

# THE STOLEN LETTERS.

"Real of cause it's real—eighteen carats and a thorough good one—goes like one o'clock—and the Albert too, takes the shine out of the French master's," and Tom Linton, schoolboy, aged fifteen, in the exuberance of his satisfaction, shook the Albert vigorously in the face of his admiring friend, Bertie Chisholm.

"But who gave it to you? your governor?" queried the latter, as the owner of the watch proceeded to detach the pendant from his vest to allow his companion a closer inspection.

"No, Bob's sister."

"Bob who?"

"Bob Allerdycy. You don't know him; he left before you came."

"It is a stunner, though," said Bertie, as he took the shining toy in his hand and examined it critically.

It was a small gold watch, exquisitely chased and jewelled, and had attached a slender Albert chain of the same metal, exhibiting beautiful workmanship.

"You're a lucky chap, Tom," said Bertie, as he returned it. "You're always coming in for something better than the other fellows. You've got better bats and cricket rig than Smith in the Sixth, and you've better fishing tackle than any other fellow in the school. That last trout rod—my eye! it is a beauty!" and Bertie relaxed into a trance of admiration as he mentally recalled the numberless attractions and perfections of that last trout rod.

"I'll lend it to you, Bert," said Tom, with an easy conscious superiority in the matter of worldly possessions.

"Honor bright?"

"Honor bright, any time you want it. If you smash it, as you did the last one, I can get another where it came from."

It may be here explained that Bertie was an enthusiastic disciple of Isaac Walton, and was in the habit of "going fishing" in the reedy stream behind the village whenever he had a chance. These excursions were to him productive of more enjoyment than success, as he invariably—after decorating the trees and bushes on the banks with various separate casts of flies, and manfully trying to hook up boulders from the bottom of the water—returned with the stump of a rod, some yards of line, and the information that he "couldn't get a bite."

On the present occasion the prospect of an early indulgence in his favorite amusement rendered him excessively grateful, and it was not till he had informed Tom that he was a brick, at least three times, that he returned to the subject of the watch by asking—

"But, I say, you haven't told me yet who she is that gave you that thing."

"I did. She's Bob's sister."

"Yes, but that makes me just as wise as before. Who's Bob? and who's his sister? and who's—"

"Shut up. What a fellow you are to ask questions! But, it's rather a queer story, the way I got that watch; so let's sit down and I'll tell you."

Accordingly, Tom and his expectantly curious cronies seated themselves on the twisted roots of an old, moss-grown oak, and the former began his narration.

"You couldn't guess what I got that for?—it was a reward, you know."

"It was something you did for her," hazarded Bertie.

"Yes, but what?"

"Well, maybe you saved her from a fire, or from robbers, or she was drowning, and you plunged in at the risk of your—"

"Stuff!" interrupted Tom, derisively. "Such things don't happen only in novels."

"Yes, they do," stoutly insisted Bertie, "because I know a fellow whose big brother saved a young lady from robbers—two tramps—one day. He heard her screams, and ran into the wood, and they had knocked her down and taken her watch and purse, and were trying to get the rings off her hand; and this fellow's brother went for them on the spot, and licked them so that they couldn't move, and the police got them, and they got penal servitude, and now this fellow's brother and the young lady are going to be married, and that's not in a novel," concluded Bertie, triumphantly.

"Well," said Tom, dubiously, "that may be, but it doesn't often happen, and any way it wasn't for anything like that that I got my present."

"What was it for, then?" asked Bertie.

"Thieving!" was the startling reply.

"What?"

"Pocket-picking," continued Tom, in grim enjoyment of his friend's astonishment. "Climbed up the ivy to a fellow's window when he was absent, rummaged his pockets and stole a packet of letters. My eye! wasn't he wild that afternoon, when he found that they were gone?" and iniquitous Tom chuckled with delight over the recollection of his victim's wrath.

"How was it, Tom? Tell us," persisted Bertie.

