POWERFUL NEW SERIES BEGINS IN THIS ISSUE!

The NELSON LEE Library 2D

And St. Frank's Magazine.

He wanted to flee—he wanted to scream, but sheer fear held him. And then he saw the mummy moving. The face seemed to twitch and the mouth opened. And a ghostly arm came from the linen bindings.

THE SCHOOL MUSEUM MYSTERY!

Being this week's Absorbing Story of the Coming of the Mysterious Dr. Karnak to St. Frank's.

No. 448 EVERY WEDNESDAY. January 5, 1924.

Never once did Handforth and Co. glance behind them. Indeed, they could not do so, owing to their very speed. But in spite of the rush of wind past their ears, they heard the steady "flap, flap!" of the unknown in their rear.

For a long time the author and I have been discussing the new series which begins with this week's story. The recent remarkable discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in Upper Egypt by the late Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Howard Carter supplied us with the germ of the idea. And as we delved deeper and deeper into the subject we suddenly came across the amazing personality of Dr. Karnak. From the moment this gentleman appeared we knew that we had made a discovery that would lead to bigger things, and with the result that the coming series will arouse the widespread interest of everyone who is fascinated by the mysteries and wonders of Egypt and its ancient civilisation. We felt that there could be no better opportunity for starting such an absorbing series than in the New Year Number, and at a time when the world's attention is being focused on the new-found wonders of King Tutankhamen's tomb.

THE EDITOR.

The Narrative Related Throug[illegible] by Nipper.

CHAPTER I.

DR. KARNAK, THE MYSTERIOUS!

CECIL DE VALERIE paused uncertainly, the fog hemming him in on all sides. And as he stood there, wondering if he had taken the wrong direction by mistake, something soft and warm rubbed against his legs.

He looked down, startled.

"Good heavens!" he muttered, a catch in his voice.

Dimly through the mist he beheld an animal that appeared to be a cat—but a cat of unusual size and colour. It was a kind of yellow, with black spots. And the creature was industriously rubbing against De Valerie's legs, and purring with a most peculiar loudness.

De Valerie forgot all about his journey through the fog. And he walked away a few paces, hoping to get rid of this unwelcome companion. For, although the animal seemed to be friendly enough, its very appearance was not calculated to fill him with confidence.

But as he walked, the strange cat walked with him—continually rubbing against his legs, its tail raised, and the purring now more noticeable than ever. Again De Valerie paused, and bent down.

"All right, puss!" he said softly. "Lost, I suppose?"

At closer quarters he could see that the creature was no ordinary cat, but more like a small leopard, or some such specimen of the feline tribe. The situation was decidedly awkward.

De Valerie was not far from Victoria Station, in one of the less frequented side-streets. The holidays were over, and to-day was the first day of the new term. De Valerie had previously arranged with a number of other Remove juniors of St. Frank's to be at Victoria Station in time to catch the morning express.

But they had reckoned without fog.

And on this particular morning a dense and impenetrable pall had descended over the Metropolis—a thick, yellow fog which blotted out every well-known landmark, and which caused complete disorganisation of street traffic.

De Valerie had started out by taxi, leaving himself plenty of time to get to the big terminus. But the traffic halts, owing to the fog, had become so irritating that De Valerie had jumped out, deciding to walk. He knew the way, and on foot he reckoned that he could easily "make" the train.

In a moment of folly he had left Victoria Street, cutting through a quiet turning, his plan being to avoid the thick pedestrian traffic, and to reach Victoria with plenty of time to spare. It was simply the result of over-confidence. He thought he knew the street so well that he could not get lost. And now, as a result, he had completely missed his bearings.

And the advent of the extraordinary cat put an end to his anxiety to reach the station. His one desire now was to get rid of this decidedly unwelcome companion.

He looked round, trying to penetrate the fog with his anxious gaze. But he seemed to be utterly alone. Once, as he paused, he heard a ghostly footstep on the opposite pavement, but could see nobody. He was in the midst of teeming life and activity, and yet was utterly alone.

Again he walked on, wishing that he was on the station platform with Handforth & Co., and Reggie Pitt, and Archie Glenthorne & Co., and the rest. Although these fellows were only five minutes' walk away, they seemed to be beyond all hope of reaching.

"Go away—shoo!" said De Valerie, making motions with his hands. "Shoo—shoo! Clear off, you beggar!"

The great cat started back for a moment, looking up at the junior, with big, luminous eyes. Somehow, the very appearance of them gave De Valerie a turn. There was something evil in the look of those eyes.

The junior turned, and walked rapidly through the fog. His one idea was to shake off this animal. But he failed. He felt it touching against his legs as he walked. And once more he came to a halt. There was the cat, purring more loudly than ever, and rubbing itself affectionately against his legs. But De Valerie was not at all keen upon this unwelcome affection.

"Anyhow, it doesn't seem to be very dangerous," muttered the junior. "Shouldn't be surprised if it escaped from the Zoo or something. Blessed awkward, though! They say that all sorts of queer things happen in a London fog—and I'm jolly well ready to believe it now!"

He bent down again, and as he did so the cat gave a sudden leap and landed firmly on the junior's chest—its two front feet clawing at his shoulders, and its rear feet clutching at the lower part of his overcoat. This was a contingency he had not bargained for.

"Great Scott!" he gasped.

The animal's purring was tremendously loud now that it was at such close quarters. And it clung there, a dead weight on De Valerie's chest. And the junior was not only startled, but positively scared. He felt, somehow that, in spite of the cat's affection, it was deadly dangerous in reality. And he knew well enough that the creature was capable of clawing his eyes out in one flash.

"Help!" he shouted desperately. "Quick, somebody! Help!"

He was so alarmed that his voice cracked with anxiety. And desperately he sought to shake the beast from him. But all his efforts to dislodge it were in vain. It clung there, even worming its way upwards a trifle, until, indeed, its bewhiskered face was close to his own. And those strange eyes were gazing full at him.

De Valerie gasped, his breathing short and heavy.

"Help!" he shouted again.

It was a situation that would have puzzled the most ingenious mind. De Valerie instinctively felt that it would be fatal to touch the animal and to make any attempt to forcibly remove it. In a fight, a human being would stand no earthly chance.

And then, just as the junior was becoming sick with apprehension, quick footsteps sounded. A man loomed out of the fog, making curious sounds with his mouth. And the cat, giving vent to a cry, flapped his ears against his head, but made no attempt to spring down.

"Quick!" gasped De Valerie. "Lend a hand, here!"

The stranger swerved over to the spot where the voice came from. He suddenly appeared out of the fog—a tall, active figure. De Valerie had no time to spend on examining the man's appearance; he was glad enough that someone had appeared.

"Call a crowd—police!" said the junior quickly. "This—this horrible thing sprang at me, and I can't get rid of it! It'll need half a dozen men to drag it off——"

The stranger uttered a cry of joy as he towered over the junior. And then, with the breath hissing between his teeth, he gave a sharp, swift command—in a tongue that was foreign to the junior.

The effect upon the cat was magical.

Without a second's hesitation it dropped to the ground, and crouched on the pavement at the stranger's feet. With a great sigh of relief De Valerie brushed his coat and backed away.

"Thanks awfully!" he said gratefully

"The rotten thing simply stuck to me like glue! I couldn't get rid of it!"

He found himself looking at the man, and he saw at once that this newcomer was a foreigner. He was dressed smartly, his face was clean-shaven, but his skin was swarthy, and he had a cast of features that was new to De Valerie. He rather fancied that the man was an Indian—a Hindu. But he felt that this guess of his was wrong.

"It is for me to make my full and humble apologies, my young friend," said the stranger, his voice soft, low, and melodious. "But you need have had no fear. Eswit is harmless—her chief fault being an overabundance of affection. But she must be restrained."

"I was afraid about my eyes," said De Valerie.

"You need have feared nothing," said the stranger. "But it seems that this is one of those curious coincidences that are always occurring in everyday life. You, I believe, are a boy belonging to St. Frank's College?"

"Why, yes," said De Valerie, in surprise.

He noticed that the man's piercing dark eyes had glanced at the badge on his cap. And now the stranger was smiling pleasantly—the cat, in the meantime, crouching at his feet as though turned into stone.

"The badge is unmistakable," purred the stranger, his voice somehow reminding De Valerie of the cat itself. "You are surprised, eh? You wonder why I, a foreigner, should be acquainted with the school to which you belong? But it so happens that I, too, was hastening to Victoria with the object of catching the ten-twenty express."

"The ten-twenty?" echoed De Valerie. "Why, that's my train."

"Exactly."

"Why, are—are you going down to Sussex?" asked the junior.

"To Sussex—to St. Frank's College!" agreed the other.

De Valerie stared, bewildered.

"But this is foolish," smiled the dark-skinned man. "I am making a mystery from nothing. Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Dr. Karnak, and I am the newly-appointed science master of the St. Frank's Junior School—also librarian and curator of the museum. Strangers at the moment, we shall soon become well acquainted, eh?"

De Valerie felt strangely relieved.

"Oh!" he said. "So you're the new librarian! We heard there was somebody booked to fill that appointment, but we had no details. Jolly pleased to meet you, sir. But I don't quite know what you are. I—I mean, your nationality——"

"I have the honour to be an Egyptian subject," said Dr. Karnak softly. "And Eswit—an Arabic word, by the way—is the name of my little pet. A cat, as you see, but not of the commonplace variety."

De Valerie looked down at the cat.

"I've never seen one like it before, sir," he said. "And it gave me a turn, I can tell you. I thought the giddy thing was a young jaguar, or something."

Dr. Karnak chuckled.

"The creature is peculiar to Africa," he said. "It is, indeed, what is known as a Serval cat. You have heard of it, eh?"

"Why, yes, of course," said De Valerie, with a nod. "I have seen a picture of a Serval cat in an encyclopedia. But I always thought they were wild—savage animals that roamed about on the desert, or in the forests."

"It is hardly necessary for us to enter into any discussion of the Serval cat at the moment," purred Dr. Karnak. "But, in the main, you are correct. This particular specimen is perfectly tame, however—I obtained her as a cub, and have trained her into my own ways."

"Still, it's a bit queer to have a giddy thing like that running about the streets of London," commented De Valerie, not without warmth. "I mean, you're liable to scare somebody."

"Do not imagine for one moment that it is my habit to walk through the streets of London with Eswit at my heels," said the Egyptian. "No. I was being conveyed to Victoria Station, when my taxi-driver was foolish enough to try conclusions with a motor-'bus. There was a smash. The cat became frightened, and jumped. I lost her. By chance I heard your cry. That is all."

"Oh!" said the junior. "It's a lucky thing you weren't hurt, Dr. Karnak. And it was a bit of a miracle that you happened to come this way."

Dr. Karnak shrugged his shoulders.

"One of the everyday miracles that constantly happen in London," he said carelessly. "And now, my young friend, we appear to be both in the same boat. We have lost our train, for the time is now ten-thirty. I propose that we travel down to St. Frank's together by the express that leaves at two-fifteen."

De Valerie hesitated a moment. In some strange way—for which he could not account—he felt drawn towards this man. But, at the same time, he had an instinctive sensation of reluctance. He wanted to go; his desire was to bid Dr. Karnak a curt good-bye, and walk off into the fog. But something held De Valerie there. Perhaps it was the influence of those dark, piercing eyes.

The man was pleasant enough, to be sure. His smile was infectious. But there seemed to be a lurking air of mystery about him, an influence that was inclined to be sinister. He spoke perfect English, and he was obviously a man of unimpeachable education.

"Yes—I suppose that's what we'd better do," said De Valerie slowly. "Shall we meet at the train, sir——"

"Not at all—not at all!" interrupted Dr. Karnak. "You are not tied? You have the time on your hands, eh? Good! Then come with me to my chambers, and we will spend

the short hours interestingly. By the way, you have not given me the pleasure of knowing your name."

"Oh, sorry, sir; I forgot," said the junior. "De Valerie—Cecil De Valerie. I belong to the Remove—the Ancient House."

"Better and better!" smiled Dr. Karnak genially. "One of the boys of the Junior School—one of the boys I shall have the pleasure of lecturing to in the coming days. But let us go. The fog is thicker, and by no means pleasant."

Looking down, Dr. Karnak gave a quick summons. The Serval cat sprang into life on the second, gave one leap, and nestled upon Dr. Karnak's chest. It was this habit which had probably impelled it to leap upon De Valerie.

Dr. Karnak opened his coat, and the cat wormed its way inside. And then, supporting the animal by one hand, the Egyptian walked away, De Valerie by his side. They soon found themselves in Victoria Street. In that fog, people had all they could do to pick their way along the crowded pavements, and they had no time to look at Dr. Karnak or his burden.

A taxi was soon hailed—looming out of the fog suddenly, and like some wheeled ghost. The pair climbed in, Dr. Karnak gave an address, and soon they were crawling along in the slow-moving tide of traffic.

The journey was not long, as distances go, but it occupied nearly half an hour. They alighted before an old-fashioned house, which could just be faintly seen through the pall—a grim, grimy old place that did not tend to improve De Valerie's comfort.

But Dr. Karnak opened a door that was flush with the street, and they mounted some stairs; and presently they found themselves within a small set of chambers—a kind of flat that had its own outer door. De Valerie was more surprised than he cared to admit.

For he saw that his surroundings were suggestive of the mystic East. It was no ordinary room into which he was ushered, but an apartment that smelt strangely of incense. Soft cushions lay around, with low divans and luxurious couches. The walls were hung with tapestries, and on every hand there were mysterious relics of Ancient Egypt.

Cecil De Valerie was a strong, healthy junior, and his brisk, open-air life at St. Frank's had developed him into a good, all-round sportsman. But there were many juniors at the school who remembered De Valerie as he had been when he had first arrived—a thoughtful, dreamy junior, with an air of mysticism about him that could never be fully explained. His eyes, too, were piercing when they liked to be. Perhaps there was some subtle bond between these two that neither of them realised.

It was not a case of clairvoyance—but there was no doubt whatever that Cecil De Valerie was susceptible to anything that touched upon the mysterious. It attracted him in a way that he had never tried to examine. It was only owing to the complete absence of any mystic influence that he had become very much as other juniors.

He soon became lost in the great interest of his unfamiliar surroundings. He found himself curiously fascinated. Everything in these chambers attracted him in an unaccountable fashion.

And Dr Karnak's control over the Serval cat was positively uncanny. He gave the animal all manner of orders—and the cat obeyed instantly, without a second's hesitation. It seemed almost human in its understanding of its master's commands.

Now and again De Valerie found Dr. Karnak's eyes directed towards him—a keen, intent gaze which seemed to awaken some sympathetic chord within the junior's being.

And the effect was curious, too. On these occasions, when Dr. Karnak gazed at him like that, all the junior's knowledge of his surroundings seemed to fade. He had no knowledge of the passage of time—he just sat there, on a divan, listening to the musical purr of his host's voice.

And he felt, deep within him, that Dr. Karnak was possessed of wonderful powers. De Valerie was frightened—but, at the same time, he was gripped in a kind of spell.

CHAPTER II.

SHAKING DOWN AGAIN!

ST. FRANK'S hummed with activity. It was early afternoon, and the majority of the fellows had arrived, and were now in the process of shaking themselves down into the normal life of the great public school. Seniors and juniors were meeting one another, exchanging hearty greetings and telling various stories of their pleasures and adventures during the Christmas holidays.

Those who had come from London were delighted to find that St. Frank's lay basked in the clear, cold sunshine of a perfect winter's afternoon. There was no fog here—not even a mist.

The air was brisk and invigorating, and the remains of a recent snowfall still lay upon the surrounding country—crisp and frozen. Bellton Lane was as hard as a rock under the well beaten snow. And in the school itself cheerful fires were blazing, and everywhere there was an air of good cheer.

"Some chaps growl like the very dickens on the first day of term," said Edward Oswald Handforth, as he strolled out on to the Ancient House steps. "But in my opinion it's a jolly interesting occasion. New chaps to be questioned, and all that

sort of thing. By the way, I haven't seen any new kids yet."

"They've got two or three in the Second and Third," said Church.

Handforth sniffed.

"Think I'm interested in those infants?" he sneered. "I mean the Remove. Somebody said there was a new chap, coming into our Form. As soon as he arrives, I mean to put him through the mill."

Handforth seemed to think that it was his especial duty to take all new juniors and to submit them to a severe cross-examination. Woe betide them if they failed to please him.

"What-ho! Here we are again, and all that stuff, what?"

Archie Glenthorne lounged out, as elegant as ever, and beaming good nature in a kind of circle all round him.

"Greetings, old companions!" he went on. "Dashed pleased to see you again. I trust nothing is seriously amiss?" he added, adjusting his monocle, and gazing at Church with concern. "I mean to say, the good old nasal organ! Somewhat enlarged, I imagine!"

Church turned a delicate pink.

"You leave my nose alone!" he growled.

"My dear old scream, I wouldn't presume to touch it!" declared Archie. "But, dash it! The size, you know!"

"I biffed him!" said Handforth bluntly. "And if you look at McClure's left ear, you'll get another shock! These asses started arguing in the train, so I had to put them in their place!"

McClure glared.

"And if you look at Handy's mouth, you'll see a cut in the corner of it," he said warmly. "We ain't the only ones who carry the scars of battle! He got his share of biffs!"

Archie coughed.

"Suppose we draw the good old curtains?" he asked diplomatically. "I mean to say, this appears to be one of those occasions when enough has been said. What-ho! Kindly excuse me, laddies! I perceive Nipper in the offing, and I must stagger forth and greet the dear old soul!"

I was strolling up with Ulysses Spencer Adams, the American boy. And Archie greeted us with all his usual enthusiasm. And ended up by expressing the hope that we had spent a priceless time.

"You said it!" declared U.S.A. "I've sure got to hand it to you English guys that you know how to run a Christmas party. Say, you sure pull the right dope, I'll tell the world!"

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie vaguely. "I understand, old tulip, that you've had a somewhat ripping time, what?"

"Surest thing you know," replied Adams. "We had an honest-to-goodness party—a real dandy crackerjack. I've gotta say right now that I had one peach of a time! Oh, boy! I'll say!"

"Then we all seem to be happy," I

As he walked, the strange cat walked with him, continually rubbing against his legs, the purring being more noticeable than ever.

smiled. "Pitt and Grey and one or two other chaps missed the train at Victoria, but that can't be helped. That blessed fog was responsible, of course."

"Gee! That fog was sure the cat's whiskers!" put in Ulysses. "My land! It was sure fierce when I started for the Terminal this morning. But these London fogs are the bunk when a guy's in a hurry."

"Oh, rather!" agreed Archie. "But, at the same time, old lad, they're dashed fascinating, if you grasp the trend. By the way, do you happen to have seen my dear old pal, Alf Brent, whizzing about?"

"I saw that guy two minutes ago in the gymnasium," replied Ulysses. "If he's not there now, you'll sure find him some place else. Attaboy! You've gotta show some speed if you want to locate him."

