaimed Grundy indignantly. "Do you mean to say, sir, that he's found out it was my hand——"

"Precisely!"

"But it wasn't, sir! I swear it wasn't! The man's a silly ass! All experts are silly asses, sir! Look at the political experts who write in the papers——"

"Enough! Grundy, you are sentenced to be flogged!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Silence! The school will be assembled in Hall before afternoon lessons, and you will be flogged in the presence of all your schoolfellows. You may go for the present, Grundy!"

Grundy stood rooted to the floor.

"But—but—but——" he choked.

"Go!"

Grundy went like a fellow in a dream.

CHAPTER 11. The Only Way!

"GWUNDAY!"
"Old Grundy!"
"That ass!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The news spread like wildfire. Grundy of the Shell had been adjudged guilty of writing the anonymous letter to Mr. Linton; Grundy of the Shell was to receive a public flogging for the offence.

The juniors were astonished. Wilkins and Gunn were quite dismayed. Old Grundy! It was incredible!

Grundy was every sort of an ass, known and unknown. That was admitted, even by his best chums. But Grundy, with all his faults, had never been known to play a dirty trick, or a mean trick, or a cowardly trick. And such a trick as writing an anonymous letter of abuse was undoubtedly dirty, mean, and cowardly.

"So that was why he was playing detective!" Racke remarked sneeringly. "That was why he said it wasn't a Shell chap!"

"Looks like it now," said Mellish.

"And that was why he was trying to fix it on some chap in the Fourth!" sneered Levison. "Jolly deep of Grundy, I must say! I thought he was simply playing the fool, as usual. I didn't know he was so deep."

"I—I suppose that expert knows what he's talking about," said Talbot of the Shell, with knitted brows. The crowd were discussing it in the quad with great excitement after dinner.

"I suppose he does, Talbot," said Tom Merry. "Experts see a lot of things other people don't see."

"And if they don't see 'em they imagine 'em," said Monty Lowther.

"I thought he looked a self-sufficient sort of bounder," said Talbot quietly. "I can't believe Grundy did it. It's all rot to say he's been spoofing all this time. He's a born fool, but he's not a ratter!"

"Gwunday!" Arthur Augustus was repeating dazedly. "Gwunday! Bai Jove, Gwunday!"

"Yes, it is a surprise," said Dig. "But there's no need for you to look so worried, old scout. You're not going to be flogged!"

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The handwriting expert from London turned to the anonymous letter

"Gwunday is not goin' to be flogged, eithah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly. "Gwunday did not do it!"

"The expert's proved it," said Herries.

"The expert is an uttah ass, Hewwies!"

Herries chuckled.

"I dare say he is, Gussy; and Grundy must have been an ass to write that letter to Linton. He might have known it would come out."

"He did not write it, Hewwies."

"How do you know, fathead?"

"I do know, Hewwies! I am quite sure of it!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Where is Wacke? I want to speak to Wacke!"

Racke had left the crowd, feeling very satisfied. If Grundy of the Shell was flogged for that insulting letter to Mr. Linton there was no further inquiry for anyone to fear.

Grundy had gone to his study quite overcome. In the midst of his wonderful investigations the matter had been settled without his assistance—and it had been settled that he was the guilty party. Grundy had, quite unintentionally, laboured to draw suspicion upon himself, and certainly he had succeeded.

The unfortunate Shell fellow was quite overcome. He sat in the armchair in his study, blinking before him dazedly. He was adjudged guilty—on the evidence of an expert gentleman, whose assertion could not be doubted. It was amazing,



done it," he announced. "The boy who sent the wrote this!"

stunning, flabbergasting! And he was going to be flogged!

Before the school went in to afternoon lessons he was to be hoisted in Big Hall and flogged before St. Jim's! He, George Alfred Grundy!

Wilkins and Gunn came into the study looking very downcast. They often found George Alfred Grundy very trying. There were many rows in Grundy's study. But now that he was down on his luck Wilkins and Gunn forgot their many little troubles with Grundy, and they were very sympathetic.

"Quarter to two, old chap!" Gunn reminded him.

"And the flogging's fixed for two," said Grundy. "Not much time for me to find out the right party, and prove it. But I'm going to try."

"But—but you can't, you know."

"I don't know," said Grundy. "A chap of my abilities is never really beaten. It was Levison or Mellish—the question is, which?"

"I—I say, it must have been a Shell chap, you know."

"Don't talk rot, George Wilkins! I've already said that it wasn't a Shell chap. Upon the whole, I consider it was Levison. Come with me!"

"Where—where are you going?"

"I'm going to make Levison own up. Same as I did when he hid Manners' camera, and I had the job of finding it. There's no time for finesse,

you know. I can't complete the case as I intended. It will be necessary to come down heavy," Grundy explained.

"But—but what are you going to do?" gasped Gunn.

"I'm going to hammer Levison till he owns up," said Grundy. "It's the only way. It may seem a little high-handed—"

"My hat! I should rather think so."

"But you can see for yourself that it's the only way, can't you?"

"But—but suppose Levison didn't do it?" howled Wilkins.

"He did. I've told you so already. Come on!"

CHAPTER 12.

A Painful Predicament!

"WACKE, you uttah wottah!"
Arthur Augustus had found Racke of the Shell at last.

Racke had been seeking to avoid the interview. But the swell of St. Jim's ran him down in a secluded corner of the quadrangle.

"What do you want?" growled Racke, with a savage look.

"Gwunday's goin' to be flogged for w'tin' that lettah—"

"Serve him right!"

"Bai Jove, you know he didn't write it!"

"The expert says he did," grinned Racke.

"The expert is a silly ass!"

"You'd better tell the Head so. No good coming and telling me."

"You w'ote that lettah to Mr. Linton, Wacke!"

Racke shrugged his shoulders.

"Wacke, you know you are the wottah who w'ote that wotten lettah! You twied to get it out of the Head's study and burn it last night. You admitted it then."

"I wasn't in the Head's study last night," said Racke. "You're dreaming! I was in my bed, and whether I was or not, you promised to say nothing about it."

"I am quite aware of that, Wacke. I pwomised watah washly not to wefer to you. I didn't fore-see this."

"Well, a promise is a promise."

"Weally, Wacke—"

"And if you're going to break your word, remember that you've got to prove what you say," said Racke, between his teeth. "I shall deny it all."

"You can hardly deny the twuth, Wacke, I pwesume?"

"You'll see."

"Wacke, there is no time to thwash you. I am quite aware that I cannot bwreak a pwomise, but that does not make any difference. You cannot allow poor old Gwunday to be flogged for what you know you did. You are goin' to own up."

"Rats!"

Arthur Augustus gazed at Racke, his eye gleaming behind his eyeglass.

"Is it possible, Wacke, that you are not goin' to own up?"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" growled Racke.

"Do you think I want to be flogged?"

"Then I expect you to welease me fwom the pwomise I made you, Wacke, as it was made undah a misappwewhension."

"You mean you're going to break your promise?" sneered Racke. "Well, if you do, I

shall deny the whole yarn, and you can't prove it."

And he walked away towards the School House. The swell of the Fourth stared after him in almost incredulous disgust.

"Come on, Gussy!" shouted Blake across the quad.

"I'm comin', deah boy—"

There was a sudden sound of yelling from under the elm-trees in the quad.

Kildare of the Sixth came out of the School House.

"Where is Grundy? My hat!"

Kildare dashed across towards the elms. Grundy was there. Levison of the Fourth was wriggling in his powerful grasp, and Grundy was knocking his head against the trunk of a tree. Levison minor of the Third was dragging at Grundy with both hands, to help his major, but he had no effect upon the burly Grundy. Wilkins and Gunn stood looking on helplessly.

"Grundy!" shouted Kildare.

Grundy glanced round.

"All serene, Kildare!" he said. "Don't interrupt! I'm getting the truth out of him. Now then, own up, Levison!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" yelled Levison. "Leggo!"

"Bai Jove! Why are you waggin' Levison, Gwunday?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, dragging the Shell fellow by the shoulder.

"Keep off! And yank that silly fag away!" gasped Grundy. "I'm getting the truth out of Levison."

"Yarcooh! Help!" raved Levison.

The astounded Kildare seized Grundy by the collar and wrenched him away from his hapless victim.

Levison reeled against the tree, his face crimson with rage.

"Leggo!" shouted Grundy, struggling. But even Grundy was not much use in the grasp of the stalwart captain of St. Jim's. Kildare held him easily.

"This isn't a time for bullying, Grundy," said Kildare sternly. "You're to come in now for your flogging."

"I'm not bullying," said Grundy indignantly. "I'm getting at the truth. Levison wrote that anonymous letter, you know."

"What!"

"I've not had time to complete the case properly, so I'm getting the truth out of him this way. I wish you wouldn't interfere. Another bang or two and he would have owned up. Leggo!"

"You silly idiot!" shrieked Levison, rubbing his head savagely. "I'm coming to see you flogged, and I shall enjoy it."

"Bai Jove, you are a howlin' idiot, Gwunday!"

"Let me go, Kildare! Will you let me go?"

Kildare did not reply, but he marched Grundy away to the School House, with a grip of iron on his collar.

It was useless for Grundy to wriggle; he had to go. Still expostulating frantically, he disappeared into the building with the captain of St. Jim's.

"Well, of all the howling asses!" said Tom Merry. "Grundy really does take the cake! But it looks as if he didn't do it, all the same, you fellows."

"Into Hall, you kids!" called out Darrell of the Sixth.

Fellows were streaming into Hall now from all sides. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went with the

rest, sorely troubled in his mind. He had promised Racke not to betray him, and with Arthur Augustus a promise was a promise not to be broken. But if he kept his thoughtless promise to Racke, Grundy was to be flogged for what D'Arcy knew Racke had done. It was a painful predicament for Arthur Augustus.

Racke's action the previous night was conclusive proof. Certainly he had had no cause to fear the evidence of the expert, as it had turned out. But Racke had not known that the celebrated expert was a solemn donkey, and he had betrayed himself to Arthur Augustus, who could not betray him. But if Racke did not choose to own up, how could Arthur Augustus stand by and see an innocent fellow flogged? It was a predicament out of which Gussy could see no way.