Tom, thus adjured, proceeded with the following narration of his theft:—

Well, it was just a year ago last Christmas. It was Bob's last term, and he was leaving for good when the school broke up for the holidays. He asked me to go with him on a visit to his folks, and as he had been twice at our place, and father and mother liked him very much, they allowed me to accept the invitation. I was to go home for a day or two, and then go by rail to Ellerton—Bob's folks' place—on Christmas Eve. I got through that program right enough, and it was just growing dusk on Christmas Eve when the train slowed up and I got out at Ellerton Station—a toy-boy of a place stuck on the side of a hill. Ellerton village—a cluster of some fifty houses jumbled together anyhow—lay down in the hollow about a mile below the station, and on the rise of the valley I saw a large mansion-house, which I afterwards found was Ellerton Priory—Bob's folks' place. I didn't think much of it then. The cold was beastly, the snow was two feet deep, and I was nearly frozen sitting in that ice box of a railway carriage. I liked it better afterwards, though.

Bob was waiting with a trap, and as we drove down toward the village, I asked him a lot of questions about the house, and whether they had many visitors.

"A regular jam," he said, "can't

move among them hardly. You and I are the only two boys, though, so we'll be pretty much left to ourselves. They're not a bad lot, either; there's only one of them that I don't like."

"Who's that?"

"A sneak—a cad," replied Bob, savagely. "He's a lawyer, or a money-lender, or something of that sort, in the city, and has heaps of money."

"What's his name?"

"Crocket—Jasper Crocket. I never go near him without feeling inclined to punch his head. He's got the soft side of the governor somehow, and I fancy that he wants to marry my sister, little Vi; but he'll never do that—I'll knock his brains out first," and Bob cut at the mare so viciously that she plunged and came near upsetting the trap in the deep drift that lay on the side of the road.

As we turned in at the lodge gates and spun up the avenue I saw that the Priory was a great deal bigger and grander than I had imagined—quite a swell place, in fact. I mentioned something of that sort to Bob, when he laughed and said—

"Oh, it's right enough; we haven't had it long, though. The governor bought it about two years ago. But here we are; jump out. Martin, take this box up to Master Linton's room; the one next to mine, you know."

As the flunkey marched off with my trunk Mrs. Allerdycy came down the steps to meet us, and I tell you I liked her right off—she welcomed me so kindly, hoped that I would enjoy my visit, and all that.

"Remember you're in Robert's charge, and if you do not enjoy yourself he'll be held responsible," she said.

"All right, mother," said Bob; "you leave that to me. But you might send us up something to my room; we're nearly famished."

"If you will take your friend into the supper-room—"

"No, no, mother," said Bob; "there's too much of a crowd there. I want to have a chat with Tom—lay plans, you know."

"Very well, dear," she said, smiling. "When you've arranged your plans,

with either of us. One thing I noticed, and that was that she and Bob were awfully fond of each other. I've seen brothers and sisters loving enough, but never anything like that. It did me good to look at them.

We had just fairly commenced to the spread when another knock came to the door, and Bob shouted "Come in" with his mouthful. The visitor came in—a young fellow with a heavy mustache. He was a regular giant, six feet high, and as straight as a dart. I guessed him to be a soldier as soon as I saw him.

As she caught sight of him Violet's face went scarlet, and she made herself very busy with the tea urn for a minute or two.

"Well," said Bob, "what d'ye want?"

"Some slight refreshments for charity's sake," replied the stranger, with a laughable attempt at a beggar's whine.

"I'm starving."

"Then why don't you go down to the kitchen and get some scraps?" demanded Bob.

"Robert!" exclaimed Violet, laughing and blushing.

"Oh, it's all very well for you to say, 'Robert, Vi,'" said Bob; "but it's my belief that you encourage these vagrants. I can't have them here eating me out of house and home. We'll have a round dozen up here presently. Why don't you go down to the supper room?" he asked the stranger.

"I'm too weak—exhausted," he answered, sinking down on a chair in a manner that made us all laugh.

"Well," said Bob, "since you are here, I suppose you'll have to stay, so, Vi, you can look after him. Capt. Graham, this is my chum, Tom Linton."

We shook hands, and in five minutes we were as thick as thieves. He was a thoroughly good fellow. He told stories, cracked jokes, and kept us all laughing; and then Violet looked so pretty, and altogether things went so swimmingly that I think we were all sorry when Mrs. Allerdycy looked in at the door.

"Come in, mother," cried Bob. "We only want you to complete the company."

business, and to tell you how beautifully brown I did that white-faced sneak.

