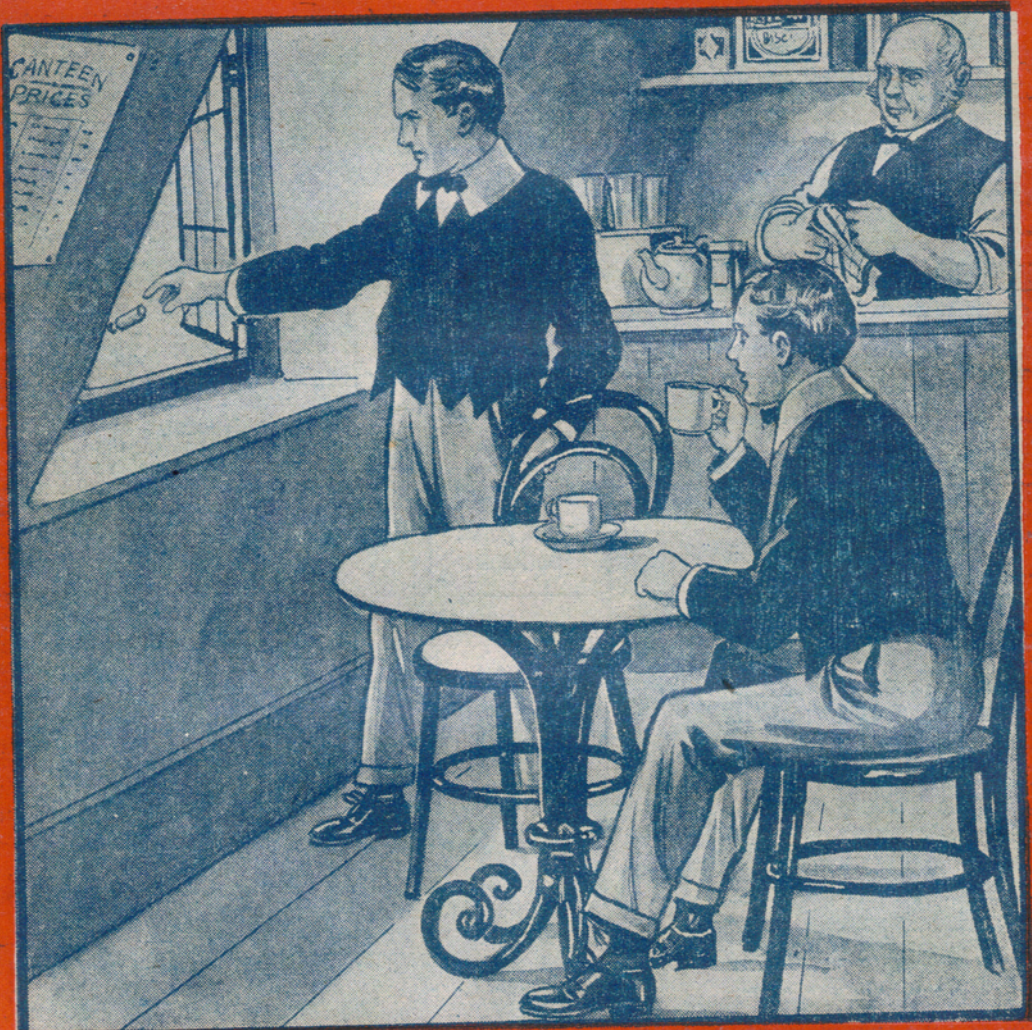


GRAND NEW DETECTIVE STORY STARTS TO-DAY!

The Greyfriars Herald 1 1/2



No. 25 (New Series) | FULL OF SCHOOL STORIES AND ARTICLES | April 17, 1920.



ESTCOURT'S STARTLING MANŒUVRE!
(A Great Scene in our Wonderful Complete Tale of School Life)

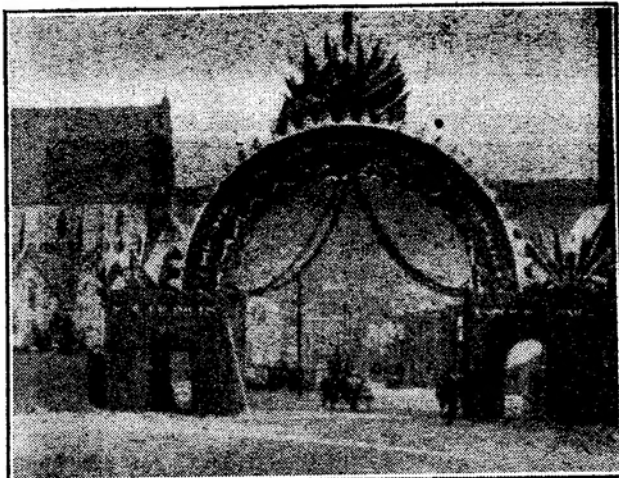
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THE BOYS' PICTORIAL

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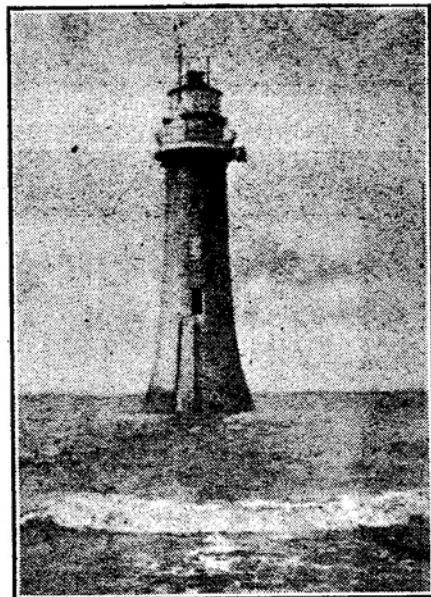
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NEWFOUNDLAND'S LOYALTY!



An arch erected in St. John's, Newfoundland, in honour of the visit of the Prince of Wales during his American tour. Everywhere our Prince was accorded a right royal welcome.—Taken by Geo. B. Martin, 124, Gower Street, St. John's, Newfoundland.

THE SILENT WARNING.



An artistic photograph of the lighthouse at New Brighton, one of the many sentinels around our shores which sends out a silent warning to the workers upon the deep.—Taken by D. H. Ainsworth, 53, Hamilton Road, Everton, Liverpool.

WELL OVER!



A high jumper at a North-country sports meeting snapped in the air. The world's record running high jump is 6 feet 9 inches. How does your best effort compare?—Taken by A. Johnson, 21, Humpage Road, Bordesley Green, Birmingham.


**SEND
ALONG
YOUR
HOLIDAY
SNAPS!**

A BOOT-IFUL VIEW!




It is commonly said "that the camera cannot lie," but this picture goes to prove otherwise. The effect is obtained through the boots of the sitter being much nearer to the lens than his face.—Taken by F. R. Winwood, 90, Clifford Street, Birmingham.


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Editorial

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Other Schools

By Harry Wharton.

FROM OVERSEAS!

Many thanks to Jack Slabbert, of 10, Callington Street, North End, Port Elizabeth, for his praise of the GREYFRIARS HERALD. Jack is a poet and breaks out in verse, not half bad verse, either, and I am only sorry there is no room for it. But one thing is as plain as palm-trees, namely that they simply dote on the G. H. in Port Elizabeth.

And that reminds me of something that many of my staunch South African supporters have said concerning competitions. Jack Slabbert does not refer to the matter at all; he merely says the paper is IT. Perhaps he realises that overseas readers cannot take part in the same competitions as those at home. It is so, unfortunately, because of the time taken for coupons from abroad to get here.

SIGNS FROM SOUTH AFRICA!

Jno. Tapp and N. Warren tell me that it is only readers in London or near by who get a chance to win prizes.

"We in South Africa never get a look in, as we do not have the books in time to go in for the competitions. We are very anxious to hear what arrangements you can come to."

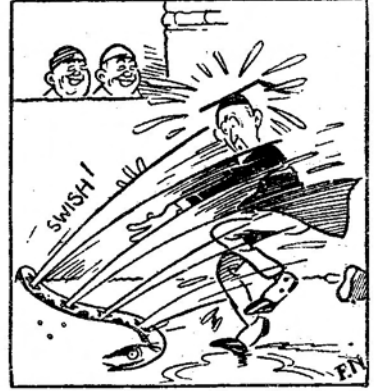
I can assure my chums that I have given the whole business long and careful consideration. To meet the wishes of my friends overseas in this matter is just exactly what I should like to do, but there are very many difficulties in the way. I cannot start separate competitions for readers in the Dominions, and it is impossible to hold up decisions until the foreign mails come in.

EDITORIAL WORRIES!

I have plenty of these at present, due chiefly to the fact that an Editor cannot please everybody no matter how hard he may try. Grundy is still pestering me to hand over THE GREYFRIARS HERALD to him. What Grundy needs is a spelling-book! Bunter continues to apply for the job of Chief Despatcher of Tuck Haupers. Phew! HARRY WHARTON.



Mr. PROUT'S BLUNDER(BUSS) - - - Drawn by FRANK NUGENT.



1. George Blundell and Bertram Bland of the Fifth were annoyed with their esteemed Form master, Mr. Prout, for giving them fifteen thousand lines apiece for coughing during class that morning. So they hit on a little jape to get even with him.

2. They tied an old snake skin over the merry hosepipe, and yelled to Mr. Prout to bring his shot-gun. In high fettle Prouty rushed to the scene and proceeded to pepper the reptile with his 17th century, jewelled-in-every-movement blunderbuss!

3. "Oooch! Great snakes!" he howled, as the water spurted out of the punctured hosepipe; "this must be one of those water snakes I've read about!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blundell and Bland; "that ought to damp his spirits a little! Eh?"

A TERRIBLE TEMPTATION!

A splendid, long complete tale dealing with the adventures of the boys of the Benbow.

By OWEN CONQUEST

(Author of the famous Rookwood school stories appearing weekly in the Boys' Friend)

I.

The Rivals.

"DRAKE!"
"Hallo! Is that you, Estcourt?"

Jack Drake peered through the gloom on the deck of the Benbow.

Drake had been hard at work in his study, with Dick Rodney, and he had come up on deck to breathe the fresh, keen air of the river. His work was done; so far as he had been able to prepare for the examination on the following day he had prepared for it. He was tired, but he was hopeful. And in spite of fatigue the Fourth-former was feeling well, and unexpectedly cheery.

It was near bed-time for the St. Winifred's juniors, and there was hardly anyone on the dusky deck. Lights gleamed from study windows on the waters of the Chadway, flowing silently past the hull of the old warship. Ashore, the woods lay dark under a faint glimmer of stars. Drake started as Estcourt's voice, in low tones, suddenly broke upon his ears.

In the gloom Estcourt's face showed up dim and pale. Drake looked at him very curiously. Frank Estcourt was his most dangerous competitor for the Founders' Scholarship; Drake knew that if he could beat Estcourt he had little to fear from the others. He knew, too, that Estcourt had reasons as powerful as his own for wishing to be successful. Both of them were in sore need of success.

"I—I came up to speak to you," said Estcourt, in the same low tones.

"Go ahead, old scout! You're looking a bit off colour," said Drake. "You've been going it too hard. No good faggin' yourself out the day before an exam. I've been goin' rather easy to-day."

Estcourt passed his hand over his brow wearily. There was no doubt that he had been working hard—too hard. It was a joke in the Fourth that any evening Estcourt might be seen in his study, grinding, with a wet towel tied round his head.

"What do you think of your chances to-morrow, Drake?"

"Good, I hope."

"I believe it's between us."

"I think so. I suppose you're going to beat me, if you can," said Drake, rather ruefully. "You're the only one I'm afraid of. I suppose it will go to the best man."

"I've seen a paper you did for Mr. Packe yesterday," said Estcourt. "It made me feel rather sick."

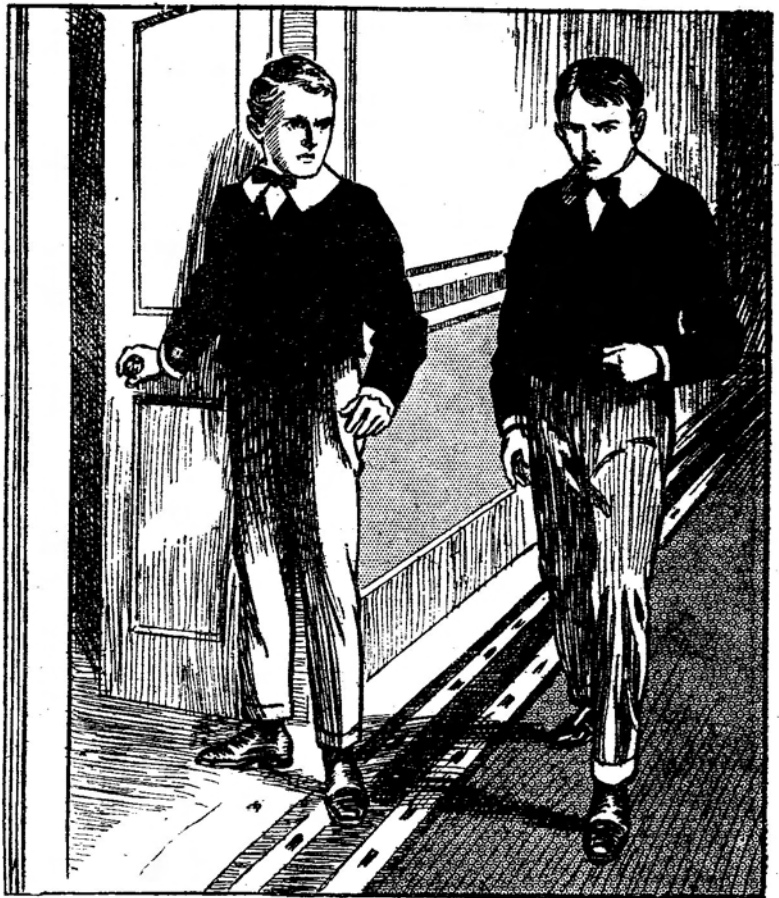
"Why?"

