

30,000 FREE GIFTS FOR READERS!

The BOYS' HERALD

No. 124.

ON SALE EVERY TUESDAY.

Mar. 11, 1922.

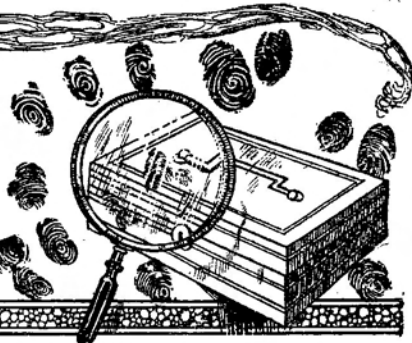


THE SCHOOL, ON THE ROOF!—See Inside.



THE TYDMOUTH TRAGEDY!

BY OWEN CONQUEST.



A Grand, Long Complete Detective Story introducing Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

The Mystery of a Murder.

FERRERS LOCKE knocked out his pipe with a sharp and savage tap. There was a deep frown on the brow of the famous Baker Street detective. He rose from the armchair, and paced to and fro in the room, unconscious of the curious glance turned upon him by Jack Drake, his boy assistant.

It was evident that Ferrers Locke was very much disturbed that morning.

It was so unusual for the cool, impassive detective to betray any sign of emotion, that Jack Drake could not help being surprised.

Locke approached the window, and looked out into the drizzle of rain that was falling in Baker Street. Up and down the street his glance wandered, as if in expectation. Then he turned from the window, and resumed his pacing of the polished floor.

Then, as he caught Drake's surprised glance, he stopped, the frown melted from his brow, and he smiled slightly.

"Is anything wrong, sir?" Drake ventured.

"Yes," grunted Ferrers Locke. He threw himself into the chair again, and slowly filled his pipe. The frown returned to his brow.

"You keep your eyes on the daily papers, as I have advised you, Drake?" he asked suddenly.

"Certainly, Mr. Locke."

"You have read the reports of the Tydmouth affair?"

"Every word," said Drake.

"And, so far, what has been discovered?"

"Nothing."

"Exactly," said Locke. "Inspector Strode is a good man, in his line, but he has discovered nothing so far, and he will discover nothing."

"How is that, sir?" asked Drake.

"Because if he had followed the right line he would have made a discovery already," said Locke. "And if he is not on the right line, his investigations can lead him nowhere."

Drake understood the cause of the famous detective's disturbance now. He had wondered, himself, why Ferrers Locke was not called in to deal with the mystery that had caused a sensation throughout the country. Evidently the same thought was in Ferrers Locke's mind.

Locke pursed his lips, with unconcealed annoyance.

"I see that you guess my thoughts, Drake," he said. "You know me well enough, I think, to know that I have no desire to butt into an affair that is in official hands, from any personal motive. But this is a matter that concerns every man in the kingdom. A poor girl has been done to death by a brutal ruffian—there are few men, I think, who would not make an effort to put the rope round the neck of the detestable wretch who has committed this crime. And I could help."

"It seems to me an utter mystery, sir," said Drake. "So far as I can make out, the murderer seems to have had no motive—no object—and many people seem to think he is simply a madman."

Locke shook his head. "He is no more mad than you or I," he answered. "He is a coward and a villain, and that is all. If I am not called in, I shall have to consider whether to take up the case without official sanction. If the man is not found by the police, I am determined that he shall not escape."

"You have formed a theory already, sir?"

"I have only the information given by the newspaper reports," said Locke. "But certain facts stand out clearly enough, to

my mind. You have the case clear in your mind, Drake, so far as it has been reported?"

"Quite, sir."

"It is good training for you, Drake, to follow a case such as this, and to form a theory upon it. Give me a short account of the case, and then give me your views."

Drake glanced at a sheaf of notes that lay on his desk.

"On December 24th the body of Miss Althea Hanway was discovered in a lonely field four miles from Tydmouth. She had been killed by blows on the head from a heavy stick. There were traces of a struggle, and traces of the body having been dragged through a wire fence, and placed near a disused mill. Tracks of a motor-car were found in the road close by. Close at hand was a corner where three roads separated, and there the car-tracks were lost. It appears certain that the victim was brought to the spot in the car—whether with one companion or more is not known—"

"Only one," said Ferrers Locke.

Drake looked at him.

"There was a prolonged struggle," said Locke. "If two men had been engaged in the crime, there could have been very little struggling on the part of the poor girl. She had only one assailant."

Drake nodded, and continued.