Big Hall was crowded with fellows, seniors and juniors, ranked in their Forms. There was a subdued buzz of voices.

Taggles, the porter, was there, ready to do his painful duty. Upon a table lay the birch, the instrument of punishment.

Grundy stood by the table, Kildare close by him. Grundy was so excited that there was no telling what he might do. And a prefect's aid might be needed. There was a hush as the upper door in the Hall opened, and the Head came in with a very grave face.

Arthur Augustus glanced across at Racke, standing cool and quiet among the Shell fellows. Racke did not meet his eyes.

Dr. Holmes took up the birch.

"Grundy!" he said sternly.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Grundy.

"You are about to be flogged for a rascally, detestable, and cowardly insult to your Form-master. I trust the lesson will not be lost on you. Taggles, take up Master Grundy!"

"Yes, sir."

Taggles advanced to do his duty.

Grundy sprang back, putting up his fists.

"Hands off!" he shouted.

"Grundy!" thundered the Head.

"I'm not going to be flogged!" roared Grundy. "I tell you I didn't do it—never thought of such a thing. If you'd give me time I'd find out the fellow who did it. I'm not going to be flogged for nothing!"

"Another word, Grundy, and I will expel you from the school instead of administering a flogging!" thundered Dr. Holmes. "Taggles, take up this boy at once!"

Grundy dropped his hands. The Head was in deadly earnest. Grundy did not want to be sacked from St. Jim's.

Taggles grasped him, unresisting, and hoisted him. There was a dead silence in the Hall as the Head raised the birch. It was broken by a sudden shout.

"Stop!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form rushed forward.

— — —

CHAPTER 13.

Arthur Augustus Chips In!

"D'ARCY!"

"Gussy! Come back, you fathead!"

"Gussy, you ass!"

Arthur Augustus did not heed; he strode right up the Hall, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

The Head, astounded, stood with the raised birch in his hand, as if turned to stone.

"Go back to your place, D'Arcy!" rapped out Mr. Railton sharply.

Still the swell of the Fourth did not heed.

He arrived breathless.

"If you please, Dr. Holmes—"

"Boy!" gasped the Head. "How dare you! How dare you interrupt these proceedings, I say! Kildare, take that junior aside. He shall be punished after Grundy."

"I feel bound to speak, sir!" said Arthur Augustus. "Gwunday did not write that wotten lettah to Mr. Linton; and I know who did!"

"By gum!" ejaculated Grundy.

Dr. Holmes looked fixedly at Arthur Augustus. He motioned to Kildare to stand back.

There was a buzz of amazement in the crowded Hall, but it died away as Dr. Holmes raised his hand for silence.

"D'Arcy, as you have made such a statement, I am bound to listen to you. You state that you know who wrote that insulting letter to Mr. Linton, and that it was not Grundy."

"Yaas, sir."

"If you are speaking idly, D'Arcy, your punishment will be very severe."

"I am not speakin' idly, sir."

"Then kindly tell me at once what you know about the matter."

Arthur Augustus drew a deep breath. Between the necessity of keeping his promise to Racke of the Shell and the equal necessity of saving Grundy from undeserved punishment, he was upon delicate ground; but Arthur Augustus had unbounded reliance upon his own tact and judgment.

"I found out the twuth by accident last night, sir."

"Then why did you not inform me or your Housemaster before?"

D'Arcy raised his head proudly.

"I am not a sneak, sir."

"Good old Gussy!" murmured Blake.

"Ahem! But how—"

"And aftahwards, sir, the wottah—I mean the chap—asked me to pwomise not to give him away, and, without thinkin', I pwomised. But I can pwove that it was not Gwunday."

"I am waiting for you to do so, D'Arcy," said the Head grimly. "You may put Master Grundy down for the moment, Taggles."

Grundy slid down to his feet. Taggles was not sorry for the relief; Grundy was no light-weight.

"I was out of the dorm last night, sir."

"Indeed! And what were you doing out of the dormitory?"

"Of course, sir, I am mentioning that in confidence."

"Wha-a-at!"

"I was goin' to jape Gwunday, sir, because he is such a wiculous ass. But I am aware that it is against the wules to leave the dormitoway at midnight. But I am simply mentionin' that circumstance, sir, for the sake of justice. Undah the cires, sir, I expect you to tweek that wevclation as confidential."

"As—as—as confidential!" ejaculated the Head, looking at Arthur Augustus as if he would eat him. "A confidence between a junior of the Fourth Form and his headmaster!"

"No, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "Between one gentleman and anothah, sir!"

A pin might have been heard to drop in Big Hall. The expression upon the Head's face was extraordinary for a moment.

(Continued on next page.)



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The juniors held their breath. But the expected storm did not burst. There was something in D'Arcy's frank and quite dignified manner that disarmed the Head.

"We will pass over the matter of your being out of your dormitory at forbidden hours, D'Arcy," said the Head at last "That is of no moment now."

"Yaas, sir, I expected that," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "Well, sir, while I was out of the dorm I heard somebody movin' about, and I thought, pewsaps, it was a burglah. But I could not vewy well give the alarm, as I thought also that it might be some chap pwowlin' wound for somethin'. So I followed him to find out pwecisely what was up, sir, and I followed him to your study."

"To—to my study! Last night?"

"Yaas, sir. He was fuml'm' in the dwawer of your w'tin'-desk, with a match, and I turned on the light and cornahed him. He had taken that lettah out of your dwawer to destwoy it. So I knew, of course, that he was the chap who had w'tten it, and he was afwaid of the expert seein' it when he came. In fact, he admitted it. I refused to allow him to do anythin' of the sort, and I made him weplace the lettah; and I locked your door on the outside, sir, and took away the key, so that he could not go back and do it, aftah all."

"That is a very extraordinary statement, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, it is, sir. I got down wathah early to unlock the door, and put the key back, sir, of course, as I did not want anythin' to be known about the mattah."

"Who was the boy you saw in my study, D'Arcy?"

"It was not Gwunday, sir!"

"No jolly fear!" said Grundy. "I never went out of the dorm last night. I know that!"

"You need not speak, Grundy. D'Arcy, what was the name of the boy who attempted to purloin the letter from my study last night?"

"I am sowwy I cannot tell you, sir. I wathah washly pwomised him not to give him away. You would not wecommend me to bwreak a pwomise, sir."

The Head coughed.

"You had no right to make such a promise, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir, I feel that myself. But I did make the pwomise, and the uttah wottah wefuses to welease me fwom it, and he wefuses to own up, too!"

"To what Fom did this boy belong, D'Arcy?"

"The Shell, sir."

"My hat!" exclaimed Grundy.

"Will you be silent, Grundy?" The Head paused, looking very curiously at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "D'Arcy, if I did not know you to be a truthful and honourable lad I should suppose that you had invented this story to save Grundy from punishment. As it is, I believe you."

"Yaas, sir. I expect you to take my word."

Dr. Holmes coughed again; and Mr. Railton turned his head away to hide a smile.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was almost too much for him. But it was so evident that the Honourable Arthur Augustus had told the exact truth that the most suspicious of headmasters could scarcely have entertained a doubt. He stood for some moments in deep thought.

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"You may go, D'Arcy," he said. "You may also go, Grundy. The school is dismissed. The matter will be inquired into further."

The St. Jim's juniors streamed out of Hall.

"You'd better look for the chap in the Shell now Grundy," grinned Tom Merry. "Which of us was it, Sherlock Holmes?"

"You think I can't spot him?" said Grundy. "Well, that's just where I come in. I've got the cad! Upon the whole, I should have worked it out in the long run that he was in the Shell."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wilkins.

"Don't interrupt me, Wilkins! I—I may say, I had practically worked it out that it was a Shell fellow. And I know who it was, too. I know who sneaked out of bounds on Tuesday evening. It was Racke. I saw him. Now I know why he was pumping me to find out just where the letter was in the Head's study, after I'd been there. And I've a jolly good mind to go to Railton—"

"Mr. Railton is here," said a deep voice.

"Oh, my hat!"

The Housemaster had come out of Hall as Grundy's loud voice resounded. A sudden silence fell upon the juniors. Racke's face was pale as death.

"Racke, you were out of bounds on Tuesday evening, it appears?"

"No, sir!" panted Racke.

"I jolly well saw you!" roared Grundy. "Crooke was helping you over the wall. You asked me not to mention it. And—"

"Crooke, come forward!"

Crooke came forward, flushed and uneasy.

"Did Racke go out of bounds on Tuesday evening, Crooke?"

"I saw him, sir," explained Grundy. "I mentioned it to Wilkins at the time. Didn't I, Wilkins? I said the rotter ought to be scragged!"

"You did, old chap," said Wilkins.

"Silence! Answer me, Crooke!"

"I—I didn't know what Racke was going for, sir," faltered Crooke. "I—I never knew anything about the letter. I—I guessed afterwards; but—but I didn't know. I swear I had nothing to do with it, sir!"

"That will do, Racke, you went out of school bounds on Tuesday evening, the time the letter was posted to Mr. Linton. You have denied doing so."

"I—I went out, sir," muttered Racke. "But I—I had nothing to do with the letter. I—I swear I hadn't!"

"Racke, there is no proof at present that you are the guilty party, but I warn you that you are under very grave suspicion. The matter will be investigated most thoroughly."

Mr. Railton passed on.

"Gentlemen," said Blake, "Racke did it, and he's a crawling, cringing ass! I vote that we give him the frog's-march round the quad!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard that as a pwopah capah, undah the cires."

And Racke of the Shell experienced the joys of the frog's-march, and he was very dusty and dishevelled when he escaped at last.

Next Wednesday: "A LESSON FOR LEVISON!"

BETRAY HIS FATHER, OR BETRAY HIS CHUMS--BEAU HAS TO CHOOSE!

THERE'S DANGER ON THE TRAIL!

Who is the mysterious watcher on the chums' home-ward trail . . . why is he there? Beau guesses, and he can say nothing!

by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Beaulerc's Father!

"HALLO! Something on!" remarked Bob Lawless.

