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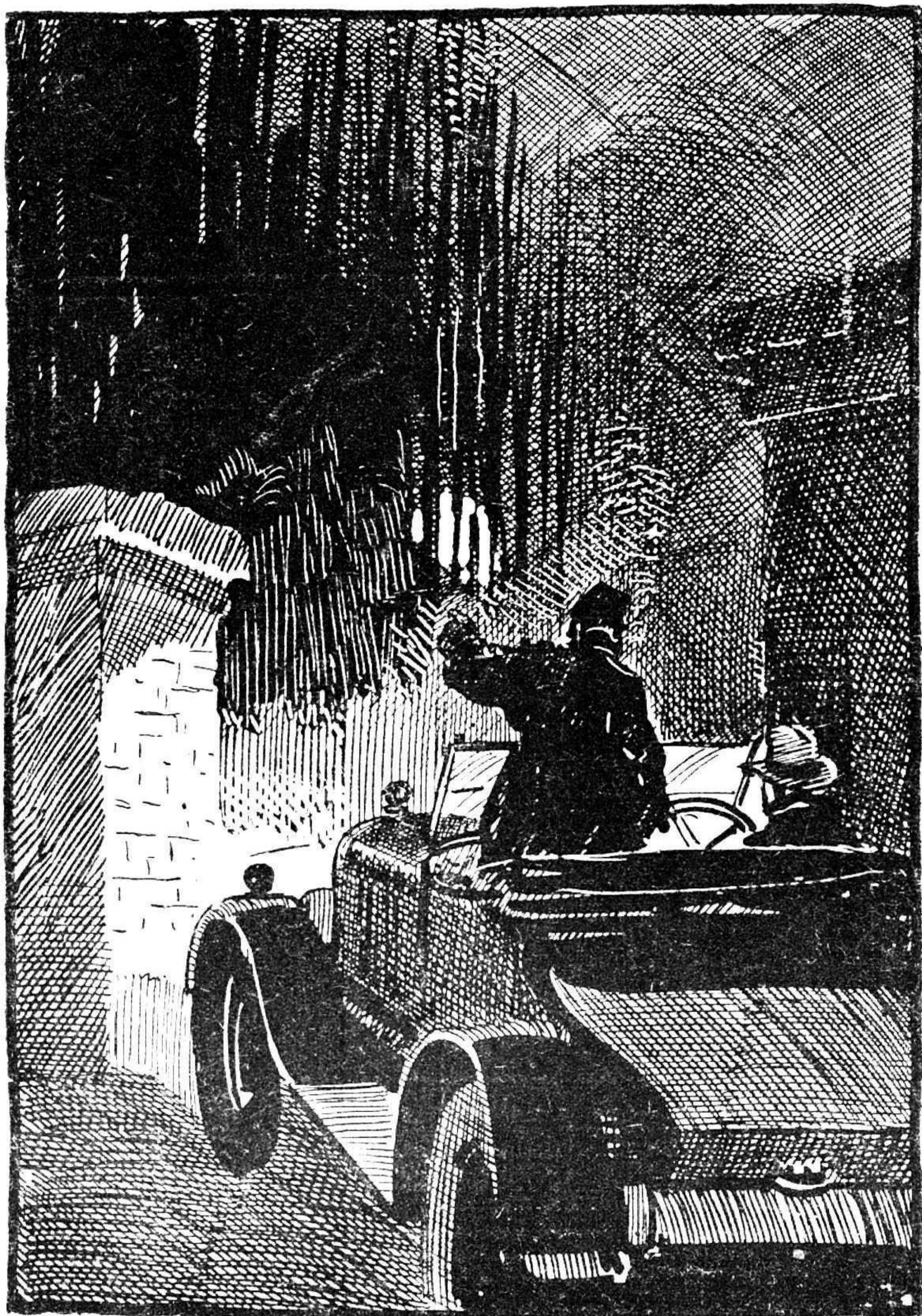
And St. Franks Magazine

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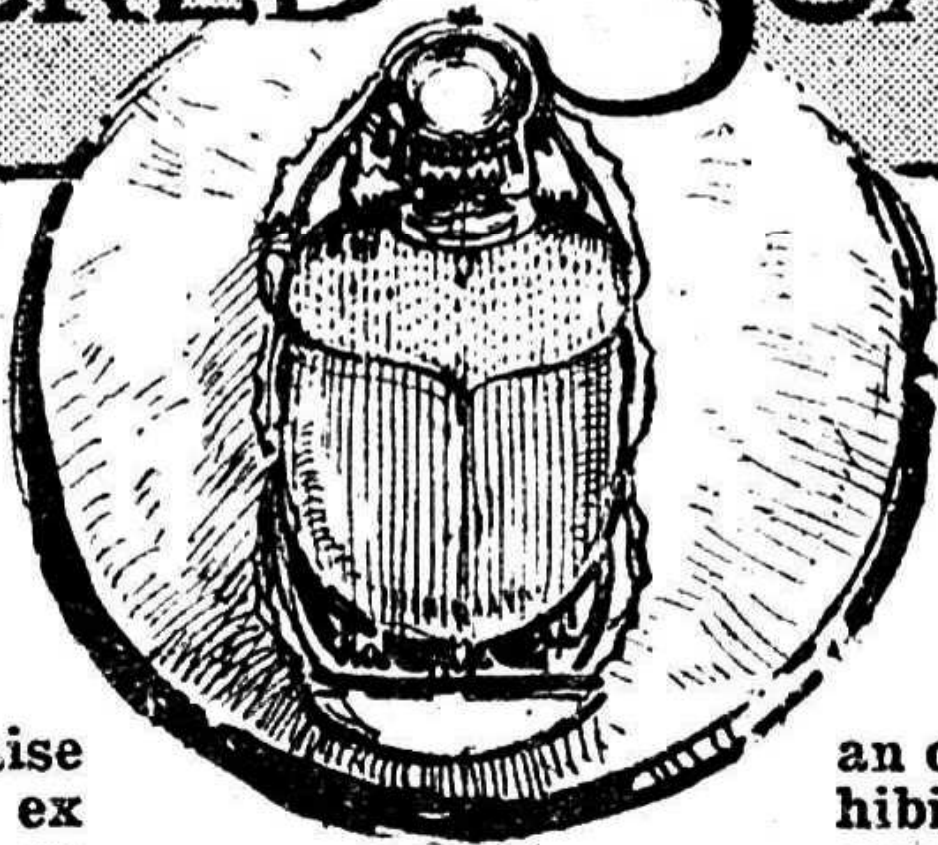
Two beams of white light stabbed through the gloom and focussed themselves upon Nelson Lee's disguised face. It was an acid test. There was no means of detecting that this man with the fez on his head was not Dr. Karnak.

Read This Week's Gripping Mystery Story of St. Frank's:—
THE SIGN ^{OF} THE SACRED SCARAB!



Dr. Karnak stood up in his seat, and his face was drawn and ghastly. He pointed out over the tree tops.

THE SIGN OF THE SACRED SCARAB!



The strange mani-
recently haunted St.
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nak, the Egyptian
Frank's museum.
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juniors in order to raise
Egyptian objects ex-
that they would be re-
and given over to him. For what purpose he wants to gain possession
of these ancient historical objects remains to be told. But a clue to this
new mystery is contained in the story you are about to read—"The Sign
of the Sacred Searab!"

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Frank's, horrifying
juniors, have now
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trickery of Dr. Kar-
curator of the St.
This olive-skinned
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hibited at the museum, so
moved from the school

THE EDITOR.

(The Narrative Related Throughout by Nipper)

CHAPTER I.

THE MOON TERROR!

"TOO late, sir," said the ticket-collector sharply.

He closed the gate with a slam, and Dr. Karnak pulled up short, breathing hard. His dark eyes were gleaming with annoyance and something that was very akin to alarm.

"Fool!" he stormed. "I must catch that train! You hear?"

The ticket-collector turned rather red.

"Yes, I hear," he replied. "But if you catch that train, you'll be a bit of a magician—she's pulling out already. If you want to make any complaints, go to the station-master—and don't call me a fool again, neither!"

"Pah!" snarled Dr. Karnak.

He turned away, frowning. He had raced like mad from the Bannington High Street. He had fairly cast his dignity to the winds in order to rush up the station approach and tear through the booking-office.

And it undoubtedly was mortifying in the extreme to see the tail-lights of his train disappearing down the platform. But

Dr. Karnak was not the only one who has had this sad experience.

He realised that he had lost control of himself, and regretted it. For Dr. Karnak, the science lecturer at St. Frank's—the renowned archaeologist—always strove to conceal his emotions in public. He preferred to be calm and immobile.

He strode to the ticket window, and rapped sharply.

"When is the next train to Bellton?" he demanded.

"One just gone," said the clerk brilliantly.

"I am not inquiring about trains that have gone," snapped the Egyptian. "When is the next train to Bellton?"

"Keep your hair on, sir," said the clerk, who was extremely youthful and lacking in respect. "Now, lemme see. Next train to Bellton is the seven-twenty-five——"

"Ridiculous!" said Dr. Karnak. "No train for over an hour?"

"Well, of course, you can have a 'special' if you like," replied the clerk sarcastically. "Or you might hop on the six-fifty goods. She doesn't stop, but she goes through pretty slow——"

"Your insolence," said Dr. Karnak, "is insufferable."

He turned away, and the booking clerk grinned at one of the porters in the office, and observed that the dark gent with the rummy 'at was blooming difficult to please.

The railway employees were not at all disrespectful as a rule, but when somebody asked for "backchat," he generally got more than he required. Dr. Karnak had certainly been caustic.

But whether he thought the fact ridiculous or not, it was nevertheless true that no other train left for Bellton until twenty-five minutes past seven. And the thought, for some reason, seemed to alarm the science lecturer.

Yet he had no appointment at the school—he had no engagement for this particular evening. His acute anxiety seemed to be out of proportion to the situation.

He strode out of the booking-office, his lips pursed, his eyes gleaming strangely. As he emerged into the open air he glanced up into the sky. It was a dark January evening, with stars showing in profusion. Frost was in the air.

Several people glanced at Dr. Karnak as he walked by. For he was an impressive figure in his dark, sombre clothing, and with the Egyptian fez on his head, which he always affected.

"Seven o'clock!" muttered Dr. Karnak. "I must be in by seven o'clock!"

And it was six-thirty already. He up-braided himself bitterly for missing his train; it had been sheer carelessness. But there was another chance—and he made his way straight into the nearest garage.

"I want to hire a car at once," he said briefly.

"Sorry, sir—no cars available just now," said the man in charge. "We're expecting one back in about twenty minutes, if that'll do—"

"It won't do!" retorted Dr. Karnak curtly.

He walked out, cursing the garage under his breath. And now his movements were agitated. He almost ran into the High Street, looking for another garage. His anxiety was becoming acute.

But why he should be so remarkably upset was unfathomable. One might have supposed that he had a boat to catch, instead of just returning to his private quarters at St. Frank's.

Before he had travelled ten yards his keen eyes caught sight of a two-seater car. It was coming out of a side turning, and as Dr. Karnak watched, it turned into the High Street in the direction of Bellton. And at the same second Dr. Karnak recognised the occupant.

"Dr. Brett!" he called sharply.

The genial practitioner of Bellton glanced round, saw Dr. Karnak's impressive figure, and immediately applied his brakes. He waved a cheery hand.

"Evening, Dr. Karnak," he said. "Going my way?"

"Yes, indeed," exclaimed the Egyptian, striding up. "As a matter of fact, I have just lost my train, and if you could be bothered with my presence, the favour would be most acceptable. You are returning to Bellton at once?"

"Just off now," said Dr. Brett. "Jump in; the old 'bus isn't going as well as usual, but I daresay we'll arrive sooner or later."

Considering Dr. Karnak's anxiety, this was hardly a cheering remark. However, after he had seated himself beside the doctor, the little two-seater hummed away down the High Street, and was soon out on the open road.

Dr. Brett had only met the Egyptian on two occasions, and he wasn't particularly attracted towards him. But that was no reason why he should not be polite and obliging to a member of the St. Frank's scholastic staff.

"You think we shall arrive by seven o'clock?" asked Karnak presently.

"Oh, yes—easily," said the medical man. "I generally do the trip in about fifteen minutes. But the old engine's a bit jumpy to-day, and we might take twenty."

Dr. Karnak smiled.

"That, of course, is a mere trifle," he said, with relief.

And then, without warning, the little car began to bump and jolt. Dr. Brett jammed the brakes on, and leapt out. He stood staring down at one of the front tyres. Then he grinned.

"I thought she'd go," he said ruefully. "Of course, it's sure to happen when I've got a passenger—just the cussedness of things. Sorry, Dr. Karnak. It'll mean a slight delay, I'm afraid."

Dr. Karnak started up with alarm.

"A delay!" he repeated tensely. "But—but I cannot wait! I must be at the school by seven!"

He glanced at the star-spangled sky anxiously, concentrating his attention upon one spot near the horizon. And his strange agitation caused Dr. Brett to look at him queerly.

"Fortunately, I've got a spare wheel, all ready to be fitted on," he said. "I don't think it will take longer than ten minutes."