"The body was identified as that of Miss Althea Hanway, a lady typist, of Croydon. Investigation showed that Miss Hanway had arrived in Tydmouth on the evening of December 23rd from London. She had come in answer to a telegram. In the 'Morning News,' of the 23rd, an advertisement had appeared, in which Miss Hanway applied for an engagement as a typist. The paper did not reach Tydmouth until 9.30 in the morning. At eleven o'clock a telegram was sent off from Tydmouth Post Office, answering the advertisement, and asking Miss Hanway to come to Tydmouth by the afternoon train—"

"The telegram?" said Locke.

"I have the copy here, sir," Drake read it out. "Miss Hanway, 11, Roberts Road, Croydon. 'Morning News' advt. Please come by 4.0 train King's Cross to Tydmouth. Car will meet train.—Forrest, Seaview House, Tydmouth.' That was the telegram, sir—sent within two hours of the paper, containing the advertisement, reaching Tydmouth. Inquiries at Miss Hanway's home show that she received the telegram, and answered it, and left King's Cross Station by the four o'clock train. Her reply telegram reached Tydmouth, and a messenger was sent with it, but failed to find any Seaview House. It was a fictitious address. The telegram was returned as 'Address unknown.'"

Drake sorted over his notes.

"A taxi-driver at Tydmouth Station observed a young lady who had arrived by the train at seven, and asked her if she wanted a taxi. She told him she was waiting for a private car. His description of her tallies, in a general way, with that of Miss Hanway. Apparently she was picked up at the station by a chauffeur in a car, and driven away—believing, of course, that she was being driven to the place where she was to take up her new engagement. Inquiry at the post-office shows that the telegram signed 'Forrest' was sent by a man dressed as a chauffeur."

"On that day, just before Christmas, the station-yard was crowded with taxicabs and private cars. All the taxicabs have been traced by the police, and most of the cars—but not the murderer's car. The tracks in the mud near the spot where the body was found show that it had Dunlop Magnum tyres. That spot is only five miles from

Tydmouth. But at least two hours had elapsed between Miss Hanway's arrival at the station, and the murder. She arrived at seven. It rained until nine o'clock. But the body when found was dry, and so cannot have been left in the field till after the rain had stopped."

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"So far," continued Drake, "it might seem that some personal enemy of Miss Hanway had tricked her into a death-trap. But this theory would not hold water."

"Why?" asked Locke.

"Because, in that case, the man must have known in advance that the advertisement was going to appear, as he laid his plans to answer it—and that implies an intimate knowledge of the Hanway household—and Miss Hanway's people would know something of such a man—and they knew nothing."

"True!" said Locke, with a nod.

"It was learned later that several similar telegrams had been sent from the same post-office, in the same hand-writing, in answer to advertisements on previous days," continued Drake. "One was to a nurse, who luckily missed the train, and so escaped. Another was to a young woman, who fortunately waited for confirmation by letter, and did not travel to Tydmouth at all. One of these telegrams was signed 'Batley,' and the other 'Batson,' and the address given was the Tydmouth Hotel, where no such names were known. In each of these telegrams mistakes in spelling occurred—the word expense was spelt 'expence,' and the word 'pleasant' was spelt 'plesent.' This indicates an illiterate man—unless the wrong spelling was simply a blind."

"Quite so!" assented Locke.

"The earlier intended victims having, by chance, escaped, the telegram was sent on the 23rd to Miss Hanway, who unfortunately fell a victim to the trick. The man's object is a mystery. Unless he is a maniac, there is no explanation of his having wished to entice a perfect stranger to Tydmouth for the purpose of committing an objectless murder. Apparently any one of the women might have arrived, and might have fallen a victim, so it cannot be a case of personal animity."

"What points in this matter strike you most, my boy?" asked Ferrers Locke.

Drake reflected.

"First of all, sir, what happened during the two hours after Miss Hanway arrived at Tydmouth. She was under cover all that time, as she was not wet by the rain when found, and it rained till nine. She had come down, supposing that she was engaged as a typist in or near Tydmouth. The few miles to the spot where she was found could have been covered in a very short time. Yet it appears that she was in the car for two hours—and during that time her suspicious must have been awakened; she could not have supposed it was a drive of two hours in a car to the place of her appointment. Yet it does not appear that she attempted to leave the car, or screamed to any passer-by—and the car can scarcely have kept on wholly unfrequented roads for two hours."