"Because I couldn't have done it myself."

Jack Drake brightened a little.

"You really think so?" he asked.

"Yes."



"What's up, Estcourt?" exclaimed Rodney, in concern and some alarm. Frank Estcourt did not reply. He strode on without looking to right or left.

"But, dash it all, you don't mean to say you think I shall get ahead of you on the papers to-morrow, Estcourt?" exclaimed Drake.

"I—I'm afraid so."

"That's good news for me. But—you always seemed to have so much confidence in yourself," said Drake, in wonder. "But you're feeling run down, from too much sapping. You'll feel differently in the morning."

Estcourt shook his head.

"I know I couldn't have done that paper you did," he answered. "It beats me; I can't understand how you've pulled up like this. You were always a slacker."

"Well, not exactly a slacker," said Drake, with a smile. "But swottin' isn't in my line, and that's a fact. Rodney's helped me a lot. I should never have had a chance but for Rodney."

"I know it—hang him!"

Drake started.

"Estcourt—what the dickens—"

"I—I'm sorry—I didn't mean that," muttered Estcourt hurriedly. "But—but this is an awful blow to me. I've been grinding for two whole terms. I've worked as I believe no fellow ever worked before—and all for nothing! You come in late, and get ahead of me—and you never were my equal in class—not till lately, anyhow. I—I suppose you've got more brains than I have."

"Oh, rot!" said Drake.

He blinked at Estcourt in the dusky shadows.

Estcourt was always a quiet, self-controlled fellow, little given to betraying emotion of any sort, and Drake was astonished to see him giving way like this.

He had always been on friendly terms with Estcourt, too, and there was a bitterness in the junior's tone now that was surprising, and not pleasant to hear.

"I'm just a plodder," went on Estcourt bitterly. "Just a plodder—plodding on while you were playing the goat—and as soon as you put your mind to it you shoot ahead. It's rotten—it's unjust. The schol. belongs to me by right. I've worked for it, and you haven't."

"I've put in some awful hard grindin' the last few weeks, old fellow," said Drake, hardly knowing what to reply. He could see that Estcourt was in a mood of nervous tension, and his tone was almost soothing as he spoke. "I've given up everythin' else to work, especially since my pater came down to see me."

"You're going to beat me to-morrow."

"I—I hope so, of course."

"It's unjust!"

"Ahem!"

Drake moved off a little, feeling that the interview had lasted long

enough. He did not want to quarrel with Estcourt, whom he liked and esteemed, unreasonable as he was now proving himself.

"Hold on!" muttered Estcourt. "Don't go away! I came up to speak to you, Drake."

"It's not much good arguing, old chap," said Drake. "I've got to do my best to-morrow. It can't be helped."

"You don't need it as I do. I've simply got to bag it," said Estcourt. "I've counted on it; my people have counted on it. I've looked on it as mine. I always knew I could beat Vane and Rawlings and Norman, and the others. I thought at first I should beat you—you dilly-dallied so long with it. Drake, I—I'm going to ask you a—a favour."

"Go it."
"Keep out of it to-morrow."
"Wha-a-a-t?"

"I can't afford to lose," said Estcourt, in a trembling tone, peering at Drake's astonished face. "I can't! If you knew my—my circumstances at home, you'd understand. I never talk much to the fellows, but you must have some idea—how poor we are. You know I hardly ever have any new clobber; I never spend any money. You've always been rich—until lately, anyhow. You don't understand what it's like. If I get the schol., I stay at St. Winifred's; otherwise, I have to go."

"It's the same with me," said Drake. "We're poor now, and my staying at St. Winny's depends on the schol. If I were going in for it just for fluff, I'd stand out, really. But I can't afford to."

"It's not so much to you as to me. The money that goes with it—I want that. It's wanted—to send my young brother to school."

"Oh, gad!"
"I had a right to count on it—and then you came wedging in, spoiling all my chances. I know I'm asking a lot—more than any fellow has a right to ask. But—but if I lose it, I don't know what I shall do!" Estcourt's voice broke.

Jack Drake stood silent.
He was feeling utterly distressed; it was distressing to see a proud, self-reliant fellow like Estcourt break down in this way. But what the junior asked was not only unreasonable; it was impossible.

"I'm sorry, old fellow," said Drake at last. "If I could help you, I would. But—but I've promised the people at home, and—and I must do the best I can for myself. If I don't land the schol., this is my last term at St. Winny's. Be reasonable, Estcourt."

Estcourt gave a groan.
"I knew what you'd say," he answered. "I knew it was no good! I've humbled myself for nothing; I knew how it would be."

"I'm sorry!" muttered Drake awkwardly.

Estcourt stood breathing hard.
Drake made a movement at last.
"I think I'll go down," he said.
"I'm really sorry, Estcourt—"

"Oh, leave me alone!"
Drake made no answer to that. He walked away in the shadows, and went down to his cabin. Frank Estcourt

moved to the side, and stood leaning on the rail, staring down at the dark waters of the Chadway, in the depths of which two or three glimmering stars were reflected. His thoughts were black and bitter. A light touch on his shoulder made him start and turn quickly.

The Tempter!

"FEELIN' bad, old top?"
It was Vernon Daubeny of the Shell who stood beside Estcourt in the gloom.

His tone was very cordial as he spoke, but there was a peculiar glitter in his eyes as they rested on Estcourt's pale, troubled face.

The Fourth-former gave him a savage look.

"Let me alone!" he muttered.
"Feelin' bad?"
"Yes, confound you!"

"I heard your little pow-wow with Drake, a few minutes ago," said the dandy of the Shell coolly.

Estcourt's white face flushed, and he clenched his hands. His humiliation, which had been useless, after all, was known, then—and known to the fellow he liked least at St. Winifred's—Vernon Daubeny, the chief of the Bucks!

"You were listening, you cad?" he muttered fiercely.

Daubeny shrugged his slim shoulders.

"I'd come up to look for a quiet place for a smoke," he answered.
"You were talkin' within a few feet of me; I couldn't help hearin'. Don't get your rag out, kid; I'm sorry for the fix you are in."

"Hang your sorrow, and hang you!"

Daubeny smiled. Hard words break no bones, and the nut of the Shell had his own purposes in view, and was not likely to desist on account of a few hard words.

"You think Drake's goin' to beat you to-morrow?" he queried.

"That's my business."

"I don't want the cad to win the schol., any more than you do, Estcourt."

"That's pretty well known," said Estcourt, with a sneer. "Everybody knows you've put as many obstacles in Drake's way as you could. You've mucked up his work every time you had a chance. He's coming out ahead, all the same."

"Which is all the worse for you."

"I know that."

"I might be able to help you," said Daubeny, in a low voice.

"You!" Estcourt gave a scoffing laugh. "You help a chap for an exam! Goodness only knows how you squeezed into the Shell yourself! Don't talk rot!"

"Oh, I don't mean in the way of sappin'," said Daubeny contemptuously. "That's not in my line. I wouldn't say like you to be head of the Sixth! I don't mean that at all. But—you've said that with Drake out of the way you'd clear the board."

"Well, he won't get out of the way to please me," snapped Estcourt. "I suppose he wouldn't if you asked him, either."

"He might be got out of the way."

"What the thump are you driving at?"

"Suppose he wasn't fit when the exam. came off—suppose he was quite off colour, and wasn't up to the work?" said Daubeny, sinking his voice to a whisper. "Suppose he fozzled over his paper, and landed bottom instead of top!"

"He won't."
"He might be made to."

Estcourt stared at the dandy of the Shell.

"What on earth do you mean?" he exclaimed impatiently. "How could he be made to?"

"I could tell you, if you liked," said Daubeny.

Estcourt drew a quick breath.
"You—you mean—some more of your rotten tricks!" he muttered.

"Well, isn't it a rotten trick—Drake wedging in and baggin' the schol. you've been grindin' for for a couple of terms?" asked Daubeny. "You said yourself it was unjust. So it is. If you could put him off his form, and bag the schol. from him, what's the odds? All's fair in love and war—and this is a case of war, isn't it?"

"Well?"
"You've heard of such things as a horse bein' nobbled before a race?" said Daubeny, sinking his voice again. "Nobody knows what's the matter, but the gee simply doesn't win. The same game has been played on a footballer before a match—I know of a case."

"I dare say you do—it's the kind of thing you would know of," said Estcourt bitterly.

"Never mind that. Suppose somebody gave Drake somethin' to-morrow mornin'—"

"Give him what?"

"Somethin'—somethin' quite harmless and tasteless, say, in his tea. No harm done; by the evenin' the dear boy is as right as ever. But for the best part of the day he's sleepy an' slack—can't put his mind into anything—lack of concentration, an' all that."

Estcourt's face was white.

"You—you awful villain!" he muttered.

"My dear man, don't call names!" said Daubeny easily. "I've got no personal interest in the matter; I'm not goin' in for the schol. I'd like to see Drake dished—I own that."

"And that's your motive!"

"Well, never mind my motive. I'm offerin' to do you a good turn. You want the schol., and the cash that goes with it. You've got a better right than Drake."

"I—I think I have—"

"Well, then, see yourself through, with my help."

There was a long silence.
Estcourt had clenched his hand, as if to plant it full in the handsome, sardonic face of the tempter. But he unclenched it again.

The temptation had found a lodgment in his breast.

He was not quite himself; his nerves were in rags. He was only too conscious that he had overdone his work, and that he had thereby lessened his chances of success. He had worked so hard, he had counted so surely upon

success, and it seemed to him, in his bitter mood, cruelly unjust that all should go for nothing. And Drake's need was not so great as his own.

He listened, while the voice of the tempter ran on:

"It's easy enough. You're in Drake's form; you can get at him without the least suspicion. Who'd suspect you of such a thing? A little dose—quite harmless—in his tea at brekker—"

"Oh, be silent!" muttered Estcourt in a tortured voice.

"It's easy!"

There was another long silence.

Estcourt stared blackly at the swift-flowing water below, his face white and his brows wrinkled.

The silence was long, but it was Estcourt who broke it at last, in a trembling whisper.

"It's impossible."

Daubeny smiled. He was sure of his man now. Estcourt was not speaking of the baseness of the scheme, but of its possibility.

"It's easy," repeated Daubeny.

"A little dose—"

"Where could I get the stuff, you fool?"

"I've got it."

"You!"

"In my study," smiled Daubeny. "There was a little left. I kept it, in case it might come in useful some day."

"Left—from what? What do you mean?"

Daubeny hesitated a moment, but he went on.

"I told you I knew of a case—of a footballer who was put off his form by it. Well, I had a hand in it. I needn't go into particulars. But I can answer for the stuff."

"It's harmless?" muttered Estcourt.

"Do you think I'd give it you if it wasn't? I'm not lookin' for a change of quarters, from St. Winny's into a reformatory!" grinned Vernon Daubeny. "I tell you Drake will never know what's been the matter with him."

Another long silence.

Estcourt was trembling. He drew himself up from the rail at last, and stood facing the dandy of the Shell, breathing deep and hard. Daubeny looked at him with a smile. He was sure of his man; the temptation was too strong. Whether assent or dissent was on Estcourt's lips he hardly knew himself. But as he met Daubeny's smiling glance all indecision left him. He made one quick stride towards the tempter.

"You villain!" he breathed.

"I—Oh!"

Estcourt raised his hand; his clenched fist shot out, suddenly, as if he were afraid to give himself time to think.

Crash!

The blow was unexpected; Daubeny was smiling over his supposed victory when the Fourth-former's knuckles struck him full in the face.

The Shell fellow went reeling and spinning, to crash down on the planks of the deck.

Estcourt stood staring at him, with glittering eyes and heaving chest, his hands still clenched.

There was a patter of footsteps as Egan and Torrence came running across the deck.

"What's up?" gasped Torrence.

"Oh!" panted Daubeny. "Oh! Collar that cad—collar him—oh!" He gasped and spluttered.

His chums made a move towards Estcourt; but they shrank back from his dangerous look. Without a word to them, Estcourt turned, and disappeared into the shadows.

"What's the row, Daub?"

"What's happened?"

Egan and Torrence spoke together. But they received no explanation from Vernon Daubeny, only a string of savage mutterings, which it was fortunate for Daub that there was no master or prefect at hand to hear.

At The Cross-Roads!

"ESTCOURT!"

Dick Rodney uttered the name, in a sudden startled exclamation. Rodney was in the doorway of No. 8, talking to Drake, who was within, when Estcourt came below.

The sight of Estcourt's face startled him.

It was white, and strangely set, and the eyes were glittering almost feverishly.

"What's up, Estcourt?" exclaimed Rodney, in concern and some alarm.

"Are you ill?"

Frank Estcourt did not reply. He strode on, without looking to right or left, went into his study, and slammed the door.

Rodney stared after him blankly, and then turned into No. 8, to meet Jack Drake's inquiring glance.

"Something's up with Estcourt," he said.

Drake nodded. The scene on deck, of his strange talk with his rival for the scholarship, was fresh in his mind.

"He's a bit upset, I think," he said. "I saw him on deck a quarter of an hour ago."

"He's been grinding too hard, the ass!" remarked Tuckey Toodles, who was eating chestnuts in the study. "He thinks he's going to bag the schol. Not against this study—what?" "I hope not," said Rodney, with a smile.

Tuckey Toodles shook his head emphatically.

"I put my money on Drake," he observed. "If I hadn't been sure of Drake baggin' it, I should have gone in for it myself."

"Which would have made it a dead cert.—for some other study!" grinned Rodney.

"Oh, I could do it, on my head," said Tuckey, with cheery confidence. "I never had much time for sapping, or you'd see. But it's all the same, if old Drake bags it. I can rely on you to do the decent thing, can't I, Drake, dear old scout?"

