



Detective Kerr

Investigates

The MYSTERY of the BROKEN FISHING-ROD

THERE was a sensation in the School House when a valuable fishing-rod was missed from Mr. Lathom's study one Saturday morning and found late the same afternoon abandoned broken on the banks of the Rhyl. The fishing-rod had evidently been taken during school hours, which automatically ruled out everybody except those fellows who had had occasion to leave their Form-rooms during lessons. Mr. Lathom's inquiries revealed that Gore, Reilly, Crooke, and D'Arcy minor were the only four who had had such an opportunity, and finding that the other three were able to prove that they could not have gone fishing on Saturday afternoon, he concluded that D'Arcy minor was the culprit. Refusing to believe that his younger brother was guilty, Arthur Augustus appealed to Detective Kerr.

KERR : You were out on Saturday afternoon, I understand, Wally.

D'ARCY : Matter of fact, I was. Went into Rylcombe to get my footer

boots repaired and looked around a bit.

KERR : Did you come straight back ?

D'ARCY : Yes.

KERR : Sure ?

D'ARCY : Yes—well, I just popped into the woods to look for something.

KERR : What were you looking for ?

D'ARCY : I'd rather not say.

KERR : I can't help you if you won't.

D'ARCY : Very well, if you'll promise not to split. I went to look for a bit of wood for a catapult. Old Selby's forbidden them, you know.

KERR : O.K., kid ; I'll keep mum.

KERR : Oh, Crooke, you were under suspicion for having taken Lathom's fishing-rod.

CROOKE : What if I was ? It was proved I didn't. Young D'Arcy took it, the little sweep.

KERR : Where exactly were you on Saturday afternoon ?

CROOKE : I was watching the footer match on Little Side.

KERR : Strange. You don't generally honour us with your presence. Anyone see you ?

CROOKE : Of course they did. I had

a chat with Skimpole, and another with Gore. Any more questions?

KERR: Just one. Why did you leave the Form-room?

CROOKE: I'd forgotten my French dick, and Mossoo let me go and fetch it.

KERR: Beginning of the second hour, eh?

CROOKE: Look here, what are you driving at?

KERR: Nothing, my infant, nothing.

REILLY: Sure, 'tis the sleuth himself.

KERR: Right first time. Care to answer a few questions?

REILLY: And why should I be after refusin'?

KERR: Wait a minute. I'm doing the asking. In the first place, you left the Form-room on Saturday morning. Why?

REILLY: I did so. Wasn't it meself had blacked the eyes of Racke and his precious pal Crooke, and them after batin' the hide off young Smith when I caught them, the miserable spalpeens? And didn't Racke flick an ink-ball at me on Saturday morning and Mossoo send me out to wash it off, and me not guilty at all, at all?

KERR: Hold everything! Mossoo sent you out to wash some ink off, eh? You went up to the bath-room for that?

REILLY: I did then. And on the way down I was after nippin' into the study to get a toffee. Will you be havin' one yereself now?

KERR: Thanks. How long did you stay in the study?

REILLY: Ah, sure, I was there tin minutes. 'Twas my prep I'd been skippin' on account of the footer practice, so I stayed there as long as I could.

KERR: Door open?

REILLY: Indade it was.

KERR: 'Nother thing, where were you on Saturday afternoon? I thought I heard you saying you were going into Rylcombe.

REILLY: I did. But Kerruish and Hammond persuaded me to stop and watch the footer.

KERR: You're fond of fishing, aren't you?

REILLY: Sure, 'tis a foine sport. Were you ever in Killarney? You weren't? Wait now whoile I relate to you the fishin' I've done in Killarney.

KERR: Sorry, old man! Another time.

KERR: I say, Gore——

GORE: Hallo! Want some help with your giddy mystery?

KERR: Not exactly. I want to know why you left the Form-room.

GORE: On Saturday? For the same reason I told Mossoo. I cut myself sharpening a pencil and went to get it bandaged.