"Surely a girl in such a situation would have become very much alarmed. She would have tried to get the chauffeur to stop. If he refused, she would know she was being tricked in some way, and would not have remained quietly in the car, to be taken wherever the man wished. She would have called for help to the first passer-by, or any passing motor-car—as a last resource, she would have jumped from the car. Moreover, the murderer can have had no reasonable object in driving about for two hours, if he intended to kill her and leave her near such a place as a disused mill. Why she

remained, apparently quiet, in the car for two hours, is the point that beats me, sir."

"Did she?" said Locke.

Drake looked at him.

"I—I suppose so, sir. She was under cover, at all events."

"Perhaps not in the car, however," said Locke. "Her silence and quiescence would be very hard to explain in that case. But to proceed. What other point stands out in your mind, Drake?"

"Why, any man, not insane, should put his neck in the rope by acting in such a brutal, unprovoked way. He must be a madman, then."

"But reflect," said Ferrers Locke. "There are homicidal maniacs in existence, certainly. But such a fearful character would have found victims easily enough in a thickly-populated town like Tydmouth—crowded with Christmas visitors at the time. If he was a madman, merely desiring to kill, he could have found a victim at hand, without all the cunning trickery of answering advertisements, and leaving written clues at the post-office."

"That is quite true, sir."

"And the cunning with which the scheme was carried out does not smack of the maniac, to my mind," said Ferrers Locke. "The man was a brute and a ruffian, but he was not mad."

"But what object could a sane man have in killing the poor girl, sir?" said Drake.

"None."

"And yet it may have been to rob her?"

"This scoundrel could not have supposed that a typist would carry much money, in going to a new situation," said Locke. "Robbery can scarcely be the motive, though he was ready to add robbery to his other crime. You have formed no further ideas on the subject?"

"It beats me, sir," confessed Drake.

"Then I will tell you—"

Ferrers Locke paused.

A loud knock on the door penetrated to the quiet consulting-room. A few moments later, Sing-Sing entered with a telegram.

Locke opened it hurriedly.

He rose to his feet, with a look of satisfaction.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "He threw the telegram across to Drake. 'Read it, my boy.'"

Drake glanced at it, and his face lighted up.

"Ferrers Locke, Baker Street. Can you come at once? Strode, Tydmouth."

It was the summons at last to the celebrated consulting detective.

Locke hastily scribbled a reply, for Sing-Sing to take to the messenger. Then he caught up a time-table.

"Pack your bag, Drake—and quickly. We catch the ten-thirty—and it is already ten. Sing-Sing, order the car at once."

Ten minutes later Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant were racing to the railway-station.

When the ten-thirty train rolled out of King's Cross, Locke and Jack Drake were seated in a first-class carriage. The express roared away, carrying the famous Baker Street detective fast towards the scene of the mysterious crime.

Ferrers Locke's Theory.

FERRERS LOCKE was silent during the swift journey to Tydmouth.

Drake did not refer to the case in hand. There were other passengers in the carriage, and talk was impossible.

But the boy-detective was thrifting with eager keenness and anxiety. He knew that his chief had formed a theory on the subject of the Tydmouth murder, and he was very anxious to know what it was. His faith in Ferrers Locke was complete; and he felt that Locke's journey to Tydmouth was the first step in the elucidation of the mysterious crime.

A car met the train at Tydmouth, with Inspector Strode. The ruddy-faced country inspector shook hands warmly with Ferrers Locke.

"I had your answer in time to meet you here," he said. "Many thanks for coming so promptly."

Ferrers Locke did not remark that he would have come earlier if his aid had been asked. That was better left unsaid. There was no doubt that the detective officially in charge of the case was anxious enough for his assistance now.

"I am entirely at your service," said Locke.

"You are acquainted, of course, with all that has been published in the papers on this case?"

"Perfectly."

"I can give you a few more minor details," said the inspector. "But we admit that, so far, we are beaten. We shall be very glad indeed to have your help, Mr. Locke."

"I shall be very glad to render it," said Ferrers Locke.

He stepped into the car with the inspector and Jack Drake. Tydmouth Police Station was their destination.

Ferrers Locke was busy for the remainder of the morning with the police officials; but at about three o'clock he left with Jack Drake, and they had a late lunch together at the Tydmouth Hotel.

After lunch they retired to a quiet corner of the lounge, where Locke lighted a cigar.

His clear-cut face was very thoughtful in expression.

Drake eyed him curiously.

He could not quite understand this inactivity, now that the Baker Street detective had arrived upon the scene of the crime.

Locke smiled at him slightly through the cigar smoke.

"I am not idle, Drake," he said. "I have suggested a line of investigation to Inspector Strode, and he is following it up actively. This is work better done by the officials. I am waiting now for word from him."