It was two days after Christmas, and I was crossing the hall when the library door opened and Violet came out. To look at her frightened me. Her face was as white as death, her eyes looked horrible with the pain and terror in them, and she had her hand squeezed against her heart.

"Violet!" I cried.

She leaned her arm on my shoulder and said with a kind of sob,—

"Oh, Tom!"

Before she could say any more the library door opened again and Crocket came out. She gave one look and then ran up stairs. He came up to me rubbing his hands together and grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"Oh, my young friend! Good-morning," he exclaimed.

I didn't give him any answer, I was too angry, but turned and walked away. What was up I, of course, didn't know, but I was sure he had been at some mischief.

It was a very unfortunate thing for him next day, though, that I should have gone into the library and fallen asleep behind a screen—very unlucky indeed for Mr. Jasper Crocket.

I had been snoozing for perhaps an hour when I was awakened by the sound of voices, and, peeping through the screen, I saw Crocket standing by the fire, and opposite him, holding on by the back of a chair, and looking as if she was going to faint, was Violet.

I was just about to bolt out when it struck me that I might as well keep still and see what his little game was. Of course, you know, Bert, it wasn't a very honorable thing to do, but then he was such a sneak, and—and—well, I am glad now that I did listen.

When I first looked out he was standing on the rug with that beastly grin on his phiz, and she was looking at him with a deadly white face and wild eyes.

"No, Miss Allerdycy, you must see that it will be better for all concerned if you consent."

"And if I do not?"

"In that case, I will certainly make use of the papers I have so fortunately discovered; and you can imagine the consequences to your brother," he answered.

"I do not believe it. Charles has been foolish, wicked even, but he would never stoop to that," she burst out.

"My dear Miss Allerdycy—Violet, I may call you, it is unfortunately no subject for belief; it is a matter of fact. Here," and he took a packet of letters from his pocket, "here are proofs amply sufficient to convict Charles Allerdycy before a judge and jury of—shall I say what?"

She gave a low cry and sat down on the chair, shaking like a leaf. He came close to her and said in a threatening tone—

"Consent, and I destroy these; refuse, and I will place him in the dock. I will give you till to-morrow to decide. Do you hear?"

"Yes, leave me—leave me," she gasped.

He went out smiling harder than ever. Violet lay down on a couch sobbing—

"Oh, Harry! Oh, my love, my love!"

While she was lying there crying I had time to think a bit. I knew she had a brother named Charles—a good-for-nothing lout he was, too, Bob had told me—but I was at a loss to know who Harry was. At last I remembered that Capt. Graham's name was Harry, and then I understood it.

She stayed there on the couch for nearly an hour, and then she got up and went out, looking like a ghost.

I came from behind the screen, and reached the hall just in time to see Crocket go down the front steps. I followed him to the door and noticed that he had changed his coat. Instantly the thought struck me to have a try for those letters. I watched him go down the avenue and then rushed up to his room. The door was locked.

Then I thought of the window and the ivy, and went out to have a look. It was an ugly climb, and the risk was great, both as to falling and the danger of being caught, but I determined to try it. I'd have run any risk to get the whip hand of that cad. His room was in the left wing, and the window fronted the wood, so that I was not so likely to be seen as if it had faced the front.

Well, I threw off my jacket and went at it. I was a good bit excited, and as I scuffled up among the leaves I couldn't help thinking what a jolly job it would be if I was had up for burglary.

Near the top I had almost come a cropper through the trails giving way, but I held on like glue, and at last reached the window. The hasp was not shot, and in two twos I was inside.

The first thing I saw was the coat lying on a chair. I dived into the pocket, and found the letters right enough. The stupid ass had never thought of locking them up.

"You'd better believe I didn't stay long after I got my claws on them. I came down that ivy like a cat, and danced a jig in the snow at the bottom."

Then I went to look for Violet.

I went up to her room and knocked at the door. It was opened by a maid, who asked what I wanted.

"I want to see Violet."

"She is unwell, and can't see any one."

"But I must see her—only for a minute."

"You can't see her," and she was going to shut the door.

"I must. I'll kick the panels in if you shut it," I said in desperation.

"What is it, Mary?" I heard Violet ask.

I pushed past the girl, and went right in. Violet was lying back in a chair by the fire, and looked miserable.

I went to see you—by yourself—just for a minute," I got out.