Archie gracefully departed, but he completely failed to show any speed. And I observed that Handforth, on the Ancient House steps, had hunched himself together like a bulldog about to attack. As a matter of fact, he had just caught sight of a perfect stranger—a junior who had wandered out of the cloisters, and who was looking round him with all the symptoms of a raw newcomer.

Handforth dashed at him with an exclamation of triumph. The new boy—for this stranger was indeed the newcomer in the Remove—paused and looked at Handforth in mild surprise. He was quite an ordinary looking chap, with nothing distinctive about him whatsoever.

He was showing all the well recognised characteristics of a new kid. He seemed to be somewhat overawed by his surround-

ings, and had obviously been wandering about like a lost sheep.

The lot of a new boy at a great public school is not a very happy one. He finds himself thrown into a vast crowd of utter strangers, the majority of them unsympathetic and critical to a degree—to say nothing of being painfully frank. And any new fellow without assurance of his own is positively booked for a trying time.

This new fellow was just the kind that Handforth delighted in—at least, to judge by appearances. He was one of those meek sort who answer every question, trembling at the same time with dutiful awe. Handforth wasn't a bully, by any means, but it afforded him keen delight to show newcomers that he was a most important person in the Remove.

Handforth came to a halt in front of the new boy, and glared.

"Your collar's crumpled!" he said accusingly.

"Yes, I know," agreed the other. "It happened in the train, when I was squashed against the door. Somebody pushed me, you know—absolutely pushed me. Now, I don't mind that sort of thing as a rule, but when it involves my collar being crumpled I think it's going a little too far People ought to be more careful in trains Trains are provided for the purpose of travelling in. I mean, when it comes to travelling, I've done a good bit of it It's a fine education in itself. Of course, education is an important thing ——"

"My only hat!" interrupted Handforth blankly.

The new boy was speaking calmly and argumentatively, and would apparently have gone on for hours unless the interruption had come. A few other fellows had collected round, and were interested onlookers.

"What's your name, you—you talking machine?" demanded Handforth.

"My name?" said the new boy. "Oh, Jarrow—Hubert Jarrow——"

"Huh! Might have expected it," sniffed Handforth. "Jarrow! Sounds like a giddy town! Reminds me of ship-yards and factories!"

"Well, of course, there is a famous town named Jarrow," said the new boy, nodding. "Jarrow is situated on the Tyne, in the North of England, and you are quite right when you refer to ship-yards. Now, these yards—these absurd measurements of ours. I don't object to feet, but why should three feet make a yard? The word 'yard' implies a walled-in space. They ought to invent a different word for signifying three feet."

Handforth stared, his wrath rising.

"Who's talking about feet?" he roared.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I was," said Jarrow. "For example, we will take your feet. At a casual glance, I should imagine that you take a No. 9. boot. Boots are very important things. And when you come to think of it, Boots are a very handy firm. They've got their places all over the country where you can buy things, and get medicine and even cameras. I didn't bring my camera. A chap can't take many photographs in this weather. Pretty good down here, but that fog in London was awful. I mean, practically as bad as soup, but not quite so liquid. I hope they provide soup at St. Frank's. I'm very fond of it—particularly tomato soup. Now, we'll take the tomato. As a vegetable it's a highly nutritious artitcle. But it may be a fruit—I'm not quite sure. I mean, fruit is an important item ——"

"Shut up!" howled Handforth desperately. "Great pip! He's—he's like a giddy waterfall—he never stops!"

The new boy had, in fact, rattled on in a manner that surprised all his listeners. And the manner in which he branched from one subject to the other was decidedly amusing. I was standing near by, and I chuckled.

"I shouldn't be surprised if Jarrow turns out to be a budding contributor to the Mag." I remarked. "We want some new stuff this term—and if he starts writing an article on steam-engines, he'll probably end up by discussing safety-pins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A magazine, eh?" said Jarrow with interest. "Yes, I've heard about it—in fact, I've seen a copy. A school magazine is a very good idea. I've got some ideas—I'll write articles. Writing is a good exercise for the brain. And brains, when you come to think of it, are important organs. Personally, I prefer a piano, but an organ isn't so bad in church. Somebody told me there's a chap named Church here? I'd like to meet him—he's a friend of Handforth's. I've been told that Handforth is a first-class ass——"

"Oh, have you?" snorted Handforth. "I'm Handforth!"

"Pleased to meet you," said Jarrow calmly.

"Who told you I was a first-class ass?" demanded Edward Oswald hotly.

"Oh, somebody—I'm new here—don't know any names yet," replied Jarrow. "I think we'll change the subject. Of course, we're all subjects when it comes to that—subjects of the King. In my opinion, the King does a lot of jolly hard work, and as for the Prince of Wales, he's a sportsman. Now, take Wales, for example. Plenty of scenery there, and mountains and things. But for real mountains you want to go to Switzerland——"

"Aw, gee, that's the bunk!" put in Ulysses "Say, listen! If you guys wanna see some real mountains, you'd best give the Rockies the once over. There's some honest-to-goodness scenery there, I'll tell the Universe! You can just about get by with these dumps you call mountains over here, and that's all."

Handforth nearly burst a blood vessel.

"Who's talking about mountains?" he hooted. "Great Scott! I came along here to question this new chap, and all you can do is talk about mountains and pianos and shipyards! Look here, Jarrow, my lad, you've got to understand that a new kid isn't supposed to say much! If he does say much, he's sat on! And for two pins I'll biff you!"

"Pins, naturally, are useful articles," said Jarrow thoughtfully. "They're very handy if something happens to go. But needles, of course, are more useful, taking everything into consideration. I remember seeing the Needles one foggy afternoon as we were rounding the Isle of Wight in a launch."

"He's talking about the Isle of Wight now!" said Handforth feebly. "My hat! Geography! Talk about an old fish wife! This—this freak could talk the hind leg off a donkey!"

"Donkeys are very docile creatures," said Jarrow. "Not so strong as a mule, of course, but very handy—especially for costermongers. They use them to pull their barrows about. I don't mean the ordinary gardener's barrow. A gardener has to push it himself—quite a job, I should imagine. Gardening is all very well, but you always get your fingers covered with soil. The world couldn't very well get on without soil. I mean, it's queer stuff What, exactly, is soil? Earth, probably. Unless you have your wireless set properly earthed, you'll get very bad results. A crystal set is not so bad—and crystals are jolly useful things when you want your fortune told. I had an uncle in Africa who made a big fortune out of ostriches. Egg collecting is very interesting, but these ostrich eggs are inclined to be rather too big—they take up so much room in a specimen case——"

"Gag him!" panted Handforth desperately. "Oh, my goodness! When he's talking, you can't get a word in edgeways! He rambles on from one subject to the other like a giddy politician! I never heard such a rambler!"

"The crimson ones are pretty good," said Jarrow. "But ramblers are always inclined to spread too much, and they'll simply smother a fence. Of course, you have fencing here, don't you? It's a fine art, when you come to know it properly. I've got an aunt who's a pretty good artist—she paints landscapes. And the scenery round here is first-class. Of course, I came down third—no need to waste money on the railways. I think they ought to improve these railways, you know. The carriage I came in wasn't heated at all. Heat can be supplied in all sorts of ways—and I'm glad to find that you've got fireplaces in the studies——"

"Aw, gee, don't pull that bull!" said Ulysses "Listen! Way over in New York, they have steam heat—and that's sure the dope to keep a guy warm. For the love of Mike! I guess it's time this old dump of an island woke up. I sure feel punk when I see a coal fire."

"I don't agree with you," said the new boy. "Coal is the best stuff to use for a fire—although I'll admit it makes soot. But that's only a trifle. I had some trifle at Christmastime and it made me feel bilious, and that's a rotten complaint——"

"Quick!" gasped Handforth. "He'll start talking about patent medicine next! Stop him! If he says another word, I'll biff him until he can't see straight! Look here, Jarrow," added Handforth, putting his fist in front of the new boy's face. "See that?"

"A fist," said Jarrow. "A big fist. Personally, I always use Palmolive Soap, but it appears that you prefer nothing. And, without wishing to be offensive, I believe you've been using some paraffin oil, or something. Paraffin is splendid stuff for lighting purposes, but the odour is hardly fragrant."

Biff!

Handforth, his patience completely exhausted, performed an action which he greatly disliked—that of biffing a new fellow. He hardly ever punched a new kid on his first day—it wasn't quite the thing. But on this occasion he couldn't help himself—his fist simply whizzed forward without any command. And Hubert Jarrow sat down in the Triangle with extreme suddenness.

"You asked for it—and you've got it!" said Handforth thickly. "Do you think I'm going to be messed about like this? I'm fed up to the neck! Get up, you ass, and let me knock you down again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Steady, Handy," I grinned. "What's become of your chivalry? Punching a new chap is not allowed in the best circles."

"I can't help it!" howled Handforth. "This fathead exasperates me! He can't do anything else but talk! Sorry, Jarrow," he added, holding out his hand to the new boy. "Get up, and don't jaw so much!"

Jarrow got to his feet, and rubbed his nose.

"I didn't know I'd offended anybody," he said, in mild surprise. "My pater particularly told me to be careful about that sort of thing. He advised me to be cautious in my friendships. Now, take these big ships—these liners. It's perfectly disgraceful the amount of money they charge for fares. These prices are more than ordinary people can afford. I'll admit a Ford isn't bad, and it's a fairly decent car, taking it altogether. But how far will it go altogether? You're always liable to have pieces dropping off. And even the

best car can't do a really creditable performance if the crank case has dropped off, or if the petrol tank has become detached. Without question, a detached house is better than one in a row. People have got more privacy, and needn't be so careful about making hammering noises. My pater gets hammering noises in his head sometimes—the effect of neuralgia, I think. That's a painful business, too. If it comes to that, many businesses are painful. Take the case of a dentist, who does nothing else but make people writhe all day. He gets his forceps, and yanks out a tooth in no time. And before you know where you are you've got false teeth and a gold plate. And, naturally, very rich people use gold plate—we only have silver plate at home, and——"

The new boy paused, and looked rather surprised. One by one his audience had melted away, many of them staggering slightly. His eloquence had completely robbed them of strength, and even Handforth was bereft of speech. Hubert Jarrow, without doubt, was the most loquacious fellow who had ever come into the Remove. It was a positive menace to start any conversation with him. You never knew where you'd get landed.

"Talk about a dictionary!" grinned Pitt, as he entered the Ancient House with me. "Why, that chap could beat Webster at his own game! But why this thusness? Why the air of subdued excitement? Make way, fair youths, and let uncle Reggie have a peep!"

Several juniors were collected round the notice-board, and Pitt and I pushed our way through, and saw that a sheet of notepaper was pinned up—the first notice of the term—for otherwise the big baize-covered board was bare.

"It's about the new librarian," said Jack Grey. "His name's Dr. Karnak, it seems. He's an M.A., an LL.D., and all sorts of other things. And he's not only the librarian, but curator of the new museum, too. And I think he'll lecture on science as a side-line."

I nodded.

"I expect that's his proper job—science lecturer," I said. "After all, the museum or the library won't take up much of his time. By the way, has anybody seen the museum yet? It's open to the school for the first time this term."

"No; I thought about going along now," said Jack Grey.

"Shall us?" asked Pitt, looking at me.

"Let's!" I said promptly.

CHAPTER III.

THE MUMMY OF THE MOON GOD!

"DRY as dust, I'll bet—these museums always are," remarked Jack Grey, as we walked along the passage. "Some of the seniors are boasting because we've got a museum at St. Frank's now, but I can't see much to crow about."

We had collected one or two other fellows—Tregellis-West and Tommy Watson, and Handforth & Co. And they all seemed to be passing criticism on the museum before they had even inspected it.

This was mainly because the average St. Frank's junior regarded all museums with a kind of contempt—in their opinion it was a place where fusty old relics are kept—uninteresting specimens of armour, and beetles, and a hundred and one varied objects. But all were dull and drab.

After this first look, in all probability, the fellows would never care about going in the museum again—except for a few cranks like Timothy Tucker, or Fillmore. The average fellow would prefer the open air, or, on a rainy evening, a story-book.

But added interest was given to the museum just now because it was a novelty; hitherto it had been just a private collection, and a hobby of the Head's. But now it was taking on a greater importance, and even had a curator of its own. And the exhibits presented to the museum by Lord Dorrimore were particularly attractive.

For Dorrie, of course, was immensely popular at St. Frank's, and it was pretty well certain that his gifts to the museum would be of great interest. All the fellows knew that Lord Dorrimore was in Egypt.

His lordship had been there for some time, exploring the ancient tombs of the old Egyptian kings. He had made discoveries, indeed, which were just as important as those concerning Tut-ankh-amen. Indeed, there were many learned Egytologists who declared that Dorrie's discoveries absolutely eclipsed those of other explorers.

And Dorrie, who had a particularly soft spot in his heart for St. Frank's—chiefly because his best friend, Nelson Lee, was so closely connected with the school—had presented some of his most remarkable finds to the school museum. It was for this reason, indeed, that Dr. Stafford had thrown it open to the public. The exhibits were too important for a mere private museum.

We had learned that newspaper reporters had been down on the previous day, and important articles were being prepared by many leading scientific magazines. For the relics from Egypt were of extraordinary value and interest. They were of interest, that is, to people who were keen on the subject. To the average schoolboy these exhibits were dull and uninviting.

We arrived in the school library—this latter being just at a junction between the Head's House and the Ancient House. The museum itself lay through the library, and was reached by means of a communicating door. There was no other entrance of any kind.

Actually, the museum was a large, oddly shaped apartment which jutted out into the cloisters on one side, with another window looking out upon the Triangle. The room was nearly T shaped, thus being admirably suited to the purpose of a museum, for there were many corners where show-cases could be placed. And this part of the school, being of great antiquity, the atmosphere of the museum was quite fitting.

When we entered the library we found a number of seniors just coming out. They were studious fellows, and were discussing the Egyptian relics with the air of learned professors.

"It's a pity the museum has been thrown open to these kids," remarked one of the Sixth Formers, frowning at us. "Look here, my sons, if you make any noise in there, you'll get kicked out! It's a pity Dr. Karnak isn't here, to keep you youngsters in order."

"Keep your hair on," said Handforth. "We're only going to take one squint. The giddy museum doesn't interest us!"

But the senior need not have concerned himself. For Mr. Suncliffe, the Third Form master, was in charge of the museum, and he would instantly have dropped down heavily upon any fellows who created a disturbance

Dr. Stafford had requested Mr. Suncliffe to be in attendance, owing to the non-arrival of Dr. Karnak, who had been expected by the earlier train. It was now getting on towards teatime, and the learned curator had not arrived.

In spite of the expressed contempt for the museum, the juniors found themselves very interested. There were hundreds of quaint things to look at, and the relics from Egypt were particularly entertaining.

Perhaps the exhibit which came in for most attention was a splendidly preserved mummy, complete in its sarcophagus—this latter being an elaborately carved stone coffin, and in a wonderful state of preservation. The mummy itself, that of an ancient Egyptian prince or king, was one of the finest I'd ever seen.

It was placed in a rather dim corner of the museum, and the effect was somewhat impressive. With a whole crowd of fellows in there, there was nothing particularly eerie about it, but to be alone in the museum would be somewhat trying to the nerves, with that mummy standing upright in the corner, still and lifeless, although having the appearance of a living man. It was wonderful to think that this relic of humanity was thousands and thousands

of years old. And yet it still bore the original shape of the living.

"Ugh! I don't like the look of it!" muttered Church. "Let's come away."

"Rats!" scoffed Handforth. "Scared?"

"Of course I'm not scared," growled Church. "But it looks—it looks rummy! Especially in this half-light. You almost expect to see those giddy eyes open, and to see the beggar come to life. It's a bit horrible, in my opinion, having a dead body in here!"

Pitt grinned.

"People don't look upon a mummy as a dead body," he said. "It's been a corpse for so many thousands of years that it's ceased to have anything repulsive about it. At the same time, I'll admit it's not the kind of thing to look at at midnight, when you're alone. Let's go and have a look at the scarabs and ornaments and other things Dorrie sent over."

While we were still looking round, I subconsciously became aware of the fact that somebody had entered the museum. And although my back was towards him, I knew that he was somebody different. I had rather a curious sensation that the air became chill.

I turned quickly, and looked at Dr. Karnak.

He had just entered, and stood there, regarding us with his piercing, strange eyes. In that very first second I took an instinctive dislike to him. I don't know why. Without any adequate reason, I seemed to feel that he was the embodiment of evil.

But he was very pleasant.

He moved silently, almost cat-like, and some of the fellows afterwards declared that his purring voice and his stealthy movements had been acquired through continual companionship with his strange pet, the Serval cat. At the moment nobody had seen the latter.

Dr. Karnak affected a curious style of dress, wearing black, sombre garments, with a great flowing necktie, and a turban. His brown, clean-shaven face, with high cheek-bones, impressed us, and one glance at his high forehead told of the brain power within.

"I am pleased to meet you, my young friends," he said, in his soft, melodious voice. "I regret that I did not come earlier. But you must blame the fog for that, and not me. I observe you are greatly interested in the relics from the Egyptian tombs?"

Rather, sir," said Jack Grey. "I've seen a few mummies, but this one is wonderfully preserved, and the sarcophagus is fine."

"I am glad that you are familiar with the subject," said Dr. Karnak softly. "And I am pleased, also, that you take such an interest in Egyptology. Let me assure you, my young friends, that this subject is one of deep and enduring fascination. It is my hope that you will all become keen students of this wonderful science."

"It doesn't interest us much, sir," said Handforth bluntly. "After all, they're only stuffy old relics. I prefer football. As for the mummy, I don't see why all this fuss should be made, just because it's from Egypt."

Dr. Karnak shook his head.

"It grieves me to hear you speak in that way," he said. "You are apparently entirely unversed in the mysteries of Egypt. You know nothing of the magical enchantment of that wonderful land. Even I, with all my knowledge, have but glanced into the deeper and more subtle depths of ancient Egyptian magic and sorcery."

"Sorcery?" I repeated curiously. "But that's all mythical, sir. There's no such thing as sorcery nowadays."

"What's sorcery?" demanded Handforth.

Dr. Karnak held up his hands.

"Dear, dear! This is tragic!" he exclaimed, in distress. "Sorcery, my dear boy, is the science of witchcraft—magic—enchantment—divination by the aid of evil spirits. You smile. You think that evil spirits have no place in this modern world? Let me assure you that the average person is living in a state of pitiful ignorance. For sorcery is still an art—although it has ceased to be practised by all but a very few."

"You don't mean to seriously tell us, sir, that you believe in witchcraft, and all that sort of tommy-rot?" I asked indignantly. "If you go on at that rate you'll be scaring some of the fags."

Dr. Karnak slowly shook his head.

"It is my last wish to scare anybody," he replied. "Regarded in the true light, there is nothing whatever in the subject to arouse fear. And let me tell you that these relics from Egypt are not to be lightly regarded. It was against my wish that the mummy of Baal was brought to this school. For I can tell you at once that this mummy is utterly and absolutely evil."

The juniors looked at the mummy with new interest.