"That depends," said Drake, laughing. "What do you call the decent thing, Tuckey?"

"Well, there's some ready cash with the schol., and, of course, you will stand a tremendous spread out of that—"

"Guess again!"

"Do you mean to say you won't?" demanded Tuckey Toodles warmly.

"Exactly."

"If you're going to be mean, Drake—"

"I am, old top, so far as the schol. goes," said Drake. "The money will be handed to my father, if I bag it—every brown."

Tuckey Toodles gave a snort of utter disgust.

"I don't call that playing the game," he said. "If you're going to be so horrid mean, Drake, I can't give you my best wishes for to-morrow."

"Then I'll try to struggle on without!"

"Come to think of it, I'm not so jolly sure you will bag it," said Toodles. "I rather fancy Estcourt's chances."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to cackle at. I wonder whether Estcourt will stand a spread? He's jolly close with money. I've noticed. I wish now I'd entered for the thing myself," said Tuckey Toodles peevishly. "I should have made sure of the oof then."

There was a sound of knocking along the passage, and then the voice of Dudley of the Fourth was heard. Dudley was Estcourt's study-mate in No. 4.

"Let me in, Estcourt! What the thump have you got the door locked for?"

Apparently there was no reply from Estcourt, for Dudley's voice went on, crescendo:

"You cheeky ass! Let a chap into his own study!"

Then there was a sound of the study door opening. Dudley entered his quarters, and Estcourt came out at the same moment. He wanted to be alone, but solitude was hard to find below. Rodney and Drake both caught sight of him as he passed No. 8, going towards the ladder.

Their faces were very grave as they glanced at him. Frank Estcourt was looking like anything but his usual self.

Unheeding—in fact, unconscious of their grave glances, Estcourt went on deck again. There was a murmur of voices from the poop, where some of the masters were enjoying the evening together. Estcourt tramped in the opposite direction, and stopped by the bowsprit, where he was alone in the darkness at last.

He pressed his burning forehead to the cool, hard wood, to calm it. His temples were throbbing.

The unhappy boy's mind was in a torment.

He had answered Daubeny's temptation as if deserved to be answered, but that, unhappily, was not the end of it.

The miserable thought remained in his mind.

After such long and sustained effort to prepare himself for the examination, the wretched conviction had rushed upon him that he had no chance of success. It was not an unusual experience, on the eve of a difficult and long-expected test. But it was not only "nerves" in Frank Estcourt's case. He was a clever lad, and a hard worker, but he knew his own limitations. He knew that he could not have done the paper which he had seen

lying on Mr. Packe's desk, and which Drake had apparently done with ease. It was hard—bitterly hard—to be beaten at the post, as it were, after so long a struggle, and by one who, as he supposed, had not taken nearly so much trouble to win success. But it was not only defeat and disappointment; he could have borne those with fortitude. But he could not afford to lose the scholarship. He was fighting for others, as well as for himself, and if he failed they had to suffer.

And Daubeny had offered a way out. In his usual mood, Estcourt would never have entertained the dastardly suggestion for a moment. But he was not in his usual mood now; his nerves were in a twitter, and he seemed to see everything about him through a false medium. It was fear of himself, fear of wicked irresolution in the presence of temptation, that had called forth the blow that stretched Daubeny on the deck. It seemed that that was escape for him—that it ended the matter for good and all. But it was not ended.

He knew that Daubeny would still help him, if he asked it—that he would not count a blow a sufficient reason for giving up his scheme of vengeance upon the junior he hated. Daubeny's dastardly scheme was still at his disposal, if he chose.

Would he choose?

Half unconsciously he found himself making a step or two towards the Shell quarters. There was a footstep close at hand. Dick Rodney came up through the shadows.

"Estcourt—"

"Let me alone."

"My dear chap, Lovelace sent me— it's bed-time. Lovelace is waiting to put out the lights," said Rodney mildly.

"Oh! I—I forgot! Thanks!" stammered Estcourt.

He hardly knew whether to be thankful for the interruption or not. He went below with Rodney, and turned into his hammock.

But he did not sleep.

Long after lights were out, and steady breathing in the 'tween decks announced that the Fourth-formers round him were sleeping peacefully, Estcourt lay awake, with eyes staring into the gloom.

In the dark hours of the night he was still wrestling with his temptation.

True Blue!

VERNON DAUBENY was early on deck the following morning.

There was a red mark on Daubeny's cheek, where a heavy hand had fallen the previous night, and Daub rubbed it occasionally, and scowled. A glitter shot into his eyes when he caught sight of Frank Estcourt on deck, staring away across the river with a knitted brow. Estcourt had been up before rising-bell, and his heavy eyelids showed how little he had slept.

He glanced round at Daubeny's step, and the Buck of the Shell stopped. He had been thinking of Estcourt, wondering whether the reflections of the night would have brought a change of mind. Estcourt did not, as a matter of fact, know him-

self. His mind was still haunted with miserable indecision.

Daubeny came towards him at last, but warily.

"You look pretty seedy this mornin', Estcourt," he remarked.

"I'm feeling seedy."

"Not in much trim for a stiff exam.—what?"

"No."

"Well, I wish you luck, dear boy."

Daubeny rubbed the mark on his cheek as he spoke. His wishes towards Estcourt just then were not very amiable.

But he did not forget the purpose he had in view. He tapped his waistcoat pocket.

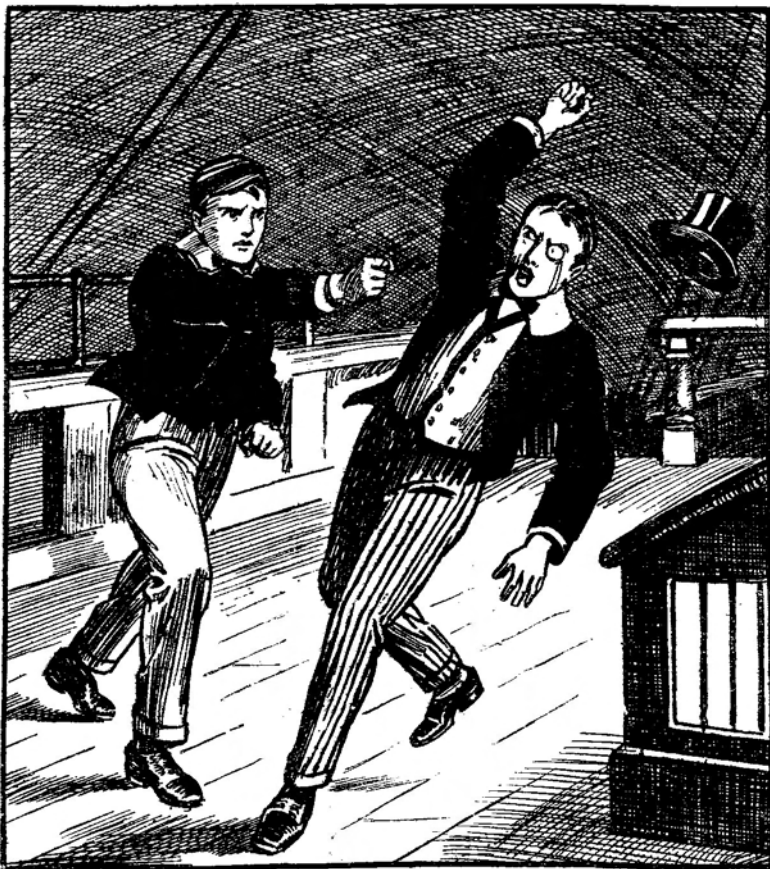
"It's there, if you want it," he said

Estcourt stood by the rail, moodily staring at the river, till he was called to breakfast.

He contrived to drop into the next seat to Jack Drake at the breakfast-table. His opportunity had come!

Once, twice, his hand touched the phial in his pocket.

It was harmless—Daub had said so, and he would never dare to lie, with so much risk to be run. It was harmless—only it would rob Jack Drake of his chance—it would "crock" him for the examination, which was to take place that morning, while the other fellows were in the Form-rooms. But the opportunity passed. When the juniors left the breakfast-table the



Estcourt raised his hand—his clenched fist shot out, suddenly, as if he were afraid to give himself time to think. Crash!

in a low voice; and with that he strolled away.

"Daubeny!"

Estcourt was calling him back! He turned at once.

"Yes, old bean?"

"You—you're sure—"

"Well?"

"You're sure it does no harm?" faltered Estcourt, without meeting his eyes.

"Quite."

"I—I'm not going to use it. But—but give it to me."

"Certainly."

Daubeny drew closer, and passed a little colourless phial into the Fourth-former's hand. Estcourt slipped it into his pocket. Egan and Torrence came on deck, and Daubeny strolled away airily to join them.

little, glass-stoppered phial was still in Estcourt's pocket, unused.

"Best of luck, old chap!" Rodney said to Jack Drake, as he left him on the deck, and went to the Form-room with the Fourth.

"Thanks; I'm going to win," answered Drake cheerily.

Daubeny and Co. came along, and Vernon Daubeny glanced curiously at Estcourt. He wondered whether the junior had acted yet. Estcourt did not meet his eyes, however, and he went into the Shell room with his comrades, still in doubt.

The dozen fellows whose names were down for the examination were free till ten o'clock. Jack Drake walked up and down the deck in a thoughtful mood. He stopped when Estcourt joined him.

"Feeling all right this morning, Estcourt?" he asked.

Estcourt smiled, a rather ghastly smile.

"Oh, ripping!" he answered. "Don't I look it?"

"Well, you don't exactly, old fellow. Pull yourself together, before old Packe comes to gather us in to the slaughter," said Drake, with a smile.

Estcourt breathed hard.

"There's plenty of time yet," he said; "come down and have a cup of coffee in the canteen."

"I don't mind," answered Drake.

The two juniors descended together to the canteen amidships, where Mr. Capps served them. Drake sat at a little table, and Estcourt handed over the coffee-cups.

It was an opportunity again; and he had intentionally made it—hardly knowing what he intended to do.

But the phial was still in his pocket.

His heart was beating painfully. This was his last chance, and he knew it; he must act now or never. And still that haunting indecision tortured his mind. Drake sipped his coffee, and made a wry face.

"No giddy sugar," he said. "Any saccharine about?"

"I've got some," muttered Estcourt thickly.

"Shell out, then."

Estcourt drew the little phial from his pocket.

It was easy—too easy! To let fall a few drops into the coffee, under pretence of adding saccharine to sweeten it—what could be easier?

Estcourt felt his head whirl for a moment. Then he stepped quickly away from the table.

The window was open close at hand, giving a view of the wide river, gleaming in the morning sunshine.

Estcourt raised his hand.

"Two terms," he muttered. "I've slogged for it for two terms—and now I'm throwing it away."

"What on earth—" exclaimed Drake.

Estcourt's hand rose in the air.

Whiz!

Something glassy and glistening shot from his hand, through the open window, and splashed into the river.

Wide circles marked where it sank; they died away, and the stream flowed on smooth and shining as before. And Vernon Daubeny's precious phial reposed in the mud at the bottom of the Chadway!

Drake was gazing at his companion in astonishment.

"What's that game?" he inquired.

"Oh, nothing!" said Estcourt, with a bitter smile. "I've chucked away my last chance of winning what I've worked for—that's all!"

He swung round on his heel, and strode out of the canteen.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Drake, utterly at a loss to account for the junior's words or actions. "Blessed if I don't think he's sapped till he's a little loose in the roof! My hat!"

He followed Estcourt to the deck; but the junior avoided him, till Mr. Packe came to call his flock together. But Estcourt's face was calmer as he followed Mr. Packe with the rest. His temptation had been terrible, but he

had won through, whether he succeeded or failed, he at least had nothing to reproach himself with. He was calm; and even hopeful. And now that he was calm, he was glad, with a deep thankfulness, that he had, at the last, played the game, and that he could work without a crime on his conscience.

That evening, Vernon Daubeny glanced into No. 4 Study in the Fourth, and met Frank Estcourt's eyes inquiringly.

"Well?" he asked.

The answer was unexpected. It came in the form of a grasp on Daub's collar; he was spun round, and a boot was planted behind him, with terrific vim.

The injured Buck let out a surprised howl, and twisted his head half round.

"What—what's this for?" he gasped. "I—I thought—"

"It's for the meanest cad at St. Winny's!" panted Estcourt, "and if you don't keep out of my way in future, I'll slaughter you—d'you understand?"

Estcourt lent force to his remarks with another well-planted boot.

Daubeny went sprawling on his hands and knees; and when he scrambled up it was to flee for his life. And he fled—with the knowledge that his last scheme against Jack Drake had failed—the final throw of the dice had decided against him.

THE END.

Read the thrilling story of the boys of the Benbow in next Tuesday's issue of "The Greyfriars Herald" and tell all your chums to look out for it.—Your Editor.

RESULT OF TUCK HAMPER COMPETITION.—No. 20.

In this competition one competitor sent in a solution identical with the Editor's paragraph. The First Prize of £2 10s. has therefore been awarded to:

FRANK REDDY,
34, Upper Mount Pleasant Avenue,
Rathmines, Dublin.

A Tuck Hamper has been awarded to each of the following seven competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

A. M. Turner, Megohm, 5, Carver Rd., Hale, Ches.; Norman Brinkman, 296, Whitehorse Rd., West Croydon; Freda G. Stow, London House, Pocklington, Yorks; Denison Copner, 30, Carnegie St., Dunfermline, N.B.; Ivy May Hawks, 37, St. Andrews St., Lincoln; E. J. Lewis, 57, Mt. Pleasant Rd., Sth Tottenham, N. 15; Denis Seaton, Smeath Rd., nr. Wisbech.