"Ten minutes!" muttered Dr. Karnak. "Hurry—hurry!"

He got out of the car, and insisted upon helping. As a matter of fact, his aid was more or less of a hindrance. Left alone, Dr. Brett would have changed the wheels in a more speedy manner.

They were still at it when three bicycle lamps appeared, and a few moments later a trio of cyclists appeared, riding by in single file. They were Fullwood and Gulliver and Bell, of the Remove.

"Anythin' we can do to help, Dr. Brett?" asked Fullwood.

"No thanks, young'un—we're all right."

"Good," said Fullwood. "I thought perhaps you'd want me to call at a garage, or somethin'. That's the worst of these old crocks—they're always peterin' out."

Dr. Brett glared after Fullwood & Co. as they cycled on, chuckling.

"Cheeky young devil!" said the doctor gruffly.

"Never mind the boys—please hasten with the wheel!" exclaimed Dr. Karnak nervously. "Good heavens! It is nearly seven already! What shall we do, Dr. Brett? You don't realise the urgency—"

He broke off, and passed a hand over his brow. And for the twentieth time in the space of two minutes he looked at his watch. It did not give him any comfort to see that the time was six-fifty.

"Shan't be a minute now," said the genial medico. "That's the ticket! Strictly speaking, I ought to have changed this tyre days ago. But you know what it is. The old one was still holding up, and I let it rip."

Five minutes later they were in the car, and it was humming speedily towards Bellton. But the time was now within a minute or two of seven. Dr. Karnak's agitation was increasing.

"Faster—faster!" he urged.

"Man alive, she's doing over thirty now," protested Dr. Brett. "And this car isn't a Brooklands racer. I'll tell you what—as you're in such a hurry, I'll take you right up to the school. Compensation for the delay, eh?"

"Thank you—thank you!" muttered the other. "But do not delay—it is seven o'clock even now!"

Dr. Brett wondered why on earth his passenger should be so keen upon getting in at such a fixed hour. But Dr. Karnak offered no explanation, and, indeed, seemed to be dumb with an unnameable dread.

As luck would have it, two lumbering farm carts blocked the High Street in its narrowest part, and Dr. Brett was obliged to sound his horn for two or three minutes before the obstruction was removed. The labourers in charge of the wagons were not accustomed to haste. Theirs was a leisurely existence. And they showed their disapproval of being disturbed in the midst of a welcome pint by delaying as long as they could.

And in the meantime Dr. Karnak was fairly fuming. There was no doubt about his agitation. He even forgot to conceal it. He sat there, his face drawn and haggard—his gaze for ever fixed upon the horizon. Dr. Brett was considerably puzzled.

They went up the lane, past Bellton

Wood, at a fair turn of speed. And then, just as the little two-seater was approaching the school gates, the village practitioner received a surprise.

A slight bend in the lane brought them round, and they could see the twinkling lights of the school on one hand, and the freshly risen moon just across the tree-tops on the other hand.

And as this scene broke into view, Dr. Karnak stood up in his seat, and his face was drawn and ghastly. He pointed out over the tree tops.

"The moon!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "The moon!"

"Man alive, what of it?" asked Dr. Brett, startled. "Sit down—"

"Hurry, for Heaven's sake—hurry!" panted Karnak. "The moon—the moon!"

He sank down into his seat, and crouched there like a craven—as though attempting to conceal himself. And Dr. Brett, realising that there was something unusually wrong with the man, "stepped on the gas," as Adams would have said, and fairly shot into the Triangle, and drew up in front of the private door of the Ancient House.

Almost before he had stopped, Dr. Karnak leapt out of the car, and bolted indoors like a rabbit. His movements were undignified in the extreme, and it was fortunate for him that no boys were near at hand to observe.

When Dr. Brett got inside, he found Karnak composed and calm—although there was still a trace of his recent agitation lurking in his eyes. But he had pulled himself together very quickly.

"Is anything the matter, Dr. Karnak?" asked Brett anxiously. "I fear you are not quite well. Perhaps it would be advisable for me to make a brief examination—"

"Tut—tut! Ridiculous!" interrupted Karnak. "There is nothing wrong with me—nothing whatever. Perhaps my nerves are somewhat relaxed. I have been doing much research work recently. I apologise, Dr. Brett, for my recent concern, which may have struck you as panic."

Dr. Brett did not fail to observe the intense relief which was noticeable in the other.

"Your nerves are all to pieces—that's clear," he said. "And why did you appear to be so—so startled by the appearance of the moon? I must confess that you gave me a bit of a turn."

Karnak smiled dreamily.

"The moon?" he repeated. "A mere trifle, my dear sir. I am grateful to you for your courtesy and generosity. Thank you, Dr. Brett—thank you! Will you kindly excuse me? I have an appointment."

He bowed, and immediately turned on his heel and walked away.

CHAPTER II.

FULLWOOD'S NIGHT JAUNT!



DR. BRETT pursed his lips, and then thoughtfully lit a cigarette.

"Hanged if I can understand," he murmured slowly.

He had not intended entering the school at all. But Karnak's remarkable behaviour had fired his curiosity. So, instead of returning to the car, he walked down two or three passages, and finally halted in front of a door. He tapped gently.

"Come in!" invited a voice from within.

Dr. Brett entered. Nelson Lee was sitting in one of the easy chairs before the fire, and he at once arose.

"Hallo, Brett!" he said genially. "Come in. Didn't expect to see you this evening."

"Well, no," said Dr. Brett. "As a matter of fact, I'd no idea of it myself. I say," he added, as he closed the door. "What's the matter with this Egyptian fellow you've got here?"

"You mean Dr. Karnak?"

"Good Heavens! You don't mean to say there are two Egyptians loose?" asked the doctor, as he sat down. "Yes, Karnak. What's wrong with him? I've made no examination, but as a rough guess I'd say that he's mentally unbalanced."

"Not a bit of it," smiled Lee, shaking his head. "By all that I have seen of Dr. Karnak, he's cool, level-headed, and calculating. He's the last man I should accuse of being mentally unbalanced."

"Then why the thunder does he go almost crazy at the sight of the moon?" asked Dr. Brett. "It's a well-known fact that lunatics are affected by the moon. Of course, I'm not—"

"Have you reason to suspect that Dr. Karnak is influenced by the moon?"

"My dear fellow, you ought to have seen him about five minutes ago," said the doctor. "He stood up in my car, pointed at the moon, and his face was ghastly. I tell you, it gave me a start. There was something so infernally uncanny about it. The man gives me the shivers!"

"Can you tell me exactly what took place?"

"Dr. Brett did so, and Nelson Lee listened with interest. But at the conclusion of the short account, he broke into a laugh.

"Oh, there's nothing in it, Brett!" he said. "Karnak's a queer fish. There's no accounting for what he'll do. He goes in a lot for spiritualism, and all that sort of scientific bunkum. But you can take it from me that he's got his wits about him."

Dr. Brett shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, it's none of my business," he said, rising. "But I wouldn't like to have the

man as a companion. Too weird and jumpy for me. I won't interrupt you any longer, Lee."

After a short chat, Dr. Brett took his departure, and soon his little two-seater was humming away down to the village. And Nelson Lee sat in his easy chair, filled his pipe, and smoked thoughtfully.

He was still in this mood when I entered his study about twenty minutes later. I had, in fact, popped in to inform the governor that Dr. Karnak was looking a bit queer.

And I was surprised when Nelson Lee told me of the incident of the moon.

"It's jolly queer, sir," I said. "Dr. Karnak's been pretty quiet during this last week, and the fellows are getting more settled down. There's not so much talk about Dr. Karnak and the mummy."

"The boys are realising that their fears concerning the mummy are all groundless," said Nelson Lee. "And there is no question that Dr. Karnak has been greatly subdued of late. I have been trying to get at the reason, and I do not think it is a difficult problem to fathom."

"You mean that stuffed lion, sir?" I asked.

I was referring to an incident that had occurred the previous week. Lord Dorrimore had presented a magnificent African lion to the school museum. It had arrived—as everybody thought.

But the lion that was delivered at the school turned out to be a clever fake—a mere skin, containing a human being. We had not been able to find out who this man was, why he had come, or where he had disappeared to. But we had reason for believing that his advent was connected with Dr. Karnak. For since that day the Egyptian had undergone a subtle change.

His former smoothness and impassive calm had gone. He was restless—worried—secretly agitated.

"I have been unable to glean any further information concerning the lion," said Nelson Lee. "Exactly how the substitution was made, I cannot imagine, but it was very cleverly worked."

"It was a piece of genius, sir," I declared.

"By the way, Nipper, have you noticed that Dr. Karnak keeps very much to the school nowadays?" asked Lee. "He rarely ventures out, and always takes care to be safely within the school walls after the moon is up."

"I hadn't noticed it particularly, sir, but now that you mention it, I can see what you mean," I said. "But what's the idea? Why should he be so scared of the moon?"

Nelson Lee looked at me curiously.

"The mummy, as you know, is supposed to be the earthly remains of Baal," he replied. "And Baal of Harran was the moon god. In some way, these matters are connected. I believe I can put my finger on the truth."

"But how, sir?" I asked eagerly.

"Keep this quite to yourself, Nipper," re-

plied Nelson Lee, lowering his voice. "My theory is this. Dr. Karnak is not everything he seems. He is a clever scholar, and a learned archæologist. But I believe him to be a fugitive from some secret Egyptian brotherhood."

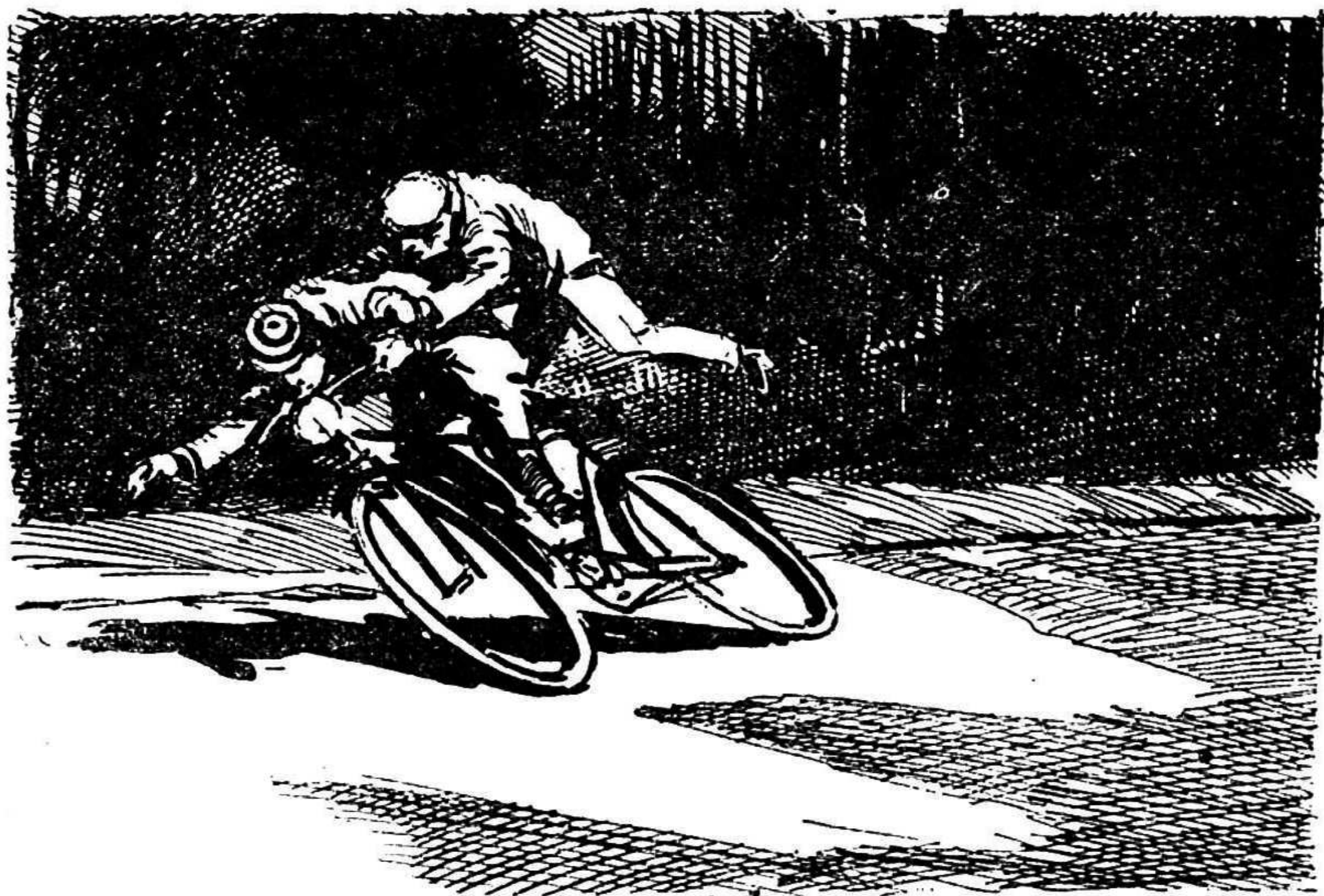
"O-ho!" I said, with a whistle. "So that's the way the land lies?"