"How do you mean—evil?" asked Reggie Pitt.

"The subject is too long for me to enter into any adequate discourse at the moment," replied Dr. Karnak with deep gravity. "But I will tell you that this mummy is the corpse of a great and wondrous Egyptian sorcerer who lived many thousands of years ago."

"A kind of magician?" asked Tommy Watson.

"Precisely," agreed Dr. Karnak. "And this great magician was, actually, the reincarnation of the moon god—Baal of Harran—and he was possessed of such powers as you do not dream of. His remains are not for the modern eye to gaze upon. I regret the presence of this mummy in the museum. But it is here," he added,

shrugging his shoulders, "and I can do nothing but give my simple warning. But I fear disaster."

"Disaster?" asked Handforth incredulously. "That—that mouldy old thing is going to cause disaster?"

"You do not treat the subject with the solemnity it deserves," said Dr. Karnak severely. "Such levity is distressing in the extreme. With all impressiveness, I advise you to look but once upon the face of Baal. For that face is evil. More I will not say."

And he dropped the subject at once, going off into a learned discourse on other matters, and holding his audience quite enthralled. When the juniors finally left the museum, they did so strangely impressed.

There was something about Dr. Karnak's personality that gripped them. They instinctively feared him, and yet, at the same time, they loved to hear his soft, purring voice, and to drink in the eloquent sentences that poured so readily from his smooth lips.

But the very fact that he had failed to explain his warning regarding the mummy of Baal, only impressed the juniors more. Without exactly knowing it, they now regarded that mummy with a secret awe.

In the space of one short hour Dr. Karnak had made his presence felt in the school. And there was a queer undercurrent of feeling regarding him. If the fellows had paused to examine their own sensations, they would have known that this feeling was one of—vague fear.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MYSTERY OF DE VALERIE!

STUDY M, in the Remove passage, was looking bright and cheerful when De Valerie opened the door, and walked in. The youthful Duke of Somerton was arranging some books in the little book-case, and he nodded cheerfully.

"About time you came, old man," he said. "I thought we arranged to meet on the platform at Victoria?"

They shook hands warmly, and De Valerie grinned.

"Fog," he said briefly. "I started out all right, but the taxi got held up, and I missed the train by five or ten minutes. Everything O.K.?"

"Yes, as far as I know," said Somerton.

"I see you've got a smudge on your collar and a tear in your bags," remarked De Valerie. "First day of term, too! My hat! What a careless beggar you are, Sommy!"

The schoolboy duke grinned.

"There are more important things to think about than smudges and rents," he said lightly. "Tea's over, but we can soon have another ready. By the way, have you seen Dr. Karnak yet?"

"You need have feared nothing," repeated the stranger. "But it seems that this is one of those curious coincidences that are always occurring in everyday life. You, I believe, are a boy belonging to St. Frank's College?"

De Valerie looked round sharply.

"He's the new curator for the museum, isn't he?" he asked, without replying to the other junior's question.

"Yes—science lecturer, too," replied Somerton. "Some of the chaps are saying that he's an impressive bird. Adams describes him as a snappy guy, and says that he's got a fine line of bull. Which means, I suppose, that Dr. Karnak is a bit of a bluffer."

"I suppose the chaps think he's clever, eh?"

"He's clever, right enough," agreed Somerton. "A bit too clever, I'm afraid. And it seems a queer thing to me why they should appoint a giddy Egyptian. Why couldn't they have had an English lecturer? These dark chaps are so jolly mysterious."

De Valerie changed the subject. For some reason he appeared reluctant to talk about Dr. Karnak. And it was extremely curious that he made no mention whatever of his meeting with the science lecturer in London. He did not tell Somerton a single word of that encounter, and the subsequent visit to the Egyptian's quaint chambers.

To De Valerie himself that adventure seemed unreal. In some unaccountable way it seemed to him that it had happened in the dim past. He retained no vivid memory of it in his mind, although it had happened but a few hours since. And during the evening he was silent and thoughtful.

When engaged in ordinary conversation there was very little change in Cecil De Valerie. But when I met him a little later on, I couldn't help observing a different look

in his eyes—a far away, dreamy expression, which had hitherto been absent.

He was keen about the football, and laughed and joked in the same ordinary way. But the very moment he was by himself he appeared to drift off into deep and silent reveries.

Bedtime came, and there was the same usual rowdiness that always marked the first night of term. On these occasions prefects and masters were somewhat deaf, and we were not disturbed.

Although the juniors expressed a kind of contempt for Dr. Karnak, he crept into the conversation almost continuously. One or two of the more nervous fellows flatly declared that it was a rotten shame to stick that mummy downstairs.

Handforth, as usual, applied his attentions to the new junior. He felt that it was his duty to put the new fellow in his place, and suggested an initiation ceremony.

"This chap talks too much," declared Handforth. "My idea is to gag him, and then make him sit in a bowl of cold water for half an hour. After that, he'll have to run the gauntlet, and then sleep on the floor! In the morning, perhaps, he won't be so jolly cheeky!"

"A bit too drastic, I'm afraid," said Reggie Pitt. "After all, the new chap hasn't done any harm. And, personally, I find him rather entertaining. He's a distinct acquisition to the Remove."

"What!" said Handforth, glaring.

"Just think of the copy he can provide for the Mag.!" went on Pitt. "Think of the trouble he'll save! Here we have struggling authors, grinding out articles and short stories by the sweat of their brow, and this chap can write pages of stuff on a hundred different subjects, and reel it out like sausages out of a giddy machine! Why, he's a treasure for any harrowed editor. In future, when Nipper's short of copy, he'll just dash to Jarrow and tell him to start talking. Another chap will take down the conversation in shorthand, and there's the article! So simple, you see!"

Handforth snorted again.

"If you think we're going to spoil the Mag. by putting that rot in, you've made a mistake," he said sourly. "The Magazine only prints first-class stuff."

"Rats!" said Pitt. "What about Trackett Grim?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you—you——" spluttered Handforth.

"Of course; we all know that Nipper only shoves those Trackett Grim yarns in just to fill up space," went on Pitt. "From now onwards he'll be able to use some really creditable stuff. It's a shame to publish the giddy paper with Trackett Grim inside. It's lowering the tone!"

Handforth nearly went into a fit. Then, feeling that he couldn't answer Pitt adequately, he strode up to Jarrow and glared at him.

"Look here, my son," he said thickly. "If you write any articles for the Mag., I'll tear them to shreds, and then use the pieces as a pen-wiper! You're a new kid—understand? And new kids ain't supposed to shove themselves forward."

"I wouldn't dream of doing so," said Jarrow. "But if I am requested to write articles, I will do my best. Articles are just as necessary as short stories. Editors have to be very careful in choosing manuscripts. It is so easy to offend the public—and that, of course, reduces the circulation. And the circulation is an important point. Chilblains are caused by insufficient circulation, and that involves the use of ointment."

"Who's talking about chilblains?" gasped Handforth.

"The fect should never be neglected," went on Jarrow. "Chilblains on the heel cause a fellow to limp, and he can't play football properly. There's no question that soccer beats rugger from a spectacular point of view. I mean, there's something exhilarating in watching a soccer match Matches differ greatly, but the safety kind are better than the ordinary vestas. And the automatic lighter has much to be said in favour of it, although they need a good deal of attention. Just look at the way these lighters glide down the river, hauled along by a tug, and think of the hard life these river-men have to lead. There they are, crawling over these barges, and they don't really realise their unfortunate plight——"

"Help!" moaned Handforth. "This chap ought to be in an asylum!"

"Everybody will admit that new legislation is required with regard to our lunatic asylums," went on Jarrow indignantly. "Imagine these poor patients, hemmed into padded cells, with keepers on the watch! I've only got a silver watch this term, but I think I shall have a gold one on my birthday. My pater promised me——"

Nobody heard what Jarrow's pater had promised him. For he was howled down. Left to himself, he would go on talking, with scarcely a pause for breath. He was never at a loss for a subject, and it apparently didn't matter a jot to him what he talked about as long as he talked.

And if Handforth had any fell designs upon the new boy, these were nipped in the bud by the arrival of Morrow of the Sixth, who had come to see that the lights were out.

"Same old grind," yawned Hubbard. "Lights-out—sleep—rising-bell—lessons! Day after day the same! It's a rotten shame the holidays are over. There's nothing to look forward to now."

"Rot!" growled Watson. "There's football, and skating, and paper-chases, and all sorts of things. There's no reason why we shouldn't have plenty of fun this term."

"Don't jaw so much," growled Handforth. "How the dickens can I get to sleep, with you chaps jabbering like that?"

But it was some little time before the Re-

move settled itself down to slumber. There were so many things to talk about—so many of the fellows had taken solemn New Year resolves, and they were eager to tell one another about them. In about a week's time, these praiseworthy resolutions would have been forgotten.

At length, however, the voices died down, and all became still. I think I dropped off to sleep as soon as anybody else, and it seemed that only a few minutes had elapsed before I found myself awake again.

Some slight movement had awakened me—something different to the ordinary sounds of the dormitory. Being a light sleeper, I had become aroused at once.

I raised my head and looked up and down the big room. But everything seemed to be quiet and orderly, and only the deep breathing of the sleeping juniors filled the stillness of the night.

It was probably getting on towards twelve, for the moon was now shining into the dormitory, and there was no sound of activity in any other part of the school.

My guess wasn't far wrong, because I was just settling myself down to sleep again when I heard twelve o'clock boom out. And as the last stroke died away, a curious, uncanny moan came to my ears.

I sat bolt upright, startled.

I was under no misapprehension. I knew that the moan had come from one of the juniors, and it seemed probable that this particular fellow was in a nightmare. I looked down the rows of beds, and then noticed that one fellow was shifting uneasily in his sleep.

He sat up suddenly in the full moonlight. I recognised him as Cecil De Valerie.

And a cold shiver went down my spine as I looked at him.

There was an unnatural, uncanny expression on the junior's face. His eyes were wide open and staring. He sat there, perfectly motionless, gazing straight before him.

"De Valerie!" I whispered. "I say, old man! Val!"

De Valerie made no movement—he apparently did not hear my call, although, if awake, he must certainly have done so. I have had one or two experiences of sleepwalkers, and it is a rather eerie business. But I was convinced that De Valerie was not in an ordinary somnambulistic state. That strained expression on his face was rather horrifying.

And then, as I watched, he shuddered violently, and gave a low moan, but louder than the one I had heard before. Then he lay down, pulled the blankets over him, and his breathing became regular.

"Thank goodness!" I murmured. "He gave me the creeps! If there's any more of this I'll get him to see the doctor. Either his nerves are in a queer state, or else he had something squiffy for supper!

And, with that conclusion, I lay down into the pillows and settled myself to sleep once more. But I couldn't help thinking of De Valerie—his image kept appearing before my eyes. He had given me a bigger turn than I had realised. The fact that the hour was just midnight may have added to the impressiveness of the little scene.

And while I was still fully awake I heard a creak of bed-springs, and I sat up at once. De Valerie was getting out of bed, and he immediately took his dressing-gown from the hook and donned it.

"Hold on, Val!" I whispered. "What's wrong with you?"

But Cecil De Valerie took absolutely no notice of my remark. I watched him as he walked swiftly and deliberately to the door, and he had gone almost before I could realise it. There was nothing of the slow, methodical methods of the somnambulist about his action.

Yet I was quite certain that he was unconscious of his movements. He had not heard me call him. And the very fact that he could act in this way startled me beyond measure.

I realised that I ought to have leapt out of bed and forced him back. And now I did my utmost to repair the error. I jumped out, sped swiftly to the door, and opened it.

And I glanced quickly up and down the corridor.

Everything was quiet, and De Valerie had vanished. I ran to the head of the stairs and looked over. He was not there. And I stood quite still, nonplussed. It was impossible to follow, because I didn't know which way the junior had gone.

But the whole affair was altogether weird.

I stood for some moments, undecided whether I should go and arouse the guv'nor. Perhaps it was only right that Nelson Lee should know what had happened. And yet, on the other hand, I didn't want to arouse the guv'nor unless the matter was really serious. In all probability De Valerie would return within a few minutes. Perhaps it was just one of those little freakish things that are liable to happen to anybody, and would never occur again. And I knew he would be sensitive on the subject when he was told.

So, after a few moments of this indecision, I concluded that it would be better to do nothing. I was near the corridor window, and I glanced out at the Triangle—the greater part of it bathed in cold moonlight.

The act of looking out of the window was quite subconscious, for my thoughts were on De Valerie. But almost instantly something claimed my attention, and I stared down.

And my heart gave a little throb of—well, it wasn't fear, but something closely akin to it. I was startled. For down in the shadowy part of the Triangle something had moved.

An extraordinary Shape leapt down from one of the windows—that angle of the building being in direct view from where I stood.

And with a sudden start I realised that the window was that of the museum.

Instinctively my mind ran to Dr. Karnak, and I remembered having heard somebody remark that the Egyptian had a curious pet, a kind of tamed wild-cat. But even as this thought came to me, I knew that the strange, sinister shape was not that of the cat.

For to my mind it seemed enormous—much larger indeed than any normal human being. The fleeting impression I obtained was of a thing with enormously long legs, with a misshapen body, and no distinguishable head. It was gone almost before I could realise it, and it was in the deep gloom.

But the most astonishing thing of all was that this Shape bounded over to the wall in a series of leaps, and with one spring it cleared the high stone wall—to vanish in a flash.

I caught my breath and rubbed my eyes.

"I'm still asleep!" I muttered half-angrily. "Either that, or my eyes are playing tricks with me. Did I see something, or not?"

The incident was over so rapidly that even in this short time I was beginning to wonder if I hadn't allowed my imagination to run riot. I don't think I should have been willing to swear that I had seen anything at all. Yet, within me, I knew well enough that that uncanny object had been there.

I shivered, feeling cold, and went quickly back into the dormitory. Somehow, De Valerie didn't seem to matter much now. I had an instinctive desire for human companionship—even though these companions were all sleeping. The affair had begun to get on my nerves.

I felt intensely relieved as I heard the steady breathing of the juniors, with Handforth's gentle snore rising and falling above all the other sounds. It was unusually comforting just now.

I was just about to get into bed when a click sounded behind me. I gave a tremendous start—indeed, almost a jump, and my breath came in a gasp. It wasn't until that moment that I realised how my nerves had been affected.

I spun round, expecting I knew not what, and was both relieved and startled to see Cecil De Valerie. He closed the door behind him, walked swiftly to his bed, and removed his dressing-gown. The strained expression had now left his face, but his eyes were still open and staring.

He got straight into bed, lay down, and this time it seemed that his sleep would not be further troubled. I gave a sigh of relief, and a creak came to my ears from the corridor.

I hesitated, my heart thumping rapidly.

What could have caused that sound out in the passage, now that De Valerie was back? All my instincts told me to creep out and investigate. And yet, in spite of myself, I felt afraid. It was a curious sensation for me, for I always prided myself that nothing could scare me.

I made a big effort, pulled myself together, and slipped rapidly to the door. As I grasped the handle, my old assurance returned, suddenly and unexpectedly. I had succeeded in throwing off that cloak of fear which had threatened to paralyse my movemovements.

Opening the door, I peeped out. I could see nothing, but I distinctly heard one of the stairs creak. And in one brief second of reasoning, I told myself that it was safe to emerge.

For that first creak had obviously been caused by somebody in the corridor, and the second by that same person on the stair—proving that somebody was descending.

I slipped noiselessly forward, and gazed over the balustrade, half expecting to see Mr. Pagett, or one of the other masters, going down in his dressing gown for some book, or perhaps a suit-case that had been overlooked.

But what I actually did see left a most uncanny impression on my mind. It was nothing supernatural, or ghostly; but it was certainly extraordinary in the extreme.

Dr. Karnak was just descending the second flight of stairs, and I caught a brief glimpse of him before he returned. He was dressed in a flowing Eastern robe, and upon his shoulders sat perched the yellow, black spotted body of his strange pet, the Serval cat.

CHAPTER V.

THE SORCERY CLUB.

DR. STAFFORD looked rather grave.

"Why, Mr. Lee, have you anything against the man?" he asked quietly.

"No, I cannot say that I have," replied Nelson Lee. "It is largely a matter of instinct. I have nothing whatever against him personally, and I know even less about his record——"

"With regard to that, you need have no apprehension or doubt," interrupted the Head. "Dr. Karnak is a brilliant scholar, and one of the greatest authorities on Egyptology to-day. For years he was at Cambridge, and proved to be one of the most eloquent lecturers the University ever boasted of. He has travelled extensively in Egypt, has done a great deal of exploring on his own account, and knows his subject from A to Z."

"From the point of view of scholastic attainments, Dr. Karnak appears to be well-nigh perfect," smiled Nelson Lee. "But I have never questioned his cleverness or his brilliance. I am simply stating as a fact that I dislike the man, and I have seldom found my instinct at fault.

"I am well aware of that, Mr. Lee. It gives me some slight uneasiness," confessed the Head. "But, bless my soul, what can there be about this learned scholar to engender such a feeling in you? I must confess that I have found Dr. Karnak both pleasant and altogether charming."

Nelson Lee shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps it was unwise of me to mention the subject at all, and I trust you will treat it confidentially, doctor," he said. "I was merely wondering if his appointment was due to your influence."

"In a way, I suppose it was," said Dr. Stafford. "I certainly advised the Governors to carefully consider Dr. Karnak's application. Unless I am greatly mistaken, he will turn out to be a wonderful lecturer, not merely on the subject of Egyptology, but on science generally, and the Senior School is in need of such a man. Dr. Karnak will only lecture occasionally to the juniors, for his subjects, I am convinced, will be too deep for their youthful minds. I thought it was very commendable of him to offer his services as curator and librarian. Altogether, Mr. Lee, I have great faith in Dr. Karnak."

Nelson Lee smiled.

"I think you are somewhat interested in archæology yourself, Dr. Stafford," he said, with a chuckle. "I know that Dr. Karnak is deeply versed in all data appertaining to ancient Egypt——"

"My dear Lee, he is a veritable mine of information," declared the Head. "Not only on Egypt, but on every known branch of archæology. I think you know that I am preparing a work of my own on this subject. And Dr. Karnak will be of great assistance to me in my researches."

There, as Nelson Lee knew, the Head had placed his finger upon the spot. He had a personal interest in Dr. Karnak, for he wanted the Egyptian to aid him in his new book. Dr. Stafford was a distinguished author of many weighty volumes, and this latest enterprise of his was, he declared, to be his greatest work. His enthusiasm for it was unbounding. And a man in his position was liable to overlook any defects in a colleague's character—providing those defects were not connected with the work itself.

Nelson Lee could not help feeling uneasy. Certainly, the new science lecturer had been quite pleasant to him upon thei introduction, but, as Nelson Lee had said, his instinct was not often at fault. And something told him that Dr. Karnak was not the kind of man to be in even partial control of the boys. His personality was too gripping—too powerful and mysterious. He was not likely to exert a healthy influence. Mr. Clifford, the cheerful young sports master, was capable of instilling a manly spirit into the boys. Dr. Karnak, Lee felt, would have the opposite effect.