CORRECT SOLUTION:

Dear Readers.—Expressions of sympathy constantly reach me concerning the weekly interviewer on account of the stormy time he gets; but let me tell you it is the *slay* ass's own fault, and as he is at present getting twopence halfpenny a week extra for his trash, you need shed no more tears.

Yours,
HARRY

EXTRACTS FROM MY DIARY

This week:

By HORACE COKER

Monday.—Had a feerfull row in class this morning with old Prout. He said I couldn't spell for toffy. I insisted that the word "ek-spekt" had two k's in it, and Prout said it had nun at all! Of course, Prout's potty. He said I was a doul and a nimbecile, whatever that is; and I promptly returned the compliment. Result Prout's given me 500 lines. Blow Prout! Blow lessens! Blow everything!

Tuesday.—Reseced a remittans from my Aunt Judy. She's a brikk! Arranjed for a big feed in my studdy, and invyted ½ the feloes in the Vth. But when we got there the cubbard was bear! Those cheeky Remove faggs had raided the grub! Fimished the day with a free fight against Whar-ton and Co., and we gave them sox!

Wednesday.—½-holiday. Plade footer with the Vth, and scored 3 goles. Blundell declares I skored them against my own side, but, of corse, Blundell's an ass!

Thursday.—Wrote to Miss Fillis Howell, of Cliff Howee, and invyted her to tea on Saturday. I don't see why the Remove should always entertane the girls. I meen to have a shot at it myself, and I'm sure Miss Fillis will vote the affare a huge suksess!

Friday.—Nothing of note to report, exept that old Prout asked me for my lines, and I told him to go and eat koke!

Saturday.—Fillis Howell wrote de-klining my invitashun, on the grounds that she was particular who she had tea with. She is a saucy minks, and I shall tell her so neckst time I see her! She ought to have been proud and pleased to have tea with a fino'feloe like me. However, she didn't come, so in the end, I had to invyte Blundell and Bland, and they both made beests of themselves.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The views of my readers, given below, Are not necessarily mine, you know!—Ed.

A Potty Post's Perpetration!

To the Editor of "The Greyfriars Herald."

Dear Sir,—Your paper I adore; each week I love it more and more. The stories are a perfect treat; the sketches, too, are hard to beat. Your bright and breezy Editorial is never dull or dictatorial. The Weekly Interview is great; the other features are first-rate. The stories—how we love to read 'em, in happy hours of mirth and freedom! No yarns could possibly be nicer; and I'll proceed to tell you why, sir—

(The remainder of this screed may be seen in No. 1 Study. We have used it to paper the walls!—Ed.)

The Sorrows of a Skipper!

To the Editor of "The Greyfriars Herald."

Sir,—I have lately been put to great inconvenience by the horde of fags who constantly invade my study in quest of information, advice, late passes, postage-stamps, and goodness knows what!

If this sort of thing continues, I shall be obliged to place myself under police protection.

I should like to make it clear to the Greyfriars public that I am not:

- (1) A walking encyclopaedia;
- (2) A General Post-office;
- (3) A sympathetic listener to imaginary grievances;
- (4) An indiscriminate purveyor of late passes;
- (5) An information bureau;
- (6) A dispensing chemist for persons who are suffering from thick ears and swollen noses!

Would you be good enough to give publicity to these facts in your next issue? If these wholesale invasions of my study continue, I shall be driven to commit fag-slaughter!—Yours faithfully,
 GEORGE WINGATE,
 Captain of Greyfriars.

(Poor old Wingate! You have my full sympathy, and I will endeavour to put a stop to these petty annoyances. Can I have a late pass to go to the Courtfield cinema this evening?—Ed.)

Our Fighting Editor Gets Busy!

To the Editor of "The Greyfriars Herald."

Sir,—I beg to report that during your temporary absence the other day twenty aspiring authors bombarded the editorial sanctum. They were armed with masses of manuscript, and when I ordered them to buzz off they set me at defiance. I was eventually compelled to disperse the mob with the editorial poker.

All communications for the victims should be addressed to the Cottage Hospital, Courtfield, whither they were conveyed on a number of ambulances.

Hoping to receive a liberal reward for services rendered,—Yours loyally,
 BOB CHERRY,
 Fighting Editor.

(Bravo, Bob! I have great pleasure in increasing your salary by twopence per annum (free of income-tax)!—Ed.)

Gosling on the Warpath!

To the Editor of "The Greyfriars Herald."

Dear Master Wharton,—Which I desires to bring to yore notiss the fact that konsiderable dammdige has been dun to one of the lamps over the skool gates. The glass has been badly smashed, and I have no doubt that one of the young raskils in the Remove is responsible. If I sukseed in finding out who it was, the young warmint will share the same fate as the lamp!—Yores, in deddy Ernest,
 WILLIAM GOSLING.

p.s.—The lamp looks as if it has been broke by a brick.

(We beg to inform our worthy gate-keeper that the individual who smashed the lamp was no less a personage than Mr. Prout. It appears that the master of the Fifth was putting in some practice with his Winchester repeater. He aimed at a sparrow that was perched on the school wall, and missed it by fifty yards or so, hitting the lamp instead.

We shall be interested to hear what Gossy intends to do now that he knows the identity of the person who caused the "konsiderable dammdige!"—Ed.)

A Demand From Cliff House!

To the Editor of "The Greyfriars Herald."

Sir,—We, the undersigned, note with deep disgust that you are not prepared to consider the advisability of turning "The Greyfriars Herald" into a girl's paper. By so doing, you would undoubtedly treble your circulation, as there are about two million surplus girls in the country, and they would all become readers if you made the change.

However, as you do not seem disposed to carry out our original suggestion, perhaps you will meet us halfway by allowing us to contribute a six-page fashion supplement in each issue?—Yours faithfully,

MARJORIE HAZELDENE,
 PHILIPPA DERWENT,
 PHYLLIS HOWELL.

(I am sorry, dear ladies, but I have passed your letter on to Lord Maul-everer, our fashions expert, and he says he's not going to have you queering his pitch, begad! He intends—when he feels in the mood for work—to get out a special supplement of his own, dealing with fancy waistcoats and multi-coloured neckties. This being the case, you are requested, with the utmost respect and courtesy, to keep off the grass!—Ed.)



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GURLEY HAIR "My bristles were made curly in a few days," writes R. Welch. "Curly" curls straight hair. 1/3, 2/6.—SUMMERS (Dept. A.P.), 31, Upper Russell Street, Brighton.

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 Send this coupon with P.O. for only 5/- direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet St., London, E.C.4. In return you will receive (post free) a splendid British Made 14-ct. Gold Nibbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6. If you save 12 further coupons, each will count as 2d. off the price; so you may send 12 coupons, and only 3/-. Say whether you want a fine, medium, or broad nib. This great offer is made to introduce the famous Fleet Pen to GREYFRIARS HERALD readers. (Foreign postage extra.) Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. **Special Safety Model. 2/- extra.**



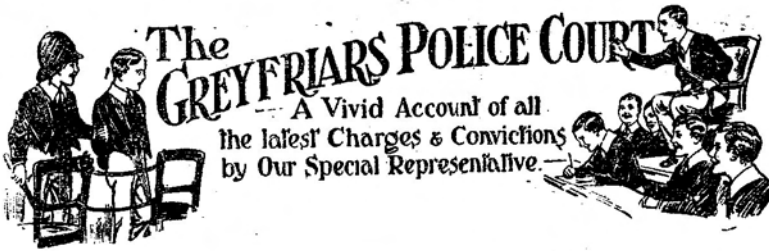
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The GREYFRIARS POLICE COURT

A Vivid Account of all the latest Charges & Convictions by Our Special Representative.

Mr. Justice Wharton presided at the Woodshed Quarter Sessions this week. His worship sported a new wig, which he had hired from Mr. Lazarus' second-hand shop in Courtfield.

There was a terrible rush for the unreserved seats, and the ambulance-men were kept busy.

Cruelty Charge Against Notorious Bully.

Percy Bolsover, a brutal and repulsive-looking lout, was pitched head-first into the dock, charged with the wilful murder of Freddie, a small fly, by taking pot-shots at it with his pea-shooter.

Magistrate: Fetch my black cap, somebody! (Laughter.)

Mr. Richard Russell, who had witnessed the terrible crime, then gave evidence.

"I was seated in the Form-room, your worship, watching the flies on the ceiling—"

Magistrate: What an exciting occupation! (Laughter.)

Mr. Russell: And presently, I saw Freddy—the victim of the tragedy—perch himself on the nape of Billy Bunter's neck. (Laughter.) I then saw prisoner, who was seated in the back row, take deliberate aim at Freddie with his pea-shooter. I was horrified to see the poor fly collapse—"

Magistrate: Did you summon a doctor?

Mr. Russell: Yes, your worship. And whilst waiting for the doctor to come, I tried artificial respiration, but it was no use. (Laughter.)

Magistrate (sternly): Freddie's untimely end is a matter for tears, not for ribald laughter! Silence in court!

Dr. Montague Newland, the Remove Medical Officer of Health, stated that he held a post-mortem examination on deceased, and that death was due to concussion, caused by a hard, round object—presumably a pea. The victim of the tragedy was well-known at Greyfriars. He had spent most of his time in the school kitchen, exploring the food. He left a widow, and fifty-eight children.

Magistrate: How shocking! Has the wretched criminal in the dock anything to say?

Prisoner: I consider that I acted in the best interests of humanity. Flies are beastly pests, and ought to be exterminated.

Magistrate: The same remark applies to bullies! (Cries of "Hear, hear!" and "Put him through it, your worship!")

Prisoner: Flies are poisonous insects

Magistrate: So are you, and you will be dealt with as such! Gentlemen of the jury, go up into the loft and consider your verdict!

After a four hours' absence, the foreman of the jury poked his head through the aperture, and informed the magistrate that the jury could not agree.

Magistrate: Then you can jolly well stay up in the loft until you do!

Sounds of bumping and yelling overhead showed that the obstinate members of the jury were being gently persuaded to agree with their colleagues.

After a further absence of three hours (during which period the jurymen missed a couple of meals) the foreman again poked his head through the aperture, for the purpose of proclaiming a verdict of guilty.

But the court was empty.

The magistrate, the witnesses, and the prisoner had retired to their studies in order to do their prep.!

REPORTS IN BRIEF.

The following proceedings took place later in the evening.

Mr. Gerald Loder claimed damages to the extent of sevenpence-halfpenny in respect of various articles of crockery which had been wilfully smashed by George Tubb, a member of the fag fraternity.

Magistrate: I can't be bothered with these beastly claims! You must settle the matter out of court.

Mr. Loder remarked that as he could not get satisfaction from the magistrate, he would help himself to sevenpence-halfpenny from the Poor Box. Before he could do so, how-

ever, he was hustled from the court by six brawny constables.

A grubby youth named George Alfred Gatty was charged with not having washed his neck, for the space of six calendar months.

His worship ordered prisoner to be sent to the laundry with the next consignment of washing.

Percy Bolsover was charged with making faces at Mr. Robert Cherry, the eminent counsel.

Magistrate (sternly): Why did you make faces at my learned friend?

Prisoner: I didn't, your worship. I was merely smiling at him. (Laughter.)

Magistrate: That's the worst of having a face like a landslip. I'll give you the benefit of the doubt this time.

Prisoner was accordingly acquitted.

Robert Donald Ogilvy was charged with blowing his nose during the police-court proceedings.

Prisoner: It's ridiculous to drag me into the dock just for that! I couldn't help it. My nose—

Magistrate: Blow your nose!

Prisoner did so—with such vigour and heartiness that he succeeded in clearing the court!

A long-haired youth named Claude Hoskins, of the Shell, was charged with the dreadful crime of writing poetry. He was alleged to have perpetrated an "Ode to an Expiring Blackbeetle."

Magistrate: Prisoner shall share the fate of the beetle! (Laughter.)

Prisoner was soundly bumped, but poets evidently possess nine lives, for he failed to expire!

There was a sensation in court when William Wibley appeared in the dock, charged with wilful murder. The members of the public were relieved to hear, however, that he had merely murdered the part of "Hamlet" in a recent performance by the Remove Amateur Dramatic Society.

Prisoner pleaded that he had a sore throat at the time of the offence, and he was accordingly discharged with a cough-drop.

George Bulstrode, William Wibley, and David Morgan were charged, at the instigation of Mr. George Wingate, with playing football in the Sixth-form passage, and with doing considerable damage to the walls thereof.

Prisoners were instantly discharged, the magistrate remarking that he had no jurisdiction over anything that went on in the Sixth-form passage.

Mr. Wingate: I claim heavy damages!

Magistrate: Sorry, old sport, but there's nothing doing!

Not satisfied with his worship's decision, Mr. Wingate left the court with the Poor Box under his arm.

Miss Priscilla —Form Master!



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of
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Obviously.

The two tramps had followed the wealthy man through miles of streets, waiting for the chance to rob him. Suddenly the man stopped, rang the bell of a lawyer's office, and entered the building.

"Well," said one tramp to the other, "we shall have to wait until he comes out again, I suppose?"

"Not likely," muttered the other; "we shall have to wait for the lawyer now!"—Sent in by J. Bibby, 56, Oriel Road, Tranmere, Birkenhead.

THEN LEO GOT ON WITH IT!



PERCY VERE DE VERE (the well-known dude and big game hunter): "Bai Jove, have you seen a wounded hare pass by here, what?"
LEO: "Nothing ever passes me, young man!"

A Deaf-ferent Story.

Deaf and dumb beggar (having unexpectedly received sixpence): Oh, thank you, sir!

Kindly Old Gent: Eh? What's that? I thought you were deaf and dumb!

Beggar (greatly confused): Er—er—well, sir, to tell you the truth, I'm minding this place for a deaf and dumb man. He's only gone into the park to hear the band for a few minutes.—Sent in by T. Rice, 126, Meeting House Lane, Peckham, S. E. 15.

A Red-dy Report.