It was a keen morning, and Frank Richards and Bob looked cheerful as they jumped off their ponies at the gate of Cedar Creek School.

As they came into the schoolground they looked round for their chum, Vere Beaulerc, but he was not to be seen.

Kern Gunten, the Swiss, was the centre of a group of fellows, and the sound of a general chuckle greeted Frank and Bob as they came in. They joined the group.

Gunten gave them a quick look. He had been speaking as they came up, but he stopped suddenly now.

"Go on, Gunten!" said Eben Hacke.

"What's the merry joke?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Don't leave us out of it."

"It's old Beaulerc on the rampage again!" grinned Hacke. "Gunten's popper fired him out

of his store in Thompson last night. Gunten was telling us about it."

Frank Richards frowned.

"Gunten might find something better to talk about!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, rather!" chimed in Chunky Todgers. "If poor old Beaulerc was full, it was old Gunten who sold him the fire-water, anyhow! Beaulerc may be here any minute, and you don't want him to hear about his popper."

"I don't care," said Gunten. "If his father is a remittance man and a waster, that's his lookout. He kicked up a row at the store last night, and he was fired. Serve him right!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Bob Lawless, with much less than his usual good-humour.

"Rats!" said Hacke. "Let Gunten spin his yarn. If young Beaulerc hears him it may do him good, and take him down a peg or two, I guess. He puts on too many airs for a remittance man's son."

"The old sport had got his remittance from



Urged on by Frank, the pony charged headlong into the startled kidnappers. "Ride for it, Bob!" he yelled, as his chum leapt for the saddle.

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England," grinned Gunten. "He came up to Thompson to blue it, as usual. He was in a game with Poker Pete, and I reckon he was cleaned out. Then the row started. If I had my way, old man Beauclerc would be ridden on a rail out of this section. We don't want his kind in the Thompson Valley."

"Shush!" muttered Bob hurriedly.

Vere Beauclerc had gone in at the gate. The Cedar Creek fellows glanced towards him rather uneasily. It was evident that the son of "Old Man Beauclerc" had heard Kern Gunten's words.

Beauclerc stood quite still for a moment, the crimson flushing into his handsome face.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless exchanged a miserable look. Their hearts ached sometimes for their chum, upon whose boyish life the shadow of a father's disgrace lay heavily.

They knew—what all the other fellows did not know—that Vere Beauclerc's icy pride and reserve were but a shield, behind which sensitive feelings were hidden.

Gunten's glance rested sneeringly on the handsome face of the remittance man's son. There was not another fellow there who would have taunted Vere with his father's shame; but the cad of the lumber school had no scruples.

"I guess—" Gunten went on.

"Hold your tongue!" whispered Frank Richards fiercely.

The Swiss shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess I can say what I like," he replied.

"Old man Beauclerc is a disgrace to this section. Some of the boys in Thompson have been talking of riding him on a rail over to Fraser. I guess it's a good idea."

Vere Beauclerc came towards the group. His dark eyes were glittering under his set brows.

"Are you speaking of my father, Gunten?" he said, in his low, quiet tones.

Gunten sneered.

"I'm speaking of the hobo who was fired out of my popper's store last night!" he said. "He went in to paint the town red. He got the boot, and serve him right. I guess— Hands off, hang you!"

He backed away as Beauclerc came towards him with clenched hands.

"Put your hands up!" Beau said, in the same quiet tones.

The Cedar Creek fellows gathered round in a ring.

The burly, heavily built Swiss was bigger than Beauclerc. He looked twice as heavy as the slim, graceful lad who was attacking him. But he gave ground at every blow.

Beauclerc's fists rained on his heavy, sullen face, and in sheer desperation Gunten put up a fight. But pluck was wanted to back up his strength, and in pluck the cad of the lumber school was deficient.

A right-hander squarely on his square, thick chin laid Gunten on his back, and he lay gasping helplessly.

Beauclerc looked down at him, his lip curling contemptuously. Gunten was quite capable of rising and continuing the fight, if he had chosen. But he did not choose. He gave Beauclerc a look of bitter hatred as he lay panting on the ground.

But he did not rise.

"Oh, get up, you galoot!" exclaimed Hacke.

"You're not finished yet!"

Beauclerc turned on his heel and walked away.

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towards the log schoolhouse, Frank and Bob joining him.

Then Gunten rose to his feet, and, followed by derisive grins from his schoolfellows, limped down to the creek to bathe his face.

Frank Richards pressed Beauclerc's arm as they went into the schoolhouse.

"Don't mind that sneaking cad, Beau," he muttered.

"I don't!" said Beauclerc quietly.

"And very likely it was all lies," said Bob Lawless.

"It wasn't lies," said Beauclerc. "I—I've just left my father at the shack. I know what happened last night."

"Poor old Beau!" murmured Frank. "But I'm glad you patted the cad. I'd have done it if you hadn't come in. The rotter! There isn't another fellow here who'd be mean enough—"

"I don't mind him. But—but it's true, more or less. I know there was a scene in Thompson last night." Beauclerc's handsome face was pale now, his forehead deeply lined. "I—I suppose you fellows think badly of my father. He—he isn't as that brute describes. He's weak, he's easily led, and when he has money from England he gets among a crew of rotten rascals. He's not so much to blame as—as you may think."

The boy's lips were trembling. To everyone else he showed only an impenetrable armour of cold reserve, but with his chums he had an almost pathetic anxiety that they should not think badly of his father.

"I—I'm sure of it, Beau," said Frank. "Nobody's enemy but his own. I—I understand."

Vere Beauclerc nodded and went into the school-room.

Frank and Bob remained in the porch with clouded faces. There was nothing they could say by way of comfort to their chum. His trouble was one that could only be borne with quiet patience.

And it was true that Lascelles Beauclerc was nobody's enemy but his own. But it was true, too, that he was his own deadly enemy. And the shame that he did not feel for himself was felt only too keenly by his son.

The Man Who Watched the Trail!

AFTER school that day Bob and Frank walked their ponies down the trail with

Vere Beauclerc to the fork, where he left them to follow the path through the timber to his lonely home near Cedar Camp.

"Good-bye, you fellows!" said Beauclerc as they stopped at the fork of the trail. "No more school till Monday."

"We shall see you again before that," said Bob. "You're coming to the ranch to-morrow, Cherub?"

Beauclerc shook his head.

"Thanks, Bob, but I can't come."

"Your pater doesn't want you?" asked Frank.

"Oh, no! But I've got work to do," said Beauclerc, with a smile. "There's plenty to be done now the winter's coming on. You haven't been through a Canadian winter yet, Frank."

"I'm looking forward to it," said Frank Richards. "But if the mountain won't come to Mohammed, Mohammed will go to the mountain, you know. We'll come over and help you work."

"It's splitting logs for the winter," said Beauclerc. "Jolly hard work."

"Not so hard for three as for one," said Bob. "We'll come."

"Well, I shall be glad if you do, of course," said Beauclerc. "But—"

"Nuff said! Expect us in the morning."

"Right-ho!"

Beauclerc went up the trail through the timber, and the cousins mounted their ponies. Bob Lawless glanced round quickly at the sound of a rustle in the larches.

"Hallo! Who's there?" he called out.

There was no reply, but another rustle came from the timber. Frank Richards checked his pony.

"What is it, Bob?"

Bob was staring into the dusky timber.

"There's somebody in the timber," he said.

"Somebody was watching us when we said goodbye to Beau."

"What on earth for?"

"Blessed if I know! I'm going to see."

Bob jumped down and ran among the trees, followed by Frank Richards.

"Look here, Frank!"

In the grass there were plain traces of boots, but there was no one to be seen. Whoever had been lurking in the timber at the fork of the trail had vanished.

Bob Lawless looked perplexed.

"That's dashed queer, Frank!" he exclaimed.

"There's been a man standing here waiting for

a jolly long time before we came up, and now he's cleared off, without letting us see him."

"How do you know he's been waiting a long time?" asked Frank Richards, in astonishment.

Bob laughed.

"That's easy enough to tell," he answered. Bob was scanning a rough old tree-trunk, and the earth about the roots. "When you've been a bit longer in the Canadian West, Franky, you'll learn some woodcraft. I dare say it would make you open your eyes if I told you all I can read here about the pilgrim who's been on this spot."

"Well, go ahead!" said Frank, with a smile.

To Frank Richards' eyes there was no "sign," beyond the fact that the grass was marked with vague traces of footsteps.

But it was evident that to the Canadian school-boy's keen eyes, trained in woodcraft, the surroundings told a different tale.

"There's been a man standing here under this tree, watching the fork of the trail, for an hour, at least," he said. "A man about five-feet-seven high, in a rough, grey coat, and pretty flush with money, too."

"Bob!"

Frank Richards' eyes opened wide.

"My dear chap, if you weren't a tenderfoot, fresh from the Old Country, you'd see all that

(Continued on the next page.)

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at a glance, and think nothing of it," said Bob Lawless good-humouredly.

"Well, I'm blessed if I see how you make it out!" said Frank incredulously. "I suppose somebody has been here, as there are fresh foot-prints. But for the rest, you're trying to pull my leg, Bob."

"Fathead!" said Bob. "It's as plain as your face, which is saying a lot. What was he doing it for? That's the puzzle. Some rustler looking for somebody to rob, I wonder?"

"How do you know he was watching the trail at all, and that he was here for an hour?" demanded Frank.

"Look!" Bob pointed to the earth under the tree. "Look at those heel-marks—how they're sunk into the soil. The man was standing here, leaning on the trunk for a good long time, or the heels would never have driven into the soil like that. And from the position of the marks you can see that he was facing the trail, with only a thin screen of bushes between that he could see through. If he wasn't watching the trail, what was he doing?"

Frank Richards nodded.

"Right on the wicket," he said. "I—I hadn't thought that out. But how the merry dickens do you know that he was wearing a grey coat?"

"Use your eyes, old chap! Look at this tree-trunk."

"The—tree-trunk?"

"Yes, ass," said Bob, laughing. "Can't you see that his coat's rubbed on the bark as he was leaning on it such a time, and the bark's rough? You'll find a dozen traces of rough, grey cloth there, if you look."