"You were going to tell me your theory of the crime, sir, when the telegram came at Baker Street," said Drake.

"I will tell you now, Drake. I am expecting developments," said Ferrers Locke.

He went on quietly, in a low voice, Drake listening keenly to every word.

"A man—probably a chauffeur—at all events, a man who could drive a car—planned to trick a young woman to come down to Tydmouth, a few days before Christmas. You will note specially, Drake, that it was a few days before Christmas—that is important."

"Why, sir?"

"Because Christmas is a holiday period, Drake. The man was unoccupied then—he may not have been unoccupied at other times. He sent several telegrams on different days—he was prepared to carry out his miserable trick as soon as a victim of leisure—or was having a holiday from his employment. There are certain points in favour of both theories. He had possession of a car, and he had leisure—so he may have been a man of some means. On the other hand, he spent in an illiterate way—though this may have been simply a trick to blind the police. I think not, however. The word 'expence' was spelt with a 'c,' instead of 's.' But this is scarcely a mistake in spelling—it is an old-fashioned way of spelling the word. All writers in the eighteenth century spelt the word 'expence.' The word 'pleasant' for 'pleasent' is more striking. It strikes me as a natural error, not an assumed one."

"The telegram containing that mis-spelt word was sent to a well-known nurses' establishment, in charge of educated people. It was quite probable that the mis-spelling might have awakened some suspicion there—not suspicion of murderous intentions, certainly, but of a hoax. Naturally it would be assumed that a man telegraphing for a pleasant nurse companion, from a fashionable hotel in a fashionable seaside resort, would be a man of some means—but a man of social position would not be likely to make such a mistake. The matron, therefore, might easily have suspected a hoax, and made inquiries before sending a nurse. She did not do so, as it happened—but the man risked it. Why should he take the risk of spoiling his own scheme? I am inclined to think, therefore, that the mistake in spelling was natural, not assumed as a trick, and therefore that the man was, to some extent, uneducated."

Drake nodded.

"It is true that many educated and intelligent people spell badly," continued Ferrers Locke. "But you will generally find that these are short-sighted people. Short sight is a general cause of bad spelling among people who might be supposed to know better. But we cannot conclude that this man was short-sighted—he was able to drive a car, and fairly good sight is needed for that. We may take it, I think, that his spelling was due to lack of education—that he was not a man of substantial position, therefore, and not the owner of the car he drove."

"I follow you, sir," said Drake.

"Moreover, every owner of a car is known to the authorities," resumed Ferrers Locke.

"Naturally, there has been a round-up of cars in Tydmouth, and its vicinity. But

recall, again, that this was Christmas-time—when many people were absent from their homes on long visits to other parts of the country. Suppose that a certain car-owner had left home with his family to spend Christmas elsewhere, shutting up his house while he was gone, and probably giving a holiday to his servant—as must have happened at a dozen places in every town in the kingdom."

"Yes?" said Drake.

Locke paused a moment, and smoked in silence.

"Take it that a certain establishment was shut up over Christmas, and the servants sent away," continued Locke. "The car remains in the garage. But the chauffeur has a key to the garage. It is a quite common practice for chauffeurs to take their employers' cars out, during their absence, for joy-rides."

"Quite!" assented Drake.

"We will imagine, then," continued Locke slowly "that this chauffeur is left on his own for the Christmas period. He may be a long way from his own home, or he may have no family ties. He finds himself in Tydmouth during the Christmas holiday, and time hangs heavy on his hands. He takes out his employer's car for joy-rides. Naturally he does not want to joy-ride in solitude."

"But he has to be very careful. He has, we will suppose, a good situation and a good master, and he does not want to risk being discharged when his master returns. He does not, therefore, look in the immediate neighborhood, where he and his master are known, and the car is known, for companions in his outbreaks. He thinks the matter out—and he is unscrupulous, brutal, and probably has a very low opinion of human nature—founded on his own base character. He looks down the advertisement columns of his master's paper, and conceives the idea of answering some young woman's advertisement, and tricking her into coming to Tydmouth. At first he thinks of this only as a sort of lark—being too selfish and brutal to care for the trouble and inconvenience he will inflict upon an innocent person."

"He will trick the young woman into coming to the seaside town—he will meet her in his master's car, and drive her away—and he has no doubt that she will enter into the 'lark' with him. If she does, they will have an uproarious holiday together, probably with his master's wine flowing, and trips in the car. If she does not, he will keep his identity a secret, and drop her somewhere, and leave her to find her way home as best she can. That is the whole scheme, so far—a reckless, brutal, base scheme, such as would enter the mind of a base man."