She certainly had very red hair—it was fiery—scorching! The rude young man entered the railway carriage in which she was seated, glanced at her once or twice, tittered, and then edged away to a far corner.

"Sense me, miss," he giggled, "but I mustn't get too close to you, or I might get burnt, y'know!"

But she was a Lancashire lassie and quite equal to the occasion.

"Doan't thee fret, lad," she replied, "tha's mooch too green to burn!"

Then all the passengers tittered.—Sent in by E. Stubbs, 154, Burbank Street, West Hartlepool.

Time!

American: I say, Pat, d'you know, in New York we build houses in a few hours by patent machinery?

Pat: Be jabbers, but that's nothing! In Dublin the other day, when I was going home for my dinner, I saw some men building a house, and when I came back and passed the house again, the first tenants were paying their second month's rent to the landlord!—Sent in by P. Slabbert, 10, Callington Street, Port Elizabeth, Cape Province, South Africa.

A Fine Feat.

The flying men were boasting about the risks taken in the air, and the falls they had survived, and the infantrymen listened and gasped.

But after a time, one of the soldiers became rather "fed" with the recital.

"I don't see anything so wonderful in all that you've been telling us," he chipped in. "Why, I know a chap who wasn't in the Army even, and who dropped seventy feet into a vat of scalding water and yet wasn't a bit the worse. In fact, he went straight on with his job."

"Oh, cheese it!" said the flying men.

"It's true," murmured the infantryman, edging away; "they were pigs' feet, y'know!"—Sent in by R. Mair, 40, Riverbank Street, Newmilue.

Words Followed.

George Alfred Grundy: I tell you I'd make a model captain.

Tom Merry: In a seuse.

Grundy: What d'you mean?

Merry: Well, just look up "model" in the dictionary. You'll find it means "a small imitation of the real thing."—Sent in by A. Kinny, 48, The Crescent, E. 17.

Fairly Bottled Him.

A Scotsman whilst walking through the streets of London noticed a chemist's shop, and entering the place he demanded of the bald-headed chemist if he had any good hair-restorer for sale.

"Certainly, sir," said the chemist, "here is an article I can thoroughly recommend. It makes the hair grow in twenty-four hours."

"Aweel," said the canny Scot, "ye can give the top o' yer head a wee rub wi' it, and I'll look back in the morn' ta see if ye're tellin' the truth."

The chemist promptly returned the bottle to the shelf, and proceeded to

kick the errand boy for laughing.—Sent in by L. Ferst, 8, Golder's Green Crescent, Golder's Green, N. W. 4.

A Bad Egg.

Tigg: Good gracious! Whatever makes that hen in your backyard cackle so loudly?

Jigg: Oh, they've just laid a corner-stone across the way, and now she's trying to make the neighbours think she did it!—Sent in by A. Dickinson, 16, Highbury Road, Headingley, Leeds.

A Cure-ious Diagnosis.

Inspector (rushing to the scene of the crime): Faith, Murphy, is the poor man injured dangerously?

P-c. Murphy: Ay, two of the wounds are fatal, sorr, but the third can be cured all right if the man has perfect rest for a few weeks!—Sent in by F. Crawford, May Tree Cottage, Walton Road, Norton, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

Ma-rred Everything!

Visitor (at private hospital): Can I see Lieutenant Barker, please?

Matron: We do not allow ordinary visitors—only relatives.

Visitor (boidily): Oh, yes, but I'm his sister.

Matron: Dear me, I'm very glad to meet you, I'm sure! I'm his mother!—Sent in by T. Wilson, 254, Sticker Lane, Laisterdyke, Bradford.

A Striking Demand.

Little Emma: Please, Mister Sales, father wants some sticking-plaster, and mother wants a bottle of china cement.

Shopkeeper: Certainly! But what's happened?

Little Emma: If you please, mother's hit father with the sugar-bowl!—Sent in by J. Hoffman, 21, Ivydale Road, Tranmere Birkenhead.

THAT PUT THE SCREW ON IT!



"Your people are not so rich as mine. Pa goes driving every day in his Rolls-Ford!"

"So does my father."

"What does he drive?"

"Nails! He's a car-penter!"

Terrible Tea-se!

Boarding-house Keeper: I'm sorry to say, ladies and gentlemen, that the tea is quite exhausted.

Faectious Boarder: I'm not surprised, it's been getting weaker and weaker for a long time past!—Sent in by E. A. Archer, 21, Chaucery Lane, Beckenham, Kent.

FIRST INSTALMENT!



HELD TO RANSOM

A TALE OF GORDON PYKE
THE MYSTERY DETECTIVE
By GEORGE WINGATE

A London Mystery!

OLD Mark Steel's fingers trembled as he read the letter that had just come by post. And his face grew dark and grim.

"Roddy, it's from your uncle Paul!" he gasped. "The man who ruined my life! And he's back from Australia, and wants to see me. I suppose he thinks I'm willing to forgive him."

Roddy Steel, a strong, well set-up lad with a clever, sunny face, had started, and was listening eagerly. Seldom had he seen his father so thoroughly aroused. And Mark Steel was a dangerous man when ill-treated or insulted.

"Thirty years ago he robbed me!" the old man thundered, tearing the letter into bits, which he flung into the grate. "I had all the world before me then. I had come through the worst, and would have been wealthy by this had he not smashed up my business. I never could pick up; it was too late. It's been one long struggle, year in, year out, with setbacks often from sickness—and now he wants to be friends again! The cad! It makes my blood boil, to think of all I could have done for you."

He stopped, with a catch in his voice, and the passion in his eyes changed to tenderness as he shot a glance at his son. But next instant they blazed again.

"He went away with a lie on his lips, and it was only when he was on the high-seas that I found what he had done. Now he asks to shake hands. He hopes I'm in good circumstances, he says. I know what that means—he wants to live on us! I had forgotten him, but that letter brings it all back, and I feel as I did when first I discovered his roguery."

With his face set hard he began to pace the room. A tall man, and a splendid athlete, he now walked with bowed shoulders and unsteady gait. His handsome old face was deeply furrowed, but his eyes still shone alertly. Suddenly he stopped.

"You're very silent, my boy," he remarked, in altered tones. "What do you think about it all?"

"Well, dad," replied Roddy, after a pause, "you promised mother when she was dying that you wouldn't bear malice—that you'd forgive him. Now, didn't you?"

At once the old man shot up straight, and a wistful, far-away look came into his eyes. His lips trembled. "I did, and that settles it, Rodd!" he replied, in solemn tones. "I'll go and see him."

Always abrupt and quick in decision he turned round, and left the room without another word. Roddy heard him fumbling at the hat-rack, and the door banged. He stirred up the fire, dropped into an armchair, and sighed heavily.

For all that his father had said about their circumstances was painfully true. Life for both of them had become an unending struggle, and the burden was falling more heavily on the lad's shoulders every month. Only by great self-denial were they able to make ends meet, and old Mark's health was failing with alarming rapidity of late. How was it going to end?

Depressed, and worn-out with a long and wearying day's work, Roddy, pondering over it all, fell asleep at last. He awoke, shivering. The fire had died out, the room was bitterly cold, and he was in darkness. Striking a match, he looked at the clock.

Good gracious! He had been asleep for four hours! And his father had not returned. What could be keeping him? Had he and Uncle Paul made friends again, and were they spending the evening happily together, forgetful of time? Roddy hoped so as he knelt down to kindle the fire. His father might be back at any moment. He would need warmth, and—oh, there he was!

He heard a key turned in the lock, and a footstep along the hall.

"I've been asleep, dad," he cried, "and I let the fire go out; but in two shakes—"

Then he heard a groan.

Looking round, he staggered to his feet with a cry.

For old Mark was holding on to the table for support, his face livid, his eyes terrible in their horror and fear. He was hatless, and his clothes were plastered with mud.

"He's dead! He's dead!" he croaked.

White to the lips, Roddy stumbled forward and clutched his arm.

"Father, you didn't kill him?" he pleaded hoarsely.

"No—no! But—but—"

"Oh, I am glad! Then they can't harm you. They can't—"

"They're after me! A man saw me. He followed me, and tried to catch me, but I just got away."

"But wasn't it too dark for him to recognise you again?"

"No!"

Roddy shot a glance out of the window. The moon had risen in the last three hours. Pulling down the blinds, he led his father to the armchair, and the old man sank into it helplessly.

The lad hurriedly lit the fire, and fetched a kettle to boil, whilst old Mark went on mumbling incoherently. Soon the fire was burning, and Roddy turned to his father again, his young face set in haggard lines.

"You must pull yourself together, dad," he insisted. "If there's likely to be trouble we'll have to face it, that's all, and unless I know everything I can't help you. Tell me exactly what happened. I must know."

Old Mark tried to collect his shaken thoughts.

"He was there before me, though I didn't see him," he mumbled. "He said Trafalgar Square, Chelsea. I was to come in by the gateway, and he'd be waiting. I found the gate open, and, seeing no one, I walked up and down the pavement. Not a soul was about. I kept on walking up and down for close on an hour, and I was beginning to feel sure he'd changed his mind, when I saw something dark lying against the railings across the road, and close to the gate. The moon had been coming up, and I had not noticed it."

"And what you saw was Uncle Paul?"

"It was." Old Mark shivered. "He was lying on his face, and when I turned him over I saw that he had been done to death."

"You're sure he was dead? That he hadn't got a stroke of some sort? That—"

"He's dead. There wasn't any life in him. I was that shocked that I could hardly keep my wits together. I didn't know what to do. I thought of shouting for help, and then I remembered that I might be held guilty, for there are lots who know how I hated him. I stood dazed for a bit, and then I bent down to make sure. And then—" His face worked convulsively.

"Yes—what then?" Roddy insisted, determined to hear the full particulars, for the old man's sake.

"Then I was gripped by the coat-collar! A man had me in his clutches. I hadn't heard him coming; he didn't make the least noise; he seemed to drop from the clouds. But somehow that grip, instead of paralysing me, seemed to give me the strength of desperation. I flung him off, and then I saw his face. Such a face!"

He covered his own with his hands.

"What was it like, dad? It frightened you?"

"It was the face of a man who never was beaten, nor could be—cold and stern as marble in the moonlight, with eyes that burned like live coals, and there was a power and daring in it that hoded ill to anyone who crossed him. There was more, but I could not place it, nor did I try, for I knew that if I hesitated it would be all up with me. I dashed for the gate, and

he caught me again as I got it open. Again we struggled, and we fell in the mud, but I was up first. I flung him off, and he tripped over a big stone. And I ran—how I ran!—till I got near to the Fulham Road."

"Yes—yes?"

"I'd got a big start, and fear gave my old limbs a pace I'd never have thought possible. He was coming after me, for I looked back and saw



RODDY STEEL.

him, but I didn't hear a footfall. He nearly had me, but luck again was with me, for a taxi was passing. The driver thought some scoundrel was chasing an old fellow, and hailed me. I stumbled into the taxi, and it shot away. It ran towards Putney, and when the driver asked me where I lived I told him to keep going. I got out at Putney Station and came home, walking most of the way."

"Then you shook the man off, dad. He'll never be able to trace you."

But old Mark only moaned.

"He'll get me!" he muttered. "Something tells me he will. If you'd seen him you'd know that nothing could baulk him. Besides, he has my hat. It fell off in the struggle at the gate, and I saw it in his hand as he was chasing me."

"But he can't trace you by that! There are thousands like it. And we live here in Highgate, miles from Chelsea. Don't worry. You're quite safe, but, of course, you are terribly shaken. You must go to bed; I'll help you upstairs."

"He'll get me, Rodd! He's after me at this moment!"

"Nonsense!" Roddy tried to speak cheerfully, though he was scared—and small wonder—by all he had heard. But his first thought was to ease his father's mind as far as possible.

"You're terribly upset still, dad," he went on. "Now, do as I ask, and come along. I'll get you a hot drink when you're lying down, and you'll soon feel better."

He helped the old man to rise. He was leading him across the room when

they saw the door slowly opening. They had not heard a sound. They stopped, Roddy petrified by amazement, and old Mark clinging to him with a piteous cry.

"It's him! It's him!"

And a man walked in, a hat in his hand!

"I think this is yours," he said, laying the hat on the table, and gazing meaningly at old Mark.

"Who are you?" Roddy faltered.

"I'm a detective," the other answered, with a shrewd smile. "And your father knows why I'm here."

Old Mark reeled, and cried out pitifully again.

"Your name?" Roddy insisted.

"Before you dare—"

"Hold on!" the man cut in. "My name is Gordon Pyke. Is that enough?"

Roddy gasped.

"Gordon Pyke, of all men!" he muttered hoarsely. "The great Gordon Pyke! The greatest detective in the world!"

On the Trail!

IT was no wonder Roddy felt completely staggered. For some years Gordon Pyke's name had been before the public, coupled with the most brilliant exploits. He had exposed the most gigantic frauds, and brought the most notorious criminals to the bar of justice; and yet, strange to say, and despite every effort, the Press had failed to establish his identity. Like a shadow he had flitted hither and thither throughout the length and breadth of Britain, and wherever he had gone a baffling mystery had been solved. But of himself, of the life he led, of the motives that had impelled him to wage a relentless war against criminals of every class, nothing had ever leaked out. And he was in the room!

As Roddy gazed at him he could well understand the fear that had gripped his father. For Pyke's face was one in a thousand. His strong features would have arrested attention anywhere, but it was his eyes that startled the beholder. They were black as ink, very deep-set, and surmounted by immense bushy eyebrows, and a yellow light lurking in their depths flashed continually. Now his piercing gaze swept over father and son. At last Roddy managed to speak.

"You've come here because of father," he said, his mouth parched.

"I have," Pyke announced, his deep voice flooding the room.

"He's not guilty," Roddy protested stoutly.

Pyke smiled.