"Good egg!" said Frank admiringly. "It's simple enough—"

"When you know it," grinned Bob.

"And how do you know he was five-foot-seven?"

"About that," said Bob. "Look where his shoulders rested?"

"How do you know where his shoulders rested?"

Bob gave his cousin quite a pitying look.

"My dear ass, those threads of grey stop at the place where the top of the man's coat rested. There isn't a fragment more than five feet from the ground—rather under that. Add the height of the man's head to that, and there you are. Roughly, a man of five-foot-seven."

"Bravo!" said Frank. "It's like a detective story. I used to read at home. But how in the name of thunder do you know that he's flush with money? That's a joke, I suppose?"

"Not at all. He's flush with money because only a pretty well-off chap could afford to smoke cigars which cost a dollar each at Thompson. And here are three cigar-stumps in the grass, if you'll take the trouble to look. The man smoked three dollars in cigars while he was waiting here."

"My hat!"

"Only a pretty well-off chap would do that, I guess," said Bob, laughing. "Not a cattleman. We haven't any millionaires in this section. I should guess that the man who's been here was one of the 'sports' of Thompson—those rotters who live by playing poker with the cattlemen. They're flush of money when they're in luck, and easy come easy go with that kind of jay."

"But what on earth should he have been here watching the trail for?"

"I give that up."

Bob Lawless returned to his pony, and the

cousins rode away to the Lawless Ranch. The incident had puzzled them, and at the supper-table at the ranch they mentioned it to Mr. Lawless.

The rancher listened with some curiosity, but he shook his head when Bob had finished his description.

"Some fellow keeping an appointment, I guess," he remarked.

And with that the matter dropped, though Frank and Bob did not forget it.

Old Man Beauclerc!

BRIGHT and early in the morning, Frank Richards and Bob Lawless mounted their ponies to ride over to the remittance man's shack near Cedar Camp.

There was a keen breath of winter in the air, and they enjoyed the ride thoroughly. The shack came in sight at last under the trees, close by the side of the creek. It was a lonely habitation, out of sight of Cedar Camp, and with no other building within view of it.

There was the steady sound of an axe at work in the timber as the cousins rode up. Vere Beauclerc was already at work.

"Hallo!" shouted Bob Lawless, as he jumped from his pony. "Hallo! Where are you, Cherub?"

Beauclerc came out from the trees, axe in hand. He greeted his chums cordially.

"Popper about?" asked Bob.

"No. He's gone over to Thompson," said Beauclerc, a shade crossing his face. "You fellows had brekker?"

Bob Lawless grinned at the word. Like Frank Richards, Beauclerc sometimes unconsciously used expressions he had picked up at his earlier school in England.

"Yes," said Bob; "we're ready to work. We've brought our axes, too."

Beau led the way to the scene of his labours. There was a pile of sawn logs to split, and the three schoolboys set to work. The thud of the axes sounded through the timber and along the creek. The pile of fuel had grown large by the time they knocked off for lunch.

Lunch was of the plainest description, but quite good enough for the fellows whose appetites had been sharpened by hard work in the open air.

And in the afternoon work was resumed. Log after log was split, and the fuel stacked round the shack for the coming winter.

It was when labour was over, and coffee was brewed over a fire of chips under a dusky sky, where the stars were coming out like points of fire, that Bob Lawless related the incident of the previous evening.

Vere Beauclerc started, and gave the rancher's son a strange look as Bob spoke of the man who had waited and watched on the trail.

He fell very silent.

"Bob's worked out a description of the man like a detective in a book," said Frank Richards, laughing. "The only thing he can't work out is what was the man doing there."

"Watching the trail, of course," said Beauclerc, in a constrained tone.

"But why?"

Beauclerc shook his head.

"You fellows always ride home the same way," he said. "You always walk to the fork of the trail with me, and we part there. It may be somebody who's interested in your movements."

"But he cleared off without letting us see him, whoever he was!"

"He may have been spying to get information as to the best place and time to lay for you, with help at hand!"

"By Jerusalem! You think so, Cherub?"

Beauclerc gave him a strange look.

"Your father's a rich man, Bob—what we call rich in Thompson Valley, at any rate. Some rascal might have an eye on his dollars—through you."

"Phew!"

"Anyway, you ought to be careful," said Beauclerc quietly. "Couldn't you ride home by another trail from school?"

"Only by losing two or three miles. And we never get in before dark now," said Bob. "No fear!"

"But—but there might be danger—"

"We'll dodge it when it comes along—not before," said Bob. "Dash it all, Cherub, you're making us out nervous cases."

There was a step on the path by the creek. Lascelles Beauclerc, dimly seen in the gloom, passed into the shack without a glance at the schoolboys.

Vere rose to his feet, and his chums followed his example.

A few minutes later Vere Beauclerc went into the shack, and Frank and Bob were riding homeward under the stars.

There was a strange expression on Bob Lawless' face. He broke the silence at last.

"Frank, old chap—"

"Hallo!"

"I'm a howling chump!" said Bob Lawless. "Did you see old man Beauclerc when he went in?"

"Yes."

"Did you notice his coat?"

Frank Richards started.

"My hat! Yes; a grey coat!"

"And he's about five-feet-seven or eight," said Bob.

"Bob, you don't mean—"

"And he smokes expensive cigars so long as his remittance lasts!" said Bob grimly. "Flush of money till it's gone in drink and draw-poker!"

"Bob!"

"That's what I want you to kick me for!" said Bob. "I was describing the Cherub's own father to him. Luckily he didn't see it."

"Bob"—Frank Richards drew a deep breath—"Bob, do you think it was Beauclerc's father who was watching the fork of the trail last night?"

"Well, doesn't it look like it?"

"I—I suppose it does."

The chums rode on in silence, each occupied with his own thoughts.

But Bob Lawless had made one mistake. Vere Beauclerc knew who was the man who had watched the trail from the timber. That night, for long hours, the son of the remittance man lay troubled and sleepless—thinking.

Danger!

FRANK RICHARDS gave Beauclerc a quick, searching look when they met at Cedar Creek School on Monday morning.

In spite of Bob's assurance, Frank felt uneasy lest Vere should have guessed from the description the identity of the man who had watched the forked trail.

But the Cherub gave no sign. He was a little more quiet and subdued than usual, and that was all, and that was fully accounted for by trouble at home. By this time Lascelles Beauclerc had dissipated the remittance from England. It never lasted long, and he wasted the money in reckless profusion, without a thought of the future.

True, the wretched man always had a hope of luck turning his way at cards and enabling him to make a handsome "stake."

With grim poverty at the door, and his father

weak and irritable after his latest outbreak, Vere's life was troubled enough, and Frank did not expect to find him looking cheerful.



"Taxi!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Ronald Burnett, Ransom Sanatorium, Rainworth, near Mansfield, Nottinghamshire.

After school that day the three chums left Cedar Creek together as usual, and walked down to the fork of the trail, where they were accustomed to part. As Frank and Bob stopped, a brief hesitation came into Beauclerc's manner.

"I think I'll walk on a bit farther with you chaps," he remarked carelessly.

"You'll be late home," said Bob.

"That doesn't matter. I shall get in by my usual bed-time. Evening indoors isn't specially entertaining at the shack, you know."

"Right you are! We're good for a tramp as far as you like."

And with Frank and Bob leading their ponies, the three schoolboys tramped on down the dusty trail under the trees.

The early night of autumn had fallen, but the moon was rising over the hills, and the light filtered through the thick branches overhead. Bob Lawless chatted cheerily as they walked on through the wood, but only Frank answered him. Vere Beauclerc had fallen into silence.

It was half a mile from the forked trail that a sudden rustle was heard in the larches, and a dim figure appeared for a moment.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Bob.

Vere Beauclerc halted.

"Who is that?" he called out loudly and clearly.

A rustle—and silence.

"Better get on," said Beauclerc quietly. "Somebody is lurking in the timber."

The schoolboys hurried on. No sound came to their ears again. Whoever it was that had been lurking by the trail was silent.

It was not till they reached the plain beyond the belt of timber that Vere Beauclerc said good-night to his chums.

"You'll be a bit late," he said. "Better put on speed."

"Oh, we'll be home in a brace of jiffies," said Bob cheerily. "You'll be jolly late, though, Cherub."

"All serene! Good-night!"

"Good-night, old chap!"

Frank and Bob dashed off at a gallop for the ranch. Beauclerc stood watching them till they disappeared in the gloom, and then he turned and started upon the long tramp to the creek.

His face was troubled, his lips set and hard, as he tramped on in the dim moonlight. Hardy as he was, inured to exertion by the rough life of the frontier, he was fatigued by the time he reached the shack.

A point of red light greeted his eyes as he came up to the tumble-down building. It was the glowing end of a cigar.

"Is that you, Vere?" It was his father's voice.

"Yes, father!"

"You are late."

"Yes, father. Does it matter?" said the boy wearily.

Lascelles Beauclerc peered at his son in the gloom.

"You are quite pale," he said.

"I'm tired."

"Why are you so late?" asked the remittance man harshly.

"I walked a bit farther than usual with my friends."

"You should not have done so. You cannot stay out till this hour. Don't let it happen again, Vere. I shall expect you to-morrow night at the usual time. Keep that in mind."

"Father!"

"It is your bed-time now," said the remittance man. "Get into the house. Don't be as late as this to-morrow."

"Will you be home to-morrow evening, father?"

"No. Go in!"

Beauclerc went into the shack without another word. His father grunted angrily, and replaced the cigar in his mouth.

It was much later that night when Beauclerc woke from a troubled sleep, to hear the murmur of voices in the adjoining room. His father was not alone.

The voices were cautious and subdued. He did not hear the words, but he recognised the tones of Dave Dunn, the "bad man" of Cedar Camp, and the more silky voice of Poker Pete of Thompson.

He closed his eyes again and tried to sleep. But it was long before sleep would come—long after the murmur of the voices had died away in the shack by the murmuring creek.

Held Up on the Trail!

"CHERUB, old scout, what the thunder—" "Beau!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

It was after morning lessons at Cedar Creek the next day. Frank and Bob had stayed to speak to Mr. Slimmey, but a few minutes afterwards they looked for their chum.