Drake listened attentively.

"On this theory, we see why the man does not care which person answers his telegram—whether it is the nurse, or the typist, or any other," said Ferrers Locke. "He only wishes to entice someone who is a stranger to Tydmouth, and who cannot know him, his address, or his master. After several failures, he succeeds in his trickery. A young woman arrives at Tydmouth; he meets her there as chauffeur for her future employer, the fictitious Mr. Forrest; she steps into the car without suspicion, and is driven away—where?"

"Where?" repeated Drake.

"To his employer's house—now unoccupied," said Ferrers Locke. "He has planned a high old time there during his master's absence—in which the girl is to take part, if she is of the same mind. He drives her to the house, and she enters without suspicion. Then she discovers that the place is deserted—she learns that she has been tricked. The brute finds that he has made a mistake in supposing that a young woman looking for a situation is prepared to spend a riotous Christmas with him; she has no taste for stolen joy-rides, no desire whatever to assist him in raiding his master's pantry and cellar. He argues with her—loses his temper, and threatens her. She demands to be taken back to the station, and assures him that he shall be punished for this cruel trickery. He gives in at last, allows her to return to the car, and drives her back to Tydmouth."

"And then?" said Drake.

"You must now consider his position," said Locke. "He has played a wicked trick, which renders him liable to imprisonment—he has betrayed the confidence of his employer. The girl is a quiet, educated observant young woman; she has noted her surroundings, and she will have no difficulty in telling the police where to find him. On the way back to Tydmouth, he thinks of the

consequences—imprisonment, and discharge from his situation. He has probably been drinking also.

"At the cross-roads, a few miles from the town, he stops the car, and demands, say, a promise of silence from Miss Hanway. He will take her back to the station, on condition that she promises to keep silence as to what has happened—or perhaps he does not trust her word, and demands that she shall exonerate him in black and white. She refuses even to discuss the matter. She demands to be taken back to Tydmouth at once, evidently with the intention of making him suffer for his rascally trickery. He is enraged—fearful of consequences. He sees himself ruined, and, between rage and fear, he drags her from the car, and seizes the nearest weapon—a heavy stick—and so secures her silence for ever."

Locke paused. He smoked in silence for some moments, and Jack Drake waited, without speaking.

"That is the theory I have formed," resumed Ferrers Locke, at last. "It is, I admit, a provisional one, but I think it will be found somewhere near the actual facts. But there are further details. The gentleman's house where this chauffeur is employed, and where he remained during his master's absence, if my theory is correct, is within a few miles of Tydmouth. A radius of more than a few miles would be drawing the line too wide."

"Why so, sir?"

"The lonely spot at the cross-roads—the loneliest spot in the district, and the most suitable for his purpose—was well known to him. The fact that he knew it so well, and found his way about it with facility on a dark night, implies that he had seen it, and passed it, fairly often—he knows that neighbourhood well. He would not know it so well unless he lived within a reasonable distance of it."

"True."

"By this time," continued Ferrers Locke, "it is probable that the employer has returned from his holiday. He has found his car in perfect order—and does not suspect that it has been used during his absence. He does not guess that the man, probably now driving him daily, is the murderer of whom the police are in search. And now, Drake, I am coming to a clue that you have missed."

"I, sir?" ejaculated Drake.

"Yet it was under your eyes, my boy, and under the eyes of everyone who has read the newspaper reports of this case."

"I do not see—"

"The clue of the false name," said Ferrers Locke.

Drake stared.

"It is the false name that seems to me to leave us without a clue, Mr. Locke," he said.

"But that is not so, Drake. The man is known to have used three different names on different telegrams—Batley, Batson, and Forrest. It is safe to conclude that none of them is his own name. From the beginning, though he had not then contemplated serious crime, his desire was for concealment, for the reasons I have gone into. He used a false name. But how was that name suggested to him?"

Drake shook his head.

"If it should ever occur to you to use an assumed name, my boy, you would find that that name would come into your head by some association," said Ferrers Locke. "You are a great reader, and you might give such a name as Clink, Merry, or Heron, from your favourite characters in fiction. But this man, whom we know to be of a brutal and sordid character, is not likely to be a great reader—neither are such names as Batley and Batson often found in fiction. A false name was more likely to come into his head from associations of a different kind—for instance, the public-house he frequents may be kept by someone named Forrest, or his tobacconist may be named Batley or Batson, or he may buy his clothes at Forrest's shop, or order spare parts for the car from Batley and Co. Something of that kind, I think, is probable."