She looked surprised and then told the girl to go away.

"I was in the library to-day, and heard what that sneak—what Crocket said to you."

She started, and her face got whiter.

"Those letters, I've got them," and I told her the whole story.

She sat staring at me, half dazed, till I put the letters in her lap. Then she jumped up, and got me round the neck, laughing and crying, and—talk about kissing! Um, just so!

We burned the letters and went down stairs, and I think that Violet must



"CONSENT AND I DESTROY THESE."

bring Tom down stairs and introduce him to your father."

"All right. Come on, Tom," and we bundled up stairs to Bob's den, where I got off my wraps, and set about throwing myself at the fire.

Some ten minutes after a maid came in with a glorious tuck-in in the way of tea, and we were just about to go for it when somebody knocked at the door.

"Who's that?" shouted Bob, as the door opened. "We've nothing to give away. We can do for this lot ourselves."

"You greedy boy," said a soft voice, and the prettiest girl I ever saw came into the room.

"Little Vi!" exclaimed Bob, and as she came up to him he got hold of her and hugged and kissed her till my mouth watered. "What sent you up here? I thought you were too busy among the swells down stairs to bother about us."

She made a face and said—

"I don't care for the swells, and I'd rather be with you; besides I wanted to see your friend. Introduce us, Bob."

"Both introductions," replied Bob. "See here, Tom, this is my sister Violet, the jolliest little sister in the world. Vi, this is my best chum, Tom Linton. I want you to be friends."

"I am sure we shall," she said, as she came up to me, and gave me her hand. I was sure of it, too, and said so. To tell the truth, I fell in love with her on the spot.

I'm not good at descriptions, but I'll try to tell you what she was like. She wasn't big—rather small than most women—but she was so well-favored and graceful that one didn't think her so little as she really was. Her face—well, I've said she was pretty, but if I were to sit here talking for a week I couldn't tell you how pretty. Her complexion was clear pink and white, her features delicate, her hair was of a golden color her eyes were like her name, violet. But what's the use of talking? I can't describe her.

Well she took charge of the tea things, and my shyness wore off after a bit, and then we got as merry as grigs, and had a splendid time of it. She wasn't a bit stuck up, and could chaff

have told the captain, for when Bob and I came in from skating he got me by the arm and marched me into the library. Violet was there looking as bright and happy as a bird, and they went on at such a rate, that I was glad to get out.

The Crocket beast came home some hours after, and behaved like a madman when he found that the letters were gone. He blustered and raved at everybody, but he didn't tell what the letters were about: I suppose he was afraid to, without proof.

At last he saw the game was up, and took his hook for London, and I've never seen him since. I got the watch from Violet, and the rods and things from the captain, and I'm to go to the wedding, and get first kiss from the bride, and that's all, and now we'd better be shinning, or we'll get toko for being late. Come on Bert.

## How a Post-Mortem is Made.

Few persons upon reading an account of a post-mortem examination stop to consider the importance of the matter or the time taken up to do the work of an autopsy, says *The Baltimore Sun*. The post-mortem surgeons are important officers, who make all the medicolegal examinations for the city, and are the medical witnesses for the state in cases where post-mortem examinations are required. There are two post-mortem physicians in Baltimore, Dr. S. V. Hoopman, for the ten lower wards, and Dr. L. W. Councilman, for the ten upper wards.

A reporter, wishing to witness the post-mortem work, called on Dr. Hoopman a short time ago just as he was starting to perform such a duty. The case was a very important one, being one of the late murders committed in the eastern section of the city. Arriving at the house, about twenty medical students were found who accompanied Dr. Hoopman to the room where the dead body lay. A table was prepared by covering it with an oil cloth. The clothing was removed from the body and it was placed on the table. The doctor carefully inspected the corpse and noted all wounds, which in this case were found to be three, two bullet wounds and one knife gash. The head was first examined. An incision was made from ear to ear over the top of the head, followed by a gush of blood, which made some of the spectators remember that they were needed outside for a moment. The scalp was deflected backward and forward and the skull exposed. The skull was then sawed around on a line with the eyebrow. When the top of the skull was removed the doctor took out the brain. That beautiful organ, with its fissures and convolutions, was a mass of blood, the fatal bullet having plowed its way diagonally through it. An inspection of the neck showed that another bullet had entered at the back, passed through toward the front, severing the carotid artery and jugular vein. The next move was to make a long incision from the chin down to the navel. The breast bone was dissected and the heart and lungs taken out for inspection. After carefully examining the heart, the doctor remarked that the "columnae carneae, chordae tendineae, and auriculo-ventricular and semi-lunar valves are all healthy." The lungs were found healthy. A piece thrown in water would not sink, which the doctor said was a test for healthy lungs. The stomach, liver, spleen, pancreas and intestines were all in turn carefully removed and inspected. All this completed, the organs were replaced and the incisions carefully sewed up. So completely is this done that when the body is dressed the fact of a post-mortem examination having been made is not apparent.