But it was obviously impossible for him to register any protest without cause—and, after all, the man had been appointed by the Governing Board. So nothing more was to be said; but the famous schoolmaster detective was determined to keep a very sharp eye upon the Egyptian doctor and his peculiar practices.

It was morning now, and all the Forms were shaking down into their regular habits. The first lessons of term would soon be commencing, for breakfast was over, and the bell would presently ring. Not that the Remove looked forward with any apprehension to lessons.

The first morning was always a free and easy affair, with the very minimum of work.

I had taken particular notice of De Valerie, and it did not escape my attention that he was looking heavy and listless; but in all other ways he was quite himself.

"Football on Saturday, you know," I remarked to him as we happened to meet in the lobby. "Feeling fit, old man?"

"Yes, thanks," said De Valerie. "Am I playing?"

"Are you playing?" I repeated. "My dear ass, you're playing inside-right. You showed such good form before the holidays that you're the best man I've got for that position. Practise after lessons to-day, remember."

"Right you are—I'll turn up."

"By the way, did you sleep well?" I asked casually.

De Valerie looked at me sharply.

"As a matter of fact, I didn't," he confessed. "I had a bit of a nightmare, I believe. Can't remember what it was; but I've got that impression. Why?"

"Oh, I don't know—I thought you were looking a bit seedy," I replied. "I expect you'll be all right to-morrow."

I wasn't quite sure whether De Valerie remembered that "nightmare" of his, or not. I felt that he was keeping something back, and as I continued to observe him during the day, I came to the certain conclusion that he was strongly under the influence of Dr. Karnak.

After seeing the latter, with that Serval cat on his shoulder, I had gone back to bed, with serious misgivings. I knew now, for certain, that Cecil De Valerie had been drawn out of his bed by the Egyptian—who, in all probability, had sent him back; but did De Valerie really think it a nightmare? I didn't want to question him.

But I did notice that he paid two or three visits to the museum, and seemed absolutely fascinated by the various relics. It was an unhealthy state of mind to get

into, and I was determined to shake him out of it if he didn't do this himself.

But De Valerie was not the only junior whom the learned Dr. Karnak was affecting. His influence was being felt all over the school. All those who came in close contact with him were struck by his impressive, gripping personality; but it was mainly those fellows who were of a studious nature that fell under the Egyptian's thrall.

Thus, it was not long before these fellows were drawn together as though by a common bond. De Valerie was making friends with Timothy Tucker—although he had never cared for Tucker's society hitherto; but T.T. was just the kind of junior to become enslaved by Dr. Karnak's mystical talk. There were others—Skelton, Ellmore, Clifton and a few others. They were all fellows who cared practically nothing for sport or the ordinary healthy pastimes of the Remove. De Valerie, indeed, was the only junior who really mattered. It concerned me greatly that he should get in with that crowd.

And in the common room that evening De Valerie, provided further surprise.

"This Dr. Karnak chap is very interesting," he remarked, during a lull in the general talk. "He knows heaps and heaps about Egypt, and the old mythology. He can reel out stories about Isis, and the ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses, and he knows an awful lot about sorcery and witchcraft."

"Bunk!" said Adams. "Say, kiddo, forget it!"

"Hear, hear!" I agreed. "You're right, Ulysses. These asses have got Dr. Karnak on the brain."

"Really, my dear sir. I must protest," said Timothy Tucker, blinking at me. "I must protest! Dr. Karnak is a highly intellectual man—one of the chosen few who are really gifted with psychic powers. Precisely—precisely! Dr. Karnak is——"

"Dr. Karnak is a giddy spoofer!" interrupted Pitt. "He knows jolly well there's no such thing as sorcery. Just imagine witchcraft and evil spirits in these days! I'm surprised at you fatheads for taking any notice of him. Your rapt attention only makes him worse. As long as he's got an audience to spout to, he'll fill you up with that kind of piffle!"

"You fellows don't understand," said De Valerie quietly. "I think you know I'm not an ass like Tucker——"

"Really, my dear sir!" protested T. T. mildly.

"No offence, Tucker—what I meant was, all these fellows know that I'm pretty level headed, and not a crank," went on De Valerie. "I believe in Dr. Karnak because he's a genuine scholar."

"Very likely he is; but that doesn't mean to say he's a sorcerer," growled Tommy Watson. "He can go and eat coke, for all I care!"

"Hear, hear!"

De Valerie shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, of course, if you take that attitude, it's no good talking," he said impatiently. "The fact is, you scoff at the man without giving him a chance. The subject's above your heads— that's the simple truth."

"You mean that he's too clever for us?"

"Yes, I do," said De Valerie hotly, "and just because of that, all you can do is to sneer and jeer at him! What about these celebrated spiritualists—Sir Oliver Lodge, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and the others? A lot of people sneer at them, although they're absolutely sincere in their beliefs. It's just the same with Dr. Karnak. He is possessed of unusual powers, and if you fellows can't see it, you must be blind. I don't mind admitting that I'm deeply impressed by his talk."

"Attaboy!" said Ulysses. "Gee! You'll sure be going around with a few ghosts behind you! Aw! That kind of bunk makes me mad!"

"Well, I'm going to suggest starting a club," said De Valerie defiantly.

"A club?"

"Yes."

"What kind of club?"

"We'll call it the Sorcery Club," replied De Valerie, "and the members will spend a certain time at the meetings, investigating Egyptian magic and witchcraft. The whole subject is absolutely untouched, and I can tell you at once that it's fascinating."

"It's confoundedly unhealthy!" I snapped. "Drop it, you duffer! I didn't think you were such an idiot!"

"Sorry to go against your wishes, Nipper; but I've made up my mind," said De Valerie firmly. "You may be junior skipper, but an affair of this kind is absolutely beyond your jurisdiction. Four or five of the fellows have already decided to join, but I'd like a few more."

"Who are the four or five?" I asked grimly.

"Oh, Skelton, Ellmore, Tucker——"

"I thought as much," I said. "Well, you won't get anybody else——"

"Hold on," interrupted Fullwood, lounging forward. "This thing rather attracts me. I don't mind havin' a shot at it. Anythin' for a thrill these dull days."

"Here, I say, Fully——" began Gulliver.

"Come on with me—don't argue," said Fullwood. "This thing ought to be interestin'. If these other fellows are game, so am I."

De Valerie looked at Fullwood and Co. doubtfully for a moment or two, and then his face cleared. After all, even the cads of Study D were better than nothing, and perhaps more juniors would join afterwards.

"All right," said De Valerie. "Glad you've shown some sense at last, Fullwood. I'll put your names down, and we hold

the first meeting to-morrow evening—in the museum."

"The museum?" I repeated sharply.

"Yes—Dr. Karnak has consented to lecture to us," replied De Valerie. "He thoroughly approves the idea, and says that he will initiate us into the mysteries of many branches of Egyptian magic. It's a fascinating subject, as I said before, and it's jolly good of Dr. Karnak to bother with us."

"Well, that's done it!" said Handforth, with a sniff. "If Fullwood and Co. are going to join, it's a cert that no decent fellows will! You ought to be boiled, De Valerie, for starting this rot!"

"All right—wait," said De Valerie. "I didn't expect anything else but ridicule. That's what pioneers always get; but before long you'll begin to see that I'm right."

"I haven't seen this museum yet," remarked Fullwood. "The giddy place never interested me. I hear it's as dull as ditch-water! If Dr. Karnak isn't interestin', I'll soon clear out of the club."

"Who told you the museum was dull?" asked De Valerie. "Why, it's worth going in to see the mummy, alone. You chaps may scoff, but that mummy is possessed of strange powers. It's possessed with the spirit of Baal, and though it looks dead, it exerts a strange and powerful influence."

We looked at De Valerie, aghast.

"Great Scott!" said Pitt. "You don't believe that bosh, do you?"

"It isn't bosh——"

"It's nothing but ridiculous twaddle," I said curtly. "Dr. Karnak's been stuffing your head with that arrant nonsense. Possessed of the spirit of Baal! You'll be saying, next, that the thing's liable to come to life!"

"It'll take more than a mummy to scare me," laughed Ralph Leslie Fullwood. "I'm curious to have a look at it, and, what's more, I'll go now! Anybody comin' with me?"

"Afraid to see it alone?" asked Handforth sarcastically.

"No, I'm not!" scowled Fullwood.

He strode out, rejecting the offer of Gulliver and Bell to accompany him. Fullwood's chief idea in deciding to join the club was to get a little fun out of it. He ridiculed the whole affair, really; but it struck him that he might be able to take a rise out of Dr. Karnak.

He made his way to the library, and found it empty. The door leading into the museum was closed; but when Fullwood turned the handle, it opened. He passed through into the museum.

And, in spite of himself, Fullwood halted, uncertain whether to go on or not. There was something very eerie about the place. He had heard a good deal about it; but had laughed at these stories in his usual cynical way.

He had to admit to himself, however,

He was dressed in a flowing Eastern robe, and upon his shoulder sat perched the yellow, black-spotted body of his strange pet, the Serval cat.

that the museum was an unpleasant place to be in alone. The air smelled of oldness, and there was only one shaded electric light glowing.

This was sufficient to reveal the various show cases in a dim, uncertain weirdness, and the mummy, standing upright in the corner, looked startlingly prominent. Fullwood felt a queer sensation within him.

But he shook himself, and walked forward into the museum. Whatever his faults, he wasn't a coward, and it seemed ridiculous for him to be scared of a mummy, in spite of the nonsense De Valerie had been talking.

He went up to the mummy, and examined it closely, for he had a suspicion that one or two other juniors might follow, and he wanted to show then that he was as good as his word.

Actually face to face with the thing, Fullwood felt rather better. The mummy was so obviously parched up and absolutely withered. It was a relic of the past ages, with nothing about its appearance to scare anybody.

Yet, in spite of this reassuring feeling, a sudden wave of unknown horror swept over the junior. It was his imagination, of course. He had pictured to himself the mummy suddenly springing to life, and clutching out at him. It was a perfectly natural thought, after all that he had heard.

He turned away, and walked swiftly to the door, an almost uncontrollable desire to look back taking possession of him. The door was just round the corner, past one of the angles of the curiously shaped room.

"Well, I've seen it, anyway," he muttered.

A faint sound came from behind him—from that empty part of the museum—it seemed to him, from the part where the mummy stood. Fullwood broke into a cold sweat, and he instinctively halted. The desire to look back was too strong for him to resist, especially after hearing that sound, which, to his excited mind, had not been unlike a sigh.

He turned, his flesh creeping, and gazed at the mummy, standing in its corner, with eyes that stared, as though expecting to see something awful. But the mummy was just the same as ever. There was no change in its appearance. Fullwood had instinctively felt that this would be the case, and relief swept over him.

But suddenly he stood as though frozen, an icy chill descending over him in a wave of sheer horror. Was it his fevered imagination, or was it actually true?

But the mummy—the mummy was looking at him!

Where there had been nothing but that dried-up face, it now seemed to Fullwood that the face had come to life, and a pair of penetrating eyes were gazing at him. The junior felt as though he were turned to stone.

He wanted to flee—he wanted to scream—but sheer fear held him. And then he saw the mummy moving! The face seemed to twitch, and the mouth opened. And a ghostly arm came from the linen bindings.

And the spell broke.

With a scream of absolute terror—loud and penetrating—Fullwood burst through the doorway of the museum, and ran into the library. Handforth & Co. and Reggie Pitt and I had just entered. And we were in time to see Fullwood pitch to the floor in a dead faint.

CHAPTER VI.

BEYOND ALL UNDERSTANDING!

"GOOD heavens!" "Quick—lift him up," I commanded. "Somebody rush into the museum, and see what happened! Water! And look sharp!"

In a moment Fullwood was lifted into an easy chair, where he lay limp and as pale as a sheet. Church rushed for water, and Handforth & Co. lost no time in applying first aid methods.

Reggie Pitt, without losing a second, had rushed into the museum. He had no thought of fear or kindred emotions. One glance round showed him that the museum was completely empty. Pitt looked at the mummy, but it stood there as mobile and as impassive as ever.

"Imagination!" muttered Pitt. "The ass scared himself out of his wits; and he was the fellow who scoffed! At the same time, I can't understand it, because Fully's a pretty strong nerved chap."

He turned and walked out, and quickly reported the result of his examination. Fullwood, in the meantime, was showing signs of coming round. A slight amount of colour had returned to his cheeks after the application of cold water to his temples, and I had managed to force some down his throat.

"Thank goodness he's coming to!" murmured Pitt. "We don't want this story to get about. But what the dickens scared him like that?"

"Goodness only knows!" growled Handforth. "Probably he scared himself—heard a rat, or something. Anyhow, if the museum's empty, it proves he saw nothing. Perhaps that rotten mummy gave him a turn."

Two or three minutes later Ralph Leslie was sitting up, and sipping the water. He looked at us with frightened eyes—shifty, restless eyes. And he made no attempt to conceal his emotions. This was sure proof of his inward terror, for a fellow of his

character would certainly make every attempt to bluff out the whole affair.

"What's wrong, Fullwood?" I asked quietly. "I suppose you know you fainted?"

"I—I don't know what happened," muttered Fullwood. "But I saw that mummy—it was looking at me! Lookin' at me!"

"Rats! That was only your imagination——"

"You fool!" snarled Fullwood hoarsely. "I tell you I saw it! Not as it usually is—but with the face comin' to life! I saw two eyes starin' at me—piercing, horrible eyes!"

He was so vehement that we were startled.

"But, my dear man, you must be wrong," I said gently. "The mummy's as dead as a door-nail——"

"I know it—I know it!" moaned Fullwood. "But De Valerie must be right—the horrible thing has got an evil spirit inside it! An' I saw an arm come out, too—a ghastly, bony arm with skeleton fingers!"

"All right; we'll have a look at it," I said. "You stay with Fullwood, Handforth. If anybody comes, don't say what happened."

Pitt and I and Church went into the museum, and we went straight up to the mummy, and thoroughly examined it. The thing was as dry as dust, and Fullwood's story was obviously impossible.

"I say, he must have been dreaming, eh?" murmured Church uncomfortably.

"No, he wasn't dreaming; it was nothing else but the fevered image of his own mind," I said quietly. "You see the result of these fantastic stories? If things go on at this rate half the school will be terrified inside a week. It's a pity Dr. Karnak ever came here."

"Hear, hear!"

We went back, and told Fullwood that there was nothing whatever to be afraid of. And Ralph Leslie became angry, and persisted that he was right By now he had almost recovered.

"What do you take me for?" he asked harshly. "Do you think I'm a scared kid, to be frightened by his own shadow? I saw it, I tell you."

"Look here, Fullwood, be reasonable——"

"I'm not the sort of fellow to get scared over nothin'," interrupted Fullwood. "Why, I went right into the museum, an' had a look at the mummy at close quarters; I was as near to it as I am to you. Even that didn't frighten me. Why should it? But when I turned, an' saw those awful eyes——"

He broke off, shivering—and I found myself thinking of that Something that had left the museum window at midnight. I shook myself angrily, surprised that I should allow such fantastic thoughts to enter my brain. I had even begun to picture the spirit of that mummy leaving the dried, embalmed remains. And the very thought was too horrible for contemplation.

But I could not help feeling that a cloud of horror seemed to hang over the very school itself. Even in this short space of time that mummy had brought a lot of trouble and fear.

It was coincidence, of course, combined with the fevered imaginings of the fellows. And I was about to advise Fullwood to have nothing to do with that Sorcery Club, when Dr. Karnak noiselessly entered.

He saw at once that something was amiss.

And Fullwood, without hesitation, retold his story. He poured it into Dr Karnak's ear; and the Egyptian listened gravely and silently. His face was immobile—expressing no emotion.

"This is serious," he said at length. "I deplore exceedingly that such an incident should have happened. If I had known that you were coming, my boy, I would have been here. It was unwise of you to enter the museum alone. Indeed, dangerous."

"Dangerous?" repeated Fullwood.

"Yes—very dangerous, indeed," replied Dr. Karnak. "What you saw was the sacred spirit of Baal, which for ever hovers near the earthly remains of the body that was once his. This spirit, you will understand, is earthbound, and even now I am investigating the cause for this phenomenon."

I looked at Dr. Karnak squarely.

"Are you seriously suggesting, sir, that Fullwood saw a ghost?" I asked.

"A ghost?" repeated the Egyptian deprecatingly. "Not a ghost, my young friend. There are many things quite beyond your understanding, and let me urge you not to scoff. Even I know practically nothing of this great subject, and yet I have studied it for years. Baal is dead—he died thousands of years ago. And what you see in the museum is but a dry mummy. But his spirit lives."

"Oh, that's a bit too thick, sir!" I protested. "That's just the kind of thing that's going to make a few nervous fellows go grey with fright! Fullwood saw nothing but an image which his own mind conjured."

"Foolish boy!" said Dr. Karnak sharply. "Your words are but the outcome of ignorance. And there is nothing to fear in this fascinating subject. Only fear comes to those who are unacquainted with it. Even a slight knowledge of necromancy is sufficient to arm any boy against the fears of his own mind."

"What is necromancy, sir?" asked Fullwood.

"It is the art of predicting future events by the practice of the Black Art, and magic in general," replied Dr. Karnak. "No fear will come to those who understand their subject. As I have said before, ignorance is the only condition that causes fear."

"Oh!" gasped Church suddenly. "What—what's that?"

He was staring with round eyes into a corner of the library.

"Eh?" gasped Handforth. "Oh, my goodness! What the dickens——"

"You see?" said Dr. Karnak contemptuously. "This unreasoning fear of yours causes you to become frightened by the mere sight of a harmless animal. Come, Eswit—to my side!"

We gazed, wondering, as the Serval cat came from behind a piece of furniture and obediently sat at Dr. Karnak's feet. The creature took absolutely no notice of anybody else by her master.

"I say, sir, it's a bit dangerous to have that thing about, isn't it?" asked Pitt bluntly. "It might scratch somebody, or ——"

"My cat is harmless," interrupted Dr. Karnak. "Your Headmaster would not have permitted its presence here unless he was assured of its innocuous condition. My cat is in no way to be feared."

In a way, I could not help feeling a certain admiration for this plausible man of the East. He had known from the very first that that cat would create an impression of mystery. There was nothing much in it—a mere pet, as he had said. But the very fact that he had it with him gave him a false importance.

"Until I give the word, Eswit will remain docile at my feet," said Dr. Karnak. "And let me warn you, boys, against taking any foolish action with regard to the mummy. Such levity is to be deplored, and can only lead to disaster."

"Disaster?" repeated Handforth.

"Even as I have said—disaster," replied Dr. Karnak quietly. "I have already told you that the spirit of Baal lives. And I will tell you more—at the risk of being held up to ridicule by your ignorant minds. Possibly you have heard of an Elemental? Is this so?"

"I've read about Elementals, in occult books, sir," I replied. "An Elemental is a spirit that takes a solid form. Of course, there's no such thing, but some people believe it."