KERR: The House-dame did that?

GORE: No; she wasn't there, so I trotted along to the study and did it myself.

KERR: Anyone see you?

GORE: Naturally not. There wasn't anyone about. Crooke had just come back. I must say you do ask some dumb questions.

KERR: Put it down to my insatiable curiosity. What about Reilly?

GORE: I met him in the corridor outside. He gave me a toffee.

KERR: And on Saturday afternoon?

GORE: Just as a matter of routine, you know.

KERR: Cast iron alibi, my lad. I was over in the san, having my finger dressed properly. Marie Rivers was having tea and invited me to stay. Jolly decent of her.

KERR : H'm ! You haven't exactly been in Lathom's good books lately, have you ?

GORE : He overheard me call him a silly old buffer, if that's what you're driving at. The blighter reported me to Railton and I got licked for it. But if you think I'd go and pinch the man's fishing-rod to get even, you're mistaken. Besides, I hate fishing.

GUSSY : Weally, deah boy, I insist that you're barkin' up the w'ong twee. None of them could have gone down to the Whyl and got back in time.

KERR : There I agree with you.

GUSSY : It was pwobably a burglah -fwom outside.

KERR : Imposs. If anyone had taken the risk of breaking in and stealing the rod they'd hardly have left it lying on the banks of the Rhyl.

GUSSY : Bai Jove, I wegard that as a bwilliant piece of deduction !

KERR : You can't see who must have done it ?

GUSSY : Wathah not.

KERR : Think it over again. I spotted something in some of the answers that didn't quite fit, and I started working from rather a different angle. There's only one explanation that fits everything, and I'm backing it as the right one.

Can you work it out ? Who took Lathom's fishing-rod, and why ? Turn to page 181 for Kerr's solution.

GRUNDY'S DREAM !

Written in George Alfred Grundy's Best Style.

THE sun came down in torrents
From a cleer and cloudless sky ;
The First Eleven were batting,
And I was standing by.

Kildare was at the wicket ;
He smote with mite and mane ;
Till his middel stump went spinning,
Then he toddled back again !

Monteith took up the running,
And he gave a sudden rore
As the ball removed his nee-cap.
Said the umpyre, " Leg before ! "

Then Darrell, Gray and Baker,
Went in to try their luck ;
But they all came back defeeted,
And each won got a duck !

Kildare broke down with sobbing,
And he turned to me and cride,
" Arise, George Alfred Grundy,
The last hope of the side ! "

I rose up like Napoleon,
And grasped my trusty blade ;
When the feeldsmen saw me coming
They staggered back, dismade !

Two hundred runs were wanted
To give St. Jim's the match.
" The skool shall win ! " I muttered.
" I sware by Colney Hatch ! "

I flogged the pewtrid bowling
North, south and east and west ;
And the feeldsmen sank exhawsted,
For they had to give me best.

" O stay, George Alfred Grundy !
O stay thy mighty hand !
Your batting terns us giddy ;
It farely beets the band ! "

I still kontinewed slogging
That week and feeble stuff.
" Declare ! " the feeldsmen showted.
" Oh, crumms ! We've had enuff ! "

I rattled up a hundred,
And then a hundred more.
The Head came out to see me
He marveled at my score.

" Well played, George Alfred Grundy,
By all St. Jim's adored !
Your wonderful performance
Doth merriit a reward ! "

The Head advanced to meat me.
" You're simply grate ! " he said.
I blinked, I gasped, I shivvered,
And then sat up in bed !

" You silly ass ! You're snoring ! "
Said Lowther in disgust.
Then he skweezed the sponge with vigger,
And my merry dream went bust !



George Kerr—the canny Scot of the New House.



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—the swell of the Fourth.

The St. Jim's PORTRAIT GALLERY



Eric Kildare—captain of St. Jim's.



Tom Merry—the leader of the junior school.



Richard Redfern—the New House scholarship boy.



Fatty Wynn—the Falstaff of the New House.