"How many post-mortems have you made during the year?" asked the reporter.

"About forty, and about one hundred since I have been making post-mortems."

"Glancing at the watch, it was found that four hours had been occupied in performing the interesting examination. Post-mortem physicians are appointed yearly, their selection being made by the mayor. In each case they file a report of the autopsy at the health department.

## A Philosophical Physician.

"Well, Henderson," said the secretary of state, addressing old Henderson Morgan, "what are you doing now, still preaching?"

"Oh nor, sah, quit dat long er go. Dar wuz plenty o' love an' fection an' halleyluys in de 'fession, but Mars 'Lias, dar want er nuff inperpent money in it ter suit me."

"What do you mean by independent money?"

"W'y, de money er pussen ken spen' widout a great hue an' ery bein' raised erbout it. De church folks is so cuis 'bout church affairs dat dar's losin' all dar best timber! Da is, Mars 'Lias—is fur a fact. I preached er mighty lang time, an' ez every body'll tell yer, de sinners bit at my hook 'bout as fas' ez I coul' throw it in, 'bout now an' den when I'd dig a troll, I'd snatch out one o' de biggest sinners in de debbil's market, sah; but arter all dis, dar ariz some disatisfaction in de church. Da forgot dat I turned in all de money dat wuz due, an' den I summoned a committee ter meet me, an' arter de committee went back a 'po'ted, w'y I turned mys'f often de congregation an' de sinnyzors o' de shackly faith. I ken stan' er heap, but I doan like ter be 'spected when I se prettly well 'vinced in my own mine dat I se innorent."

"What are you doing now?" the secretary of state asked.

"W'y sah, I se practicin' medicine, now."

"What?"

"Yes, dat's what I's doin'."

"Look here, Henderson, you don't know anything about medicine."

"'Cause I doan. Who does? Er haw. Doan know nothin' 'bout medicine, ter he, he."

"Are you very successful?"

"Oh, yes, sah. Ain' los' er case yet, an' some o' em wuz powerful ailin'."

"What sort of medicine do you use?"

"Wall, fur de chills, I uses dogwood bark, fur de fever I uses sastruf bark, fur ordinary biliousness I uses blackberry root an' fur eberything else, I uses all dese head mixed. When I doan know what's de matter wid a man I gives him er mixture o' de whole lot, an' dat fetches him roun' nine times outen ten."

"Henderson, those barks cannot help a sick man."

"Dat may be, Mrs. 'Lias, but da ain' gwinetter do him no harm. In de practice it ain' so much de medicine dat will do good ez it is de medicine dat won't do no harm. De harmless is de best."

"Don't you know that you are violating a state law, practicing without license?"

"You don't mean to say that you have license?"

"Yes, I does."

"Where did you get it?"

"Frum de 'thorities—er justice o' de peace down in de country. Wall, I se got er lot o' fever on han' an' mus' be stirrin'. I ain' got much time ter fool erway. When yer gits sick, Mars 'Lias, jes' sen' fur me an' I'll doctor yer fur half price, an' take my pay in state papers."—*Arkansas Traveler*.

## He Wanted a Rest.

"Don't you want to go to a better world, Tommy?" asked a Sunday-school teacher of the new scholar.

"No, mum," promptly replied the frank little fellow.

"And why not, Tommy?"

"Oh, when I die I want to go where a feller can rest."

"Well, my boy, you can rest there."

"Well, in the song we sung it said we'd all shine there."

"Certainly; don't you want to shine there?"

"No, mum. I get enough of that here. I'm a bootblack, mum."—*Yonkers Statesman*.