Dr. Karnak shook his head sadly.

"Your faithlessness is lamentable," he purred. "But your description is correct. An Elemental is a spirit that takes a solid form—that materialises. And I have to inform you that the spirit of Baal will, on occasion, assume a ghastly and horrific form."

"What kind of form, sir?" I asked quickly.

"I have never seen this Poltergeist myself——"

"This what, sir?" broke in Fullwood.

"Poltergeist—the word means 'noisy ghost,' but is applicable to all spirits that assume the form of an Elemental," replied Dr. Karnak fluently. "As I have said, I have never seen this Shape myself, but I believe it assumes a form somewhat resembling a great furry body on two enormous legs."

I stood there, breathing rather hard. Again I remembered that dim Thing out in the Triangle—that mysterious object which had jumped from the museum window, to leap over the school wall in an impossible bound. Could it be possible that I had imagined that apparition? After what Dr. Karnak had just said, it seemed out of the question.

It occurred to me that Dr. Karnak himself might have been playing ghost—for some reason of his own—but I dismissed this. I had seen the Thing leap over the wall, and Dr. Karnak himself had descended the stairs two minutes afterwards.

"So I warn you, boys, to regard this science with all the respect it deserves," continued the Egyptian, in his purring voice. "Woe betide you if you ever fall foul of Baal when taking this earthly form."

"Well, Dr. Karnak, I'm sorry, but I can't accept any of this theorising as actual fact," I said quietly. "In my opinion, talk of this kind will only scare the fellows out of their wits."

Dr. Karnak turned his eyes upon me, and smiled.

"There is nothing to be afraid of," he said softly. "And in future I must insist upon the museum being left severely alone—unless I am present."

We took our departure almost at once, Fullwood being himself, except for a slight shakiness, and a look of fear in his eyes.

And after we had gone Dr. Karnak walked silently into the museum, and stood in front of the sarcophagus containing the mummy. He chuckled evilly. And the Serval cat, which had followed him, crouched on the floor, her ears back, her eyes expressive of terror.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNCANNY ADVENTURE!

IRENE MANNERS waved a cheery hand, and Handforth & Co. leapt off their bicycles at once, and all raised their caps simultaneously.

Two or three days had passed, and they were in the Bannington High Street. It was evening, and the industrious High Street was alight with brilliant shop windows, and busy with life.

"Jolly pleased to see you, Miss Irene," said Handforth gallantly. "We've hardly caught sight of you since the new term started. Here alone?"

"Yes; I'm just going back," replied Irene, smiling.

She was the one girl at the Moor View School whom Handforth had a tender spot for. In his eyes Irene was perfect. And

she certainly was an exceedingly pretty girl, with her cheerful, frank disposition. She had her bicycle with her, too, and was well wrapped up for the cold, winter weather.

"You don't mean to say you're going home alone, Miss Irene?" asked Church.

"Why, of course."

"But, it's dark—or nearly dark," protested Handforth. "All sorts of—things might happen on that country road to Bellton. Tramps, you know, and—and goodness knows what——"

"Don't be silly!" laughed the girl. "I've ridden home in the dark many a time, and nothing's ever happened to me. Goodness! Do you think I'm afraid of the dark?"

"Nun—not at all," stammered Handforth. "Of course you're not, Miss Irene. But look here, can't we escort you home?"

"But you've only just arrived," said the girl. "You surely didn't come to Bannington to turn back and go home again?"

Handforth laughed carelessly.

"Just out for a spin," he said, waving his hand. "We don't want to stop here, do we, you chaps?" he added, giving them a private glare, as an indication regarding their answer.

"Stop here?" repeated McClure. "Of course not!"

"We were just going home, anyway!" said Church, somewhat untruthfully.

Irene consented, and, as a matter of fact, she was rather pleased. She didn't actually mind the ride home in the gloom, but it was far more pleasant with Handforth & Co. to accompany her.

They were soon off, riding in a kind of square—Handforth and Irene leading, with Church and McClure in the rear. It was a clear, dark evening, and the moon had not yet risen.

Irene's bicycle was fitted with an electric lamp, which sent a brilliant beam on the road. Handforth, however, was only using an oil lamp, and he felt, somehow, that something would have to be done. These girls couldn't go about beating the St. Frank's chaps!

"I like your lamp," he remarked casually.

"Yes, it's splendid, isn't it?" asked Irene. "It was a present from my uncle at Christmastide. It's so simple, and no trouble at all. I'm rather surprised you haven't got one, Ted. I always thought you were so up-to-date."

Handforth sought wildly for an answer.

"Well, as a matter of fact," he said, at last—"as a matter of fact, I didn't want to be in too much of a hurry, you know. So many electric lamps to choose from, and it's easy to make a bloomer. Still, I've got my eye on one, and I suppose I'd better give my order in."

He mentally resolved to send an urgent application to his pater that very evening. It happened that Sir Edward Handforth was in a particularly good humour just now, owing to very successful results in the recent General Election. Sir Edward, in fact, was now an M.P.

He had lost no time in celebrating the occasion, and had promised Edward Oswald that he'd give him something extra before long. Here was just the chance—and for the first time Handy was glad that his pater was a Member of Parliament.

Hitherto, Handy had sneered at the whole affair, and had even refused to mention it to his chums. He regarded an M.P. as a particularly contemptible kind of scallywag, and the fact that his father had been elected struck him as being a family blow.

"I hear that you've got a new master at the school?" asked Irene presently.

"Oh, yes, rather!" said Handforth, his mind returning to matters of the moment, instead of electric lamps. "Yes, a rotter named Karnak—a giddy nigger!"

"Nigger!" repeated Irene, in astonishment.

"Well, not exactly a nigger—an Egyptian."

"Oh, it's too bad of you, Ted," said the girl. "How dare you speak with such disrespect? An Egyptian would be awfully insulted if he heard himself referred to as a nigger."

Handforth realised that he had to be careful.

"Sorry," he apologised humbly. "Well, not a real nigger, you know, although he's pretty dark and swarthy. One of these chaps with glittering eyes, and a powerful personality. He's in charge of our new museum, and lectures on science, too."

"He sounds a very clever man," said Irene.

"Clever!" snorted Handforth. "He's a beast! It was a bad day for St. Frank's when he arrived! All he can do is to put mad ideas into the heads of the chaps, and get them scared. In my opinion, Dr. Karnak is no good!"

Irene was surprised.

"Oh, but you shouldn't make such accusations," she said.

"Shouldn't I?" said Handforth. "Just listen to this, Miss Irene! He's actually telling the fellows that sorcery and witchcraft are modern arts—and can still be practised! There's a mummy in the museum, and Dr. Karnak has been saying that this mummy is still haunted by a spirit, which takes a solid form, and roams about in the shape of an awful monster."

Irene was rather startled.

"Oh, but you must be joking!" she said.

"You're playing on Saturday, Handy?" came a voice from Church, in the rear. "We ought to have a pretty good game, you know I've heard that the Grammarians are fairly strong just now."

"Blow the game!" said Handforth. "I'm talking about something else."

"Yes, but——"

"Dry up!" snapped Handy.

Church and McClure glanced at one another significantly. They had done

their best to retrieve the situation. It was very thoughtless of Handforth to tell Irene all this about Dr. Karnak. It couldn't possibly do any good, and might result in making her a bit nervous.

Even Church and McClure had an instinctive desire to glance behind them into the darkness of the country road. For they, too, vividly remembered the words of Dr. Karnak.

Again and again, they had told themselves that the Egyptian's statement was a lot of tommy-rot—spoken just for the sake of effect. Their own common sense told them that such a thing as an Elemental, or Poltergeist, was out of the question. Those fantasms only existed in the minds of those who posed as experts in the occult.

In fact, Handforth had stated his opinion quite frankly. He had told a crowd of juniors that plenty of lunatics never got into an asylum at all. Pitt agreed with this, remarking it was obviously true, because Handforth was at liberty. But Handforth's point was that fanatical believers in occult phenomena were little better than lunatics—not dangerous, but decidedly touched.

And Church and McClure firmly believed in their leader's view. And it struck them as a pity that he should repeat Dr. Karnak's nonsense to this girl. It couldn't possibly do her any good.

Irene herself continued pedalling, and had become somewhat frozen — not physically, but in speech. Handforth kept on talking, but got no reply He even asked a question, and still Irene was silent. And by this time they were getting near to Bellton.

"I say, Miss Irene?" said Handforth, at length. "Anything wrong?"

"Yes, there is!" replied Irene coldly.

"But—but I don't understand."

"It was very rude and brutal of you to snap at your friend in the way you did!" replied Irene frostily. "He just asked you a civil question about football, and for some unearthly reason, you nearly snapped his head off! Do you always treat your friends like that?"

Handforth nearly fell off his bicycle. For the life of him, he hadn't dreamed of this explanation of Irene's sudden chilliness. He had spoken to Church in just his ordinary way—which, obviously, failed to meet with Irene's approval.

And it was brought home to Edward Oswald, with great force, that he had been unnecessarily sharp. And to do anything that reduced his status in Irene's eyes was approaching a tragedy.

"I'm sorry!" he gasped. "I didn't mean to be snappy, you know—but the ass interrupted. Sorry, Church!" he went on, glancing behind and treating Church to a ferocious glare. "You weren't offended, were you?"

But Church didn't fall into the trap.

"Well, not exactly," he replied. "At the same time, you were a bit rotten, you know."

"Rotten!" gasped Handforth thickly.

"Of course—snapping at me like that," said Church indignantly. "Just because you get into a habit of speaking that way, you do just the same in front of Miss Irene! And you've got to remember that you can't be your own self in the presence of a lady."

Handforth wobbled dangerously, for the shock of that remark was severe. He had no answer ready. And, in the meantime, Irene was gazing at him with much severity, and pained surprise.

"Is that true, Ted?" demanded the girl.

"True?" repeated Handforth, hedging for time.

"About being your own self?" asked Irene. "Do you always treat your chums in that bullying manner?"

"Bullying manner!" repeated Handforth, breathing hard. "Of—of course not! I—I mean, they ask for it sometimes, you know! Goodness knows, I don't want to be rough with them! I haven't punched their heads since yesterday——I—I mean——" He broke off, at a loss.

"Oh! So you are quite in the habit of punching them?" asked the girl. "I'm very sorry, Ted, that I should find out these unlooked for traits in your character. I had always regarded you as such a shy boy."

Crash!

Church lost control of his handlebars, swerved into McClure, and the pair collapsed. Afterwards, Church explained that everything had gone dim for a moment. To hear Handforth described as "a shy boy" had come altogether too suddenly. The mental strain was too severe.

Much confused, Church and McClure singled themselves out, jumped on their machines again, and were fairly in the saddle before Irene and Handforth could dismount.

"It's all right—carry on!" said Church breathlessly. "I skidded, or something. Don't get off—I'm not hurt!"

"I wonder why they fell over like that?" asked Irene. "I can't help thinking, Ted, that you must treat them badly. Perhaps it was sheer nervousness that caused Church to fall."

"No, Miss Irene — not nervousness," said Church, from the rear. "It was just shock. You were saying that Handforth was shy, and it took all the breath out of me. My hat! You don't know him!"

There was something significant about this remark. It contained some hidden meaning that Irene tried to fathom. Handforth, already boiling inwardly, suddenly overflowed. In spite of all his efforts, he couldn't prevent himself.

"Just a minute!" he said thickly. "Ride on, Miss Irene!"

He leapt off, and performed this action

so suddenly that Church and McClure rode straight into him. The three juniors collapsed into a mixed heap of humanity and bicycles.

Biff!

A head bobbed up, and Handforth punched it. It was of no consequence to him that the head belonged to McClure, who had said nothing at all.

"Yarooooh!" howled McClure, in surprise.

"Another word from you chaps, and I'll slaughter you!" hissed Handforth. "Take that! And that!"

Biff—biff!

"Hi, steady!" gasped Church. "Don't forget Miss Irene, you ass——"

sat down heavily. This was the last straw. Nothing is more undignified than for a fellow to sit down violently in the road.

"I wish you good night!" said Irene coldly. "Please don't attempt to accompany me further! And never dare to speak to me again."

Handforth sat there, opened his mouth, but words failed to come.

"Good night, Church — good night, McClure," went on Irene, treating Handforth's chums to a sweet smile. "I'm ever so sorry that this has happened. Don't forget to look in if you are passing the Moor View School. But please come without Handforth—I detest him!"

And Irene, with a toss of her head,

"Look out!" yelled Church suddenly. They swerved, jamming on their brakes. And only just in time, for Irene was lying in the road, her fallen bicycle close beside her.

"You tell her that it's all spoof!" breathed Handforth darkly. "Explain to her that I never touch you! Don't tell any actual lies, but if you don't make things right, I'll boil you in oil!"

Considering that Irene was standing quite near by, having dismounted and walked back, this injunction on Handforth's part was somewhat unfortunate. For there was Handforth, instructing his chums to explain that he'd never biffed them, and he was doing it to the very accompaniment of his words!

"Oh!" said the girl indignantly. "Oh! This is too bad!"

Handforth turned, startled. He staggered back, put his foot into his back wheel, and mounted her machine, and rode off. Handforth still sat there, on the hard road. He felt as if almost all the strength had oozed out of him. His main desire at the moment, was to lie there and die. Church and McClure maintained an ominous silence.

So she had finished with him! And all because of these two fatheads! That last shot of hers had crowned everything—it had inflicted a stab that Handforth could not recover from. She had invited Church and McClure to call and see her—but not with Handforth! And she had called him by his surname! That was an additional blow.

Handforth's inward misery was a mere

indication of his utter lack of knowledge regarding the feminine mind. Experience would prove to him that Irene's very action proved, conclusively, that she cared for him quite a lot. And Church summed up the situation a moment later.

"Girls are rummy creatures!" he said shortly.

Handforth slowly picked himself up, and a sudden resolve had come to him. Church and McClure observed what they thought to be the danger signal and backed away instinctively assuming a defensive attitude.

"Oh, you needn't worry—I'm not going to biff you," said Handforth. "Miss Irene thinks I'm a bully. All right! In future, I'm not going to touch you at all—I'm not going to harm a hair of your heads! I'll prove to Irene that I'm made of the right stuff."

Church and McClure were openly incredulous.

"Of course, it's a good idea—but you won't keep to it," said Church. "I've only got to say something you don't like, and you'll lash out——"

"Never!" retorted Handforth. "From now onwards I'm going to be a different chap. No more biffing—no more punching! Perhaps I have been a bit too drastic. And now let's buzz on, and see if we can catch up with Irene."

"But she won't speak to you——"

"Won't she?" said Handforth curtly. "We'll see about that!"

He stuck his jaw out, and he was in one of those moods when apparently impossible things became possible. He jerked his bicycle up, leapt into the saddle, and promptly fell into the road again. He had neglected to observe that his chain had come off, and the first thrust of the pedal had upset his equilibrium.

He managed to get the chain on after a moment's delay, and rode off. The back wheel scraped noisily against the fork, for Handforth's foot in the spokes had not done it any excessive good.

However, the machine was rideable, and the way the three juniors skimmed through Bellton was a surprise to one or two villagers who were about—particularly as Handforth's bicycle was without any light.

They were just passing over the bridge which spanned the Stowe, and the dark lane lay ahead, when a sound came to their ears—a shrill, feminine scream. And all three juniors recognised Irene's voice!

"Great Scott!" gasped Handforth desperately.

He didn't wait to make any other comment, or to hear what his chums had to say. In fact, they all pedalled with every ounce of their strength. Evidently, Irene had halted in the village, perhaps to make some small purchase, and they had overtaken her before they had expected her to do so.

"Look out!" yelled Church suddenly.

They swerved, jamming on their brakes. And only just in time, for Irene was lying in the road, her fallen bicycle close beside her. As Handforth bent down, she grasped at his arm, and held tightly.

"Oh, you've come—you've come!" she said sobbingly.

"What's wrong, Miss Irene?" asked Handforth, pale with anxiety. "Did you fall, or something? We heard you scream——"

"I don't know what it was!" murmured Irene, her eyes round with horror. "Oh, don't go away from me! Something followed me—some awful shape kept pace behind my bicycle. I looked behind, and saw it!"

"A—a shape?" repeated Church uneasily.

"It seemed to spring at me from the hedge, and I don't know much more," murmured Irene. "I felt it so close behind me that I nearly fainted with terror. And the faster I rode, the nearer it came! I—I must have swooned!"

They helped her up, and insisted upon having a search round—saying that she had merely seen a tramp, or some idiot who thought it funny to frighten her. But, inwardly, Handforth and Co. thought differently. In spite of all their efforts, they found themselves recalling the warning of Dr. Karnak. They thought of the mummy—and the spirit of Baal which was capable of taking solid form!

Irene was very shaky and unnerved, and she allowed Handforth and Co. to escort her to the very door of the Moor View School By the time they arrived, she had regained some of her old composure, although she was still pale.

"Please don't say anything about this," she said softly. "The—the other boys wouldn't understand, and they might laugh——"

"Don't you worry, Miss Irene," said Handforth promptly. "We won't breathe a word. I—I say!" he added uncomfortably. "You didn't mean that about not speaking to me, did you?"

"I was very annoyed with you, Ted," replied Irene, becoming stiff.

"Look here—I won't touch Church and McClure in future—I'll promise not to punch them, or—or anything," said Handforth desperately.

"All right—I'll believe you," said the girl. "I'm afraid you'll think I'm a frightened baby, won't you? But I did see something in the lane—I'm sure of it! I didn't just allow my imagination to get the better of me."

Handforth & Co. assured her that they would keep the matter quite to themselves. And they did not detain her, for it was quite clear that she was still overwrought. They bade her good-night, and wheeled their machines out into the road.

"Well, what do you make of it?" asked Church bluntly.

"Oh, she must have seen a shadow, or

something," said McClure. "It's Handy's fault, for telling her about old Karnak and that ghost. Either that, or she saw some tramp lurking in the hedge."

Handforth didn't want to talk, and he got on his machine and rode off. And Church and McClure accompanied him. They had hardly progressed more than a hundred yards along the deserted lane before Church, who was in the rear, looked behind him with a queer start.

He fancied he heard footfalls—strange, uncanny footfalls that were slow and deliberate, but increasing in sound.

Flap—flap—flap—flap!

It sounded as though some enormous, flat-footed monster was coming just behind, and Church's heart nearly leapt into his mouth. He tried to pierce the gloom. Perhaps it was imagination, but it seemed to him that a dark kind of blob was taking shape in the middle of the roadway—a shape whch was following.

It seemed to be all legs, with an enormous body perched on top—hunched up and uncanny. And although the juniors were riding at a good pace, this thing was walking—deliberately and horribly—and overtaking them all the time!

Church's mind leapt back to Dr. Karnak's description of the ghost of Baal—the awful Elemental that sometimes took shape from the mummy. And this ghastly monster in the rear exactly tallied with Dr. Karnak's description. A flood of sheer horror swept over Church in one gush of panic.

"It's behind us!" he screamed. "It's overtaking us!"