Jack Drake nodded, his eyes gleaming as he followed the reasoning of the Baker Street detective.

"I have advised Mr. Strode," continued Ferrers Locke, "to ferret out every Batson, Batley, and Forrest in this part of the county—a laborious task, but performed simply enough, for the greater part, by the use of the directories."

"That's true, sir. And when one is found—"

"Many will probably be found," said Locke, "and each will open up a line of in-

vestigation. If we find that a man owning a car has been away over the Christmas period, leaving his car behind—that his chauffeur had possible access to the car during his absence—that there is in the neighbourhood a shop bearing any of the three false names—or a public-house kept by a Forrest, a Batley, or a Batson—then we may consider that we are somewhere near the track, Drake."

"By Jove, sir, you've found a clue that was under the eyes of every newspaper reader all the time," said Drake. "I had certainly not thought of looking for a clue in the false names themselves. Yet, now you point it out, sir, it seems clear that these names must have been suggested to the villain's mind by some sort of association."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"When you have studied more deeply our records at Baker Street, Drake, you will find a considerable section devoted to the subject of false names and their derivation," he said. "I have kept the history of many cases. There was a famous case of bank frauds, some years ago—the swindler called himself by the name of S. Windell—a piece of cool effrontery that ought to have furnished a clue. I have records of a forger who used the name of Scott—he was an appreciative reader of the Waverley Novels. A cracksmen named Peace used the name of Packs—an English spelling of 'pax,' the Latin word for peace. A criminal who used the name of 'Wales' was traced through his being a frequenter of the Prince of Wales public-house. It requires a man of considerable and cultivated imagination to select a false name which will afford no clue to his identity—and we are now dealing with such a man. This ruffian gave the first false name that came into his head, in all probability; only caring that it did not resemble his own. It was almost certainly suggested to him by some association—through which I hope to trace him. But we shall see."

The dusk was falling now, and after a little further talk Ferrers Locke and his pupil went for a stroll on the sea-front.

Soon after their return to the hotel, Inspector Strode called, and was in consultation with the Baker Street detective for some time.

Jack Drake went to bed that night at the Tydmouth Hotel at any early hour. He was

up early in the morning—full of hope of success in the quest that had brought Ferrers Locke from Baker Street to the scene of the crime.

Brought to Justice!
A TAXI stopped outside the Tydmouth Hotel, and Ferrers Locke glanced from the window. The portly figure of Inspector Strode descended from the vehicle.

A minute later he was shown into Ferrers Locke's private sitting-room on the first floor.

There was a very keen expression on the inspector's face, and he shook hands warmly with Ferrers Locke.

"News?" asked Locke.

"We have been following the line you indicated, Mr. Locke," answered the Tydmouth inspector, as he sat down. "I admit, sir, that I thought at first that your theory of the false name was—a little—"

The inspector hesitated.

"A little far-fetched?" said Ferrers Locke calmly.

"Well, yes," said Mr. Strode, colouring. "That remains to be seen!" remarked Ferrers Locke.

"Not at all, Mr. Locke. Events, so far, seem to have justified you," said the inspector frankly.

Locke made a movement of interest, and Jack Drake was all attention.

"At Lower Tyd—three miles out of the town—there is a public-house called the Seven Stars," said the inspector. "It is kept by a man named Batley."

"Ah!" said Locke.

"I have seen Batley, and questioned him, and learned that among the regular callers at his place is a chauffeur named Blenge, in the employ of Colonel Royston. I have telephoned to Colonel Royston, and learned that he returned a few days ago after his Christmas visit to Scotland; he was away at the date of the crime."

"It begins to look promising," said Ferrers Locke. "He owns a car?"

"Yes."

"You asked him about the tyres—"

"Dunlop Magnum."

"Good! The circumstances fit together pretty well, so far," said Ferrers Locke.

"We are drawing the line rather close, I think. I am extremely interested in Mr.



An entrance was quickly forced into the chauffeur's room, adjoining the garage. It was empty; but there were many signs of hasty packing and hurried flight. The colonel looked round him. "He has fled," he said. "Yea, but he will not get far," said the inspector. "We know him now."

Blenge, the chauffeur to whom the name of Blenge is very familiar. We may not need to look for a Forrest."

Jack Drake drew a deep breath. Well as he knew his chief's sagacity, he had hardly expected to find the famous detective's theory so closely borne out by the facts.

"I have asked Colonel Royston to call at the police-station as quickly as possible," continued Inspector Strode. "He will drive over in his car."

"With his chauffeur?"