"It may be so, but do not take it for granted," replied the gov'nor. "This sect is apparently determined to get hold of Dr. Karnak, and he is equally determined to evade them. That is the way I figure it out, and I have already set the cogs into motion elsewhere. Inquiries are afoot—

appear that these gentry can only touch him while the moon is up," continued Nelson Lee. "It is quite safe for him to move about in daylight, or in darkness. His enemies may be near him, but their code forbids them to touch him. But when the moon is above the horizon, they are free to take what measures they like."

"Then—then that explains why he got the wind up so much in the lane," I said. "He was delayed, and the moon rose. And he was expecting to get a poisoned dart, or something, in the back of his neck!"

"My dear Nipper, there is no need to become imaginative," said Lee drily. "You



As Fullwood sped by, the waiting man simply leapt at him in a clean, remarkably lithe jump. He clutched at Fullwood's arm, and the next moment the pair of them were on the ground.

inquiries concerning Dr. Karnak's former movements and habits. So at the moment I am just waiting, expecting news at almost any time."

"And if you find out that Karnak is an impostor?"

"There is no reason why we should discuss that subject," said Nelson Lee. "We are confining our attentions to the present, Nipper, not the future. I know something about these Eastern secret societies, and it seems feasible that Karnak at one time belonged to a sect that worships the moon god."

"Oh!" I said thoughtfully.

"And, from Karnak's actions, it would

have no reason for assuming that these enemies resort to the use of poisoned darts. If my theory is correct, then Dr. Karnak's actions are at once explained. His reluctance to go out while the moon is up becomes clear. His worry and agitation of late are easy to understand."

"But couldn't these men break into the school and get him?" I asked.

Nelson Lee shook his head.

"It is not such an easy matter to break into the school," he replied. "And these men are probably Egyptians, who speak nothing but Arabic, and who would be very conspicuous. They move only at night. And to break into the school would be of

little avail, for they are necessarily ignorant of the school's geography, and even if they got inside, it would be tantamount to looking for a needle in a haystack. St. Frank's is a very large place, remember."

"Yes, sir, that's true," I agreed. "I hadn't looked at it like that. So one of these beggars got into the school inside that lion's skin?"

"Precisely. He knew well enough that he would be taken to the museum—and that sooner or later he would have Dr. Karnak to himself," said the gov'nor. "But that scheme failed—although we don't know how. And Karnak's enemies are in a quandary."

"Because he won't show himself after the moon is up?" I asked.

"Yes. He always remains indoors during these hours of peril," said Lee. "Therefore, the only hope of these fellows is to get into the school by some secret means. They are reluctant to break in by ordinary methods. As far as I can see, we can do nothing but wait."

The gov'nor reminded me that he had no proof of his assumptions. But in my own mind I was fairly certain that his deductions were correct. For they fitted into every phase of the case.

And when I went back to the junior quarters, I was in a rather thoughtful mood. I was more than ever convinced that Dr. Karnak was a trickster, and I wondered how long it would be before his exposure came.

Nelson Lee suspected him in many ways, but the gov'nor had not one atom of proof. And to bring any accusations against Dr. Karnak now would be futile—to say nothing of being unfair. Until evidence arrived, Dr. Karnak had the right to be regarded as an honest, peaceful member of the community.

When we went to bed that night there was some talk about the Sorcery Club—a ridiculous gathering of cranky fellows who believed they could invoke the help of the spirits, in delving into the mysteries of ancient Egypt.

Such fellows as Timothy Tucker and Skelton and Ellmore were prominent in the club, and Cecil De Valerie was the prime mover—instigated, of course, by Dr. Karnak.

And recently there had been no meetings of the club. The science lecturer had had no time to spend on the juniors—and a few of them were getting rather fed up. De Valerie remained as staunch to Dr. Karnak as ever. In some subtle way he had changed—he had lost his interest in sports, in school life generally, and hankered only after the mysterious companionship of Dr. Karnak. I knew well enough that Dr. Valerie was in the man's power. Karnak had some deep hypnotic influence over him.

And Handforth brought up the subject while the Remove was undressing.

"Look here, De Valerie," he said abruptly. "What's up with you lately?"

"Nothing," said De Valerie quietly. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that you do nothing but moon about, and read rotten books on sorcery and black magic," said Handforth, with a glare. "What about football? Why didn't you play last Wednesday? And the paper chase? Instead of being one of the hounds, you backed out, and read a book on the catacombs!"

De Valerie flushed.

"Am I obliged to ask you what I shall do?" he asked curtly.

"No; but hang it all, we don't like to see a decent chap go to seed," said Edward Oswald Handforth. "It's about time you chucked up this rot, and gave Karnak the go-by! He's no jolly good!"

De Valerie shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll do as I like!" he said. "And you can mind your own business!"

"By George!" said Handforth warmly. "Why, for two pins, I'd biff you! And remember this!" he added darkly. "Remember this, my lad! There's got to be no more of that rotten Sorcery Club!"

"Oh! And who says so?" asked De Valerie.

"I say so!" roared Handforth. "I'm not going to allow it! See that?"

He planted his fist under De Valerie's nose—a favourite trick of his when he wanted to emphasise a point.

"Don't be an idiot!" said De Valerie sourly.

"See that?" repeated Handforth. "Well, my son, if you don't take heed of what I say, you'll feel it! I didn't think it would be necessary to give you a good hiding, but I'm afraid that's what it'll come to."

De Valerie brushed the fist aside.

"Go and eat coke!" he said shortly.

Handforth wanted to have a scrap then and there, but Church and McClure persuaded him to postpone it. And then a prefect came in, and put an end to all discussion. He turned the lights out, and informed the Remove that if he heard any sounds from the dormitory, he would return with a cane.

Soon the Remove settled down to sleep. And it must be admitted that the juniors were now far more comfortable than they had been a week or so earlier. They were getting accustomed to Dr. Karnak and his ways, and their early nervousness was being replaced by indifference.

Ten o'clock sounded solemnly from the old clock tower. And as the last stroke died away, one of the juniors cautiously sat up in bed. The rest of the fellows were sound asleep. It didn't take the Remove long to depart into the land of nod.

"Hist!" breathed a voice. "Time to get up, you chaps!"

There was no reply, and the figure slipped out of bed, and if anybody else had been awake, they would have recognised the fellow as Ralph Leslie Fullwood, of Study A. He

looked down at Gulliver and Bell, as he stood between their beds. Both were sound asleep.

"Fat lot of good making an arrangement with these idiots!" muttered Fullwood impatiently. "They promised to keep awake, too!"

He shook Gulliver, and Gulliver opened his eyes.

"Hallo! Why, what—That you, Fully?" he mumbled. "Go 'way, blow you! I'm tired! Don't disturb me—"

"Get up, you ass!" muttered Fullwood. "It's gone ten."

He turned to the other bed, and awoke Bell, who seemed just as reluctant as Gulliver to arouse himself. But after a few moments the pair were sitting up, hugging their knees under the bedclothes.

"Ugh! Looks jolly cold outside!" muttered Bell, gazing at the moonlight.

"What did you expect it to be—ninety in the shade?" asked Fullwood sarcastically. "It's winter time, my son—not midsummer! Buck up, an' get your things on. We promised to be there at half-past ten."

"Oh, goodness!" yawned Gulliver. "I say, is it worth the candle? Don't you think we'd better chuck it up? I—I don't exactly like the look of the moonlight, you know. Bally creepy!"

Fullwood was disgusted.

"Whenever I make an arrangement with you chaps, you always try to mess it up," he said. "This party is somethin' special. There'll be two or three mugs present, too, an' we've got a chance to rake in some cash. It's safe enough, too—the back parlour of the Wheatsheaf is absolutely private."

"It's a good idea, I'll admit," said Bell. "But—but I'm not sure that it's safe, goin' down Bellton Lane in the dark."

"Safe?" repeated Fullwood.

"Well, you know what I mean," said Bell uncomfortably.

"You idiot! I haven't got the faintest idea what you mean!"

"Well, some of the chaps have seen shapes!" said Bell vaguely. "There's talk goin' round that that—that mummy comes to life, or somethin', an' roams about in the form of a ghost."

"My hat! I'm stoppin' in bed!" said Gulliver, with a shiver. "Blessed if I'm goin' out on a cold, dark night like this! Chuck it up, Fully. There's no tellin' what'll happen."

Fullwood looked at his precious pals contemptuously. They had turned pale at the very thought of what might happen to them in the lane. And yet they had been so enthusiastic earlier—when Fullwood had fixed things up with two or three questionable acquaintances in the back parlour of the Wheatsheaf.

"You miserable funks!" he said jeeringly. "Afraid of a ghost—eh? If it wasn't for waking the other chaps, I'd pulverise you! You're nothin' but a pair of weak-kneed cowards!"

The taunt left Gulliver and Bell unmoved.

"Say what you like, we're not goin'!" growled Bell. "Go alone, confound you! I'll bet you're afraid, too! That Shape will come along an' grab hold of you from behind!"

"You make me sick!" sneered Fullwood. "You've got no more pluck than a couple of earth worms! Go to sleep, an' hang you! I'll go to Banninton alone, but don't dare to ask me for any money to-morrow!"

"Money?" faltered Gulliver, remembering that he was broke.

"Yes, money!" snapped Fullwood. "I'm goin' to make some to-night, an' I happen to know that you chaps are pretty well stony. I won't lend you a bally cent, even if you go on your rotten knees for it! Miserable reptiles!"

He turned away in disgust, and rapidly got dressed. And Gulliver and Bell watched him uneasily. They badly wanted to go, but yet they couldn't pluck up enough courage to face that dark, lonely ride. Fullwood was made of sterner stuff. Nobody had ever accused him of being a funk.

He crept out of the dormitory, without even giving his chums another glance. They whispered to him as he went out, but he took no notice. And before long the precious pair were sound asleep again.

Fullwood crept downstairs like a shadow. He had planned everything in advance. In fact, all three of them had planned, and had made full preparations. Fullwood slipped out by means of the window in Study A. He conveniently left it unlatched, so that he would be able to get in easily upon his return.

Then, keeping a wary eye open for any possible master, he softly made a detour round the Triangle, keeping to the black shadows. For it was only a little after ten, and plenty of the adult inhabitants of the school were still up and about.

But Fullwood reached the tool shed without incident. And here, tucked in the space behind the shed and the hedge were three bicycles. Fullwood grunted with disgust as he sorted out his own machine.

"Fat lot of good makin' plans for those crawlin' insects!" he muttered.

Having drawn his machine out, he hoisted it over the school wall, and then followed. It was a bit of a job, single-handed. But Fullwood had expected to have help. The backing out of Gulliver and Bell had got him into a nasty temper. In the lane, he fixed his bicycle clips on, mounted, and rode off. But he did not light his lamps. He felt it safer not to do so.

And as he passed down the lane, with the moonlight filtering through the gaunt, leafless trees, he could not help remembering what Gulliver and Bell had said. And there was undoubtedly something mysterious and eerie in the stillness of the night, and the pale, watery appearance of the moonbeams.

In spite of all his determination, he

found himself glancing sharply over his shoulder now and again. He heard queer little sounds from his rear. He imagined that soft footsteps were padding along the hard road behind. But a glance told him that he was alone.

All the same, Ralph Leslie Fullwood was nervous.

CHAPTER III.

AN EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE!



BELLTON Village was as quiet and still as a place of the dead when the solitary junior quickly cycled through the little high street.

Fullwood was half expecting to come across a master, or perhaps

chance of meeting a master on the main Bannington road.

So his nervousness left him somewhat, and he paused to light his front lamp, and a cigarette at the same time. Then he remounted, and pedalled on easily. He would only be about five minutes late, and it wouldn't matter if he didn't return until one o'clock, or later. These card parties often ended up in the small hours, and Fullwood was no quitter.

He had got about half-a-mile beyond the last cottage of the village when he saw a flash of light in front of him. At first he couldn't quite make out what it was but he decided that somebody was using an electric torch.

And immediately afterwards it became clear that the light was being used as a

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the village constable. One generally met somebody like that at an inopportune moment. And Fullwood had prepared for this by failing to light his lamps, and by wearing his coat collar turned up high.

He was relieved after he had got through the village.

And his relief was caused by two reasons. Firstly, he was thankful to get out of Bellton Lane, where that ghastly apparition was supposed to dwell. And, secondly, he figured that there was practically no

signal. For the man who held it, was standing in the centre of the road, holding the torch so that the rays were directed full at the oncoming junior.

Fullwood's heart jumped into his mouth, and he hastily tossed his cigarette away. The moonlight was now rendered very dim by a passing cloud. But this would only last for a moment. The spot where that man was standing was quite dark, for there were trees on one side of the road—allowing only a small proportion of moonlight to filter through.

"Old Pagett, I'll bet a quid!" muttered Fullwood. "Just like him to be prowlin' about at this hour! I've heard he goes for long walks before turnin' in. The miserable old sinner!"

