

has sent for me to bring my dogs to help 'em in tracking the thieves; so I'm reckoning that them wrong-doers are pretty nigh as good as convicted already," replied the old man, with a knowing wink, and a vicious pull at the leash, for the dogs were straining at it so hard that they nearly dragged him off his feet in their eagerness to go forward.

"When was the robbery?" called out Fred. "I was over at the depôt with our team yesterday, and I heard no talk of anything having been taken then, nor did there seem anything much to steal except a few empty freight cars, and nobody would want bloodhounds to track them with, I should think."

"Ah, it doesn't ever do to judge by appearances," retorted the old man, with a sly chuckle. "There was a little box standing in one corner of the office, that was worth double the value of every freight car on the depôt, and it is that box that was stolen last night, the thief getting clear away, and nobody none the wiser until this mornin'."

"What was in the box?" piped Johnny, whilst Sam whistled again, in wonder this time that anything so valuable should be left in the office, instead of being locked away in the safe.

"They say the box was chock full of dollars—five hundred of 'em, and they'd been labelled nails, so that no one should suspicion them for anything of more value. I reckon the thief that went for to steal that box o' nails made eyes as big as glass marbles when he saw what that box had in it really."

"Will your dogs be able to catch the thief?" called out Johnny, more shrilly than before, for the old man was moving on again, the straining of the hounds serving to tow him along.

But he turned to nod in token of assent, at the same time grimacing so hideously that the boys