They found Vere Beauclerc under the trees by the creek. He was seated on a log on the bank, too busily occupied to notice their approach.

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It was his occupation that struck them with astonishment.

Beauclerc had a six-chambered revolver upon his knees, and was carefully cleaning it, and as the chums came up he began slipping cartridges into the chambers.

His face was flooded with crimson as he looked up and caught their surprised glances upon him. He made a hasty movement as if to put the weapon out of sight; but it was too late for that.

"What on earth are you doing with a shooting-iron, Cherub?" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

Beauclerc did not reply.

"Beau!" exclaimed Frank.

The remittance man's son finished loading the firearm, and slipped it into the inside pocket of his rough jacket. He rose to his feet, his face still crimson.

"I—I didn't mean you to see it," he said haltingly. "I—I decided to bring it with me because—"

"Any trouble on the way home last night?" asked Bob.

"Oh, no; but—"

Bob chuckled.

"Did I alarm you with that yarn about the galoot watching the trail?" he asked. "Don't say you've got nerves, Cherub?"

"I have a very lonely way to go home," said Beauclerc, his manner less frank than usual. "And—and you remember that Mexican rustler who was round this part once. Don't say anything about this, you fellows. Miss Meadows would be angry if she knew I had a revolver."

"By gum, she would!" said Bob, with a whistle. "Better keep it dark, old chap. Mind it doesn't go off in your pocket."

"That's all right. I mean to carry this for a night or two," said Beauclerc, in a low voice. "You remember there was somebody lurking on the trail last night. I feel safer with it."

Beauclerc changed the subject at once, and nothing more was said about the revolver.

After school the three chums left Cedar Creek as usual. Vere Beauclerc halted at the fork of the trail.

"Not coming on this evening?" asked Bob.

"No. Father did not like my being so late home."

"Well, it isn't really safe to be out in the woods so late. There was a grizzly bear loose in this section once, you know. Good-night, old scout!"

The cousins mounted, as Vere Beauclerc disappeared into the timber, and rode on down the dusky trail.

"What a glorious moon!" said Frank, as the silver edge of the queen of night showed above the trees.

"Gorgeous!" said Bob. "Nearly as light as morning. Don't ride too fast, Frank; you'll catch your coconut on the branches in this half-light."

"Right-ho!"

The ponies' hoofs thudded softly on the grass of the forest trail as the chums rode on at a trot.

As they neared the spot where the lurking figure had been seen the previous night, they looked about them sharply.

Neither of them were nervous; but they remembered their adventure with a Mexican rustler on that trail a few weeks before, and they were on their guard.



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PEN PALS COUPON

22-10-38

From the darkness of the larches there came a sudden, deep voice.

"Halt!"

"By gum!"

"Halt! There's a rope across the trail!"

The schoolboys drew in their ponies at once. Across the trail, in the dimness, a rope stretched from tree to tree. They had almost ridden into it. As they halted there was a trampling of feet under the shadows of the trees, and three dim figures rushed out into the trail. Hands caught at the bridles of the ponies.

"Hands off!" shouted Bob Lawless angrily. "What's your game? Rustlers, by gum!"

"No harm is intended you," came the deep voice again. "But you must dismount. Only one of you is wanted."

"Which one?" exclaimed Bob, in astonishment.

"You, Bob Lawless!"

"Holy smoke!"

The cousins, sitting their panting horses, looked down at the three dim figures. Each of the three had a cloth mask tied across his face, completely hiding the features. Only their eyes could be seen—strange and eerie as they glittered in the moonlight.

Bob clenched his teeth.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" he demanded.

"That need not concern you now. You are wanted, and you are in our hands. If you resist, you will be handled!"

Bob's pony was drawn to the side of the trail. The masked man turned to Frank Richards and pointed down the trail.

"Ride on!" he said.

"I'm not going without Bob," said Frank, between his teeth.

"Fool! Ride on while you are safe! And carry a message to Rancher Lawless from me. Tell him that when he wishes to see his son again, it will cost him a thousand dollars. He

will hear from me later where and when to pay the money."

"Kidnappers!" muttered Bob.

"Ride on!"

Frank Richards did not ride on. It was not much use to think of a fight between two schoolboys and three burly men, but Frank did not intend to desert his chum.

"You'd better go, Frank," muttered Bob. "Tell my father, and tell him not to think of paying these scoundrels any money. Tell him I'll wait till he comes with the cattleman, and a rope for their necks."

"Silence!" muttered the masked leader. "That's enough. Richards, ride on at once, unless you wish to be left senseless in the trail!"

Frank's eyes gleamed.

"I won't go!" he said.

"Start him!" rapped out the leader harshly.

One of the ruffians struck Frank's pony a sharp blow on the flank, at the same time jerking away the rope across the trail. The pony started forward, Frank perforce rode down the trail, but only for a few yards.

He swung his pony round and drove him on at a gallop, right at the three scoundrels gathered round Bob Lawless. The manoeuvre was entirely unexpected. The pony crashed into the three, and sent them spinning in various directions.

There was a roar of surprise and pain, and loud curses from the ruffians as they reeled right and left.

"Now, Bob!" panted Frank.

"Ride for it, Franky!" yelled Bob, urging on his pony.

But a hand gripped the bridle and swung the animal round in time. The leader of the kidnappers struck fiercely at Frank Richards, and the schoolboy reeled from the saddle and crashed into the grass.

(Continued on page 36.)

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**EVEN THE BUCKS ARE PLEASED WHEN TUCKEY TODDLES DEIGNS TO
HONOUR THEM WITH HIS COMPANY.**



Intent on squashing the unfortunate Raik, Tuckey let go of his pound note. In a moment the wind had caught it and whisked it away across the deck.

Something for Toodles!

"OLD Brutus was a jolly good chap!" Tuckey Toodles of the Fourth made that sapient remark, looking up from a scribbled and smudgy page as Jack Drake came into Study No. 8 with Rodney.

Drake and Rodney had just come on board the Benbow after football practice, and both of them were looking ruddy and cheerful. But their fat studymate looked anything but cheerful. Tuckey's face was deeply lugubrious.

"Hallo, what are you up to?" asked Rodney.

Tuckey groaned.

"Beastly Cæsar. Old Packe found no end of fault with me this morning. I've got to mug this up. I call it rot."

"You should explain that to Mr. Packe," suggested Rodney, laughing.

"No good; he wouldn't understand. Old Brutus was a good chap, though," said Tuckey.

"What did Brutus do?"

"Polished off Cæsar!" answered Tuckey ferociously. "If the silly ass had only done it a little earlier, we shouldn't have this rotten Gallic War planted on us. Why couldn't he carry on a war in Gaul without writing books about it afterwards?"

Rodney glanced at Tuckey's paper. Tuckey had expended a great deal of time and trouble upon it; but it looked as if he had been upsetting the inkpot over it. Tuckey Toodles was not the most promising pupil in the Fourth Form at St. Winifred's. There was ink upon Tuckey's podgy fingers, too, and a smear upon his fat little nose.

"What's ditissimus?" groaned Tuckey. "You might tell a chap, Rodney. You're as good as a dic in the study."

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TOODLES THE MAGNIFICENT!

By Owen Conquest.

"Most wealthy, ass!"

Tuckey Toodles blinked at his Cæsar.

"That can't be it," he objected. "Cæsar wouldn't call Orgetorix an ass, would he? Apud Helvetios longe nobilissimus fuit et ditissimus Orgetorix. Orgetorix was the noblest and wealthiest ass among the Helvetians. That doesn't sound right."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Rodney. "That wouldn't do for Mr. Packe."

"Well, you said—"

"I said ditissimus was most wealthy, fathead."

"You said most wealthy ass. Drake heard you, didn't you, Drake?"

Jack Drake only chuckled.

"Besides, it couldn't be fathead," said Tuckey Toodles. "Cæsar wouldn't call him a fathead. I dare say he was a fathead—I know Cæsar was—but this isn't a humorous book—it's jolly solemn."

*Nothing less than a miracle could make
Tuckey Toodles the most popular fellow
on the Benbow—but miracles happen
sometimes!*

Suppose I put chap—would chap do? Orgetorix was the noblest and most wealthy chap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all very well to cackle," said Tuckey Toodles. "You haven't got to take the dashed thing in to Packe after tea. I've been slogging here for an hour while you chaps have been punting a ball about. I call it sickening! As if I care twopence about Orgetorix, and whether he was well off. The only one of those classical johnnies I've got any respect for is Brutus. Hallo, is that a letter, Drake?"

Jack Drake had brought a letter into the study with him, and he was reading it by the window. Tuckey eyed him inquisitively, forgetting for the moment all about Cæsar and Orgetorix.

"Eh? Yes. Dry up while I read it!" answered Drake.

"I didn't know the post was in. Any letters for me?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Well, you might have looked!" said Tuckey Toodles, in an injured tone. "I'm expecting a tip from my people."

"There was a postcard for you in the rack," said Rodney.

"Only a postcard?"

"That's all."

"Well, you might have brought it along, anyway!"

"Raik took it to bring to you," said Rodney. "I'd have brought it if I'd known you were here, fathead; I supposed you were hanging about the canteen, as usual."

"Sure there wasn't a letter, too?" said Tuckey. "I'm awfully hard up just at present. If I had my tip, I'd get Raik to do this thumping exercise for me; he'd do it for a bob."

"That wouldn't be much use, if you've got to show it up to Mr. Packe," said Dick Rodney. "He would know Raik's fist."

Tuckey grinned.

"You're a new chap here," he said. "You don't know the ropes. Raik does lots of lines for fellows—he does all Daubeny's. He can imitate anybody's fist. I'll tell you what, Rodney; you lend me a bob, and I'll get Raik to do this for me."

"Rats!" was Rodney's reply.

Tuckey Toodles rose to his feet.

"Well, I'll go and get the postcard—may be something about the tip on it. Blow Caesar! I think I'll tell Packe that I've had an awful headache; he can't do more than lick me, anyhow!"

"You young spoofer!"

"Well, I should have a headache if I kept on with it," said Toodles, and he quitted the study.