And, then and there, Fullwood decided that it would be far better to dash straight by. He didn't feel like taking any chances. By holding his head down, and putting on top speed, he would probably get past the master without the latter recognising him.

It was too late now, in any case, to go back.

So he lowered his head, put all his energy into the pedalling, and fairly shot along. And the man with the torch seemed to realise that Fullwood had no intention of stopping. For he stepped back, and waited.

And as Fullwood sped by, the waiting man simply leapt at him in a clean, remarkably lithe jump. He clutched at Fullwood's arm, and the next moment the pair of them were on the ground.

Fullwood and the bicycle had come down with a terrific crash, and the junior was dazed, and somewhat bruised. He and the machine and his assailant were mixed up in one tangled mass. Never for an instant had Fullwood suspected that he would be attacked in such a way.

And it proved one thing conclusively—the man was not Mr. Pagett. For under no circumstances would the staid master of the Fifth Form render a very passable imitation of a jaguar.

The fellow was thin, wiry and his features were swarthy. He was a dark-skinned man of some kind—but he was attired in an ordinary tweed suit and a cloth cap. But Fullwood saw nothing of this.

For almost before he could scramble up, a black cloth was flung over his head. He didn't know who had done this. But he felt convinced that two or three other men were on the spot—having been lurking in the shadows.

"What—what's the idea?" gasped Fullwood thickly. "Take this infernal thing off! You—you cads——"

He broke off, for he felt that a rope was being bound round and round him. And it was being done so skilfully, and so swiftly, that he had no chance to struggle. The black cloth over his head descended fully to his waist, and the rope was fastened on the outside—pinning his arms to his body.

Inward alarm filled the junior.

At first he felt half suffocated, for the cloth was thick. But there was no real danger of him coming to any actual harm. His discomfort was great, but that was all.

But who were these men?

Why had they picked on him in this way? What possible object could they have in capturing him? He felt certain,

in his own mind, that some mistake had been made. He had fallen the victim of a trap that had been laid for somebody else.

"Who are you?" he mumbled, in the folds of the cloth. "Lemme go! You've made a bloomer! I'm Fullwood—I'm one of the chaps from St. Frank's!"

He received no answer.

And this struck him as being significant. His words must have been heard. But never once had he caught the faintest murmur from his captors. They had not even conversed between themselves. Their silence, indeed, was rather uncanny. There was something sinister about the whole affair.

If these men were just ordinary foot-pads, they would have held him up boldly. And if they had wanted somebody else, they would have paused to investigate upon hearing his mumbled words.

Fullwood was puzzled and alarmed, but not frightened.

There was nothing ghostly or supernatural about this attack. He was dealing with real men, and for the life of him he couldn't understand why they had made him a prisoner. He had no enemies—at least, no enemies who would perpetrate a trick of this kind.

But, suddenly, Fullwood had a quick thought.

Perhaps Buster Boots and Co. of the College House, had found out about his trip, and had planned this ambush! Perhaps the great J.B.B. had made up his mind to make Fullwood the victim of a House jape. This, indeed, seemed to be the only possible explanation.

"You cads!" stormed Fullwood. "Lemme go! I know who you are! You'll jolly well pay for this to-morrow, you beasts!"

Still that stony silence. But Fullwood now knew the reason for it. For if his captors spoke, they would reveal their identity at once. Fullwood would recognise the voices. That was why they kept silent.

He boiled inwardly, and again protested.

"You might have killed me, jumping at my bike like that," he said thickly. "An' if you think this affair is goin' to pay you—— Hi! What the dence—— Confound you!"

He was suddenly jerked to his feet—without gentleness. It was possible for him to stand, for his legs had not been tied. But he was more than helpless. With his arms bound to his side, and with that black cloth completely blinding him, he hadn't the faintest idea of direction. Even if he broke away—which was practically impossible—the first ten steps he took would probably carry him into the ditch.

He felt pressure on either arm, and he was compelled to walk. At first it was an uncomfortable experience. It is no pleasant matter to walk blindfold in the

presence of persons whose identity remains unknown. Fullwood had an impression that he was going to blunder into something.

But this soon left him.

For he walked on, and whenever there was any gate to negotiate, or a difficult piece of path, he was carefully and easily lifted. And he gained the impression that his captors were walking him across country. They were certainly not keeping to the road.

It seemed an age to him before that walk came to an end.

At least a full hour must have elapsed, and the distance could not have been less than two miles—and possible three. And, abruptly, he was brought to a standstill. That thick cloth had prevented him from hearing any fine sounds. All he could distinguish were his own heavy breathing and the sound of his own footfalls.

He only knew that his captors were there, because he could feel them. They made no sounds of any kind. And the effect was beginning to tell upon Fullwood's nerves. Upon coming to a halt, he felt the rope being unfastened. At the same time, something was being fixed round his left ankle. It felt hard and cold, but Fullwood knew no more.

He became aware of the fact that the cloth was now loose. With a jerk, he pulled it off, and blinked round dazedly. In his mind's eye, he had pictured himself to be in the middle of a meadow, with the stars gleaming overhead. And he had calculated that he was somewhere on the other side of Edgemore.

His surprise, therefore, was enormous.

For he was not out in the open at all, but in a most curious room. He stood in the very centre, and on every side the room was draped in black cloth. Even the ceiling was covered with this same material. And the light from an electric torch was gleaming steadily upon it.

He took a step forward, and was brought up so suddenly that he nearly fell. He glanced down, gasping. And then he saw that his foot was encircled by an iron-cuff, and he was fixed by a strong chain to a great ring in the floor. He couldn't move more than a yard in any direction.

"By gad!" he muttered. "This—this is awful!"

He looked round, almost seared.

"I say, you chaps!" he said hoarsely. "Come and unfasten this rotten chain! You ought to be kicked for playin' a trick like this! You miserable cads! I'll complain to the Head!"

Stony silence.

If it had got on Fullwood's nerves before, it now nearly sent him into a panic. He could see nothing except that black cloth all round him, and the steady, unwinking electric light. He breathed hard, realising the utter helplessness of his position.

No matter how hard he struggled, he

could never get free. Even if he had possessed a file, it would have taken him days to get through those heavy links. For they were not soft iron, but hardened steel.

And even now Fullwood could not tell where he was. He listened intently, but heard no sound—nothing that would serve as a clue to his whereabouts. For all he knew, he might have been in a farmhouse—or a tent in the open—or a cave on the seashore.

And then, just as Fullwood was getting desperate, a voice came to him. After all this stony silence, it was an absolute relief. But the voice was unknown to the junior, and although it spoke English, there was a curious accent.

"No harm will come to you if you agree to what we require," said the voice, from behind one of the curtains. "We have brought you here because you can be of use to us. Agree, and you will be treated well. Refuse, and your fate will be swift and sudden."

Fullwood gritted his teeth.

"You can't fool me!" he snarled. "I know your voice, Boots! You've disguised it pretty well, but it's no good! Why not come out an' show yourself, instead of foolin' about with all this stage effect!"

There was another tense silence before the voice spoke again.

"You are mistaken, boy," it said. "We are not known to you. But you will be released after you have done our bidding. We captured you in the way we did because there must be no clues left—for others to follow."

"Idiot!" jeered Fullwood. "You can't fool me, I tell you."

"You must agree to act as our guide," continued the thin, unemotional voice. "It is necessary for us to enter St. Frank's by means of a secret passage. And we have learned that such a passage exists."

"Everybody knows it!" snapped Fullwood. "At least, everybody knows that there's a passage. But what's the idea of jumpin' on me? You don't think I know how to get in, do you?"

"You are a boy of St. Frank's—therefore you will know," said the other. "There are vaults beneath the ruins of the monastery. From these vaults a secret passage leads into the school. We have searched, but we can find no door. It is for you to show us that door, and to guide us into the school."

"Oh!" said Fullwood. "Anythin' you'd like?"

"Perform this service, and your work will be done," went on the voice. "Consent, and you will be taken to the vault of which I speak, and after showing us the secret entrance, you will be released."

Fullwood flew into a rage. He was con-

vinced that his captors were the Monks, and all this apparent nonsense angered him.

"Do you think I know where the confounded door is?" he shouted. "I don't! There's a passage, but hardly anybody knows how to get through! You're mad—all of you! Why can't you drop this foolery?"

"Will you consent to act as our guide?" asked the voice relentlessly.

"No!" shouted Fullwood thickly.

"Then you will be left in this prison until you come to a different decision," said the unseen voice. "You will be left here without food, and without water. We intend to have this information."

"But I don't know it!" snarled Fullwood.

"You swear that?"

"Confound you, yes! I've never seen this secret entrance."

"It is possible that you are lying, and so we will leave you for a while, to meditate upon the situation," said the voice. "And rid yourself of the impression that we are practical jokers."

"You do it well, but you can't spoof me!" sneered Fullwood.

There came no further sound, but suddenly the electric light vanished, leaving the darkness utter and absolute. Fullwood stood there, listening intently. He heard not a single sound. There was not even the scrape of a foot, or the brush of a sleeve against the curtains.

When he clanked his chain, it sounded deafening in his ears.

A tiny doubt was beginning to creep into his mind. Were his captors the College House juniors or not? If his surmise was wrong, who could they be? Their request was a curious one—a pointless one, indeed, if they were really Boots and his chums.

And as the minutes passed, Fullwood's fears grew apace.

He knew that the Monks would not delay long. Five minutes, perhaps—even ten. It was just like them to attempt to scare him. But the minutes dragged on until it seemed to Fullwood that several hours had passed.

And now he got into a panic. He seemed to be utterly alone, and isolated. He shouted, but only the dull echo of his own voice came back to him. The silence otherwise was nerve-wracking.

He held still for minutes on end, trying to distinguish some familiar sound. The chiming of the school clock, the sound of the village church clock—the crowing of a cockerel—the barking of a dog. Anything, in fact, but not one of these night sounds came to his ears.

And Fullwood began to get scared. And he knew, now, that this affair was more serious than he had supposed. It was not a House jape, but a grim and sinister plot.

And he was in the hands of—Whom?



Almost before the thought had come to him, he seized Dr. Karnak's coat as that gentleman was sprawling on the ground. One swift tug, and Willy had pulled the jacket upwards, and clean over Dr. Karnak's head.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING JUNIOR!



CLANG! Clang! Clang! The rising bell sounded its unwelcome note in the Remove dormitory, and the juniors turned over in bed, yawning and unwilling to rise. One or two sat up, blinking.

"Oh, rats!" growled Tommy Watson. "Time to get up!"

"I agree it's frightful, dear old boy, but there's no gettin' out of it," yawned Tregellis-West. "I've always found that it's best to jump straight out, you know. There's nothin' to be gained by havin' a doze."

"You're right," said Watson. "I'll race you dressing."

Sir Montie grinned.

"Of course you will," he agreed. "It takes me somewhat longer to adorn myself for the day—it does, really. For instance, I wouldn't dream of goin' down with my hair only half brushed."

"Can't you fatheads keep quiet?" growled Handforth sleepily. "Jaw—jaw—jaw! How do you suppose I can sleep, and all that chatter going on?"

Tommy Watson and Sir Montie grinned, and went on talking in shouts. Handforth stood it for a few moments, and then sat up.

"Shut up!" he howled.

The rising bell was absolutely eclipsed by that roar from Handforth. Those fellows who had not become thoroughly awake now sat up in bed, believing that the school was on fire, or that an earthquake had happened.

"Ass!" said Watson. "It's no good trying to sleep now—it's time to get up!"

Why, what the— Quick! Water, somebody! I feel faint!"

"Begad!" said Tregellis-West.

"Fullwood's up and dressed!" gasped Watson. "Look! He's out before anybody else, by jingo! He must have got up before the rising bell went."

"Well I'm jiggered!" said Armstrong blankly.

Gulliver, who was only half awake, gazed at Fullwood's bed, and gave a violent start. Then he looked at Bell. And Bell, with a pale face, thought of the previous night's happenings.

"Fully hasn't got back!" he muttered huskily.

"Oh, rot!" said Gulliver. "He must have got back—he wouldn't stay out all night. He's a reckless bounder, but it would mean the sack. Even Fullwood isn't mad enough for that."

"That—that Thing must have got him!" said Bell, with a shiver.

Gulliver started.

He said nothing, but he shared Bell's thoughts. They had warned Fullwood against going out in the night. They had refused to go, because they feared the unknown. They had seen Fullwood leave—and from that moment the leader of Study A had vanished.

But if Gulliver and Bell thought there was going to be a commotion, they made a mistake. There were, in fact, only one or two comments, and the subject was dropped. Fullwood was not of sufficient interest to the Remove to cause any excitement.

Besides, it was assumed that he had got up early for some freakish reason, and had probably gone for a walk. Only Gulliver and Bell knew the truth. For it was as clear as daylight to them that Fullwood had not returned from his night jaunt.

They dressed themselves, very anxious and concerned, and went downstairs. They half expected Fullwood to turn up at any minute. But when it was nearly time for prayers he was still absent.

"I'll bet I know what he's done—the fool!" said Gulliver, in alarm. "He must have gone on playin' cards until three or four, an' then fell asleep! Probably had somethin' to drink, too, an' got woozy!"