Handforth and McClure, utterly startled, stared round. And they, too, saw that shape—proving conclusively that it was no figment of Church's fevered mind. The thing was there—coming along behind them!

"Ride for your life!" panted Handforth desperately.

He didn't know how he spoke the words, for terror untold gripped him and his companions. All Handforth's usual aggressiveness went. The one glimpse of that horror bade him flee for his life.

And Handforth & Co. pedalled as they had never pedalled before—a mad, desperate race through the night. And all who have ridden a bicycle along dark country lanes will realise the terror of that ride.

Even when nothing is following one, there is the impression that some dim thing may spring out from the shadows. And once panic is resorted to, the affair becomes a living nightmare.

And this was no mere imagination—it was real!

Never once did Handforth & Co. dare glance behind. Indeed, they could not do so, owing to their very speed. But in spite of the rush of wind past their ears, they heard the steady "flap-flap" of the Unknown in their rear.

And their common sense told them that this monster could be nothing earthly. For they were dashing along at full speed on their bicycles, and this ghastly thing was overtaking them inch by inch on foot! They even fancied that they heard a fiendish cackle of laughter, and it came sobbingly out of the night air.

The faster they rode, the nearer came that shape. And it seemed ages before they reached the gates of St. Frank's. How on earth they ever managed to swing into the Triangle without disaster they never knew. But they did so, and flung themselves from their machines at the Ancient House steps.

They stared round, nearly exhausted.

And the night stars twinkled down, revealing a scene of peaceful calmness. There was no sign or indication of anything spectral or unearthly.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH DE VALERIE?

MINUTES passed. And Handforth & Co. quickly recovered—they got their wind back, and their nerves were beginning to go back to their normal state. Church was the first to speak.

"What—what was it?" he asked, his voice husky and strained.

"I don't know; but for goodness' sake don't say a word to anybody else," muttered Handforth. "They'll only ridicule us—and Karnak will talk a lot more of his rot!"

"But is it rot?" asked McClure. "It strikes me there's something in what he says, after all. That—that thing——"

"Don't let it play on your mind, old man," said Handforth quietly. "I can't believe it, you know—I can't credit that that horrible old mummy can come to life! The best thing you can do is to forget all about it and to leave any discussion until later."

"Well, thank goodness it didn't follow us into the Triangle," said Church. "We're pretty safe here."

They put their bicycles away, and went indoors to Study D at once. And for the remainder of the evening they were very subdued. Hardly any of the usual sounds of commotion came from Study D.

And later, at supper-time, Handforth & Co. were so quiet that this very fact caused comment. But in reply to all questions the three juniors gave vague, uncertain replies.

I was pretty certain that something had happened, but I did not do any questioning. I thought it would be better to leave that until the morrow. And in the meantime I was concerned about Cecil De Valerie.

During the past day or two I had been watching him closely. Everything had been going on fairly smoothly, and the ridiculous Sorcery Club had held one or two meetings—without disturbing the even running of the Remove's affairs. Dr. Karnak was just as mysterious and impressive.

But De Valerie had altered.

True enough, he was keen on football, and wanted to play in the match against Bannington Grammar School on the following afternoon. But he was becoming absent-minded and erratic in his actions. His study chums in particular were noticing this. But to all their inquiries he turned a deaf ear, saying that he was just the same as ever.

If he had shown any sign of falling off in football form, I would have crossed his name off the list of players. But he didn't. At practice he proved that he was even more sparkling than ever.

This was no doubt due to the fact that the footer came as a glad relief after the mental strain of Dr. Karnak's society. At all events, De Valerie filled the outside-right position so well that I had no intention of making him stand down.

And so he turned out in the St. Frank's colours the next afternoon.

There was a great deal of enthusiasm, for this was the first junior match of the new term. And the Grammarians were in fine fettle. Their great ambition was to win their first away match. And we were determined to take the conceit out of them.

Handforth was at the top of his form, and if any goals were scored by the visitors, no blame could be laid to Handy at all. Without doubt, he was the best custodian the Junior Eleven had ever had. And the previous night's adventure had left no enduring mark upon him.

Football drove away all morbid thoughts of stuffy mummies and horrible spectral forms. Once on the field of play, all other thoughts vanished. The game was the thing! Even De Valerie dropped his recent absent-mindedness like a cloak, and laughed and joked with his usual geniality.

The Junior Eleven was feeling confident—and so was the Remove, as a whole. Crowds had collected round the ropes, and they were cheering even before the game commenced. A crowd of Grammarians had come over, and were supporting their own team loyally, shouting encouragement and demanding goals to the tune of "one—two—three—four—five!" They were not likely to get them!

Morrow, acting as referee, blew his whistle, and the game commenced.

During the first few minutes there was some exciting play. The Grammarian centre-forward, knowing the value of an early goal, did his utmost to force his way through the St. Frank's defence. Cleverly beating the half-backs, he worked his way round the final defence, and sent in a magnificent shot.

"Goal!" howled the excited Grammarians.

It certainly looked like one. But Handforth, flinging himself sideways and upwards, cleared with a magnificent punch, and the ball was swiftly kicked over the half-way line by a persevering back.

"Goal, eh?" sniffed Handforth. "Huh! Don't count your giddy chickens before they're hatched!"

He was cheered lustily by the crowd, and he bore these honours modestly. That is to say, he paced up and down between the goal-posts, with very much the same attitude as a turkey.

"He'll begin crowing soon!" remarked Willy, who was standing near-by. "I say, Ted, do you gobble?"

"Gobble?" snapped Handforth.

"Yes; turkey-cocks always do that when they're pleased," said Handforth minor blandly. "But don't let me interrupt you—that strut of yours looks pretty good!"

The game was in danger of sheer tragedy for St. Frank's. For Handforth nearly left his charge, in order to chastise his younger brother. But Willy knew how safe he was, and purposely got near the goal so that he could criticise to his heart's content.

The game went on rapidly—a fast and furious battle. It was one of those breathless tussles which only take place when the opposing teams are equally tuned up to a high pitch.

St. Frank's scored first.

And the goal came from my own foot—although it was largely due to Reggie Pitt's clever craftsmanship. He received the ball in a long, swinging pass from the centre-half, and he was away down the touch-line with all his usual speed and astonishing ball-control.

The Grammarian back leapt at him, desperately attempting to play the ball. He sprawled over, and Pitt took a clean leap over his prostrate form; and again he went on, to the roar of the crowd.

At exactly the right second he centred, and the ball fell a bare two yards in front of me. Without hesitating a second, I leapt forward and sent in a powerful drive—a first time shot, taken on the run. There was no time to steady myself, for another Grammarian defender was upon me.

Slam!

The ball struck the cross-bar with a terrific jolt, and a groan of disappointment went up from the spectators. But the rebound came directly back to me, and I got my head to it, and flashed it past the goalkeeper before he could even see what was coming.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Nipper!"

"First blood to St. Frank's!"

The teams lined up again, the Grammarians looking grim and determined. They were in no way disheartened yet. The two teams were fairly well matched, and there was little to choose between them—although, on the whole, the St. Frank's forward line was the superior.

The visitors recommenced the game with a tremendous burst of energy. And it was left to one of their half-backs to score. The inside forwards had had two splendid opportunities to shoot, but they appeared to suffer from that common complaint—hesitation. While preparing themselves to shoot, the St. Frank's defence would dash up and clear.

And the Grammarian half-backs probably became somewhat fed up. At all events,

one of them, having gained possession, made no attempt to pass. Instead, he dashed through of his own accord.

By a piece of ill-luck the Remove back slipped on a loose stone just as he was about to tackle. It was not bad play—just bad fortune. One of those trifles that occur in every match, and which frequently lead to important results.

The visiting half-back kept on, and Handforth rushed out to clear. By a mere fraction he misjudged the distance, and the other got there first.

Swish!

The ball shot into the back of the net with such force that it nearly burst through.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah for Grammarians!"

Handforth turned round and gazed dazedly into his goal.

"Who put that ball there?" he gasped. "I thought it went wide!"

"You shouldn't think these things, old man," exclaimed Willy, shaking his head. "And I thought you said the Grammarians weren't going to score. This is what comes of being too cocky! If you had remained between the sticks, you'd have saved that s!"

"...u—you——"

"There's no sharpshooter living who can get a ball past you when you're on the alert," went on Willy calmly. "Even the Third Form goalie is only a bit better!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth shook his fist.

"Wait!" he said thickly. "Wait until after the match!"

"Thanks—I shall," said Willy. "But if you expect to find me, you'll be sadly disappointed. I shall have an engagement elsewhere."

Handforth was thoroughly disgusted. It had seemed so easy to him to collect up that ball and clear it away. It had been an absolute shock when the visitors had got there first.

But that goal made the game even, and both teams were at the highest pitch of enthusiasm. They gave a brilliant display, and although effort after effort was made to score, half-time arrived with the board unchanged.

"We shall have to buck up this half," I said grimly, as we lined up for the re-start. "Can't let the game end in a draw—and the thought of losing it is out of the question. But we shall have to work hard—these Grammarians will exert themselves to the utmost to prevent us scoring."

Tregellis-West nearly got through two minutes after the game had been on the way. He was fouled in the penalty area, and Morrow awarded a penalty. There was an expectant hush as I took the kick.

But although the leather went true, the Grammarian custodian managed to get his hands to it, and cleared. It struck one of his own backs, and rebounded over the goal-line.

The corner-kick was taken by Pitt, but even this proved useless. De Valerie came out strong by getting his head to the leather, but it went just wide of the bar. Upon the whole, I was very pleased with De Valerie's play.

Soon afterwards Handforth had all his work cut out to stave off two or three successive raids upon his citadel. For the brief period of five minutes the Grammarians woke up and fairly bombarded the St. Frank's goal. But Handforth was unbeatable.

And then, as is the way of football, the game swung to the other end of the field. Two shots were sent in that tried the goalie to the utmost limit. But luck was with him, and he cleared on both occasions.

And then, unexpectedly, De Valerie got possession. It was owing to a mis-kick by one of the visiting backs. And De Valerie, seeing his opportunity, seized it in a flash.

"Go it, Val!"

"Shoot, man—shoot!"

De Valerie seemed to bear a charmed existence. One after the other he beat the half-backs and backs, and the open goal lay in front of him—with the custodian dancing about, knowing that he was as good as beaten.

In that brief second a tense hush fell over the crowd. De Valerie steadied himself to kick, and at that very second he paused. A shudder seemed to pass through his frame; and for some utterly unaccountable reason he stopped dead. And he stood there like a figure turned into stone.

"Shoot!" howled Willy wildly.

A second later it was too late. One of the startled backs rushed in and booted the leather far up the field. And a perfect roar of anger rose from the St. Frank's juniors round the ropes.

"Idiot!"

"Fathead!"

"Why didn't you shoot?"

The crowd yelled itself hoarse with indignation, and even the players glared at De Valerie with wrath. It had been such a deliberate failure—and when the goal would have meant so much, too! With the goal absolutely at his mercy, he had failed! It was almost beyond belief.

In that brief spell, while the game halted, I saw De Valerie shiver, and he suddenly sprang into activity, kicking wildly at the air. He looked round with an expression of dazed surprise when he discovered that the ball was nowhere near him.

The crowd jeered disgustedly, and De Valerie passed a hand over his brow. And now I was gazing at the ropes—grim and angry.

For, standing there, watching the game, was Dr. Karnak—and I had noticed that De Valerie had stared straight in that direction as he made his fatal stop. And Dr. Karnak had been gazing straight at the junior.

(Continued on page iii. of Cover.)

MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

By the Author of our St Frank's Stories.

No. 5.—THE LAST WORD IN ADVERTISING.

MY first motor drive through Greater New York by night was something of a revelation to me. This was on the very first day of my arrival in America, and the contrast between London and New York was, therefore, all the sharper.

I think I have previously mentioned that there are many things about America that I strongly dislike; but, on the other hand, I found much there to admire. And without any question or doubt, I've "gotta hand it" to Uncle Sam that he is very far ahead of us when it comes to poster advertising.

That drive through New York, in the crisp, frosty air of a December night, was a time of sheer enchantment to me. Afterwards, of course, the novelty wore off, and I came to regard New York's posters with the indifference which comes of familiarity.

Just let me explain how these poster-hoardings, or bill-boards as they are always called over there, differ from ours. In London we see great hoardings, plastered with a conglomeration of advertising posters. These posters of ours are stuck on shoulder to shoulder, as it were, large ones and small ones, all on the same hoarding. And at night, unless a street lamp happens to be near, they shyly lie in dim obscurity.

Not so in New York—or, if it comes to that, in any part of America.

In order to make myself thoroughly clear, I will describe that night drive through Greater New York. The very first thing I noticed—the thing that came out and hit me, so to speak—was the exquisite beauty of the poster advertisements. No conglomeration—no confused mix-up of different sized posters—no dim obscurity.

These American posters are artistic to the last degree; a fact which is all the more surprising, considering that the Americans care practically nothing for appearance in other matters. They will build a sumptuous apartment house, quite artistic in design, and then stick a huge, hideous water-tank on the roof, in full view of all, mounted upon spidery iron girders! They will ruin the appearance of a frontage by fixing an iron fire-escape, right over the very pavement. The law compels them to provide a fire-escape, but they need not make it so unsightly.

It is all the more surprising, therefore, that these "bill-boards" should be so exquisitely artistic and attractive. As you drive along by night, you see these great hoardings—sometimes singly, sometimes in long rows. The posters themselves are enormous, and each one is in its own surround—a kind of frame, with moulded pillars, and even carved figures.

The frame is generally white, with electric globes along the top. And the advertisement is more valuable at night than in the day—for each poster is brilliantly illuminated. These hoardings stand out boldly and artistically. You cannot possibly miss them.

The lighting is cunningly contrived—yet the method is simple in the extreme. From the top of the hoarding extend long metal rods outwards. On the ends of these are powerful electric lights with dazzling reflectors.

But there is no dazzle to the passer-by. The lights are cleverly shaded, so that all the illumination is cast upon the hoarding. And the value of the advertisement is increased a hundred-fold, for it stands out clearly.

It is just the same far out, where the houses are few and far between. There, on the lonely dark road, you will see these illuminated hoardings, carrying their message to every traveller that passes. And these hoardings, instead of being a blot on the landscape (as, I fear, many of ours are), become an added charm.

The posters themselves are beautifully coloured, and sometimes resemble elaborate oil paintings. I cannot find words to express my admiration for these posters, and I am looking forward to the day when our own advertising firms will awaken to the fact that they are far behind the times.

After being in America for the best part of a year, I think I am the last man to advise England to copy the United States. But in the case of these poster hoardings, I certainly do raise my hat to Uncle Sam. And nothing would please me better than to see Great Britain following his example.

GRAND NEW YEAR NUMBER OF THE MAG. !

No. 6. Vol. 1. Edited by Nipper. January 5, 1924.

St. Frank's Magazine

CONSILIO ET ANIMIS

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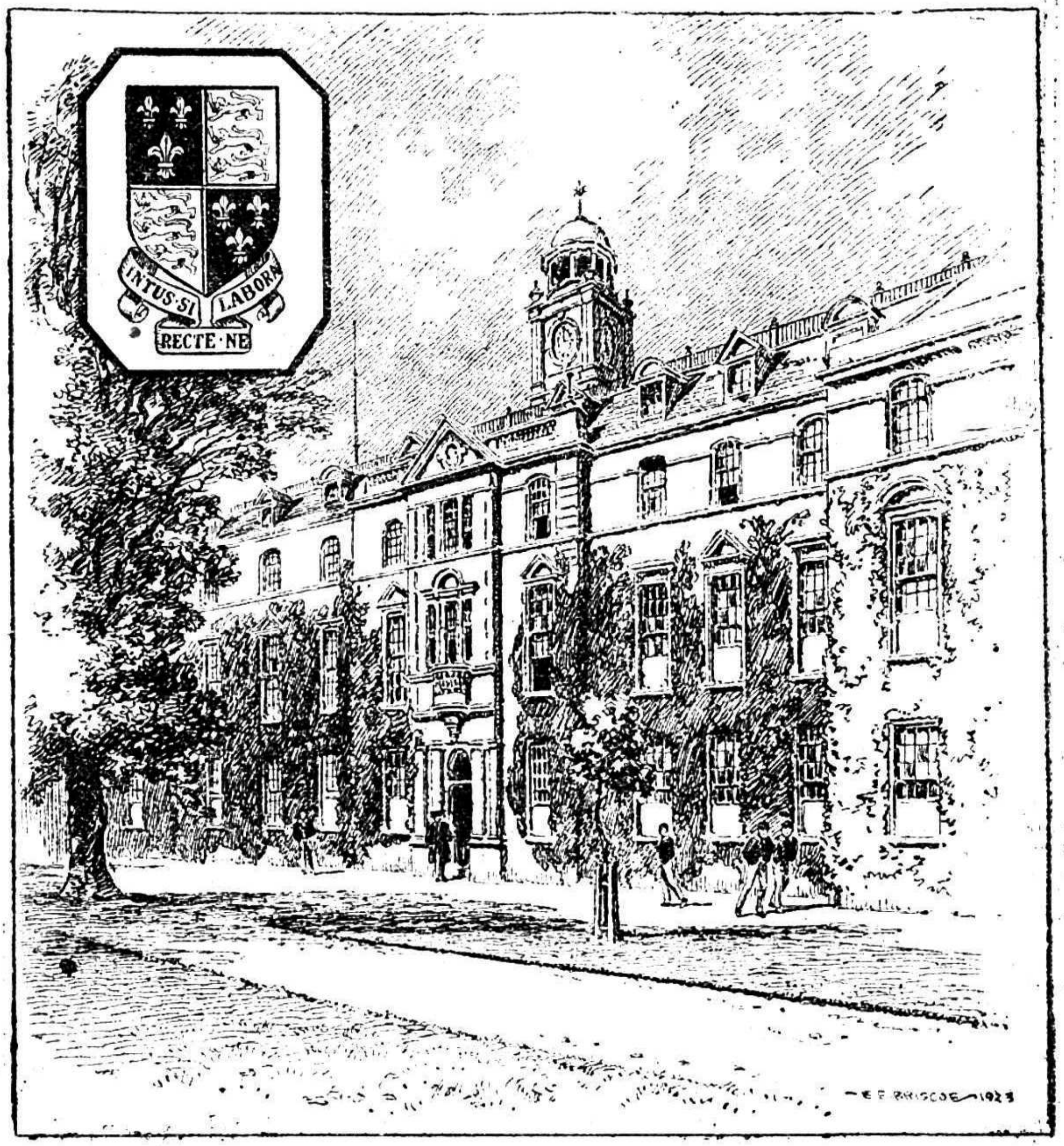
OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