"Yes—without a word to the chauffeur on the subject; I have specially impressed that upon him. His chauffeur is a man named Blenge—rather an uncommon name. As a matter of fact, Blenge has already been seen by the police, in connection with the case—every car in the district has, of course, been traced and examined. I saw Blenge at Colonel Royston's house a few days ago, in the course of a general investigation. He is a man of powerful build, very quiet in his manners, and he certainly answered all my inquiries readily enough. The colonel's car was locked in the garage during its owner's absence, and Colonel Royston took the key with him. Blenge lived in rooms attached to the garage. He is a single man, thirty years old, and not a native of the district. He has lived here for two years in the colonel's service."

"You say you had examined the car?"

"That is so."

"In the colonel's absence, then?"

"Yes. He was written to, with a request to send us the key, and he did so at once. After the examination, it was returned to him at the place where he was staying in Scotland."

"I see."

"At that time," continued the inspector, "Blenge was asked to account for his time on the night of December 23rd. He gave what was considered a satisfactory explanation: He lived alone in his rooms, during the absence of the family, and declared that he had no key of his own to the garage. He had gone to a dance in an assembly room connected with the Seven Stars, and declared that he arrived there at eight o'clock, and left at eleven. It was found that he certainly had been at the dance. Closer investigation will now, of course, be made, as to the exact time of his arrival and departure. The man will drive the colonel to the police-station this morning—and as they will arrive soon, Mr. Locke, perhaps you had better come with me now, and meet them there."

"Most certainly! Come, Drake!"

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake followed the inspector from the hotel, and entered the taxi.

In a few minutes they reached the police-station.

Colonel Royston's car had not yet arrived, and Locke and Jack Drake waited in the inspector's room.

It was not long, however, before the buzz of a car was heard outside, and Locke looked from the window.

A handsome car had stopped. It was driven by a military-looking gentleman, who was alone in the car.

"That must be Colonel Royston?" said Locke.

"He is driving the car himself," said Inspector Strode. "His chauffeur apparently has not come. This must be looked into."

Inspector Strode hurried out of the station, followed by Locke and Jack Drake. The military gentleman had alighted from the car.

"I came as quickly as I could, Mr. Strode," he said. "I understand that you think I can be of assistance in the affair of Christmas week—"

"Where is your chauffeur?"

"You have some suspicion of Blenge?"

"Where is he?"

"At my house," said the colonel. "He hurt his hand by accident, in starting the car, so I drove myself. If you wish to see him, I will run down to Royston House in ten minutes."

"He knew you were coming to the police-station?"

"I had told him where to drive."

The inspector gritted his teeth.

"Drive us to Royston House, as fast as you can go!" he exclaimed. "I very much doubt whether we shall find your chauffeur there—who has had an accident at such an unfortunate moment."

"You think—"

"I think he has taken the alarm, and bolted," snapped the inspector. "For goodness' sake lose no time."

"Jump in!" said the colonel tersely.

The three fairly leaped into the car, and the colonel started the engine. The car raced out of Tydmouth.

Ferrers Locke's calm face was as impassive as usual, during the rapid drive; but Jack Drake was thrilling with excitement and impatience, and the inspector gnawed his lip.

The colonel drove hard and fast, and in a very short time the car turned into the garage of Royston House.

"Blenge!" called out the colonel, as he alighted.

There was no answer to the call.

Ferrers Locke smiled grimly.

"You may call as loudly as you like," he remarked. "I do not think that Mr. Blenge will hear. Undoubtedly he smelt a rat when he was ordered to drive to the police-station." He shrugged his shoulders. "Did you betray to him, colonel, that the police wished to see him?"

"He may have guessed."

"No doubt he did. Certainly he is gone."

"We shall soon see," replied the colonel.

An entrance was quickly forced into the chauffeur's rooms, adjoining the garage.

They were empty; but there were many signs of hasty packing and hurried flight.

The colonel looked round him.

"He is gone!" he said. "He has fled! Then—"

"He will not get far," said Inspector Strode grimly. "We know him now—and,

unless he can fly like a bird, he will not get away from us."

And the inspector rushed back to the car.

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake stayed till the following day at Tydmouth.

They needed to stay no longer. For on the second day they received news of the fleeing chauffeur's arrest.

The wretch had succeeded in reaching London, doubtless hoping to hide himself in the wilderness of the great city. But he was known—his description was circulated—and in twenty-four hours the police had him safely in their hands.