"Oh, I say!" muttered Bell. "He's got more sense than that!"

"Has he?" sneered Gulliver. "He's pretty level-headed as a rule, but there's no tellin' what he'd do if he had a big run of luck. I'll bet he'll turn up in a few minutes—just in time for prayers. He's got the cheek of a dozen."

"But he'll get the sack for stayin' out all night."

"Who's to know it?" asked Gulliver. "He'll come up, as bold as brass, an' say he went out for an early mornin' spin! Some chap in the Fifth did that, an' it never got twigged. Horribly risky, but

Fully's got the nerve to do it. But if he's late for prayers, it'll mean inquiries, so he's bound to turn up soon."

To their dismay, however, there was no sign of Fullwood when the bell went for prayers. And by the time breakfast was served, Gulliver and Bell were in a state of sheer agitation.

Mr. Crowell commented upon the fact that Fullwood was absent, and asked if anybody could throw any light upon the matter.

"He wasn't in bed when the rising bell went, sir," said Owen major. "He got up before anybody else, and must have gone out."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Crowell, with quiet sarcasm. "Our friend, Fullwood, has developed a most remarkable energy all at once. I trust he will not be late for lessons. He may miss his breakfast, with punishment, but if he presumes to be late for lessons, the case will be different."

Gulliver and Bell were much relieved that they were not questioned. They certainly expected the fellows to crowd round, asking them for their opinion. But nobody thought it worth while. The strange disappearance of Ralph Leslie Fullwood caused no ripple to stir the accustomed calm of St. Frank's.

And, at length, morning lessons began. And—horror of horrors—Fullwood still showed no signs of appearing. Gulliver and Bell were startled beyond measure. But even now they were afraid to speak.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Crowell, as he bustled in. "So Fullwood has not graced us with his presence. I shall demand a very full inquiry from him when he does turn up. He will doubtless mourn the loss of the next two half-holidays very severely! Now, boys, to work!"

The labours of the day commenced, but by this time Fullwood's prolonged absence was causing general comment. And it was no surprise for the Remove when Nelson Lee came into the Form room about half an hour later.

He spoke to Mr. Crowell for a few moments, and both looked towards Fullwood's empty desk. Then Nelson Lee turned to the Form.

"I understand that Fullwood is missing," he said. "It only came to my ears a short time ago, and it appears that the matter may be serious. Can anybody here give an account of Fullwood's movements?"

"Nobody saw him get up, sir," I pointed out. "He was out of the dormitory before the rising bell went."

Nelson Lee nodded.

"I have reason to believe that Fullwood was absent during the whole night," he said quietly.

There was an immediate sensation.

"All night, sir?" asked a dozen voices, aghast.

"Yes," replied Lee. "As soon as I

heard the news I at once instigated an inquiry. I have discovered that the window of Fullwood's study was found unfastened this morning. Furthermore, it has come to my ears that Gulliver and Bell, of this Form, were seen to remove two bicycles from behind the tool-shed. Their action strikes me as being significant."

Gulliver and Bell turned pale as Nelson Lee looked at them.

"Why were your bicycles behind the tool-shed?" he asked. "Stand up, Gulliver; stand up, Bell. Explain this matter at once."

"Why, we—we left our machines there last night, sir," stammered Bell.

"Indeed! And for what reason?"

"We came in from a ride, sir, and put them behind the wood-shed for a minute, and forgot all about them," lied Gulliver desperately. "We meant to put them in the cycle house, but didn't think of it."

"And was Fullwood's bicycle there, too?" asked Lee sharply.

"Yes, sir—I mean, no, sir," said Gulliver. "No, sir—Fullwood's machine wasn't there at all!"

"And yet Fullwood's machine is missing," said Nelson Lee. "Furthermore, Gulliver, you are lying to me. Your confusion is painfully obvious. I advise you to tell me the truth at once, and have done with this falsehood."

"I am telling the truth, sir."

"Then perhaps you will explain how you came to put your bicycles behind the tool-shed 'for a minute,' while it would have been infinitely easier to place them where they are usually kept?"

Gulliver looked confused.

"Well, sir, we—we were having a bit of a lark," he said huskily. "We put the machines there so that we could get at them afterwards—I—I mean—we forgot they were there, sir!" he added lamely.

"Unless you tell me the truth, Gulliver, you will make your position infinitely worse than it is already," said Nelson Lee quietly. "A few more falsehoods, and you will probably find yourself in the Headmaster's study, with a flogging in view. I want the truth—at once!" he added sharply.

"It wasn't our fault, sir," whined Gulliver. "It was Fullwood's idea. Anyhow, we didn't go, so I don't see that we can be punished. We refused to have anything to do with it," he added, with a burst of righteous courage. "We decided not to break bounds."

Both Gulliver and Bell had suddenly realised that as they had remained in bed, there was no case against them. They could tell the truth without any particular risk. But they had feared to do so at first, in case Nelson Lee made inquiries in Bannington. But there was no getting out of it now.

"You decided not to break bounds?" re-

peated Lee. "But, I take it, Fullwood broke bounds?"

"Yes, sir."

"At what time?"

"Ten o'clock last night, sir."

"For what purpose?"

"He—he went to a party in Bannington, sir," admitted Gulliver. "He tried to get Bell an' I to go, but we refused."

"I think I understand," said Nelson Lee. "You prepared for this trip in advance; the bicycles behind the tool-shed are evidence of that. But the loneliness of the night rather unnerved you, and you preferred to remain in bed. Fullwood, however, went alone."

"Yes, sir!" muttered Gulliver and Bell.

The Form was fairly buzzing all this time. So Fullwood had been missing since ten o'clock the previous night! This was something sensational. Even the rascal of Study A had never gone to the length of staying out all night.

"This'll mean the sack for him," whispered Watson in my ear.

"Seems like it," I said. "Especially if he's been out on the razzle!"

"He's asked for it tons of times—and now he's going to get it," said Handforth.

Nelson Lee looked at Gulliver and Bell sternly.

"So we have arrived at a portion of the truth," he said. "Fullwood left the school at ten o'clock last night, and he has not been seen since. I must make immediate inquiries at the house where Fullwood journeyed to. You will give me the address, Gulliver?"

Gulliver looked scared out of his wits.

"I—I don't know it, sir!" he panted. "Fullwood just went to—to a friend! Bell an' I didn't know where—did we, Bell?"

"No, sir!" said Bell desperately.

"Gulliver and Bell, you will follow me to Dr. Stafford's study," said Nelson Lee, moving towards the door. I have no alternative but to—"

"I—I think I remember the place, sir!" gasped Gulliver.

"Oh, indeed!"

Gulliver stood there, gulping. At the suggestion of going to the Head's study, he had recovered his memory with marvellous rapidity, and the Remove could hardly help grinning.

"Fullwood went to the—the Wheatsheaf Inn," said Gulliver.

"I am by no means surprised," said Nelson Lee. "And this party, I presume, took place after closing hours?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, Gulliver and Bell, I will deal with you later," said Nelson Lee. "For the present you will continue your work."

And the schoolmaster-detective walked out of the Form room—leaving Gulliver and Bell in a state of horrid uncertainty, which, in itself, was an acute form of punishment.

"You'll all be sacked!" said Handforth cheerfully, as he turned round and gazed at the miserable pair. "I shouldn't be surprised if you get a flogging, too! And Fullwood might go to quod!"

Gulliver and Bell groaned in unison.

"Just imagine!" said Handforth. "Your last giddy morning in the Form room! By to-night you'll be off home——"

"Handforth!" said Mr. Crowell tartly.

"Speaking to me, sir?" asked Handforth.

"You know very well that I am speaking to you, Handforth," said Mr. Crowell. "You will allow me to point out that it is scarcely necessary for you to make any prophecies regarding the punishment that will be inflicted upon these boys. And it will please me if you will write one hundred lines for talking in class."

Handforth stared blankly.

"I wasn't talking, sir!" he snorted. "I was only whispering!"

"For daring to quibble, Handforth, you will write an extra fifty lines," snapped the Form master. "And now we will get on with our lesson, I trust. Fullwood is not so well loved that you must all pine over him."

And the Remove, after this piece of sarcasm, settled down to work again. Handforth was very indignant, and the looks he bestowed upon Mr. Crowell—when that gentleman's back was turned—were positively diabolical.

In the meantime, Nelson Lee was in communication with the landlord of the Wheatsheaf. This beery gentleman was somewhat startled to have an inquiry concerning the St. Frank's juniors. At first he denied all knowledge of them. But when Nelson Lee informed him that Fullwood was missing, and that Fullwood had been missing ever since he started out for the party, the landlord changed his tone.

He swore positively that Fullwood had not turned up. He had been expecting him, but Fullwood had failed to arrive. There were half-a-dozen witnesses who would prove that, if necessary.

Nelson Lee hung up the receiver, quite satisfied that Fullwood had never reached the Wheatsheaf. What, then, had become of him? What had happened to the junior between the school and Bannington?

Nelson Lee went out, and walked slowly down the lane in a thoughtful mood. He was quite convinced that Fullwood's disappearance was vaguely connected with Dr. Karnak.

Yet it would be worse than useless to question the Egyptian on the subject. Dr.

Karnak himself could have no possible object in spiriting Fullwood away. But what of Dr. Karnak's mysterious, elusive enemies? Was it not feasible that they had captured Fullwood for some reason?

The complete lack of evidence was somewhat disconcerting, and Nelson Lee's walk down the lane promised no further advancement. In fact, he did not expect to get any further with the investigation. The matter was a complete mystery.

However, there was a faint possibility that Lee might pick up a clue between the school and the village. For it was probable that something had happened to Fullwood between these two points.

The morning was bright and sunny, with a crisp touch in the air that made walking a real pleasure. And Nelson Lee was slowly proceeding down the lane, his eyes very busy, when he caught sight of an elderly gentleman labouring up from the village on a very high bicycle.

The elderly gentleman was the Rev. Mr. Goodchild, the vicar. It is a curious fact that clergymen seemed to have a special preference for high bicycles. Mr. Goodchild dismounted just before he arrived at Lee's side.

"Good morning, Mr. Lee—good morning!" he said puffily. "Wonderful morning, I must say. We can do with some more weather of this kind. A thousand thanks, my dear sir, for your very generous contribution to our Widows' Fund. Your open-heartedness was most gratifying."

"Not at all, Mr. Goodchild," said Lee. "Pray don't mention it."

"Oh, by the way," said the vicar, adjusting his glasses, and fumbling in his pockets. "Perhaps this will be of interest to you, Mr. Lee. I picked it up on the other side of the village."

He produced a trouser-clip and handed it to the detective.

"Quite a simple object, but rather an expensive one," said Mr. Goodchild. "I do not suppose I should have troubled about an ordinary trouser-clip, but this is exceptionally good. It struck me that one of your boys might have dropped it, and he will naturally be vexed."

"An excellent idea, Mr. Goodchild," said Lee. "And very thoughtful of you to pick the clip up. I think it is most probable that it belongs to one of the St. Frank's boys."

The trouser-clip was indeed an exceptionally smart one. It was brightly nickelled, and was of unique pattern, with a patent design for fixing. And the whole thing was finished exquisitely. The pair of clips could not have cost less than half-a-crown.

Lee was rather keen. No ordinary junior would waste money on such an unnecessary luxury. But it was characteristic of Fullwood to buy such a pair of trouser-clips, for he was a dandified junior, and he had a strong love of display.

Without any guesswork, Lee could be fairly

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certain that this clip belonged to the missing junior.

"By the way, Mr. Goodchild, would it be troubling you too much to take me to the spot where you found this clip?" asked Nelson Lee. "I have reason to believe that one of my boys has met with a slight mishap, and this may prove to be of assistance."

"Certainly, Mr. Lee—certainly!" said the vicar. "I can show you the exact spot."

And they walked down the lane, went through the village, and some distance beyond Mr. Goodchild pointed out the spot where he had found the clip. It was just at that point where a number of trees shaded the road.

The vicar did not wait—having an appointment. Nelson Lee was rather relieved that he was alone, and he proceeded to make a thorough examination of the ground. And it was not long before he detected signs of a struggle.

There were two sharp marks on the road itself, unnoticeable to any casual observer, but clear enough to a trained eye that was looking for some such mark. Obviously, Fullwood had crashed down there, and his bicycle had scored up the hard ground. His trouser-clip had probably become unfastened at the same time.

In the long grass by the side of the road there were vague footprints and marks of someone having rolled there. Lee, trying to visualise the scene, guessed that Fullwood had been pulled from his bicycle, rolled to the side of the road, and then secured.

But this proved nothing. There was no absolute evidence of foul play. The affair might have been a practical joke. Some of Fullwood's questionable friends, perhaps—just out for a lark.

At all events, Nelson Lee did not feel justified in informing the police. It was feasible that Fullwood was merely on the spree, although unlikely. Lee did not wish to bring unwelcome publicity to the school by getting the police to make investigation.

His faith in the local force, moreover, was not particularly strong. He felt that it would be better to wait until the evening, and see what developments the day brought forth.