There were several fellows gathered round the letter rack on the lower deck of the Benbow. Tuckey Toodles joined them and blinked at the rack.

"Where's my postcard?" he demanded.

"Raik took it to give you," said Estcourt.

"I haven't seen Raik," grunted Tuckey. "I wish he'd leave my letters alone! Where is he?"

"Give it up."

Tuckey made his way to the canteen amidstships, but he did not find Pierce Raik there. He looked for him next in his study, No. 7 in the Fourth, and there he found him.

Raik was seated at the table, and he started up as Tuckey Toodles came in. Tuckey gave him an accusing look.

"Where's my postcard?" he demanded. "You took it out of the rack. Rodney saw you, and so did Estcourt."

Raik nodded.

"Just bringing it to you," he said. "Here it is!"

"I don't see what you wanted to bring it to your study for," said Toodles suspiciously.

"You've been reading it!"

"Not at all," answered Raik airily. "I've been looking for you to give it to you, Toodles."

"Well, give it to me, then," grunted Tuckey.

Raik tossed the card across to him. Tuckey Toodles caught it, and took it to the window to read it, Pierce Raik watching him with a rather peculiar expression on his face. A less obtuse youth than Tuckey Toodles might have guessed that the cad of the Fourth had some motive for taking possession of his postcard for a time. What that motive might have been, however, was rather a puzzle, and Tuckey did not even think about it. His eyes were glued upon the card, and an expression of beatific satisfaction overspread his fat face.

"Hurrah!" he ejaculated.

"Hallo! Good news?" asked Raik carelessly.

"Hip-pip!" yelled Tuckey, and he fairly danced in his satisfaction. "Fifty quids! Hurrah!"

"Fifty what?"

"Quids!" shouted Tuckey Toodles. "Gorgeous! You never believed that my Uncle Toodles was rich, Raik."

"I don't believe it now," remarked Raik.

"You would if you read this card!" chuckled Tuckey. "It would be just like you to read a fellow's correspondence, too. I wonder you haven't!"

"I say, old chap—"

"Not so much of your old chap," said Tuckey Toodles loftily. "You needn't take the trouble to be civil to me now, Raik. You can go and eat coke! Yah!"

And with that, Tuckey Toodles rolled out of Study No. 7 in a state of great glee, leaving Pierce Raik grinning.

In the Lap of Fortune!

"HALLO!"

"What's up?"

Drake and Rodney spoke simultaneously as Tuckey Toodles came back into Study No. 8. They were surprised.

There was a change in Tuckey Toodles.

He seemed rather to sail than to walk into the study, and his fat little nose, with its smear of ink, was elevated to an unusual altitude—though Nature had already sufficiently elevated it.

Tuckey glanced loftily at his studymates. They regarded him with astonishment. Tuckey seemed to have grown several inches taller, and to be walking on air.

"I've had a postcard from my Uncle Toodles," said Tuckey, in a rather distant manner.

"Well?"

"He's rather decent," said Tuckey in a negligent tone. "He's sending me fifty quid on Saturday."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Fifty pounds!"

"Gammon!"

Tuckey's lip curled.

"I dare say it surprises you," he remarked. "I dare say you've never seen a fifty-pound note in your life, Rodney."

"Quite true—I haven't."

"And Drake's just as poor as you are now," said Tuckey scornfully.

"Just!" assented Jack Drake.

"I'll lend you some money when I get my remittance!" exclaimed Toodles, in a burst of generosity. "Dash it all, I'm not mean! After all, you're my friends, though you're poor blighters without a quid to your name. It's jolly easy-going of me to pal with you—it's my good nature, you know!"

"You silly ass!" said Rodney politely. "What bee have you got in your bonnet now?"

"Read that!" said Tuckey loftily, holding out the postcard.

The chums of the Fourth glanced at it. Then they stared.

In a rather scrawling handwriting the message on the card ran:

"Dear Rupert,—I have received your letter. I am afraid you have been extravagant. However, I am sending you a fifty-pound note on Saturday. You must make the most of it."

"Your affectionate uncle,
"MONTAGUE TODDLES."

"Well, my only hat!" ejaculated Drake in amazement.

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"Phew!" murmured Rodney.

Tuckey's eyes danced.

"Isn't it ripping?" he exclaimed. "Fifty quids. That's my rich uncle, you know."

"You've got such a thumping lot of rich uncles and aunts and things," said Drake. "Their riches haven't travelled as far as the Benbow yet."

"That looks like it, what?" grinned Toodles. "Fifty pounds! Why, even Daub's pater doesn't send him fifty pounds at a time. There isn't another fellow at St. Winifred's who's ever had fifty quid in a lump—not even Lovelace of the Sixth."

"It's jolly queer," said Drake.

"Not at all," answered Tuckey airily. "You see, my uncle's simply rolling in money."

"He must be to squeeze out fifty-pound notes," said Rodney. "I suppose your uncle isn't a humorist, is he, pulling your leg?"

Tuckey Toodles sniffed.

"Well, I congratulate you, Tuckey," said Drake.

"Thanks, old chap!" said Tuckey loftily. "I'll remember you when my fifty pounds comes!"

"Fathead! I don't want any of it," said Drake testily. "Don't be an ass."

"Look here, Drake—"

"But if you're going to roll in money, you may as well stand your whack at tea for once," said Drake. "Old Capps will give you tick, I dare say, if you show him that postcard."

Tuckey's eye roamed disparagingly over the frugal tea-table in Study No. 8.

"This won't do for me," he said. "I want something decent. Bless your mouldy old sardines. I'll stand you fellows a feed, anyhow, for once in your lives. Mind, I'm not going to have you sticking me for feeds all the time as soon as I get my money!"

"What?"

"That's got to be understood," said Tuckey Toodles, blinking seriously at his incensed study-mates. "I'm going to do the generous thing, but I'm not going to be looted. Just understand that to begin with."

Jack Drake rose to his feet and took Tuckey's fat ear in a finger and thumb and led him to the door.

"Leggo!" howled Tuckey. "Wharrer you at, you silly ass?"

"Outside!"

"Leggo! Yaroooh!"

Jack Drake jerked the grubby junior into the passage and slammed the door on him. Tuckey stood rubbing his reddened ear for a minute or two, gasping with wrath. This certainly was not the way to treat a fellow with such great expectations. His study-mates did not seem to understand what an important fellow Tuckey Toodles had suddenly become.

"Ow!" gasped Tuckey. "Cheeky rotters! I'll show 'em!"

He tore open the door and glared into the study. Drake and Rodney had resumed their tea.

"Yah!" roared Tuckey.

"Buzz off!" snapped Drake, picking up the loaf.

"I won't stand you a feed now!" howled Tuckey Toodles. "I shan't lend you any money! Yah!"

"Whiz!"

Toodles closed the door just in time, and the loaf crashed on it. With a snort of wrath, Tuckey went his way—and shook the dust of Study No. 8 from his feet.

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Popular!

"FIFTY pounds!"

"Phew!"

"Lucky bargee!"

Tuckey Toodles purred with satisfaction.

It was the following day, and all the Lower School at St. Winifred's knew of Tuckey's amazing luck.

Tuckey Toodles had not been exactly popular before. Now he seemed to have jumped into something like popularity. Fellows found that old Toodles wasn't such a bad chap, after all, considering.

There were plenty of good points about old Tuckey.

Some doubting Thomases declined at first to believe in the fifty pounds. But Tuckey loftily displayed the postcard from Uncle Toodles, and they were silenced.

For there it was in black and white. Raik certainly suggested that perhaps Uncle Toodles was pulling his nephew's leg. But that did not seem at all probable. A fellow's uncle wouldn't write to him that he was sending him a handsome tip unless he really was sending him a handsome tip; the juniors were agreed upon that.

Tuckey Toodles bore his blushing honours—thick upon him—not with too much modesty. It was undeniable that Tuckey swanked.

But, after all, as Newson remarked, a fellow was entitled to swank when he had relations who squeezed out fifty pounds at a time in tips.

Even Vernon Daubeny of the Shell never received tips like that, and Daub's people were no end wealthy. Fellows Tuckey hardly knew by sight nodded to him most politely now, and even Fifth Formers condescended to take note of his existence.

There was one drawback to his great expectations; they weren't to materialise till Saturday, and it was still only Thursday. There were two days to wait.

Mr. Capps, in the school canteen, declined to give Tuckey credit on the strength of his uncle's postcard, though Tuckey showed it to him, and assured him, almost with tears in his eyes, that it was all right.

Somehow, Mr. Capps did not believe that it was all right, and he persisted in carrying on business on a strictly cash basis—which barred off Tuckey from the canteen till Saturday.

Indeed, Mr. Capps most unjustly suspected Tuckey of having written the famous postcard himself, as a dodge for obtaining "tick" in the canteen.

"I shall transfer my custom to the shop at Chade, Capps!" said Tuckey Toodles, with dignity, after his twentieth attempt to soften the heart of Mr. Capps—in vain.

"Jest as you like, Master Toodles," answered Capps, quite unmoved. "P'r'aps they'll let you run up a bill. What I knows is, I won't!"

"I'm receiving fifty pounds on Saturday, Capps."

Mr. Capps closed one eye.

"You're a suspicious beast, Capps!" said Toodles.

"Thanky, Master Toodles."

"I was going to give you an order for a couple of pounds' worth of tuck," said Toodles—"now I shan't!"

Mr. Capps did not look dismayed.

"I'll simply take a couple of tarts now," said Tuckey.

"Not unless you pay for 'em, Master Toodles," answered Capps.

Tuckey gave a snort.

Even for a couple of tarts he could not pay with his expectations, and he rolled disconsolately out of the canteen.

He was reduced to sidling into Study No. 8 for tea that day; but his manner to his study-mates was lofty in the extreme, not to say haughty. Drake and Rodney did not seem to mind. They stood Tuckey his tea, as usual, and Tuckey took the lion's share—also as usual. Over tea he spent his fifty pounds—in advance. He was thinking of a motor-bike, he told his study-mates, also of a canoe, a new footer rig, and several other things. Indeed, the things Tuckey thought of would probably have run away with a good many fifty-pound notes.