"Who's going to believe that?" he asked. "His hatred for his brother was well-known; if he were seen to-night by anyone but me—"

A ray of light had shot into Roddy's heart.

"Then you don't think him guilty, Mr. Pyke?"

"I know he's not, but for the present I can't prove that. His life is in danger; so is yours—and, for that matter, mine is also! There's a foul conspiracy behind all this. Paul Steel,

your uncle, had become an immensely wealthy man, and a notorious gang dogged his footsteps from Australia, to grab his fortune."

Roddy and his father stared at one another.

"I wronged poor Paul, my boy," old Mark murmured, in great agitation. "He had come home to make atonement, and I thought—I thought—" His voice trailed off in keen remorse.

But Roddy's mind was centred on Pyke's statement. He could think of nothing else.

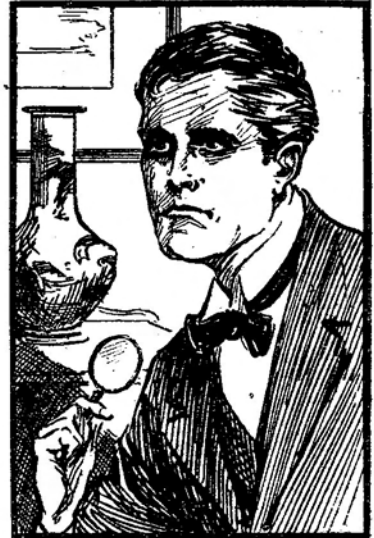
"You know all this, and you say that your life and mine is in danger, as well as father's!" he gasped.

"I do. You and your father stand in the way of this fortune, and these scoundrels would stop at nothing to make sure of the money. As for me"—he laughed breezily—"for two years now there has been a bitter fight waging between myself and this gang. Their leader is the most daring and brilliant criminal I have ever sought to run down, and so far I have not succeeded. It is his death or mine at the finish. Tarbovy Strang has vowed that."

Again Roddy gasped, for he knew the outlaw's name well, also. He had heard it a hundred times.

"Are we up against Strang?" he said bewildered.

"We are, my lad. And I've been watching outside for three days and nights, in case he should come here! My motor is waiting, and I intend to take your father into hiding. You must accompany me. And there's a



GORDON PYKE.

way in which you can help me, if you don't mind."

Roddy's heart jumped. To be of assistance to the mysterious and world-renowned detective! To aid him in his work, to be his confidant, to share his perils and triumphs! Of all things it was what he most would have wished.

"I'll go with you like a shot," he said. "But my father—"

He looked at the old man, who had staggered back to the armchair.

"He wouldn't be safe with us; he couldn't get about with us. We must get him where he can lie low," Pyke explained.

"You've heard what Mr. Pyke suggests, dad?" Roddy asked. "Are you willing—"

"I'm in your hands and his, Roddy," old Mark agreed. "I'll do whatever you think best. I'm too flustered to think things out."

"All right," Pyke said. "Then come along. But—ah, just a moment!"

He crossed to the fireplace, and, gathering together the scraps of Paul Steel's letter, that old Mark had thrown into the grate, he carefully stowed them in a pocket-book. They left the house, and he led them to a side street about sixty yards distant. There a Rolls-Royce car was drawn up against the kerb, and the chauffeur was standing by it.

He was almost a dwarf, and at sight of him Roddy drew a deep breath of surprise, for he knew his appearance well. Not once but a score of times had he seen him sitting at the wheel of that magnificent car as it flashed past in the City, in the West End, in distant suburbs. The tiny figure, the waxen face, the fragile fingers grasping the wheel with superb control! And Gordon Pyke had often been hidden in that car, and no one had even guessed!

"Jump in," Pyke said.

They took their seats, the chauffeur sprang to the wheel, Gordon Pyke pulled down the blinds, and the car rolled away. Old Mark, dazed and still trembling, lay back, exhausted. Roddy, his mind in a whirl, gazed in silence at Pyke, who had taken a box from under the seat, and was examining the contents. Roddy heard the clink of metal.

"As soon as your father is fixed up we are going after the gang," Pyke said. "I have everything I want here." And he closed the lid with a snap, and pushed the box under the seat.

"You mean to catch Strang tonight?" Roddy cried.

"It's the fifth attempt I've made, and I hope this one will be successful," Pyke answered, his strong face a trifle rueful. "If we fail, it won't be long before he hits back. But I've discovered his lair, and I know he is to be there at midnight. It's an appointment he must keep."

The car had been travelling very fast, and, of course, with the blinds down, Roddy had not the least idea of the direction it was taking. After a half-hour's run it stopped, and Pyke pulled up one of the blinds. A house was facing them. It was in the midst of a common. The chauffeur slipped from his seat and knocked at the door and at once a light shone forth in the hall. The door swung open.

"Now, Mr. Steel," Pyke said, taking the old man's arm, "this is your home for the present, and you will receive every care. And it won't be long before you see us again."

Old Mark stumbled out of the car and accompanied Pyke to the door. Roddy saw his father enter the hall, and the door closed. Pyke and the chauffeur hurried back.

Pyke pulled down the blind again. He looked at his watch.

"We've cut it rather fine, but we'll get there just in time," he said. "And now I want to explain some things to you."

His mood had changed, and with that even his face seemed to change. The hardness had gone out of it; the eyes had become playful; he looked a different man altogether—a light-hearted man, genial and friendly.

"This fellow Strang is giving me the most exciting time I've ever had," he said, as he struck a match and lit a cigar. "I've enjoyed sport of every sort—hunting wild beasts, tracking them down, never knowing when I should come on a tiger or a panther in the jungle before I could get my gun—and it's all tame compared to a man-hunt after a rogue like Strang. He's a wonder! He's a genius! Every month he does something more surprising. He has an amazing instinct, and seems to scent out every danger. He reads the thoughts in my head—he must, or he couldn't have baffled my most careful plans. He never attempts the same tactics twice, and he's most resourceful at the moment he's most hard pressed. I just live to beat him; the longing has grown on me till I can think of nothing else. You can be useful to me in one of two ways tonight. You can either stand by the motor and work a mechanical invention from there, or come along with me. If you work from the motor, Tigg, my quaint little chauffeur, would accompany me. There must be three of us for the job to-night, and that's why I asked for your help."

Roddy's face flushed, and he spoke eagerly.

"I want to go with you, and face any danger there may be," he said. "Hasn't this scoundrel Strang killed my uncle, or been the cause of his death somehow? Isn't it due to the villain also that my father's in jeopardy? And doesn't the cur mean to rob us now that he's done my poor uncle to death?"

"Yes; but the risk?"

"I don't care a rap about the risk, Mr. Pyke. I'm not a coward, I hope. I want to get even with him, same as you do, and I've even more reason, perhaps."

Pyke nodded.

"All right," he said. "I didn't misjudge you, I find."

"What's Strang like, Mr. Pyke?"

"I've seen him thrice, and I don't know," Pyke replied, to Roddy's amazement. "That's one of the cleverest things about him—he's a master at disguising himself. Each time I've seen him he was quite different. Ah, if that were only all!"

"He's up to all sorts of tricks, I suppose?" Roddy hazarded, eager to learn all he could.

"He is," Pyke assented. "He has a cargo of them. He and I have mostly been fighting up to this at long range, so to say. He has tried to get at me by one scientific stratagem, and I've countered by another, and so on. Science is my hobby; I revel in it, and he's jolly clever that way. There's little he doesn't know. But I've got a scheme to-night that I hope— Well, we're up to time."

A neighbouring clock had begun to toll the midnight hour. As the last note died away the car slowed down. Pyke opened the box, and a moment later they stepped on to the road.

The Tables Turned!

TINY TIGG had begun to unroll a long coil of tubing. Pyke walked a few paces, and looked round a corner. They were near the river. Huge warehouses stood out gaunt and ugly in the moonlight; a cold wind swept across the water to the bleak spot on which they stood; big ships were silhouetted against the sky on the opposite side, their tall masts rising like long spears through a slight mist. No house was in view.

But Roddy, following Pyke, saw, when he came to the corner, a small, square building with a flat roof, erected on a patch of rank grass. It was surrounded by debris. Pyke pointed towards it.

"He's in there," he chuckled, "and we're going to smoke him out."

Tiny Tigg, dexterously uncoiling the tubing, came along. Everything had been carefully calculated. From the spot where the motor had stopped, the piping ran to the building, with three yards to spare. Pyke had his box under his arm, and he whispered to Tigg to return to the car. Meantime, Roddy had been examining the building at close quarters.

It was of stone, and quite a hundred years old. The walls looked very thick; there was only one window, very high up, and only one door. This last, made of oak and strengthened by iron bands, was tremendously strong. It evidently was the only means of entry or exit.

Pyke's stratagem began to dawn on him. If the ingenious detective could inject smoke in sufficient volume, anyone inside would have to come out through that doorway to escape suffocation. So Roddy watched intently, his pulse beating fast.

Pyke took a small nozzle from the bag and fixed it to the tubing. From the nozzle a very thin, hollow mouth of steel protruded. Pyke gently inserted this into the keyhole. All now was ready.

By his direction, Roddy hurried to the corner and waved his hat to Tigg as a signal. The latter had attached his end of the tubing to the engine in the car, and he now set the engine going. From a large drum of compressed smoke the tubing at once began to fill. Roddy ran back.

Three minutes passed in complete silence. Then he and Pyke heard a startled cry.

"The smoke is beginning to make itself felt," Pyke whispered.

As he spoke, he took from the box a long bar of steel, like a jemmy, with a thin, flat edge. The cry in the building followed by a babble of voices, then a shout.

The shouting increased. They heard the crash of furniture, the clatter of feet on the stone floor within, yells of imprecation, shrieks of terror. And then, above all, a stentorian voice rang, loud and commanding.

"That's Strang!" Pyke cried to Roddy. "They're trying to find the door. When they burst their way out,

I hope to knock 'em over one by one, before they can see for the smoke."

Roddy was trembling with excitement. Not a trace of fear had gripped him; it was impossible to be afraid with a such a comrade as Pyke—cool, powerful, completely self-confident. The uproar inside increased. Any moment now Rodney expected the rush. With every limb taut, with head and chin thrust forward, he stood at the door.

But suddenly Pyke's face changed. For an instant his figure dropped. Then he put his ear against the door, and at that moment a loud, mocking laugh rang forth, and was followed by a silence so unexpected and startling that Roddy's heart turned cold. And Pyke began to prise open the door with the jemmy.

With a tearing snap the door burst open. A huge, thick cloud of smoke rolled out in heavy folds. Pyke had to step back before it, and Roddy could see the consternation on his face. But whilst the room was still invisible he dashed in. The boy followed him.

Quickly the smoke lessened, and Roddy could see Pyke's figure, motionless in the middle of the floor. The baffled detective was standing straight and stern, his arms folded across his chest. Roddy looked around, and cried with amazement.

For of all there who had shrieked and struggled, not one was to be seen! Nor was that all. Even the furniture had vanished! Nothing but the four walls remained!

Roddy, gasping, half choked by the smoke, and his eyes stinging with pain, saw Pyke bend down.

"Strang has scored! I told you he never left anything to chance," he said; "but I certainly didn't reckon on this!"

Roddy struggled to his side. Beneath them a large trap-door had been newly put in position. The villains had got away by means of a tunnel.

Pyke pulled up the trap-door, and dropped into the tunnel, bidding Roddy await his return. He was only away five minutes, and came out of the tunnel almost breathless.

"It leads to the river-side," he said at once, speaking now with unexpected agitation. "I heard the throbbing of a launch. They managed to get everything aboard; they haven't even left me a clue. And that is not all. Strang has his chance to strike! Hurry along. We must get away at once!"

He ran out of the building, and swung round the corner.

"Don't bother to fetch the tubing, Tigg," he shouted. "Get to the wheel, man. Make for home as fast as you can. Strang is after us!"

He jumped into the car, and pulled down the blinds as soon as Roddy tumbled in after him. He began muttering, as if upbraiding himself. The car glided away, and soon was travelling at terrific speed. He looked at his watch.

"We'll do it within the hour! He'll be jolly smart if he can get there first," he panted, still breathing hard. "But what a slip I made! It'll be a lesson to me. I did think that with that smoke apparatus—Whew! The tussle will be bigger than ever, after this!"

He sat forward, his long, supple fingers knit together. Neither spoke.

At last! The wheels crunched over gravel. The car stopped.

Pyke became alert again. He pulled up the blind, and waved to Roddy to alight. The lad jumped out, and found himself facing a large mansion. He went up the steps, and, waiting while Pyke and Tigg conferred together, he saw a noble expanse of park and woods and grounds surrounding the house. Pyke ran up the steps, opened the door, and they entered the hall.

"Go into that room, Steel," Pyke said. "I'll join you directly." And he ran up the stairs.

Roddy turned into a large, splendidly appointed room on the left of the hall. This was a house of luxury, he saw at a glance. For a few moments he stood looking around, lost in



Three minutes passed in complete silence; then Roddy and Pyke heard a startled cry. "The smoke is beginning to make itself felt!" cried the detective.

admiration. Then he listened in surprise.

For all through the house bells had begun to tingle. Doors clanged with a metallic ring; an engine began to throb; he heard a strange hissing, not unlike the sound of steam. Voices also seemed to echo fitfully, mingling with one another, and of different tones. And he did not hear a footstep.

What could it all mean? He went out into the hall, to listen the better. He looked up along the stately staircase, and along the passage to the basement. No one stirred. It seems as if some wizard were at work. Then a trapdoor fell back, a few yards from his feet, and Tiny Tigg shot up into the room!

Roddy stared, round-eyed. But there was not the least trace of flurry or confusion on Tigg's waxen face. He stepped out as if this were the most ordinary way possible of entry, and the trapdoor closed noiselessly of its own volition. Then Roddy heard Pyke's voice, and it sounded clear, and yet far away.