As events proved, Nelson Lee's decision was a wise one.

CHAPTER V.

THE LETTER IN ARABIC.



DR. KARNAK picked up the letter from his table and glanced at it sharply.

He had just entered his private room, after spending a couple of hours with the headmaster, helping Dr. Stafford with his new book on archæology. And he had found the letter on his table. It had obviously arrived by the noon delivery.

And Dr. Karnak didn't like the look of it.

One glance told him that it bore the Bannington postmark. Yet he knew nobody in Bannington. The writing was strange to him. And it was clearly addressed to the Egyptian. There could be no mistake.

Dr. Karnak tore it open and extracted a single sheet of notepaper. And his eyes grew tense as he saw that the paper contained a number of queer signs which were not unlike Hebrew characters. But Dr. Karnak knew at once that the writing was Arabic. It was his native tongue, and consequently more easily readable to him than English.

In less than a minute he had read the message, and he stood there quite still, his lips pursed, his gaze fixed. Then, with a sudden shrug, he thrust the sheet of paper into his pocket and uttered an exclamation.

He walked out, intending to have a quiet walk in the cloisters. He felt that he wanted to be in the open air, to think. And he had an appointment, too, with Mr. Stockdale.

Quite composed, he went outside and walked round towards the corner of the Ancient House, intending to reach the cloisters by the rear.

But Dr. Karnak was not aware that four fags were tearing along the Triangle at lightning speed just round that angle of the building.

The truth was, Willy Handforth of the Third had playfully yanked off the caps of Owen minor and Heath, and was tearing away with them. And Owen minor and Heath were in hot pursuit, with Lemon bringing up the rear.

And it was unfortunate for Dr. Karnak that he arrived at the corner at exactly the same second that Willy came springing round. Willy was not the kind of fellow to worry about corners.

He simply shot round, with his head down, and it would have been just the same if a traction engine had been coming. Happily for Willy, Dr. Karnak was rather softer than a traction engine.

Handforth minor charged full-tilt into him, catching the luckless Egyptian just below the belt. And as Heath and Owen minor were immediately in the rear, they added their own force to the charge.

The way Dr. Karnak went over backwards was extremely funny, to judge by the way Willy told of the incident afterwards. He sat down, went completely over, and did not even see who had crashed into him.

And in a flash Willy's great generalship came into play.

His mind worked like lightning. It was a young mind, but it lacked nothing in speed. He knew that if Dr. Karnak spotted them they'd all be booked for nothing less than a flogging.

And Willy objected to floggings on principle. He saw no reason why he should suffer one when it was possible to avoid it.

Almost before the thought had come to

him he seized Dr. Karnak's coat as that gentleman was sprawling on the ground. One swift tug and Willy had pulled the jacket upwards and clean over Dr. Karnak's head.

"Scoot!" hissed Willy curtly.

The way in which the fags vanished was akin to a miracle. There was just one scuffle, a shower of gravel, and they had dematerialised as neatly as one of Dr. Karnak's spirits.

The Egyptian sat up, snarling with rage and pain. His composure for the moment was gone. The coat over his head muddled him, and he tore it down into place as he scrambled to his feet. And he looked round with a baleful glare.

"You infernal young——"

He broke off abruptly, for to his amazement he was addressing the empty air. The Triangle was peaceful and quiet at this spot. True, two or three Removites were chatting together against the gymnasium, and Chambers and Co. were just strolling out through the gateway. But of fags there was no sign. Dr. Karnak gritted his teeth venomously.

He muttered something to himself in Arabic—probably something unprintable—and strode off. And he failed to observe that a piece of paper fluttered to the ground. It had slipped over half of the side pocket when his coat had been reversed. And the shaking that Dr. Karnak now subjected the jacket to added the final touch.

Dr. Karnak walked on, unconscious of his loss. He went to the College House and passed inside. And two minutes later I came round the corner of the Triangle, bound for the gymnasium.

I saw the piece of paper and walked on. But important things generally rest upon the merest trifles. I hesitated, glanced back, and decided to pick the paper up. It looked clean and fresh.

But it was only by a mere fluke that I had come that way, and even then I had nearly passed the paper by as not worth noticing. I opened it casually, and I walked on. But then I suddenly came to a halt.

"Phew!" I whistled.

I could see that the writing was Arabic. I didn't know the language, and I couldn't make head or tail of the message, but I knew Arabic writing when I saw it.

Instantly I thought of Dr. Karnak, for, of course, he was the only person at St. Frank's who would use the language. I was very curious, but by no means excited. If Dr. Karnak had thrown this away it proved that it could be of no importance.

I went straight into the Ancient House, however, intending to show the thing to the guv'nor. He could read Arabic, I knew, and would probably settle the question at once.

I had just entered the lobby when I caught sight of Willy Handforth and his gang convulsing themselves against the notice-board. They appeared to be enjoying

a huge joke, and were unconscious of my presence.

"Like a giddy ninepin!" said Chubby Heath gleefully.

"I've never seen a chap bowled over so beautifully in all my natural," declared Willy. "And the beauty of it is, he doesn't know who did it! Serves him jolly well right! Blessed foreign beast!"

"That was a great dodge of yours, Willy, to yank his coat over his head," remarked Owen minor with admiration.

Willy shrugged his shoulders.

"I think of these things on the spur of the moment," he said carelessly. "I'm not going to boast, but it was that wheeze that saved us. If old Karnak hadn't been confused——"

Willy paused as he caught sight of me.

"Go on," I said grimly.

"Eavesdropper!" hissed Chubby Heath.

"Don't be a young donkey!" I said. "If you talk about these things in a public place you must bear the consequences. Do I understand that you bowled Dr. Karnak over, and pulled his coat over his head?"

"Don't be dotty!" said Willy. "We just happened to be running round the corner, and Dr. Karnak was coming the opposite way. We met, and he biffed over beautifully. You're not going to blame us, I suppose?"

"Not at all," I said. "But if you'll take my advice, you'll be a bit more careful when you rush round corners. You won't always be lucky."

I walked on, leaving the fags grinning. But I had heard sufficient to make me quite sure that Dr. Karnak had lost that paper by accident. He had not flung it away. It had dropped out of his pocket during that little mix-up.

And I was all the more curious concerning it. Somehow I felt that I was justified in taking it to the guv'nor instead of restoring it to its rightful owner. We were out to obtain evidence against Karnak, and here was a chance.

I went straight to Nelson Lee's study and entered.

"What do you make of this, sir?" I asked, putting the paper in front of him.

Nelson Lee, who was sitting at his desk, frowned slightly, and picked up the note-paper. I had purposely refrained from saying how I had obtained it, for sometimes the guv'nor has absurd scruples.

"My dear Nipper, why do you come bothering me now?" asked Lee impatiently. "I really cannot be interrupted——"

He broke off, for he had caught sight of the Arabic writing. I could see his expression grow tense, and his eyes fairly gleamed. He started to his feet, and looked at me sharply.

"Where did you get this?" he rapped out.

"I found it."

"Found it?" he repeated. "What on earth——"

"It really belongs to Dr. Karnak, sir,"

I hastened to say, eager and keen. "It dropped out of his pocket, I think, as he came round the corner of the Triangle. Somebody bowled him over—some of the chaps. I don't think he knows anything about this loss."

"Wait!" commanded Lee curtly.

He seized a pencil, sat down at his desk again, and quickly construed the Arabic into English, jotting the words down on a writing block. I stood by, watching intently, although I could not read what the gov'nor was writing.

"What is it, sir?" I asked tensely.

Nelson Lee flung the pencil down, handed me the paper, and pointed to the door.

"Go as quickly as you can and drop this paper where you found it," he said sharply. "Make certain that nobody sees you. Having done so, watch from a convenient point. If possible, I want Dr. Karnak to find this letter on the ground, so that he will not suspect that it has been read or glanced at. He may discover his loss at any moment."

I didn't stop to argue. I could see that this was a very important occasion—one of those times when the gov'nor was not the man to be disobeyed. I fairly rushed out.

But once in the Triangle I walked at a sedate pace and unobtrusively dropped the sheet of notepaper just at the corner, where I had found it. Then I lounged away, and stood beneath one of the chestnut trees, pretending to be deeply immersed in manicuring my finger nails.

I was all impatient to hurry to the gov'nor's study again. I wanted to see what it was that had caused him to spring into life with such abruptness. But I had my job to finish.

For two or three minutes nothing happened.

One or two juniors walked round the Ancient House, but they took no notice of the paper, much to my relief. And then Dr. Karnak came hurrying out of the College House, feeling in his pockets as he did so.

"Ah!" I murmured. "This is where he finds the letter; but I'll bet he'll never guess that it's already been translated into English!"

Just as Dr. Karnak was getting near to the Ancient House, Tom Burton came round the corner, paused, and looked at the paper, in full sight of Dr. Karnak. The Egyptian hurried up as Burton was glancing at the Arabic writing.

"I think, my boy, that that paper belongs to me," said Dr. Karnak smoothly, his composure being quite perfect.

The Bo'sun looked up.

"Swab my decks!" he said. "Sorry, cap'n! I just found it lying on the deck here, near the scuppers."

"Yes, I dropped it a few moments ago," said Dr. Karnak. "Rather curious writing, is it not?"

"Can't make head or tail of it, sir," said Burton.



One of the newcomers stepped forward obsequiously, and bowed low.

"If you are very interested to know, it is merely a friendly note from a learned colleague of mine in Cairo," smiled Dr. Karnak. "Thank you, my boy. I should not have cared to lose it."

"Ay, ay, sir!" said the Bo'sun, raising his cap.

Dr. Karnak passed on, relieved. And without appearing to hurry, I walked into the Ancient House and quickly went to the gov'nor's study. In a minute I had informed him of the success of our little scheme.

"Splendid, Nipper!" said Lee. "Dr. Karnak suspects nothing. And yet that message has told me a very great deal."

"May I see the translation, sir?" I asked eagerly.

Nelson Lee passed me the writing block.

"It is not a literal translation, but the sense of the message is there," he said. "My Arabic requires a little polishing I am afraid."

I looked at the words on the writing block and read them with my heart beating rapidly. And this is what I saw:

"We have got a boy of the school with us. We made a prisoner of him last night. To save this boy's life, you must deliver yourself into our hands in that portion of the lane where the wood borders the road, between eight-thirty and nine o'clock this evening. If you fail to do so, the boy will be subjected to the altar of fire."

"The Avengers of Baal-Harran."

I looked up from the paper, and found that Nelson Lee was regarding me intently. My thoughts were confused at the moment. And then one thing came out clearly. The boy referred to in that message was Ralph Leslie Fullwood.

"What are you going to do, sir?" I asked breathlessly. "This letter is from Dr. Karnak's enemies!"

"Obviously," replied Lee. "It came by the noon post."

"But—but Fullwood——"

"Fullwood is being held by these unknown people," said Nelson Lee. "But it is impossible for us to know what their hiding-place is, or where it is situated. You see, my surmise was correct. Karnak's enemies could not get hold of him in the ordinary way, and so they have captured Fullwood for the express purpose of forcing Karnak to obey their will."

"But Fullwood's in danger, sir!" I gasped. "Can't we do something at once to rescue him? Can't we go to Dr. Karnak, and force him to——"

"My dear Nipper, pause a moment and think," interrupted Lee. "Of what use would it be to go to Dr. Karnak? He knows no more than we do. His instructions are to deliver himself into the hands of these avengers in Belton Lane. No object would be gained by letting Dr. Karnak know that we are aware of his position. We will wait—and see how things go."

And Nelson Lee refused to discuss the subject further. But I was worried, and I wondered how the affair would end.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLAN OF ACTION!



TUBES, the pageboy, put his head inside Study C, and grinned.

"Sorry, Master Nipper," he said. "Mr. Lee wants you."

"Right!" I said. "I'll go at once."

I happened to be in the study alone, and I lost no time in obeying the summons. It was evening now, and tea was already over. I had been in a fever of impatience ever since dinner-time.

Throughout the afternoon I had wondered what the gov'nor was doing. But after lessons I had discovered that he was apparently as indifferent as ever. All sorts of talk was going on about Fullwood, and the juniors were now becoming interested in his disappearance. But there was no actual consternation. Fullwood was not popular enough for that.

Knowing all I did, I found it difficult to listen to the many conjectures that had been put forward. For I knew that Fullwood was in the hands of Dr. Karnak's enemies—a kind of hostage. It seemed that if Karnak failed to give himself up, the unfortunate junior would be put to torture.

It can be well understood, then, that I lost no time in hastening to Nelson Lee. I found the gov'nor as cool as ever, and perfectly calm. He smiled at me as I closed the door, and stood listening for a moment.

"Why all this dramatic effect, Nipper?" asked Lee drily. "There is not much chance of anybody listening outside our door. This matter strikes you as being vital, but it is not so serious as you imagine."

"But Fullwood's still a prisoner, sir," I said. "I don't care much about the chap, if it comes to that, but I don't like to know that he's in danger."