It seemed to Tuckey Toodles that Saturday would never come. He did not turn up to supper in Study No. 8 that evening. Chetwynd and Vane of the Fourth had him to supper, standing him quite a handsome spread, that spread being intended as a sort of sprat to catch a whale when Tuckey came into his money.

And on Friday Tuckey put his great expectations to still further use, raising two or three little loans in the Fourth, to be repaid when he got his fifty pounds.

"When I get my fifty pounds," was now the burden of most of Tuckey Toodles' remarks.

And there were many triumphs in store for Toodles. As the Fourth came out of their Form-room on Friday afternoon three elegant figures loomed up in the passage. Daubeny, Egan, and Torrence of the Shell were waiting there for Tuckey Toodles.

Tuckey eyed them suspiciously as they came up to him, smiling.

His last interview with Daubeny had been a painful one. He had dropped into Daub's study for tea, and he had dropped out again in a heap, with Daub's elegant boot to help him. But that was before Uncle Toodles' postcard, and the great Daub's manner was now very friendly.

"Waitin' for you, old top!" said Daub. "Comin' along to tea?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Tuckey.

"I've been goin' to ask you for ever so long," said Daubeny affably. "You've been rather neglectin' us of late, Toodles."

Toodles swelled.

Deep down in his fat heart he knew the reason for Daub's unaccustomed cordiality; but he would not admit the fact, even to himself. It was so much more agreeable to suppose that he was sought after for his own fascinating qualities.

"Well, I've got such a thumping lot of engagements, you see," said Tuckey.

"Yaas, I know you have; you popular fellows never have much time to give a pal," assented Daubeny.

"Oh, quite!" murmured Egan.

Torrence grinned assent.

"Still, you ought to spare us an evenin' every now and then," said Daubeny gravely. "Of course, I know your study-mates want you to stick to them, and lots of fellows are anxious to get you to their quarters, but I really think you might give us this evenin', Toodles. Be a pal!"

Tuckey beamed.

"I will, old chap!" he said.

"That's a good sort! Six o'clock," said Daubeny.

"Right-ho!"

Tuckey Toodles' fat nose was higher than ever when he rolled into Study No. 8 and found Drake and Rodney getting tea, there. Tuckey stood before the glass hanging on the bulkhead and adjusted his tie very carefully, and brushed his hair. Drake glanced at him in surprise.

"Hallo, what's the game?" he inquired. "Trying to make yourself a little less grubby than usual?"

"I don't want any cheek, Drake," said Toodles distantly. "Kindly keep your dashed familiarity for your own friends."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I don't like it," said Toodles. "I'm not a snob, I hope. But there's a difference between us, and I'd like you fellows to understand it. If I'm civil to you in this study it doesn't mean that I don't want you two bounders to keep your distance."

"You'll have to be rather more civil if you want any tea, Tuckey."

Tuckey gave a sniff of disdain.

"I'm having tea with my friends," he answered loftily. "My pal Daub's asked me."

"You young ass! Daub's heard of the fifty-pound note, I suppose, and he's going to teach you to play banker," grunted Drake.

"I decline to hear any insinuations against my friend Daub," answered Tuckey Toodles haughtily.

And, having adjusted his tie to his satisfaction, Tuckey left Study No. 8 and rolled along the deck to the Shell quarters.

The Remittance!

VERNON DAUBENY & CO. greeted the grubby junior with great cordiality.

The bucks of the Shell had heard all about the expected fifty-pound note, and at first they had taken the story with a very large grain of salt. But they found that it was generally credited among the juniors, and when Daub had had a glimpse of the famous postcard he had to admit that it looked all right.

Daub's favourite horse had lately run away with a large slice of Daub's ample allowance, and he saw no reason why he should not make good the deficit at Tuckey's expense. Hence the friendly smiles with which the fat fly was greeted in the spider's web.

DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution:

KERR: As I pointed out to Farmer Blunt, Yode said Racke and Crooke, sitting by the rick, had thrown down cigarette-stubs near enough to set light to it. Yode then stated that the rick was burned to the ground, and the grass for several yards round it scorched black. In that case, any stubs near the rick would undoubtedly have been burnt, and no trace left. How Yode found a number of stubs intact after the blaze was a mystery he alone could explain. I fancy he saw Racke and Crooke, and thought it was a great chance to get even with them by firing the rick—which didn't belong to him, anyway, so it was no personal loss—and landing the blame on the fellows who had once dumped him in the hedge. And but for his invention of the cigarette-stubs, it might easily have worked!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,601.

Tuckey Toodles grinned expansively at the tea-table. Daub's lavish spread was very different from the frugal tea in Study No. 8, and Tuckey did it more than justice. After tea he accepted a cigarette from Daub's handsome case, and smoked it with quite a doggyish air.

Naturally the fat junior also had no objection to a little game of nap. Nap was quite in accordance with his new character of buck. With the door locked, Egan produced the cards, and the four juniors sat down to a surreptitious game.

Tuckey Toodles was unprovided with cash, as usual, but that did not matter. He was to roll in money on the morrow; and Daub assured him that among pals a fellow's I O U was all right—right as rain.

So during the process of the little game quite a considerable quantity of impot paper was converted into I O U's, with Tuckey's initials—"R. de V. T."—scrawled upon them. Tuckey's fat face was a little serious, however, when he rose from the game, indebted to the tune of ten pounds to his new friends.

"Not goin'?" said Daubeny affably. "Well, if you must—I suppose prep must be done. Give you your revenge any time, old top."

"Oh, rather!" gasped Tuckey.

And he escaped from the study.

Daubeny & Co. winked at one another when he was gone. Tuckey Toodles had paid well for his entertainment, if his I O U's were worth anything.

Tuckey Toodles was one of the first out of the hammocks on Saturday morning. For once in his life, he showed his little fat nose first on deck. Long before the morning postman could possibly be expected, Tuckey Toodles was watching for him. The morning post came in before breakfast, but there was no letter for Tuckey.

"Next post," said Tuckey airily, and he went cheerfully into the Form-room.

That morning Tuckey was in hot water several times. Mr. Packe did not know that Tuckey's fat mind was running upon his fifty-pound note.

Tuckey was greatly relieved when the Fourth Form was dismissed. At the dinner-table Tuckey's round face shone like unto a full moon. He seemed already to hear the rustle of the fifty-pound note.

Immediately after dinner Tuckey rolled out on the main deck to watch the gangway for the postman. He was almost trembling with excitement when that gentleman appeared in sight on the path down the river from Chade.

"Here he comes, Tuckey!" grinned Raik.

"Now for the merry quidlets!" murmured Chetwynd.

Quite a crowd had gathered round Tuckey Toodles to see the fifty-pound note as soon as the letter was opened. Daubeny & Co. were in the crowd. They were keenly interested; they had a financial interest now in that great remittance. Drake and Rodney paused on the way to the gangway to see their studymate receive his good fortune. There was a shout as the postman came across the gangway.

"Anything for Toodles?"

There was!

And there was a hush as Tuckey received his letter—directed in the scrawling hand now well-known to the juniors, the hand of Uncle Toodles!

"Let's see it, Tuckey!"

"Certainly, dear boys!" said Toodles negligently.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,601.

Daubeny lent him a penknife, and Tuckey slit the envelope.

"Hallo, there's something in it!" said Raik.

"Of course there is—my fifty!" snapped Tuckey.

"It doesn't look like fifty!"

"By gad, it doesn't!" remarked Daubeny.

And it didn't!

There was a note in the letter as Tuckey unfolded it, but it was not a crisp, rustling "fifty." It was only too plainly a currency note. Tuckey took it out rather blankly.

"A—a pound!" he stammered.

Some of the juniors grinned. Raik gave a chuckle. Tuckey stared at the letter.

"He's put in a pound note by mistake," suggested Drake.

"He—he—he says here—he encloses the pound note as promised," stammered Tuckey blankly.

"Oh dear, he—he said on the postcard—you fellows all saw it—a fifty-pound note—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Raik.

Tuckey dragged the famous postcard out of his pocket and stared at it. It was rather crumpled and grubby from much handling, but it was plainly decipherable. There it was—a fifty-pound note! That was what was written. But now that Tuckey stared at it more attentively, he noted what he had not specially observed before—that the figures "50" were crowded in between the "a" and the "pound."

And the truth dawned upon him.

That was why Raik had taken the postcard from the rack! Raik, whose skill with the pen was well known!

Tuckey understood at last.

"You rotter, Raik!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Raik. "I was only pulling your leg, Tuckey. I wanted to see what you'd be like with fifty quids coming!"

There was a howl of laughter from the juniors.

"What a rotten sell!" growled Daubeny in great disgust, and he walked away—to light a cigarette in his study with Tuckey's I O U.

Tuckey Toodles stood rooted to the deck among the roaring juniors. He had a pound note in his fat fist, and at any other time a pound note would have been a joyful possession. But now a pound note could not comfort him.

"You—you—you spoofing rotter!" he gasped, and he made a sudden rush at Raik. Tuckey was not a fighting-man, but his wrath was too much for him now. He clutched the cad of the Fourth, and Raik gave a howl as he rolled on the deck under Tuckey's weight.

"Look out, Tuckey!" shouted Drake. "Your note—"

"Oh crumbs!"

It was too late!

As Tuckey clutched Raik the pound note slipped from his fat fingers, and the strong wind from the river caught it. In an instant it was whirling away on the wind, far out on the river.

Tuckey jumped up, leaving Raik gasping on the deck. He made a rush after his flying note, but it was far beyond the rail. With horrified eyes Tuckey hung on to the rail and watched the pound note fluttering away on the wind, far over the waters, till it fluttered into the Chadway and vanished for ever. Tuckey Toodles' remittance had come—and gone!

And for days afterwards there was a sad and lugubrious face on board the Benbow—the face of Tuckey Toodles, who mourned and would not be comforted.

Next Week: "RIVALS OF THE RACE!"

IS YOUR NAME HERE ?

262 READERS WIN FREE FOOTBALLS!

It goes without saying that there was a fine entry for the first "Footer Stamps" (end-of-August) Prize-giving, and we congratulate readers on the many good scores of "Goals" made.