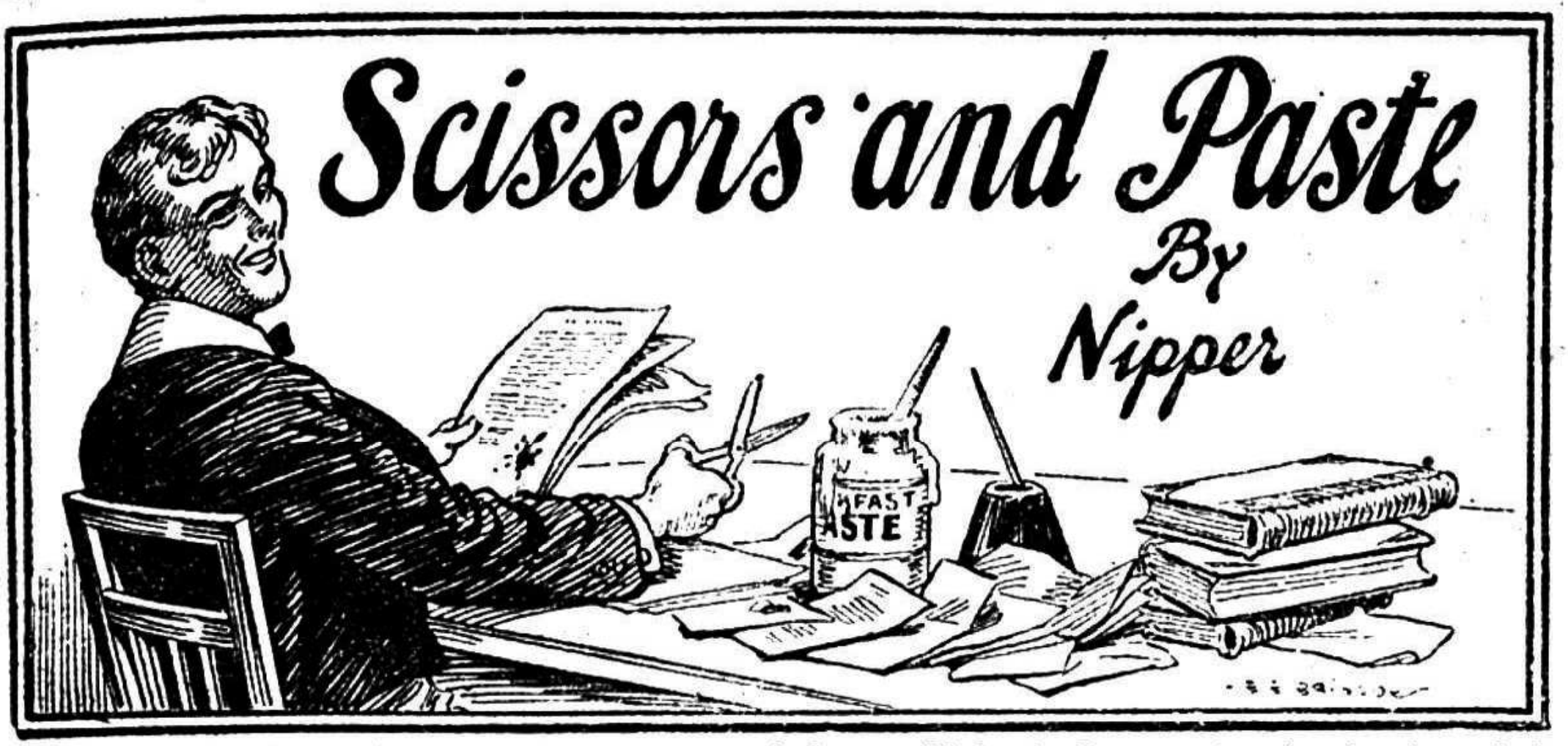
SPECIAL SERIES OF ART SKETCHES BY MR. E. E. BRISCOE.

No. 8. SHREWSBURY SCHOOL.



SHREWSBURY SCHOOL.

This celebrated public school was founded by Edward VI in 1552, the original old buildings in the town of Shrewsbury being now occupied by the public museum and library. The school was in the town until 1852, when it moved to its present site at Kingsland, just outside. It is now situated beside the River Severn, an advantage which enables the boys to include rowing as one of the regular sports. Beginning as a grammar school, Shrewsbury attained its prominence as one of the important public schools of England by the fame of Dr. Butler, who was headmaster from 1798-1836, and later it won a high reputation for scholarship under Dr. B. H. Kennedy, headmaster from 1836-1866. The school accommodates 400 boys, who, with the exception of a few day boys, are boarded in nine houses. In addition to the ordinary school buildings there is a fine library and picture gallery.



Editorial Office,
Study C,
St. Frank's.

My dear Chums,

It is funny how great minds will think alike. When I told my contributors that I wanted New Year articles, most of them sent me copy dealing with New Year resolutions. As you will see for yourselves in the present number, E. Sopp, Reginald Pitt, and Willy Handforth have selected this theme for their contributions. Happily, each of them has his own particular ideas on the subject, which differ sufficiently to give variety.

ON MAKING NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS.

Personally, I am very much in favour of making New Year resolutions, provided they are made with the intention of being kept. Otherwise, I agree with Sopp, that it is better not to make any at all. That is why I would advocate moderation in New Year resolutions. Don't attempt too much at a time.

OUR GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

As regards the Mag., New Year resolutions do not apply, for the simple reason that we make good resolutions every week. That is to say, with every new issue of the Mag. we always try to make it a little better than the week before. Thus, what is only an annual custom for many people, has become a habit with us. I am sure you will admit after reading through the present number that we have begun the New Year uncommonly well, and if we continue at this rate we know that you will be more than satisfied with our progress during the coming year.

HUBERT JARROW.

The most notable contribution in this issue is perhaps that of Hubert Jarrow. It is a very remarkable thing that a new boy, and a junior at that, should get a contribution published in the Mag. during the first week of his arrival at St. Frank's. But the reason is very clear. Hubert Jarrow is simply bound to be a contributor. There is no one in the whole of St. Frank's who can get so much information into so little space as the new junior. He is a kind of pocket walking encyclopedia. You can ask him questions on anything, and he will be certain to reply. The only thing is that his replies are apt to leave the inquirer a little less informed, if that is possible, than he was before.

DE VALERIE'S CRITIC.

By the way, there is rather a funny yarn going round about De Valerie's article on Quaint Customs in Foreign Lands. You would think it was obvious that the author was amicably pulling our legs. Anyway, most of the chaps would. But there is one Removite who was shown the article and went off the deep-end. I won't tell you his name, but it begins and ends with an H. So perhaps you can guess. Well, it is said that this Removite was quite upset by some of the stuff in De Valerie's article. He said that very likely the customs of Bananaland were quite true, because he knew the natives of that place were an uncivilised lot of fatheads. But he was certain that the Yellow Dwarfs of Zag never existed. He thought the article was written by someone who knew nothing about his subject. That, in fact, De Valerie ought to take a course of geography lessons.

HANDY'S GRIEVANCE.

And talking of Handforth—sorry, I am afraid I've given the junior's name away now—talking of Handy, he has written me a note asking why I am not printing more of his Trackett Grim stories. He says that they are the best features in the Mag. Well, I know better than that. But cheer up, Handy, more of your yarns will be appearing soon.

Wishing you all, my chums, a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Your Sincere Friend, NIPPER.

CABBAGES AND KINGS

And All Sorts of Things

Gossip of the Week :: By Hubert Jarrow

I HAVE been requested by the Editor to write a few lines on the general situation. That is, I intend to give my views concerning St. Frank's. Being a new boy, I naturally regard this as a great honour.

Of course, there are all sorts of honours—honours that a soldier gets on the field, honours for passing exams, and there are honours in the game of bridge. One of the biggest bridges I've seen is the one that spans the Firth of Forth. And it strikes me as curious that they don't call the Remove by its correct name—which, of course, is the Fourth. Why should there be this confusion?

Mind you, it's easy enough to get confused. For example, any fellow who goes along the Underground Railway for the first time is pretty well muddled up. I mean, these trains, rushing up and down, going in all sorts of directions, and shooting off before you can see where they're bound.

And any book bound in leather is far more durable than a book bound in cloth. For winter wear, you can't beat all wool, and this is a very important point to remember when choosing cloth. Cotton is hardly suitable—— Now, cotton, when you come to think of it, is rummy stuff. It grows on plants, and has to be put through all sorts of processes before it gets wound round a reel.

I heard the reel once, when the Gordon Highlanders were marching past, and although it wasn't exactly music, it was nice to listen to.

I'm surprised there isn't more listening-in at St. Frank's. These wireless sets are very cheap nowadays, and just think of the concerts that are being broadcast from all the big stations.

You can't call Bellton a big station. It's only a small place, and I believe there's only one porter. I wouldn't drink porter, although I've been told it's good for the health—and so, for that matter, is stout.

It isn't my way to be personal, but I do think that Little, of the Remove, ought to do something to reduce his stoutness. It's time the chap woke up to the peril of his condition, and it wouldn't do any harm to tell him outright that he's endangerous his heart by this over-eating.

I'm well satisfied with the grub at St. Frank's. There certainly was a grub in the cauliflower on Tuesday, but I don't suppose the kitchen-maids can help that sort of thing now and again. I think it's safer to use cabbages, and even swedes are nice for a change.

The Swedes are not at all bad when you get to know them. In fact, I've been to Sweden, and some of the men are big, hefty fellows, who hop off to the United States as soon as they get enough money.

Money's very queer stuff nowadays. A fellow who's travelling about doesn't know where he is. The value varies in almost every country he goes to. And some people say that the King gets too much money to spend, but I call that ridiculous. The King has got more work to do than any of his subjects, and he doesn't get any too much screw.

And screws are always better than nails. Nails make such a lot of noise when you hammer them in. And isn't it queer, when you come to think of it, how your nails keep growing, although you cut them every few days? Now that we're getting well into January, the days will begin to get longer, and almost before we know it, we shall have Spring here.

I thing the clock in our study must need a new spring, because it's always going slow. I've told Singleton about it, but it doesn't worry him at all.

More people get prematurely old through worry than anything else. Where's the sense of it? Worrying is simply nothing

more nor less than a curse. And it isn't really a fact that curses are dangerous. In olden days, people used to think that curses were awful, especially as they were cast upon somebody by a witch. And these witches—these old girls with broomsticks—they're nothing but fairy tales.

I used to read lots of fairy tales when I was a kid, but they're altogether too young for me now. And it's rummy to me why a little boy or a little girl should be referred to as a kid. After all, a kid's simply a young goat. And if I went up to Willy Handforth and called him a young goat, he'd get jolly wild.

Jonathan Wild was a real man, too. He lived at the same time as Dick Turpin, and had all sorts of thrilling adventures on the York road. I don't know much about York, because I've only been there once.

Yorke, of the College House, seems to be a pretty good sort. I met him the other day, and he was as nice as anything—and I'd been told that the College House chaps were beasts.

I don't think I'll go into any discussion on beasts. There are so many of them that I haven't got space enough to cover the whole ground. Just now the playing fields ought to be carefully looked after, because the ground's getting spongy and damp.

And dampness is the cause of all sorts of illnesses. You sleep in a damp bed, and you get pneumonia; you wear damp boots, and have chilblains. Then you have to go to a doctor.

It seems peculiar that our Headmaster should be called a doctor—when, of course, he isn't a doctor at all. At least, not a doctor who's got a practice. And it's up to everybody in these days of football to put in as much practice as he possibly can. A chap can't be too fit.

There's something awful about a fit. I saw one poor chap in a fit, and he had to be taken away in an ambulance. And the way some of these ready-made suits fit! It's perfectly disgraceful. About the only fellow at St. Frank's who really looks perfect is Archie Glenthorne—with Tregellis-West as a second.

I was a second once, when two of my chums had a fight. And, as a matter of fact, the fight didn't last much longer than a second, because the knock-out blow was delivered in no time.

(Talking about the time, I think you'd better dry up, old man. This is just about as much space as we can allow you this week.—ED., St. Frank's Mag.)

Another Chatty Contribution

By HUBERT JARROW

Will Appear in our next issue

under the title of :—

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK!

PAINFUL PARODIES

PERPETRATED
By
Clarence Fellowe.

LITTLE TUCKSHOP IN THE WEST

Being That Famous Song "Little Grey Home in the West," As Rendered by FATTY LITTLE.

When my watch points to just four o'clock,
And the toil of a long day is o'er—
Though the throat may be dry,
And my tummy awry,
I forget I was starving before.
Just outside, 'neath the Triangle's wall,
I shall find tons to eat of the best;
And the rest of the day
Will be all bright and gay,
In my little tuckshop of the West.

There are cakes that will welcome me in,
There are bottles that flow with a hiss—
There are two pies that shine
Just because they are mine,
And a thousand things other chaps miss;
It's a corner of Heaven itself,
Though it puts a chap's cash to the test;
But with grub stocked in there,
Why, no place can compare
With my little tuckshop of the West.

There are times when my tin fades away
And I roam about hungry and sad—
Though I pass by the door,
And my luck I deplore,
I can enter not this place so glad.
Then on Saturday morning so bright,
With my week's tin I'm simply possessed;
And I dash straight along,
Caring nought for the throng,
To my little tuckshop in the West!

QUAINT NEW YEAR CUSTOMS IN FOREIGN PARTS

Arranged and Invented by CECIL DE VALERIE

THE FAR, FAR NORTH.

NOW that we are ushering in the New Year, it may be of interest to your numerous readers to read about the various and extraordinary customs prevailing in the more outlandish parts of the world.

For instance, there is a place in the far, far north where the most peculiar rites are performed on the First of January in every year. Here the inhabitants annually perform a dance round a national image known as the Haggis.

The people wear strange clothes. The men dress themselves like women in short skirts of many colours, that reach to the knee. Their knees are bare and in their stockings they have little knives known as dirks.

The villagers in this strange land, which is far north of the River Tweed, then start their New Year show. To the strains of music, made by men who play a queer instrument call the Bag of Pipes, they dance the stately old dance known as the Haggis-dance. The performers dance in a circle round the image saying the odd words: "Braw bricht moonlicht nicht."

They continue this for a long time, and then the music ends up with a tremendous bang, and the dancers dash off to have a glass of the national drink, which is called whisky.

The tremendous bang is called "banging the saxpence."

* * *

THE NATIVES OF BANANALAND.

But even more curious customs prevail at the New Year in the distant country of the Washi-Wispis. The Washi-Wispis are a small tribe of African natives who inhabit Bananaland. They have an old chief whose age is over six hundred years, and whose name is Yeswe.

This quaint tribe hold a wonderful ceremony every New Year. They form up in a long line, the women and children at one end and the men at the other. Then huge quantities of bananas are brought and each member of the tribe takes a bunch in each hand.

Old chief Yeswe suddenly beats on a tom-tom. This is the signal for the ceremony to begin. Immediately everyone starts peeling their fruit. And the idea is to see who can eat all his bunch before the others.

The first man or woman to finish then dashes up to Yeswe, and flings the skins at his head, at the same time shouting:

"We avvernon tu dayee!"

* * *

A NORTH AMERICAN CUSTOM.

Even more extraordinary than this custom is one that annually takes place in North America amongst the Domino Indians. This tribe is one of the last surviving tribes of Indians and is headed by a chief called Double Blank.

The old chief insists on a most complicated affair being gone through every New Year. The main idea is that every brave in the tribe should bring him the scalp of a white man.

This is rather difficult for there are very few white men in the neighbourhood. And those who are there always refuse to lend their scalps for the purpose.

So the only thing the poor braves can do is to make their scalps out of tissue paper. Each brave hands up a bundle of these paper scalps. And the trouble is that they keep on getting torn. That is very annoying for the braves, because for each scalp that gets torn old

Double Blank always makes them give him a resent.

To get over this difficulty the braves have ately been cutting their scalps out of cardboard.

This was all right. But one advanced fellow cut his out of tin. And, unfortunately, the old chief cut his fingers on its sharp edges.

Double Blank was so angry that he ordered his cook to serve up the brave for dinner, surrounded by onions and Worcester Sauce.

* * *

THE PUSHIMOVAS OF CENTRAL CHINA.

That is very sad, but there is a native tribe where things are even sadder. I refer to a little-known people who inhabit Central China, and are called the Pushimovas. They are ruled by a man called Hi-hi-yu, and his assistant Oh-I-sa.

It is the fashion amongst these uneducated Chinks to tie themselves by their pigtails to tall trees on the last night of the old year.

Hi-hi-yu and Oh-I-sa walk round after dinner to see that all their tribesmen are doing this. The richest members of the tribe are left hanging by their pigtails while the poorer ones are allowed to be cut down.

In the morning, Hi-hi-yu and Oh-I-sa go round once more. By this time the chaps left hanging are feeling pretty bad. So the head and his assistant go up to them and say, "If you no likee one time hangee me velly pleased cut you dlown."

"Velly thankee muchee," say the poor fellows.

"It costee you muchee chin-chink notees," says On-I-sa.

"Goodee nuffee," the others reply. "Me pay you one time tlousand poundee."

So the head and assistant collar the cash and set free the rich Chinks. They think it is a very fine custom.

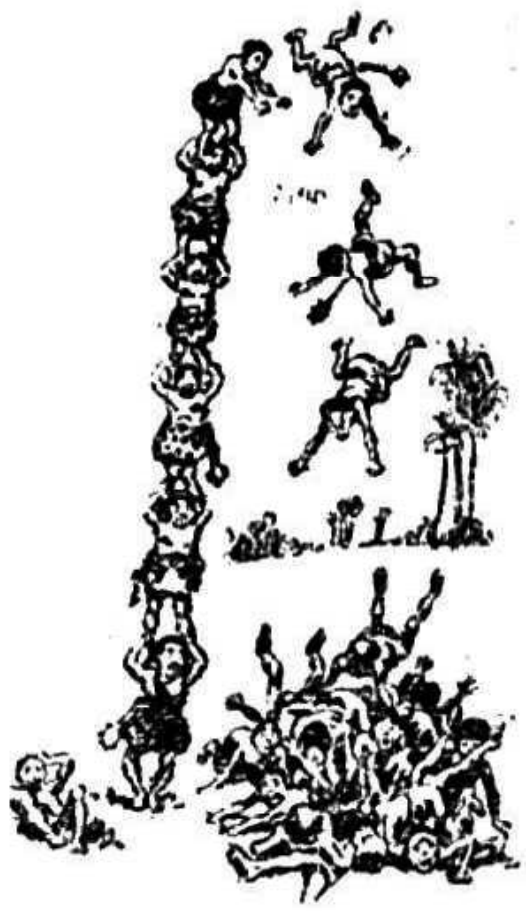
* * *

THE YELLOW DWARFS OF ZAG.

There is one other small tribe who come from the Centre of Asia, whose New Year customs would strike us in England as rather singular.

They are the Yellow Dwarfs of Zag, located in the wilds of Umbrellastan. These poor heathens imagine that the moon is made of green cheese.

They are particularly fond of cheese, and every New Year's Eve a number of the little fellows are chosen by lot to fetch the moon out of the skies.



To do this, the men picked climb up on each others shoulders. And in this way it is thought they will reach the moon. So far, they have not succeeded in doing it, as when about thirty men have climbed up in this fashion, the whole lot always fall down with a crash.