"Well, Nipper, it may ease your mind to know that Fullwood is in no danger at all—at least, not at the moment," said Nelson Lee. "His captors will do him no harm until after nine o'clock. We must worry if Dr. Karnak fails to obey the summons. Until then, we may be easy."

"Do you think Dr. Karnak will obey, sir?"

"It is very difficult to form any conjecture," said the gov'nor. "That is why I brought you here. I want you to keep your eye on our Egyptian friend, and watch his every move."

"You bet I will, sir," I said eagerly. "But haven't you done anything this afternoon?"

"I have not looked for Fullwood, if that is what you mean."

"But why not, sir?"

"Because he is in no immediate danger, and because it would be a very foolish move to make," said the detective. "The whole point of the affair will come to a climax to-night. By making investigations earlier—with probable futile results—I should only be showing my hand. As it is, we know Dr. Karnak's cards completely, and it is now for us to see how he will play his hand."

"You're quite right, gov'nor," I said thoughtfully. "When you come to put it like that, I can understand. But at first sight it seemed that you were wasting time—leaving Fullwood in the hands of those Egyptian chaps when you ought to be busy. But I can see this is the best way."

"What I want you to do, Nipper, is to watch Dr. Karnak unobtrusively," said Nelson Lee. "On no account let him suspect that you are shadowing his movements. And if he should go out, shortly before eight-thirty, then you must still follow him."

"You mean, if he goes to surrender himself?"

"Yes, that's what I mean," said Nelson Lee. "Keep on his trail, and remember that you will be dealing with expert men of the outdoors type—men who are better at tracking than you are. So you must use every caution."

"Trust me, sir," I said quietly. "But I don't believe Dr. Karnak will go. What does he care about Fullwood? In order to save his own skin he'll stay in the school, and leave the poor chap to his fate. And what are we going to do then?" I added anxiously.

Nelson Lee looked at me patiently.

"This is not the time, Nipper, to discuss what we shall do if Dr. Karnak fails,"

he said. "It will be time enough to make plans then. For the present, I have given you instructions, and I want you to carry them out."

"Good enough, sir; I'll buzz off," I said.

And I left Nelson Lee's study, and casually walked into the library to select some volumes on history. And I took care to observe that Dr. Karnak was in the museum.

I knew there was no exit from the museum except by means of the library. Therefore I had only to keep my eye on this apartment, and I should do all that was necessary.

The Egyptian soon came out, and went to his room. I followed. For over half an hour he stayed there, and I had a pretty ticklish time of it, one way and another. For I couldn't allow anybody to see that I was on the watch. But I managed fairly well.

It was now getting on towards eight, and I had a little thrill when Dr. Karnak emerged, and went down the passage. At first I thought he was going outside. But he didn't.

Instead, he went back to the library, and closed the door after him. After waiting five minutes, I walked in, went over to one of the bookcases, and selected a volume. Dr. Karnak was not in the museum, but in the library itself. He was sitting down, making notes.

He was perfectly composed, and seemed to be the genuine, thoughtful scholar that his position indicated. I left the room, and again stationed myself on the watch.

And it was not until eight-twenty that Dr. Karnak emerged.

The time was now getting close. If he was bent on going, he would have to start almost at once. And I kept myself acquainted with his movements with particular care. And I was convinced that he had no suspicion of my attentions.

But I was certainly surprised when he made his way straight to the lecture hall. He had two books tucked under his arm, and he seemed to be in a thoughtful mood. There was no sign of agitation about him.

After entering the lecture hall, he went to the platform, sat down, and seemed to be preparing some notes. I managed to get a glimpse of him now and again by peeping cautiously in at the door—which he had left ajar. But I had to dodge aside soon, for a number of Sixth Formers arrived—in a continuous succession, in ones and twos.

After about a dozen had turned up, the door was closed, and no more came. And I heard Dr. Karnak's voice continuously. And the time was now eight-thirty. Grimly, I crept to the door, and opened it a bare inch.

The science lecturer was standing on the platform, holding forth upon the subject of "Recent Discoveries in the Ancient Egyptian Tombs." And his audience of Sixth Formers was listening with careful attention. And

Dr. Karnak's lecture was highly intellectual, and very interesting.

But I softly closed the door again, and stood there for a few moments. My eyes were gleaming. So Dr. Karnak had started a lecture, and would probably entertain the seniors for a full hour! That meant nine-thirty before he came out!

"The brute!" I muttered. "He's decided to leave Fullwood to his fate! He's ignoring that letter altogether! What the dickens will the gov'nor do now?"

I hurried back to Nelson Lee's study, agitated and worried. For Dr. Karnak had failed. And this meant that the position, as far as Fullwood was concerned, was ten times more acute.

And how would it be possible for Nelson Lee to find out where Fullwood was being kept? There was no clue—no single clue! We might search for days, and yet find absolutely nothing.

I arrived at the door of Nelson Lee's study, and attempted to enter, but the door was locked. So I rapped urgently on the panels.

"Well, who is it?" came the gov'nor's voice.

"Me, sir," I said softly.

The key turned in the lock, and I quickly entered the room. Then, with a gasp, I fell back. For I was standing face to face with Dr. Karnak! I stared at him in blank amazement and confusion.

"Why, I—I thought—" I began.

"Well, and what did you think, Nipper?" purred Dr. Karnak calmly.

I still stared at him. It was impossible. I had just left him in the lecture hall. And here he was—At least—

"Yes, Nipper, you have guessed it," said Dr. Karnak, but his voice was the voice of Nelson Lee. "Now, don't get excited. Keep cool, young 'un—keep cool! What is your report?"

I stared at the gov'nor amazedly.

"But—but it's marvellous, sir!" I ejaculated. "I've never seen such a stunning disguise! You're Karnak to the life! And you've got his voice to a tee, too! I never thought you could do it, sir—"

"Never mind what you thought, Nipper. What is your report?"

In ten words, I told Nelson Lee the position.

"As I thought," he said grimly. "I was convinced that Karnak would never sacrifice himself for the sake of saving a junior. It may not mean death for him, but it certainly means the end to all his comfort and high social position in this establishment. And Dr. Karnak has left Fullwood to the mercy of his enemies. But this is where we step in, Nipper."

"Yes, sir?" I asked breathlessly.

"My dear lad, don't you see that we've got friend Karnak just where we want him?" asked Nelson Lee, with a touch of triumph in his voice. "I am not interested

in Karnak—my object is to get Fullwood back. And here is a simple way of achieving my end."

"You—you mean to give yourself up to those men?" I breathed.

"Exactly."

"But—but the danger, sir—"

"The danger is trivial," interrupted the gov'nor. "The advantage will be on my side, for I shall be prepared. I fancy that I shall be accepted as Dr. Karnak without question. And if my surmise is correct, I shall be led to the spot where Fullwood is imprisoned. The rest I must leave in the lap of the gods."

I regarded the prospect with alarm.

"Can I follow, sir?" I asked eagerly.

"Just to see where they take you—"

"No, Nipper; your place will be here," interrupted Lee. "You must watch Karnak, and prevent him leaving the school at all costs. For if two of him are seen, it will be a poor look-out for any success. If he attempts to come out before I return, keep him within the school buildings. Use any pretext in order to do so. I can trust to your ingenuity—although, as a matter of fact, I didn't think you would be called upon to bring it into play. However, we must be prepared for any emergency."

In spite of my concern for the gov'nor, I could not help marvelling at the cleverness of this master stroke. For Dr. Karnak was calmly lecturing to the Sixth Formers, unsuspecting and cool.

And, while he was thus engaged, Nelson Lee would go down the lane, and allow himself to be caught—thereby effecting the release of Fullwood. But in order to save the young rascal of Study A, the gov'nor was placing himself in a position of grave peril.

"Supposing they find out, sir?" I asked anxiously. "They'll make you a prisoner, too!"

"There is that possibility, I will admit."

"And then what shall we do?" I asked.

"The position will be ten times as bad, sir. Without you here, we shall be done!"

Nelson Lee patted my shoulder.

"We must take these risks, young 'un," he said quietly.

"We!" I echoed bitterly. "You, you mean!"

"Possibly I will have the lion's share, but we need not waste time in discussing that," said the gov'nor. "I think, upon the whole, it would be advisable for me to use the window as a means of exit. Somewhat undignified for a renowned Egyptian scholar, but we must let that pass. There would be a most unfortunate contretemps if two Dr. Karnaks happened to meet in the passage!"

And Nelson Lee walked to the window, and signed to me to switch off the lights. I did so, and Lee quickly raised the blind, opened the window, and glanced out into the Triangle.

"All clear," he murmured. "Good-bye, Nipper! I'll be back before long!"

I ran up to him.

"Gov'nor," I muttered, "I don't like it! You—you might never come back! These Eastern chaps are uncanny—they're devils!"

"This is the only way to reach Fullwood, and I must go," replied Lee quietly.

Without another word he turned, and walked boldly across the Triangle—trusting to chance whether he was seen or not.

And I stood there, anxious, and filled with foreboding of evil.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE HANDS OF THE MYSTERY MEN!



NELSON LEE walked sedately down Bellton Lane.

The time was now just eight-fifty. There were still ten minutes to run before the time limit was up.

In the gloom, Lee looked Dr. Karnak to the life. And his disguise was equally impenetrable in a strong light. The detective was in no way alarmed at the prospect ahead of him. On the contrary, he was thoroughly enjoying the whole adventure.

It was something after his own heart.

There was an element of mystery and uncertainty in the whole affair. He was going into danger with his eyes wide open, and he knew well enough that he would have to keep his wits about him.

But this made the whole thing all the more interesting.

He had almost reached that part of the lane where the wood came to an end, and he was wondering if some hitch had occurred. For there had been no sign of a movement from the dark hedges, or from the wood.

The lane itself was deserted.

The moon was up, but partially obscured by drifting clouds. And there was a ghastly gloom in the lane. In the distance, the sound of a train rumbling into Bellton Station could be heard. But all around Lee complete silence prevailed.

And almost before he knew it he found somebody by his side.

Although he had been expecting it, he was just a little startled. It seemed like a shadow, but when he halted, he found a man there. Quickly, he held himself alert. He saw that another man had come up on the other side. There were, indeed four. And they were close to him.

There was something uncanny in the way they had stolen up out of the darkness.

Two beams of white light stabbed through the gloom, and focused themselves upon Nelson Lee's disguised face. It was an acid test. But even in that brilliance, there was no means of detecting that this man

with the fez on his head was not Dr. Karnak.

The other four men were all dark featured—Egyptians—and they were wearing European attire. Nelson Lee allowed his face to break into a smile as he stared unblinkingly into the light.

"You are brave, Dr. Karnak—we did not expect you to come," said one of the men softly. "It is well that you have done so."

The man spoke in Arabic, but Lee understood perfectly. His own mastery of the language was not absolute, but during the afternoon he had been studying Arabic, and cleaning some of the rust away. He did not feel the full confidence that he would like, so he had to be cautious.

"I have come," he said shortly. "Enough!"

He was glad that no further questions were asked, and that it was unnecessary for him to speak again. His hands were seized, and in a moment, a rope was passed over his wrists, and they were tied. Lee felt rather grim, but he could do nothing to avoid this great handicap.

And then, without wasting further time, the four men led him off across the meadow, until they had got well away from the lane. They seemed to be going in the direction of the river.

But before progressing further, a heavy piece of cloth was produced, and it was tied over the imitation Dr. Karnak's eyes. And now he was led onwards, blindfold.

But Lee's captors would have been a little surprised if they had known how accurately their prisoner knew where he was going.

He saw nothing, but his ears were not at fault. He knew every inch of the surrounding country, and his sense of direction was highly trained. He felt sure that the men were making attempts to confuse him—but he wasn't confused.

He knew every turn that was made. A faint echo here—a slight rustle there—a ripple of water in one direction—the swishing of a tree in another. All these slight sounds meant something to Nelson Lee as he was being led along. And, at length, the journey came to an end.

Lee was smiling quietly to himself in the darkness. His captors believed that they had fooled him. But he knew, almost to an inch, where he was. He had seen nothing, but his instinct was certain.

He had felt himself being taken down into the deserted stone quarry on Bannington Moor. Even before he reached that spot, he knew where he was going. And after getting into the quarry, he was aware that he had been led into one of the old tunnels—into the long since deserted workings.

He heard a door being unlocked, and then he was thrust forward, and left alone. The door closed upon him. But when he attempted to walk forward, in order to find out what manner of prison this was,

he felt detaining hands upon him. He was not alone, after all.

In the meantime, two of the men who had brought him here went along the old tunnel for a short space, and, finally entered another cave. Just within, they came to some heavy black curtains. Passing through, they were within a room very similar to the one in which Fullwood had been imprisoned. It was entirely draped in black.

But there was a great difference, nevertheless.

For almost in the centre of this sombre apartment a man sat in a chair. And he was a man who deserved a second look. His appearance was impressive in the extreme.

He was an Oriental, and of great age. His brown skin was crinkled and creased into a thousand wrinkles, and he wore a grey beard of much strength. His clothing was Oriental—rich, costly robes. And upon his head there sat a well fitting turban.

On either side of him were long stands, with a big candle burning in each. It was an extraordinary spectacle to come across down in these deserted quarry workings.