"Hurry up, Tigg!"

"Coming, sir!" Tigg said; and he went up the stairs.

Roddy had to laugh. Clearly Pyke had spoken modestly when he had said that science was his hobby. He was far more than an amateur; in fact, he was an inventive genius. Everything in the house was worked by science; it was a scientific laboratory. Yet what could be the meaning of all this at that moment?

Then he heard a gentle humming, and, turning, he listened. Had Pyke begun to ply some other invention now that he had been joined by Tigg?

But no; on the contrary a great silence had fallen within the house. The sound was coming from afar. And it was growing in volume. Ah! Roddy of a sudden recognised it. An aeroplane was on the wing! He looked up at the sky, trying to pick it out.

The noise grew louder. The aeroplane was travelling fast. Ay—he saw it now. It was very high, and coming straight towards the mansion. Suddenly it dived in a long swoop, and the engine stopped.

Then he heard the clatter of feet. Someone was racing down the stairs at break-neck pace. The next moment Pyke dashed into the room, his face stern and white.

"Stand back, if you value your life!" he thundered.

Roddy sprang from the window as Pyke wrenched open a cupboard door. His hand went round in a half-circle, and, at the swing of his arm, iron shutters that Roddy had not noticed swept forward and secured all the windows with a click.

And hardly had this been effected when a bullet, smashing through the glass, flattened itself on the shutters!

"That's Strang!" Pyke cried. "And he nearly had your life! He saw you as he swooped down. Good job we got home first."

Roddy could not speak. Pyke's dramatic entry, the swift and unexpected attack, the narrow shave he had had, left him dazed. And as Pyke closed the cupboard and walked leisurely towards him he heard a cry. His face went white.

"Help! Help!" It was his father's voice! He could not be mistaken.

"My father!" Roddy cried. "He's calling to us! Strang has him! In some extraordinary way he's got him!"

"Steady, steady, my lad," Pyke urged. "Your father is in great danger, but he's not in the aeroplane with Strang. Another of my inventions, that's all. Look at that wall." And he pointed to an ivory mouthpiece, set in a small block of marble. "Your father is where we left him, and only his voice has travelled here. Ah—listen again! Never say die, Steel! Never say die! I'll stand by you to the end, my lad, and we'll save him yet!"

Another thrilling, long instalment of this magnificent new detective serial written by the Captain of Greyfriars will appear in next Tuesday's issue. Order your copy early and tell all your chums about it.—
Editor.



The War Dance.

LITTLE had the boys dreamed when they had set out on this expedition to the secret place of the Navajo Indians, that they would have to dance for their lives.

Yet this is what they were literally doing as, disguised as medicine-men, they followed Buffalo Bill in a sort of stamping, rhythmic loekstep through the maze of the Sun Dance.

They knew well that the slightest failure on the part of their leader, in following out the classic lines of the dance, would result in their immediate discovery and death.

But they did not falter or doubt as, followed by the Indian file of two thousand braves and squaws, they stamped their way through the dance, with its ever shifting patterns of flowers, reptiles and animals, all lined out in patterns of chanting, stamping Redskins on the great firelit plain.

Buffalo Bill, the grim wolf mask of the head medicine-man drawn over his head, was leading them with absolute accuracy through the mazes of the dance, which viewed from outside the great dancing plain made a magnificent spectacle.

First the long line of dancers showed the shape of a coiled rattlesnake which, under the influence of the sun, woke and dissolved giving place to the shape of an ear of corn. This in its turn dissolved as the line of dancers moved onward into a dazzle line symbolic of the lightning, of the spring rains. Then the line took the shape of prairie flowers, and the pipe of peace, and passed through conventional patterns of the sun, moon and stars, the line zigzagging to the cardinal points of the greater constellations as seen in the early summer.

And finally the dance wound up in one vast circle of human figures extending far round the group of medicine-men, a circle symbolic of the sun in all his glory and majesty.

A deep cry of admiration went up as the Sun Dance was thus brought to its close. Never, in the memory of the oldest warriors and war chiefs amongst the spectators, had the Sun Dance been better led in the Navajo nation.

And little did these dream that the leader of that tiny group of medicine-men, now clustered together in the centre of that wide circle of panting human figures was none other than the hated Buffalo Bill himself, supported

by the no less dread "Buk Diksce," and their prisoner "Jak Ballu."

Jake Bellow was dancing in more senses than one, to-night. He could have danced with delight, even now, as he saw that impassive, hooded figure of his old enemy, Big Eagle, lashed and gagged on the litter that lay before the Moon Stone or Ring Stone.

There was no danger that the Navajoes would discover that it was not Jake Bellow himself, but Big Eagle, their chief medicine-man, who lay there. Nobody dared go within arrow shot of the Ring Stone.

Only when the moon rose high enough to cast its light through the circle of the ring, in its vast monolith, so that it fell upon the silent body of its victim, would the boys and untried braves shoot their arrows through the ring at the bound figure.

It was not an easy shot. But to the Indian youth who planted an arrow through the ring, and into the heart of the victim, would follow a year of good luck, and a chance of obtaining easily the first scalp that would create him a brave.

The ring of braves and squaws that was gathered about the supposed medicine-men was so large that the little group was quite isolated and, in the wait between the dances, could whisper to one another beneath their

painted hoods without fear of being overheard.

"Bravo, Billy Cody!" whispered Buck Dixie to Buffalo Bill. "If you go through the War Dance as well as you led the Sun Dance we are safe! And I would give a few hundred dollars to know if those Apaches are going to join in the dance with us!"

And, as he spoke, he glanced through the eye-slits of his hood towards the spot where the twelve treacherous Apache chiefs, led by Chief Two Axe, Chief Horse's Skull and Chief Man Who Smiles, were grouped at the side of the dancing-ground.

Prairie Wolf chuckled under his hood.

"Lo!" said he. "He who is called Buffalo Bill is more than a Redskin. Never was the Sun Dance better led, and the followers of the Apaches are eager for the War Dance. They would join in if their chiefs would but allow them!"

"But the chiefs are not wearing their war-bonnets!" said Jake Bellow, taking a glance at the group of chiefs, behind whom were gathered five hundred of their picked braves.

"Wah!" replied Prairie Wolf. "We shall wait till the squaws have withdrawn, and till Buffalo Bill leads the War Dance. Then we shall see what we shall see!"

"Wah!" replied Jake Bellow. "We got Big Eagle fixed anyway. He's as good as a dead man this night. Guess he won't toast the feet of any more Palefaces, the varmint!"

The squaws were now moving out of the circle of the Sun Dance, and the under war chiefs, who had joined in the dance, leading their followers, were walking off to their lodges to assume the war-paint and war-bonnet of feathers that was proper to the War Dance. And after these braves went off to dab on the hideous black and vermilion bars of war-paint.

Soon they came trooping back again, and reformed in the circle leaving a space through which the medicine-men could pass.

"Now for ther game o' kiss in the ring!" muttered Jake Bellow. "And we'll see whether the Apaches pick up the handkerchief. If so they do, it's war north, south, east and west!"

The great hide drums started rumbling out the first deep call of the War Dance; and Buffalo Bill and his little group of mock medicine-men locked up in close single-file, swinging

READ THIS FIRST.

Kit and Joe Desmond, two British boys whose father is a prisoner in the hands of the Redskins, are accompanying a convoy of emigrants across the prairies. The convoy is attacked by Redskins, but is relieved by the Dandy Fifth, the famous 5th United States Cavalry. After the battle Kit and Joe enlist as scouts. When the convoy moves again they ride ahead with Uncle Baldy, Buck Dixie, and two Indian allies, old Prairie Wolf, and a youth called Teekopi. They are joined by none other than Buffalo Bill, and make their way into the secret stronghold of the Navajo Indians. They overpower the medicine-men and rescue Jake Bellow, a pioneer, whom the Redskins were going to sacrifice. Then, covered with long robes and carrying one of the medicine-men on a litter in Bellow's stead, they go forth with Buffalo Bill, who leads them in the Sun Dance.

their tomahawks, this time, blade foremost, as they stamped the ground.

The deep-throated war-yell of the Navajoes went up from the grim, painted braves, as the little group stamped their way across the great circle into the space which had been left for their exit.

The squaws, the Indian girls, the Redskin louts or untried braves had all retired. They were now gathered at the edge of the great parade-ground, all watching the beginning of the dance breathlessly.

They were also watching the Apache chiefs and their following in sly sidelong glances. It was everything to the Navajo nations that these ambassadors of the Northern Apaches and their followers should join in the dance, thereby signifying their intention of standing in with the Navajoes in a great rising against the Paleface power.

And this dance was a warriors dance only. It was forbidden to Redskin youths who had not yet taken their first scalp.

It was a dance of intense solemnity and meaning to the Redskins, and it meant all the more to them since it had been forbidden by the law of the United States. And to-night it meant all to the Navajoes. They had been twice signally defeated in the field by the Fifth United States Cavalry, the Dandy Fifth. And they knew that they were up against a new and organised power, with a weight behind it that they had never felt before in their warfare with the Palefaces.

And they knew that this was one of the last strongholds of the Red Man of America. Crees, Iroquois, Delawares, Micmacs of the Eastern States had all been vanquished and tamed by the white man in the space of a couple of hundred years.

These Redskins knew their own history well enough. They knew that not so many years ago the Manhattans had held the island on which the great city of New York with its towering buildings and huge populations now stands.

They knew that on the east, only the Seminole Indians held their own in the huge trackless swamps known as the Everglades in the south of Florida.

They had heard of the first coming of the Palefaces on the Atlantic shores of the United States, and of the early plantations of Virginia and Maryland. They had heard of Pocahontas, the Indian Princess, who went to England to the court of Queen Anne, wife of James I, and who is now buried in the churchyard of Gravesend, in Kent, though they did not know that a descendant of this self-same Pocahontas, was to become the wife of Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States.

So all those dark, savage eyes were turned eagerly on Buffalo Bill and his comrades as they stamped their way out of the circle of painted braves and chiefs, who fell in behind them in close Indian file, chanting the war-song of the Navajoes.

There was a space between the spurious medicine-men and Red Cloud, the war chief who led the long line of feathered warriors.

It was an inviting space, a space

left for the ambassador chiefs of the Apaches. These stood unmoved in a savage group as the endless procession of tossing feathers and flashing weapons passed before them, lit red in the flames that were now leaping high from the fires.

The squaws were giving shrill cries, working up the intense emotions that always sway the Red Man when he hears the chanting of the songs that accompany the War Dance.

These are to the Redskin what the singing of the Marseillaise is to the most red-hot of French patriots.

But the Apache chiefs were biding their time.

They allowed that long procession to file past them in review.

As a matter of fact they were counting the numbers of the braves and watching the quality of the heavily feathered chiefs, who led their cohorts past them. The Apaches were not out to flog other folks' dead horses. They

For all-round wickedness, cruelty, and bloodthirstiness of aspect it would have been difficult to have matched Two Axe, Man Who Smiles, and Horse's Skull, the leaders of this group.

They represented the Apache, the most cunning, malevolent and ferocious of the Redskin races. And they looked it.

Jake Bellew afterwards declared that he felt his scalp raise up on his head every time they passed that grim group, for you could rake the world with a small tooth-comb and not find a more hard-bitten crush of murderers and assassins.

And thrice the great scout, leading the War Dance, led his following of two thousand chiefs and braves invitingly past the group who stood grim and impassive.

There are four turns, or marches past, in the War Dance. Three of these had passed. If the Apaches did not join in the dance next time



Ere the first of the flight of arrows rattled on the stone there was a blinding flash, followed by a shattering roar which cracked and reverberated down the echoing crags of the gorge like a barrage of artillery.

wanted to see how many of the Navajoes had been killed by the United States troops, and if enough of them had obeyed the summons to the secret valley to make it worth while going in with them in war against the Paleface.

For once, the boys had a chance of seeing the Red Man in all his majesty. That little group of chiefs, lit by the red glare of the fires, was as fine a specimen of this dying race as the country could ever show again.

There were twelve of them, the leading generals and the craftiest councillors of the northern Apaches. And for all their evil hatchet faces, they looked fine specimens of men as they stood there crowned with the tall war-bonnets of eagles' feathers which they were now wearing in compliment to the War Dance.

The boys almost shuddered as they passed under these pitiless black eyes.

Buffalo Bill led his horde past them, it was a sign that they regarded the Navajoes as being too weak for their enterprise. They would not dig up the buried hatchet. They would go back to their lodges in the rugged mountains, and they would smoke the pipe of peace. And for lack of help the Navajoes would be a ruined nation.

A terrible hush fell upon the waiting mob as the little group of medicine-men were seen coming down the long straight at the edge of this vast parade-ground leading the long feathered line of braves.

Then Two Axe whispered to Horse's Skull, and as Buffalo Bill passed him for the fourth time, he stooped and raked on the ground at his feet.

Then the hush was broken by a mighty war-whoop. For, in the red light of the fire Two Axe held high his sign of war. He had unearthed

not one hatchet but two, and, brandishing these, he followed into the vast circle of the War Dance, his fellow-chiefs and their followers adding another five hundred to that terrible Indian file of the War Dance, which told of war and murder north, south, east and west the greatest Redskin rising which had taken place since the great Sioux war.

And under his hood old Prairie Wolf chuckled.

The Apaches were in it now—up to their necks. They were a tricky and treacherous race even amongst the Redskins. But they could not go back on having danced the War Dance with the Navajoes. And the Southern Apaches would be drawn into the war by the Northern tribes, so that there would be war even down to the borders of Mexico.

And Prairie Wolf looked to getting a bit of his own back.

He stamped along behind the boys, yelling at the top of his voice and brandishing his tomahawk uncomfortably close to Kit's ear.

And old Prairie Wolf meant to keep close by the boys till they were safe out of the peril of this valley. For, in his Redskin fashion, he had taken a great fancy to Kit and Joe, and he had no intention of allowing them to be scalped if he were there to fight for them.