What followed was almost exactly in accordance with Ferrers Locke's theory as he had explained it to Drake. The arrested man denied everything at first; but his denials were futile. For a thorough search of Royston House revealed the dead girl's hand-bag, buried deep in a secluded corner of the garden. In the chauffeur's rooms was found the duplicate key of the garage. When the overwhelming evidence became known to him, the wretch made a complete confession. And Drake wondered, as he read the newspaper report of it—it followed so closely the lines laid down by Ferrers Locke.

Blenge maintained that he had, in the first place, intended no harm—only a brutal joke on the unsuspecting girl. It was after he had driven her to Royston House that he realised that his ruffianly folly had been his undoing. Miss Hanway had been indignant and severe, and had made no secret of her intention of handing him over to the police as soon as she could. He declared that he had taken her back to Tydmouth, intending to leave her safely there. On the way he had thought the matter over and seen imprisonment and ruin staring him in the face—and he had been drinking deeply.

He stopped the car at the lonely cross-roads, and the rest followed as Ferrers Locke had mapped it out. He declared that if the hapless girl had promised to keep silence as to his escapade, he would have taken her back to the station unharmed; but fear had driven him to the only means of silencing her. Afterwards he had driven the car home, carefully cleaned it, and locked it up in the garage, and gone to the Seven Stars dance, in the hope of establishing an alibi.

Ferrers Locke and his pupil had long been back at Baker Street when the final act came in the tragedy—and the detestable ruffian was hanged for his crime.

Ferrers Locke's name did not appear in connection with the case—but the Baker Street detective did not desire it. He was satisfied with having helped to bring a conscienceless villain to just punishment—and there are few cases the famous detective remembers with such grim satisfaction as that of the Tydmouth Mystery.

THE END.

Another grand detective story will appear in next week's "Boys' Herald." Make a point of ordering your copy EARLY.

: Editorial :

My dear Chums,—From letters to hand I can see some of the new school yarns in the BOYS' HERALD have caught on. Sometimes a tale fails in its appeal because it turns up at the wrong time. Then there is no help for it. But there is usually something about a school story which generally gets there.

I would not have a school yarn in the BOYS' HERALD which had not the genuine ring. As we all know, the really great feature about school life is the good temper which prevails. It is so. A fellow learns to keep his temper to himself at school. Some individuals forget this lesson when they step out into the big world, and so much the worse for them. It is the strong fellow who manages to keep pretty calm and untroubled in the midst of a set of exasperating circumstances, who wins through, and generally finds himself acting as leader of a crowd before he knows where he is.

Just watch Teddy Heron. He is a case in point. When he piled Miller's furniture out in the corridor, and climbed up the ivy to save the life of the bully, Heron was just the same ready, resourceful fellow, never getting ratty, though

his first experiences at St. Bridget's were not over pleasant. One is glad to meet Teddy Heron. The character is sketched by a master hand, and the stories are distinguished by that measure of cheeriness which ensures popularity. His coolness is astounding; St. Bridget's, too, is a real live school with the right atmosphere. I should be glad to have your opinion of these school stores with their brightness and freshness of view. They are new—the well-told school yarn is ever new.

In other respects the old paper has nothing to fear. There is one point about the Round Up Club I am bound to deal with. This is a real club, and will promote good fellowship all round. The club which fails in that respect is worth little; but just mark this, the Round-Up Club is making fine headway. I would suggest to all captains of football clubs that they tell their men about the advantages of the Round-Up Club, and get them to join. The Club serves to band fellows together for common interests, and it is organisation and mutual help of this kind which pays all along the line.

I am relying on my friends to assist me in this matter. I want you to link up with this Club for your own advantage. A club like the Round-Up is as full of possible developments as a new line of railway through unopened country.

Suggestions are welcome. Meantime, join the Club, and tell others about it. They will speedily come in.

The new series of complete adventure stories in the BOYS' HERALD will round off our programme well. They deal with all parts of the world, and are brimful of novelty. Please make a note of them.

There is, of course, plenty of adventure in the narratives of Ferrers Locke, and Drake, his young assistant. These tales go pretty deep into life, and deal with matters which are of daily interest in the newspapers, such as companies, stock and share dealing, and so forth, but Mr. Owen Conquest contrives to make any subject he touches on fascinating. He is a fair marvel at extracting the significance out of apparently commonplace matters, such as a call over the 'phone, or the news which the little tape machine clicks off on the unending strip of paper. I like to have all these details dealt with in the paper, because the BOYS' HERALD is read by everybody, and the fellow in the country, who sees little of the time-saving expedients of town, at any rate, likes to read about them, and to learn how it is all done.

Look out for next week's splendid number of the BOYS' HERALD.

YOUR EDITOR.