Actual winning scores proved to be all those of 34 "goals" and over, and their senders' names are given here. A Prize Football was sent off promptly to each of the winners.

At the time of going to press we are getting ready for the end-of-September Prize-giving, and that list of winners will be given in our earliest possible issue.

First Contest Winners: J. ABBOT, Harrow; E. ALBUTT, Hammersmith, W.6; A. ALGER, Dagenham; PETER ALLEN, Harrow; ROY ANNIS, W. Ealing; D. ANSELL, Wembley; GEORGE ARMORY, Hunwick; FRED ASLEY, Kingswood; J. M. ATKINS, Brighton; R. ATTWOOD, Peckham Rye.

JOHN BAKER, Pailton; C. BALL, Petworth; D. BRANT-SMITH, R. Eastbourne; A. BARHAM, Norden; E. P. J. BARNARD, Penge, S.E.20; R. F. BARNES, Peole; J. JACK BARTER, Bourne-mouth; VINCENT A. BANENDALE, Openshaw; R. BAYLISS, Nuneaton; KENNETH BEARD, Camberley; R. BECKETT, Regent's Park, N.W.1; LEONARD BENCH, Balsall Heath; BERNARD BENNETT, Barnsley; ROY BENNETT, Oniton Broad; F. BENSON, Liverpool; W. BIRTWISTLE, Ribbles-ton; A. C. L. BISHOP, South Harrow; S. BOWDEN, Hales; ROBERT BREZZE, C. Coholm; ROBERT BREWER, Bromley; R. BRYLEY, Exeter; A. BRIARS, Leicester; L. BRIDGES, King's Lynn; PETER O. BROOKE, Sanderstead; G. BROWN, Downham; ANDREW BROWNIE, Strathaven; JOHN BUCKLEY, Bermondsey, S.E.16; A. BUDGETT, Edinburgh; R. J. BUGG, Long Melford; J. BUTCHER, London, N.15; N. BUTLER, Palgrave.

SYDNEY CAMPBELL, Pontyclun; JAMES CHALLIS, Hampstead, N.W.3; SAM CHAMBERS, Belfast; R. K. CHAPMAN, Canterbury; G. CLARK, Sutton Coldfield; W. CLARK, New Southgate, N.11; JOHN CLARKE, Llangollen; JOHN F. CLEVE, Gt. Crosby; GEORGE COLES, Wickham; WILLIAM COLLINS, Carshalton; WILLIAM CONNOR, Shadwell, E.1; NORMAN COOK, East Croydon; HARRY COOPER, Salford; J. G. COOPER, London, N.16; M. COTTERELL, Broadway; J. COULBY, Retford; ROY COWLING, Wellswood; REGINALD CROOK, Stamford; A. W. CROSS, Hemel Hempstead; ROBERT CROSSLEY, Harrogate; RALPH CROW, Dalston, E.8; NIALD CROWLEY, Ballsbridge.

W. S. DALGLEISH, Edinburgh, 8; COLIN DAY, Kingston; N. DELLER, London, N.W.3; PETER DERHAM, Southampton; R. DIVE, Kennington Lane, S.E.1; P. DOUGHTY, Sutton; FRANK DRABBLE, Gleadthorpe; ERIC DUNTON, Alveston.

E. EDWARDS, Rowlands Castle; A. ELLIOTT, Hackney, E.8; RONALD ELLIOTT, Stalham; SAMUEL ELLIOTT, Greencastle.

HERBERT FARROW, Kirby Moorside; JOHN FIELD, Eastbourne; BILLY FINLAY, Ormeau; GEOFFREY FISHER, Lr. Wanborough; D. FLINDERS, Wimbledon, S.W.19; L. FOLKARD, Oulton Broad; E. FOSTER, Neepsend; H. FOWLER, Eltham; J. FRASER, Tiptree; R. FRYER, Darton.

KENNETH GAUN, Beccles; JAMES GEDDES, Galashiels; VICTOR GEORGE, Foulsham; HOWARD GIST, Leicester; RICHARD GLOVER, Edgware; T. GOLDING, Forest Gate, E.7; FRANCIS J. GRANT, Walthamstow, E.17; F. GRATTON, Plymouth; A. GREENBERG, West Norwood, E.27; W. GREENSMITH, Cinderhill; DENIS GRIER, Chiswick, W.4; E. GUIBLIN, Littleover.

PETER HAIGH, Oldham; ERIC HALL, London, S.W.2; J. HALSTEAD, Brentford; BILLY HAMILTON, Belfast; A. G. HANKINS, Seatonhorpe; THOMAS B. HARAN, Wisbech; ROY HARRIS, E. Dulwich, S.E.22; F. W. HAWKE, Plympton; R. HAYES, Reading; DEREK HAYTER, Bourne-mouth; N. HEATHFIELD, London, S.W.2; G. HENRY, Catel, Guernsey; HUGH HEWITSON, Edinburgh, 9; WILLIAM HEWITT, Newtonmearns; P. J. HILL, Broadstone; PERCY HOBBS, Templecombe; HAROLD HOLDING, Exeter; T. W. HOLT, Dagenham; L. HORN, Harefield; H. HORNBY, Horwich; C. HORROCKS, Heaton Chapel; RAYMOND HORST, Milford Haven; W. E. HOWE, Sheffield, 6; W. HURRELL, Hornchurch.

G. ILLSLEY, Fulham; R. INOTT, Burton-on-Trent; DERRICK JENNER, Palmers Green, N.13; ANDREW JOHNSON, Highgate, N.6; IAN JOHNSTON, Glasgow; A. W. JONES, Bere Alston; DAVID A. JONES, Old Colwyn; GERALD JONES, Bangor, N. Wales; KEN JONES, Mountain Ash; PHILIP JONES, Westbury; R. JONES, Bristol, 5; TERRY JONES, Cashes Green; W. T. E. JONES, Eltham, S.E.9; F. JULIAN, Carshalton.

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G. LARKWORTHY, W. Croydon; KEN LAUNDER, Trerule; H. N. LAMB, Birmingham, 8; D. G. LANGFORD, Newport; A. J. LEFLEY, Doncaster; F. C. LEWIS, Newport; J. H. LEWIS, S. Harrow; L. LEWIS, Ascot; B. LOFFLER, Hendon, N.W.4; R. LUKER, Ventnor.

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Is YOUR name in the list—if so, good for you, and our congratulations. If not, keep on with "Footer Stamps," as in case you miss the September list, you can still be in the running for this month's prize.

THERE'S DANGER ON THE TRAIL!

(Continued from page 29.)

"Hold that young fool!"

An iron grip was laid on Bob Lawless. Frank lay dazed in the grass. In a few moments more Bob would have been led away into the timber.

But at that moment a figure sprang out from the dusky thickets into the clear moonlight on the trail.

"Stop!"

"Beau!" panted Frank Richards.

With a face white as marble, his eyes gleaming from it like stars, the handsome son of the remittance man stood with the revolver in his hand, the barrel levelled at the kidnappers, his finger on the trigger.

"Stop!" His voice rang out sharp and clear. "Let them go, or I'll shoot!"

Father and Son

WERE BEAULCERC'S voice rang and echoed on the trail. The three ruffians, startled, stared at him. The revolver muzzle bore upon all three men from where the schoolboy stood, and a pressure of the finger was enough to send one, at least, into eternity in the twinkling of an eye.

"The Cherub!" panted Bob Lawless, in surprise and delight. "Good old Cherub! Keep them covered!"

Frank Richards scrambled to his feet.

"Shoot them if they lift a finger, Beau!" he panted.

"I shall!" said Beaulcerc grimly.

The masked men stood irresolute.

"Boy!" The deep voice of the leader was husky with rage. "Fool! Go at once! Leave this spot!"

"It is you who will go," said Vere Beaulcerc quietly and steadily. "This revolver is loaded in every chamber, and I'm a good shot. I shall shoot if you raise a hand."

There was a muttered curse.

"Go!" said Beaulcerc. "If you are not gone in one minute I shall shoot!"

There was no mistaking the grim earnestness of the boy. The hands that held Bob Lawless fell away from him.

With muttered curses, the three masked men plunged into the timber. Their trampling footsteps died away in the silence of the forest. Not till the last sound had died did Beaulcerc lower the weapon.

Then his arm dropped to his side, and he drew a deep breath.

"Beau, old chap," said Frank. "Would you have fired?"

"I should have fired," said Beaulcerc quietly. "Ride home now—ride home, and remember in future that there's danger on the trail."

"But how did you get here, Cherub?" exclaimed the astonished Bob.

"I did not go home. I followed you through the timber—but of sight."

"Then you expected this?"

"I feared it."

"Jolly good luck that you did!" said Bob. "But you're not going home alone after this, Cherub. Those scoundrels are still in the wood. Come home with us. We can send word to your father."

Beaulcerc shivered.

"No, no! Good-night!"

"Beau!" shouted Frank.

But the remittance man's son had already plunged into the wood and disappeared. The chums shouted to him, but no answer came. Frank caught his pony.

"I guess we'd better be moving," said Bob at last. "Come on, Franky. The Cherub doesn't want us!"

Frank Richards nodded silently, and the cousins mounted and rode off. They lost no time in getting to the ranch.

Through the dusky wood Vere Beaulcerc was tramping homeward. He reached the shack and entered. A candle burned on the plank table. By it sat Lascelles Beaulcerc, with a black brow. He looked up, frowning, as his son entered.

"You are late again!" he said, in a grinding voice.

"Yes, father," said Beaulcerc dully.

"Where is my revolver? I have missed it from its place."

Beaulcerc laid the revolver on the table in silence.

The remittance man looked at him, and their eyes met. As he read what was written in Vere's face, the remittance man paled, and his breath came quickly.

"Vere!" he muttered.

"I should have fired, father!" said Beaulcerc, in a low, shaking voice. "I was not sure, though I suspected—but I should have fired!"

The remittance man's eyes sank before his son's. Vere Beaulcerc gave him one look of haggard misery, and passed into his room. And no word came from the man whom his son had saved from crime.

Next Week: "THE BAD MAN FROM BANDO!"

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