The War Dance came to an end in three long-drawn war-whoops, in which the Apache death-howl was heard plainly above the war-shout of the Navajoes.

Then the great line of savages melted into a shouting, gesticulating mob, swarming up towards the long line of lodges.

For the Red Indian, mostly quiet and impassive, is noisy enough when the firewater is circulating in his veins. And to-night the chiefs had supplied all the braves well with the fiery Taos whisky which is called "Forty Rod" whisky, since it is supposed to be poisonous enough to kill a man over forty rods distance. And there was the equally vile square-face gin, the Hollands gin with which the white man has wrought the ruin of many native races.

This had been bought or captured from those ill-doing Indian traders who, though they were Palefaces, had no scruple in selling the Redskins arms and drink against the wise laws of the Government.

The chiefs of the Navajoes and the Apaches retired to the Great Council Lodge to smoke and pow-wow according to their custom.

They apparently did not expect the presence of the medicine-men at this talk, greatly to Buffalo Bill's relief, for he had learned all that he wished to know.

The Apaches had thrown in their lot with the Navajoes, and were going to join in a sudden Indian rising in defiance of all treaties of peace and promises of good behaviour.

So the little group of false medicine-men stood there on a little hillock far apart from the crowd who were gathering about the fires, waiting till the moon should have risen high enough above the crags of the valley to cast its light through the ring of the fatal Ring Stone.

The squaws were already going round to the big fires which had illuminated the plain, extinguishing these with baskets of water and skin buckets.

The boys had never seen baskets used before for holding water, and they did not know the close-woven, exquisite basket-work of the Navajo and Soshone squaws which, to-day, only finds its place in the glass cases of museums.

But these baskets, woven of the inner bark of the willow, so finely that forty stitches went to the inch, were so tight that as soon as they were wetted and the willow strands had swollen up they would hold water.

And with these the squaws were putting out the fires which sent up great pillars of steam, looking like funeral pyres in the moonlight.

And in front of the Ring Stone lay Big Eagle awaiting his well-deserved death.

Big Medicine!

THIS ruffian had been justly tried by Buffalo Bill and his companions, and they had no compunction that he should die in Jake Bellew's place.

Big Eagle had often boasted that he had spared neither woman nor child amongst the Palefaces, and that piteous string of scalps, bearing his mark, would have cost him his life before the bar of any civilised court of justice.

Now the moon had risen, and the long shadow of the Ring Stone was shortening the ring of light travelling slowly over the ground towards that silent figure stretched on the litter before the stone.

It seemed as though the fatal stone, of its own accord, was focussing the light on the victim.

And a rustle of expectation passed amongst the Redskins as they watched that circle of white light slowly creeping towards the silent figure they believed to be Jake Bellew.

If they could only have known that Jake—the slippery Jake who had so often eluded them—was standing there in that group of silent medicine-men who were to give the signal for execution, and that by his side stood Prairie Wolf, whilst the rest were Palefaces, how different would have been the demeanour of that crouching, respectful mob as they turned their hot eyes, like wolves, on that silent, stately group on the knoll.

But the medicine-men as yet made no sign.

The Redskin louts, always eager for cruelty and murder, were fitting their arrows to their bows. But they knew that the time was not yet.

They must not shoot till the circle of moonlight shone fair and true on the naked chest of their victim. And they did not dare go forward to the firing mark.

Buffalo Bill made a sign to his companions and they fell into procession stalking down to where the victim lay, four hundred yards from the watching host.

When they reached him, Buck Dixie leaning over Big Eagle whispered to him:

"Lo, Big Eagle!" said he. "Thy hour is come! Repent thee of thy

many crimes, and thank the Paleface for this last mercy! Thou shalt die swiftly, and thy black soul shall go forth to the Happy Hunting Grounds to the mercy of Manitou, who has mercy for the worst man; be he Red Man or Paleface. Thou shalt not suffer from the torture of the arrows, and thou shalt be the last victim at the Ring Stone of the Navajoes. Lo, I have spoken!"

And Buck laid behind the victim close to the stone a small packet from which protruded a short fuse.

That packet contained eight sticks of dynamite, a new faugled explosive just beginning to be used amongst the more adventurous of the pioneer miners and yet unknown to the Redskins.

Prairie Wolf looked on wonderingly through the slits of his grim mask.

He heard Buck Dixie's promise of a swift and easy death to Big Eagle, and he did not altogether approve of it. He felt that Buck was doing Paleface medicine. And he wondered over the soft-heartedness of these Palefaces who were yet so reckless and brave.

Prairie Wolf did not see at all why Big Eagle should escape the lingering tortures of the blunted arrows which would sting and sting without killing till Big Eagle was quilled with arrows like a porcupine.

But the Red Man has his ways, and the Paleface has his ways. Prairie Wolf had long come to the conclusion that all Palefaces were mad and that the greater they were amongst their own kind the madder they were.

Buck Dixie lit the fuse from a tiny lump of smouldering charcoal which he had taken from one of the steaming fires.

He watched it glowing redly for a moment. Then he whispered to his companions and they marched away.

Buck was counting the seconds. He had allowed a four-minute fuse.

The medicine-men regained the crest of the knoll, taking their stand in a group at the top, just where it took off on a deep-shadowed hollow full of clumps of sloe and blackberry-bushes.

Buck Dixie was still counting under his mask.

"Now," said he.

Standing erect in the moonlight, Buffalo Bill lifted his hand high in the air, giving a shrill cry that echoed down the valley like the hoosting of a night-bird.

It was a signal to the Redskin youths and louts that they might move forward to the firing-point from which they were to let fly their torturing arrows through the circle of the Ring Stone on their victim.

A cold chill ran down the backs of the boys as they heard the cowardly, bloodthirsty yell with which the permission was received.

Five hundred of these Redskin hooligans rushed forward, fitting their arrows to their bows as they ran.

And on the firing-mark they came to a standstill in a tightly packed mob bristling with arrows all pointing upwards at the same angle to give them the trajectory that would carry them through the ring of the stone.

Well had Buck Dixie spoken when he had told the hapless Big Eagle of the mercy of the Palefaces.

The mercy was in that tiny red spark that, even now, was smouldering closer and closer to the detonator of the charge.

"Now!" whispered Buck in Buffalo Bill's ear.

Again he scout threw up his hand, giving out the thrill cry.

And five hundred bows twanged as one, sending a cloud of arrows towards the stone, seeking out the circle through which they would strike at the supposed Jake Bellew.

"Gee whiz!" whispered Jake as the arrows flew. "I'm glad that's not me!"

And ere the first of the flight of arrows rattled on the stone there was a blinding flash, followed by a shattering roar which cracked and reverberated down the echoing crags of the gorge like a barrage of artillery.

And, with a great cry of fear, the Redskins threw themselves on their faces.

When they dared to look up again the great Ring Stone was gone and their victim was gone.

And, in his going, he had hurled stones at them, they thought, for a perfect volley of rock fragments had scattered over their heads, some even tearing through the deerskin lodges on the terrace above.

The Redskins were stunned.

Their ears were still deaf and singing from the explosion.

Not one of them dared go forward to the spot where the Ring Stone had stood and where a thin blue fume like a puff of tobacco smoke was now hanging in the still air.

They could still hear the echoes of the vast explosion thundering amongst the surrounding crags and hills.

And they looked round for their medicine-men. But the medicine-men also had disappeared as though they had vanished into the ground.

When they had recovered speech, they all agreed that it was the biggest medicine ever done in the history of the Navajo tribe. Their victim, Jake Bellew, had gone in a flash of lightning, the Ring Stone had gone, and the medicine-men had gone.

They all agreed that a thunderbolt had descended from the clear sky, or that one of the shooting stars, which they often saw on the prairies, had fallen amongst them.

The chiefs were eager to pick up a sign, and to hush up anything that might tell against their plans.

They decreed, later on, after much council in the Great Council Lodge that the falling of the thunderbolt or shooting star was a favourable sign.

But it was not till the following morning that they discovered their medicine-men bound and gagged in the medicine lodge, whilst Big Eagle had gone amiss entirely.

Another long instalment of this exciting serial next week. Order in advance and oblige your Editor by giving this copy, when you have finished with it, to a non-reader chum.

My Weekly Interview

By the Special Representative of
"The Greyfriars Herald"

This week: Dr. LOCKE

"THIS week," said the editor, peering at me across a pile of rejected manuscripts, "I'm going to put your nerve to the test."

"How?" I asked.

"By sending you to interview the Head."

I shivered involuntarily. I had already interviewed one Head in the course of my wanderings—the Head of Rookwood—and it had proved a most painful ordeal.

"Ah," said the editor, "I can see you funking it!"

The taunt nettled me. I hate being called a funk, and I resolved to prove to the editor that I feared no man.

"Funking it?" I said. "No jolly fear! Whatever put that idea in your head?"

"Do you seriously mean to tell me," said the editor, "that you're not afraid to beard the Head in his den?"

"Not a scrap!" I said cheerfully.

"But, of course, as this is an extra-special interview, I shall expect double pay when it appears in the 'Herald'."

"There's no harm in your expecting it," was the reply; "but you're not going to get it!"

"Mean beast!"

"Stop slinging fancy names at me, and buzz along to the Head's study."

"Unless you agree to pay me twice as much as usual," I said firmly, "there will be nothing doing!"

"Oh, all right!" growled the editor. "I'll see that you get fourpence, instead of the usual tuppence. Now cut off!"

I confess that it was with considerable trepidation that I approached the sacred apartment in which Doctor Herbert H. Locke, Master of Arts, and Director of Public Floggings, reigned supreme.

But after boasting to the editor that I was not afraid, I couldn't very well retract. Pulling myself together I rapped on the door of the Head's study.

There was no response.

After a decent pause I again rapped, straining my ears for an invitation to enter. But none came.

"The Head must be out," I murmured.

A glance into the study confirmed my theory.

Feeling quite bold now, I advanced into the apartment.

Although I am not an inquisitive fellow, like Billy Bunter, I simply couldn't help seeing a note which had fluttered off the Head's desk on to the floor. It was a brief note from Sir Hilton Popper, inviting the Head to a game of golf.

"Good!" I exclaimed. "The Head's miles away!"

Crossing to the window, I saw that

a battle royal was in progress in the Close.

A party of Removites had come to loggerheads with Temple and Co., of the Upper Fourth, and the air rang with shrill battle-cries.

At that moment, a bright idea occurred to me. (I'm bristling with bright ideas!)

Hanging on the door of the Head's study was a gown; likewise a mortar-board.

"What a lark," I reflected, "if I put on the Head's robes of office, and shout at those fellows from the window! I shall give them no end of a scare. They're bound to think I'm the Head!"

Chuckling softly to myself, I donned the gown. It was a very long garment, and as I strutted about the study, I nearly tripped up on it once or twice.

I then perched the mortar-board on my head, and went to the window.

The battle was at its height. A score of fellows were mixed up in a fierce and frenzied melee. There was a thudding of hard body-blows, coupled with the groans and lamentations of the wounded.

Raising the window-sash I exclaimed in a deep, stern voice:

"Boys! How dare you? Cease this unseemly disturbance at once!"

The combatants scattered as if by magic.

"Ha, ha, ha!" I chuckled. "They were fairly spoofed that time!"

I turned away from the window, and then a gasp of horror escaped me. For, framed in the doorway, surveying me with a forbidding frown, was the Head.

"Boy!" he rumbled. "What does this impertinence mean?"

"Oh, crumbs!" I gasped. "I—I didn't expect to see you here, sir! I thought you were playing golf!"

The Head's frown deepened.

"I returned to the school," he said, "in order to recover a club which I had inadvertently left behind."

I wondered why the Head, on his return had not seen and checked the fighting in the Close. And then it dawned upon me that he had entered the school building via his garden. By coming in that way, he had missed the disturbance.

"Remove my gown and mortar-board at once!" rapped out the Head.

I did so, and was then commanded to hold out my hand.

The Head was in golfing attire, and he was able to wield the cane with more vigour than usual. There was no gown to encumber the movement of his right arm.

Swish, swish, swish!

The cane bit into my palm, and I danced in anguish on the study carpet.

"Now you may go!" panted the Head, at length. "And do not dare to trespass within my study again!"

I crawled limply away, and the editor met me in the Close.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "What's happened? Been wrestling with a lawn-mower?"

"No," I replied sadly. "I've just interviewed the Head!"



TUCK HAMPERS AS PRIZES!

GREAT NEW COMPETITION.



1st PRIZE 50/-. And 5 Other Prizes of Tuck Hampers.

This week I am giving the above splendid prizes, which will be awarded for the best efforts in the following simple task. Below you will find an attractive picture-puzzle, and I want you to try to make it out for yourselves. I myself wrote the original paragraph, and my artist drew up the puzzle. The original paragraph is locked up in my safe, and the First Prize of 50s. will be awarded to the reader whose solution is exactly the same as my "par." The other prizes, which consist of hampers crammed full of most delicious "tuck," will be awarded to the readers whose solutions are the next in order of merit. If there are ties for the money prize, this will be divided, but no reader will be awarded more than one share.

Should more than 5 readers qualify for the tuck hamper prizes, these will be added to. You may send as many solutions as you please, but each must be accompanied by the signed coupon you will find on this page.

Write your solutions, IN INK, on a clean sheet of paper, fill up coupon below, and pin to this, and address to: No. 25 TUCK HAMPER COMPETITION, "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than Tuesday, April 20th.

Remember that my decision must be accepted in all matters concerning this competition as absolutely binding.

I enter "The Greyfriars Herald" Tuck Hamper Competition No. 25, and agree to accept the published decision as absolutely binding.

Signed

Address

WRITE CAREFULLY.

CAN YOU READ THIS LETTER? OUR ONE-WEEK COMPETITION.

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