The Yellow Dwarfs of Zag pick themselves up again, and have another shot. But as soon as the first rays of another day's sun appear over the horizon they have to chuck it till next New Year.

On New Year's Day the Yellow Dwarfs of Zag liberate the sacred cheese of Gorgonzola. This famous cheese is many centuries old and is kept locked in the Temple of Odour, situated on the top of a big hill overlooking the country of Zag. At sunrise the temple gates are thrown open, and the fine old cheese slowly moves forth to a platform and emits a refreshing smell of such strength as to be appreciated by the Dwarfs of Zag for many miles around. This continues throughout the day, and by noon becomes so powerful that none of the inhabitants can approach within a mile of the holy cheese. When the sun goes down the great cheese returns majestically to its resting place in the temple. The holy men then close the temple gates, which are not opened again until the following New Year.

I think it will be seen from these wonderful examples how strange are the customs of people in far off lands. So strange, in fact, that it is almost impossible to believe them.

There is something significant about Handforth's recently acquired habit of taking solitary walks up the lane—generally in the direction of the Moor View School for Girls. Handy always expresses complete indifference to the charms of the fair sex; but, well we're not quite blind, are we?

We wish you luck, Handy, old man!

* * *

Somerton is getting very shrovy these days. Unless he visits the barber pretty soon somebody will be treading on his hair.

HANDFORTH'S NEW YEAR PRESENTS

A Tragedy :: Related by WALTER CHURCH

HE'D just got back from the holidays, and Handforth was in one of his mysterious moods. Clarey and I had done our best to find out what he was up to, but he started getting ratty, so we gave it up. We knew jolly well that he'd let the whole secret out as soon as we pretended to be indifferent.

I'm not much of a hand at writing, and I don't think it's any good trying to repeat any of the conversation. So I'll just tell the affair as it happened, and do the best I can. The Editor asked me to make it into a short story, and this thing you're now reading is the awful result.

We were pretty surprised in Study D when Handforth produced a cake of carbolic soap. This was on the day we arrived, and we thought it pretty queer that Handy should bring soap of that kind with him. McClure asked him what it was for, and Handforth, after nearly chucking McClure into the coalbox, explained that the chunk of carbolic soap was a New Year present for his minor.

Irene gave old Handy a terrific slap on the face.

Of course, we heartily agreed with the idea—because Willy generally goes about in a pretty grubby condition, and you can't beat carbolic soap for a real cleansing job. Naturally, Willy wouldn't like it, but this was just one of Handy's little jokes.

And then, after pledging us to secrecy—in fact, he threatened to murder the pair of us and bury our remains in the kitchen garden—Handy brought out a ripping scent spray. It was one of those things that ladies use, made of cut glass, with a metal squirt at the top, and a couple of rummy rubber bulbs hanging at the end of a tube.

The thing was filled with jolly fine scent, and when you pressed the bulb, a spray of lovely perfume came whizzing out. You can easily imagine how surprised McClure and I were to see this, and we sarcastically asked Handforth if it was for fumigating himself after he'd been cleaning his bike lamp.

As soon as the study had been put straight again, and McClure and I had recovered, Handforth went very red in the face, and explained that the scent spray was just a little New Year present for Irene Manners. Of course, he had really intended telling us nothing about it, but he couldn't help himself.

And he calmly explained that it was my job to take the present to Irene, and McClure had to deliver the soap to Willy. I didn't mind much, because I considered I'd got the best of the two errands. It was only after a great effort of will-power that Handy resisted the temptation to go in person.

Well, he made two parcels, tied them up, and then wrote on one of them "to Miss Irene, with comps. I think this is just what you want for the New Year. Hope you'll use it regularly." And on the other parcel he wrote, "to Willy, for the New Year. You're always so grubby that this stuff will give you a pleasant niff."

Well, I went off with my parcel, and I've got to admit that I had an awful suspicion in my mind. But Handy can't blame me, because I mentioned something about it, and he told me not to be a blithering idiot. Everybody knows what an obstinate ass he is, and he simply won't take anybody's advice.

But, anyhow, I had an idea that he'd addressed the parcels wrong! And the very thought of it was horrifying. Still, it wasn't my doing, so why should I worry? But as I walked along the lane, I shook the parcel about, and felt it thoroughly, and I was pretty certain that it contained the soap.

And I could picture to myself what Miss Irene would say when she got it, with Handy's advice that she should use it regularly! And Willy, of course, wouldn't even guess that a mistake had been made, because Handy mentioned that the present would give him a pleasant niff.

Half-way to the Moor View School, I halted, and decided to turn back. But then I remembered how Handy had ridiculed me. Besides, it was just possible that I'd made a bloomer. And if he untied those parcels, and found them all serene, I should have been in for tons of trouble.

And it happened that Miss Irene came along on her bike just then. So, of course, I handed over the present to her, and simply hopped it—in case she opened it on the spot.

Just as I was getting near St. Frank's, I passed Handforth, who was lounging carelessly along the lane. As soon as I told him what had happened, he whizzed off, and told me not to follow. Of course, I did, but I took care to keep well behind.

And I just turned the bend when I saw Irene walking along, looking daggers, as they say. Anyhow, she had a fierce expression on her face. Handy raised his cap, and then got an awful shock. Irene drew herself up, and gave old Handy a terrific slap on the face that nearly knocked him flying. Then she walked on, as though he didn't exist. And Handy stood there, flabbergasted.

In the meantime Willy was having the time of his life. I didn't see this, but young Chubby Heath told me all about it afterwards. Willy sniffed like anything when he got the parcel, and said it was obviously one of Handy's silly jokes. But when he saw the scent spray he nearly collapsed.

And the young beggar, instead of going to his major, and asking for explanations, held out the spray in front of him, and started pumping the thing for all it was worth. He simply showered himself with scent, and Chubby said that the Third Form passage still whiffs of parma violet.

Willy went out into the Triangle, leaving a trail of scent behind him like a blessed perfume factory. The chaps scattered like chaff before the wind, holding their noses and yelling inquiries. But Willy didn't care. He marched across the Triangle, and just then Handy came in.

He gave his minor a glare, passed on, and then paused. For as he went by Willy,

The young beggar, instead of going to his major and asking for an explanation, held out the spray in front of him, and started pumping the thing for all he was worth.

the whole air reeked of parma violets. It absolutely hit him in the face. And the truth dawned upon him.

For a minute or two he stood there, opening and shutting his mouth like a codfish. He went as pale as anything, realising the horrible truth. No wonder Miss Irene had slapped his face! Carbolic soap! And he had told her to use it regularly!

He grabbed hold of Willy, shook him until the poor kid nearly fell to pieces, and demanded the truth. And, having verified his suspicions, he got the scent spray, and dashed off like the wind to the village—because he knew that Miss Irene had gone that way.

I don't exactly know what happened, but half an hour later Handy came in looking pleased, and it seems that two or three chaps had seen him coming up the lane with Miss Irene. Obviously, he had succeeded in explaining things, and was forgiven.

But he was chipped unmercifully for days, and the Third absolutely treated Willy as an outcast until he sent all his clothes to the cleaners. And now every time some of the chaps meet Miss Irene, they ask how the scent's getting on, and they offer to buy her fresh supplies when Handy's is exhausted.

E. Sopp's Fables

By Edgar Sopp of the Fifth

No. 6—The Fable of the New Year Resolution Fiend.

TOWARDS the end of every Year there is a sinister type of Fiend let loose to roam over the face of the Land. The Horror is known Far and Wide as the New Year Resolution Fiend.

And it came to pass that a Great Seat of Learning, known as St. Frank's, possessed one of these Abominations. Of course, there were Lesser Fiends at large, but this particular New Year Resolution Fiend was a Corker. He had, in fact, Got it Bad. He shall be Nameless, but it may be Revealed that he was a Member of that Select Body known as the Remove Form.

Returning to School after that Period of Over-Eating and Hectic Excitement called the Christmas Vac., he let it be Trumpeted Forth that he had made at least Six Firm Resolutions, and, furthermore, that he intended keeping these Resolutions to the Letter.

Now, the Lesser Fiends were content with but One, but this Giant of Will Power must needs make Six. And his Resolutions were as Follows:

1. Henceforth he would keep a Diary, day by day.

2. He would spend but Half of his Pocket-Money, and save the Rest.

3. He would put in one Hour each Evening learning Shorthand.

4. That he would Write to Mother every Sunday.

5. That he would wash his neck daily, leaving no watermark.

6. He would always keep his Temper under Provocation.

Thus it will be seen that this N.Y.R.F. had set himself Something to Do. He even went so far as to write out a list and pin it to the Study Wall. Whereat his Chums scoffed and Jibed, and made Certain Remarks concerning his Sanity.

With Great Fortitude he kept Resolution No. 6, and merely Smiled. And thereupon he sat down and Pondered Long, wondering what the dickens he should write in his Diary. However, the difficulty was Overcome, and he felt Good.

And, behold, the Next Day he divided his Pocket Money into Two Halves, and placed One Portion into a Brand New Money-Box—one of Those which it is impossible to open without using a Hammer.

And in Spite of many Tempting Allurements he kept Resolution No. 2. In fact, and to be Candid, he was a model of Strength for a week—even including Washing his Neck and Writing to his Mother. His Shorthand was Shaky in the Extreme, but he Manfully persisted.

Now, it came to pass that one morning the Rising Bell rang out in vain. That is to say, the N.Y.R.F. dallied between the Blankets until the time for washing and dressing was Reduced to exactly Three Minutes. And although he Did his Best, nobody except a Magician can dress and wash Thoroughly in such a short Space of time.

And, lo, he Whizzed Downstairs with a Distinct Watermark round his Neck. Thus was Resolution No. 5 broken. And it chanced that this day was a Half-Holiday, and our N.Y.R.F. went out on the Spree with a number of other Fellows. His day's Pocket Money vanished utterly. However, he decided that he would spend Absolutely Nothing on the Morrow, thus Making Good the Leeway.

But on the Morrow he found it Extremely Difficult to go about Penniless, and he was now becoming Reckless. He had omitted to make up his Diary, but thought Little of this, assuring himself that he could make up Two Days in one. And in the evening there Happened to be a Form Meeting on a Matter of Great Moment, and the Shorthand Hour went by the Board.

And the N.Y.R.F. worried greatly, and grim were his Thoughts. After much Cogitation he came to the conclusion that the Shorthand was Unnecessary, and he forthwith Hurled his books into the Fire.

Resolution No. 3 was Broken beyond Repair. And Resolutions 1 and 2 rapidly went the Same Way. After all, he asked himself, why should he keep a Diary? He came to regard the Idea as preposterous. And what was Pocket-Money for, but to Spend? And, behold, the Money-Box was Hammered open, and the Money extracted. And a Great Feed was held in Celebration.

And it came to pass that on the Sunday

he was immersed deeply in the Pages of a Thrilling Adventure Book, and he not only Neglected to write to Mother, but he forgot All about It.

He was reminded, however, by one of his Chums, and he scoffed and spoke, saying that the Letter would do Later. But having Put it Off, the letter was never Written. And Resolution No. 4 met its Fate.

And his Friends jeered at him, and said that they knew what would Happen. They made Sarcastic Remarks and Provoked him muchly—feeling fairly certain that he would keep Resolution No. 6.

But the N.Y.R.F. arose in his Wrath and smote his Tormentors hip and Thigh. They had pointed out to him that his neck was Grubby, and that Resolution No. 5 was broken, and he thereupon proved to them that No. 6 was broken also. For he lost his Temper to such good purpose that Blood flowed freely, and Thick Ears and Black eyes were as Plentiful as Leaves in Vallambrosa.

And the N.Y.R.F. came to the Conclusion that New Year Resolutions were nothing but Rot, and he decided then and there to have nothing more to Do with Them. He concluded that they were just Traps for the Unwary. And in his New Found wisdom he was Right.

That is to say, the N.Y.R.F. dallied between the Blankets until the time for washing and dressing was Reduced to exactly Three Minutes.

And thereafter he was a Fiend no more, but just an Ordinary Chap.

MORAL: BE SAFE! IF YOU MUST MAKE A NEW YEAR RESOLUTION, LET IT BE THAT YOU WILL MAKE NO RESOLUTIONS!

RESOLUTION SUGGESTIONS

Offered Free Gratis

By REGINALD PITT

CECIL DE VALERIE:
To always be pleasant and courteous in Study M when Ulysses Spencer Adams refers to time-honoured English customs as "the bunk."

FATTY LITTLE:
To look the other way whenever he happens to pass the tuckshop.

RALPH LESLIE FULLWOOD:
To read the daily newspaper without even glancing at the racing columns.

TIMOTHY TUCKER:
To read at least two anti-Socialist books weekly.

THE DUKE OF SOMERTON:
To treat the Remove to a feed every time he tears his bags.

CLARENCE FELLOWE:
To read Macaulay, Tennyson, and Longfellow, so that he can find out what Poetry is.

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH:
To give up his vice of writing alleged detective stories.

SOLOMON LEVI:
To make no more than 100 per cent profit on any deal.

ARCHIE GLENTHORNE:
To go for a five-mile walk daily, and dispense with Phipps.

ULYSSES SPENCER ADAMS:
To learn the English language without delay.

CUTHBERT CHAMBERS, of the Fifth:
To fix a band round his head, so that it won't swell so much.

NIPPER:
To resign the Captaincy and the Editorial Chair of the "St. Frank's Magazine" in favour of Handforth.

WILLY HANDFORTH, of the Third:
To always treat his elder brother with becoming humility and respect.

MYSELF:
To write something for the "Mag" which will be readable.

NU YERE REZZOLUTONS

By WILLY HANDFORTH

I THINK Nu Yere rezzolutons are orfly silly.

That is becos no won ever kepes them. If they did, it wud be silly two. But not quite so silly. Fer instants I made a nu Yere rezzoluton larst Yere. I said I woodent give mi major anny cheak.

That was qwhite a good rezzoluton, I think. And Ted made one that he woodent give me a punch. It wurked ollly wel for the furst day. That was up to diner-time.

Then I called him a silly fatthed becos he bust mi new rist worch, wich was a prezent from my arent. Then the roter sloshed me won in the i.

Yuve brokken yore rezzoluton I sed. rot he sed yuve broken yers.

Thats wots so stewpid. I haddent brokken mi rezzolution. Hed brokken my worch wich is not a bit the same thing.

But Ted cuddent se that. Hese two dens. But Ime not going to make enny more rezzolutons wen other peeple brake them.

Sum of the chaps mite do wel to make good rezzolutons tho. I shud like to see that gredy felow. Teddy Little make won. He borode six pence of me the otther day and spent it on stufing his ise out in the tuck shop.

Yu crool boy he sed. Wot a barbros habbit. Blez mi sole such a thing must be stopped.

I stopped as sune as I sor yu coming along sir I sed orlways truthful.

Wen I asked him to pay me back he said I was being gredy and tryde to hit mi hed. I cot him a hard biff on the ere but that didunt get me bak mi tanner.

I think Fatty Little ought to swear he wont have enney mor tuck till hese payd me back.

And theirs otther chapps I think wud be beter for making sum rezzolutons. Archie mite giv up torking in his slopy way. Harf the time wy yu carnt understand wot hese speking about.

If a chap torks orl rong he carnt eggspekt chaps to tork to him. Just the same as if a chap spels his riting orl rong he carnt eggspek enny won to rede it. I no becos I usant to be abble to spel.

So yu can take it from me Ime rite. Q.E.D as they say in Uklid.

And then theirs Sir Montie. Ime not saying ennything against him. Hese orl right and qwhite a nice feller. But wy shud he wear those glarses? If he gave them up this yere I shuddent get mi hed smaked.

Tu days ago I ran into him slap in the Tryangel and the beezly things fell orf into the mud.

Beegad he ses yore a clumsy ass mi dear chap and Ile joly wel have to punch yu for that. Yu must be tort to be more careful.

So he picked up his speks and boxxed mi ears. Thats not fare. If he wud onnly stop waring the silly things I shuddent get my eres boxed.

But i think the peeple who reely ott to make a Nu Yeres rezzoluton ar the St. Franks masters. I shud like Mr. Suncliffe to make won. Becos on Satturday he cot me sticking a brokken nib into Owen minor's carf.

Yu crool boy he sed Wot a barbros habbit. Blez mi sole such a thing must be stopped

I stopped as sure as I sor yu coming along sir I sed orlways truthful.

Thats impatinents he ansered Yu will du me too hundred lines for that and another too hundred for bullying. Wel!

Wy carnt Mr. Suncliffe make a rezzoluton not to giv anny lines?

Otther good rezzolutons I can suggest ar these.

1. Giv us extra long hollydays this yere.

2. Let orl the juniors get fre tuck at the tuck-shop.

3. No won below the age of fifteen need do enny work in form time.

4. Abbolish orl fagging.

5. Giv us dubble the usul pokket money.

These ar just sum of mi good rezzolutons wich otther peple mite be getting on with. Ive plenty mor wen they ar wanted.

A TRACKETT GRIM YARN

Coming Next Week!

(*Continued from page 27*).

It was altogether uncanny — indeed, horrible. What strange, mystic influence had this Egyptian over the unfortunate Removite? That the influence was all powerful could not be denied—for it had stopped De Valerie from scoring at a moment when victory had been as good as certain.

Fortunately, nobody else had noticed Dr. Karnak's connection with the incident, and the game went on—De Valerie now playing listlessly. He was a completely changed person.

And that ghastly failure of his to seize a golden opportunity made all the difference in the world to the game. For a period of five minutes the Saints seemed to lose heart, and the visitors took full advantage of this. They scored again, scrambling the ball into the net during an exciting struggle in front of goal.

The Grammarians re-started with great vim, and the Saints were forced to adopt purely defensive tactics. De Valerie was nothing but a passenger. He was worse than useless, mis-kicking, failing to pass at crucial moments, and generally spoiling the whole forward line.

And so the game ended—a defeat for the Remove. Beaten on our own ground! The crowd was grim and angry, for everybody had a grievance against Cecil De Valerie. This licking was his fault entirely!

When he went off the field he was bombarded with questions from hot, excited juniors. But De Valerie couldn't answer. He only said that for those few seconds he didn't know where he was. And to the bulk of the Remove the affair remained a complete mystery.

But I knew well enough that the sinister Dr. Karnak was responsible. The man's evil influence was becoming stronger every day. And I could see trouble coming—big, appalling trouble.

And I was helpless. To complain to the Head was out of the question, for Dr. Stafford had full confidence in the Egyptian, and would ridicule any complaint. Moreover, I had no proof of anything sinister.

And so I could only wait, grimly determined to do everything in my power to kill this dread influence. But I knew within me that my powers were puny and insignificant compared to the all-compelling strength of Dr. Karnak.

THE END.

1924
NEW YEAR ANNOUNCEMENT

SIX THUMPING GOOD STORIES Every Week. (This is an additional story.)

HOW TO BOX. (Instructive article.)

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

HOW TO KEEP RABBITS. (Useful article.)

— in —

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