The patriarch raised one hand, and his eyelids flickered.

One of the newcomers stepped forward obsequiously, and bowed low—almost to the ground.

"Speak!" said the aged man, in Arabic.

"The faithless one has surrendered, O, Highest!" said the other. "We have him in another apartment, and await your orders."

"Go!" said the greybeard. "Bring him hither."

The man bowed his way out, and with his companion, went back to the cave where Nelson Lee had been placed. Without a word, the prisoner was led out, and taken to the black draped apartment.

And as he entered, the bandage was taken from his eyes. For here he could not tell where he was, or what manner of place this could be. The patriarch looked at him in a gloating kind of way.

"So, traitor, we are face to face," he said, in Arabic.

"I have nought to say regarding myself," replied Lee. "I have obeyed the command. What of the boy?"

"The boy shall go free."

"It is well," said Nelson Lee, using Dr. Karnak's tone to perfection. "But I demand to see that the bargain is kept. I have done my part—you must do yours. I want to see this boy set free before my eyes."

The old man considered.

"And who are you, that should demand?" he asked. "You have been too long in this infidel country. You are forgetting your Mother-tongue. You speak not as you should."

Nelson Lee shrugged his shoulders.

"These are modern, days," he said. "I speak the new language of Egypt. I seldom use my Mother-tongue."

"Your wish shall be granted," said the patriarch. "Our object is gained, and it is sufficient. You will be taken out into the open with the boy, and you will see him set at liberty. Will that suffice?"

"It will suffice," replied Lee.

Inwardly, he was gloating. He had hardly hoped for such success as this. He had expected to have a stiff, grim battle before he gained his objective. Once he saw Fullwood set at liberty, he would worry no more. For he knew that he was capable of dealing with these picturesque rogues.

They were probably, sincere enough in their own way—but quite fanatical. And Nelson Lee felt that they would be an easy crowd to deal with. Cunning, perhaps, but of little use in a stiff fight.

They believed, of course, that they were dealing with Dr. Karnak—not with England's most celebrated detective. And that, of course, made all the difference in the world.

Nelson Lee was blindfolded again, and taken out. And then there was a short wait. Two of his captors had, indeed, entered an adjoining cave—where Fullwood was a prisoner.

The leader of Study A, in all truth, was reduced to a condition of abject fear. The darkness, and the extraordinary nature of his surroundings, had succeeded in scaring him out of his usual calm. His pluck had not been able to stand the test. For hours his courage had been oozing.

He had been fed—he had eaten commonplace sandwiches, and had drunk a prosaic bottle of gingerbeer. And although the pangs of hunger were strong upon him, in spite of this feed, his mental condition led him to forget his physical state.

He had been in darkness so long that it now held terrors for him. He heard a sound, but saw nothing.

"What—what's that?" he asked, with a gasp.

"Fear not," said a voice. "You are to be freed."

"It's all a trick—it's torture!" muttered Fullwood. "You—you devils! You're going to kill me, I believe! Where am I? Hang you, where am I? Why don't you tell me?"

"Be silent, boy, and all will be well," said the voice. "Your ordeal is almost at an end. Henceforth you will remember it as but a nightmare. Have no fear, for no harm will come to you."

Fullwood almost screamed as a hand touched him out of the darkness. He shrank away, shivering.

"Leave me alone!" he moaned. "Don't—don't touch me!"

But he was touched—this time firmly. For a second he struggled, and tried to

get away. But he was chained to that ring in the floor, and could do nothing. He felt that same black cloth descend over his head, and once more he was roped. And the anklet was unlocked from his leg.

Now a wild kind of hope surged within Fullwood's breast. Were these men speaking the truth? Was he actually to be released? After his twenty odd hours of captivity, it seemed almost too much to expect.

He had slept some of the time away, but it had been fitful slumber, and the junior was haggard and in a highly nervous condition. Between his captors, he was led out, and they came to a halt.

"You have the boy?" asked a voice that made Fullwood start.

But the words were not in English—Fullwood could not understand them. He recognised the tone of Dr. Karnak, however. And he was staggered.

"Dr. Karnak!" he gasped. "What—what are you doing here?"

"It is well," said Nelson Lee in Arabic. "I know the boy's voice. Proceed."

They moved forward, and both the prisoners were now blindfold. Out into the open they went, out of the quarry, and then along the moor, and further beyond—until they were standing at the edge of a deserted meadow. Here, Karnak's enemies deemed that it would be safe to release the boy. He would never be able to tell where he had been imprisoned.

To Fullwood's secret joy, he felt the ropes being untied from about him. But even now he was hardly sure whether he was awake or asleep. Perhaps this was but a dream, and he would soon wake up and find himself chained to that ring in the room of blackness.

But no. The cloth was removed, and he stood there, blinking round, dazed and bewildered. The gloom of night seemed brilliant to him. For since the moment he had been captured, he had been almost continuously in darkness. He could see the tall, well known figure of Dr. Karnak.

"Remove the bandage!" exclaimed Lee curtly. "I must see this boy go."

After a moment's hesitation, the captors took Lee's bandage off. And Fullwood was certain—beyond the shadow of a doubt—that he was facing Dr. Karnak.

The other men he could not see. At least, he only saw their dim forms. They kept their heads down so far that their features were invisible to him.

Dr. Karnak pointed away across the meadows.

"Go!" he said, in English. "Run to the school as quickly as you can, Fullwood. And say nothing of this adventure to your companions. Take heed of my words—say nothing. For if you do, you will be ridiculed. Go, while you have the opportunity."

Fullwood didn't wait to argue—he turned, and fled.

CHAPTER VIII.

FULLWOOD'S DELUSION!



GULLIVER groaned. "It's no good—we'll never see him again," he said miserably. "He seems to have vanished off the face of the earth! Why ain't the police told about it? It's terrible!"

"An' Mr. Lee does nothin'!" said Bell. "He just came an' asked some questions in the Form room this mornin', an' that's all we know! I don't believe Fully's on

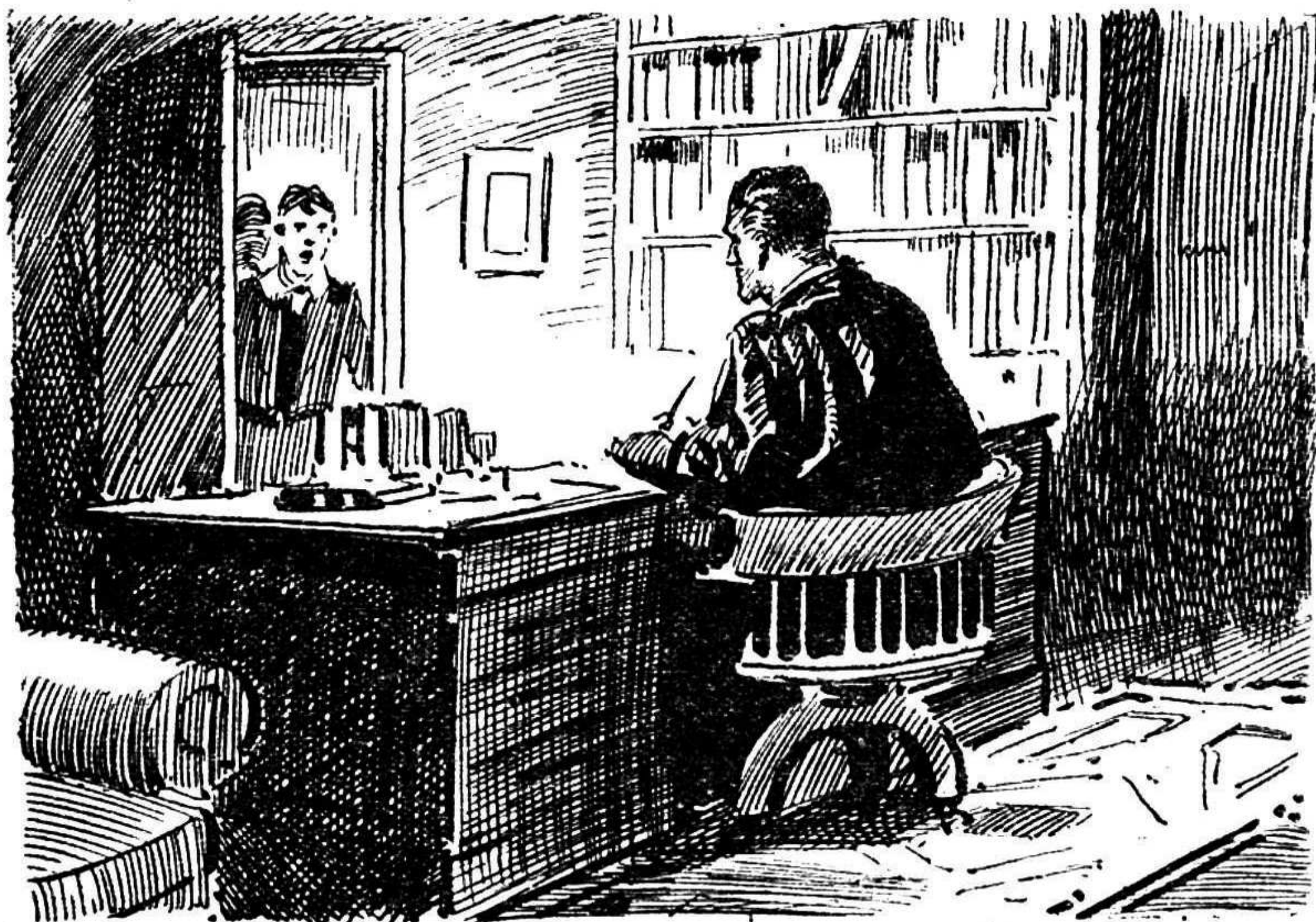
button in the Triangle this afternoon! A brace button! And I'll bet a quid it came off Fullwood's trucks!"

"Why, is it marked with the maker's name?"

"No, it's a plain button——"

"Then how do you know it belongs to Fullwood," grinned Pitt.

"Because when a chap's struggling with villains, he generally loses a button, or something," said Handforth firmly. "Therefore, it's a clue. And I've found some footprints outside in the lane—big footprints, just against the ditch. They're the footprints of one of the crooks!"



In the doorway, I nearly collapsed. I closed my eyes, blinked, and stared again. Yes, it was the gov'nor all right, sitting there as calm as you like, as though he had been thus engaged for hours.

the razzle! He must have met with some accident."

"Or foul play!" suggested Handforth. "It's my belief, he's fallen into the hands of a gang of smugglers, or something. Anyhow, I've been thinking it over, and I mean to investigate."

A dozen fellows groaned. We were in the common room, and it was only natural that Fullwood should be the main topic of conversation.

"Handy's going to investigate!" said Pitt, in a hollow voice. "Poor old Fullwood! He'll never be found now!"

Handforth glared.

"You—you ass!" he snorted. "I've got about four clues already! I found a brace

"My hat!" said Armstrong. "He's fairly on the track! And what kind of a villain is this? A good detective can tell from the footprints, all sorts of things. He can say how high the man is, whether he's fat or thin, if he's clean-shaven, or if he's got whiskers! I've read all about it. That's what Sherlock Holmes does!"

Handforth sniffed.

"Sherlock Holmes," he said disdainfully. "A pretty good detective, perhaps, but he's a back number. He's out of date. A modern detective knows more. Now, from those footprints, I've conclusively proved that the criminal stepped into the ditch by accident."

"Good old Trackett Grim!" said Owen major approvingly.

"And the crook is a huge man, with No. 9 boots, and he's bow legged——"

"Old Cuttle!" said Church brilliantly.

"Fathead!" sneered Handforth. "This man is a big, muscular fellow, and he's got a limp. I can easily tell that, because the toe was more deeply impressed than the heel. Probably, the man's a murderer."

"Thanks!" said Armstrong.

"Eh?"

"Those footprints happen to be mine—that's all," said Armstrong calmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The expression of dismay on Handforth's face was comical, and the crowd roared.

"Yours?" gasped Handforth.

"Yes, you ass," said Armstrong. "I happened to be going along there with Griffith, and my cap blew off. I had to step nearly into the ditch to get it. So what about your marvellous deductions?"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Handforth blankly. "Of course, I knew all the time that they were yours," he added, with startling effrontery. "You surely realise that I was just trying to test you?"

Armstrong fainted into the arms of a few other juniors.

"Well, of course, there's no doubt that Handforth is a pretty clever chap," remarked Jarrow. "He gets out of these holes like a blessed worm. Jolly clever, too—the way these worms slip up out of the ground——"

"Are you calling me a worm?" howled Handforth.

"Not at all," said Jarrow. "I wouldn't dream of insulting you. I mean, it's not the thing. But when we consider how easy it is for a fellow to get offended, it makes us realise that human nature is weak. It's a very complex piece of mechanism. Human nature, when you get down to rock bottom, is nothing more nor less than a mass of absolute contradictions. Just look at the way Handforth gets into a temper——"

"If we let this ass start talking, he'll never finish!" snorted Handforth. "Look here, Jarrow, you'd better dry up, or you'll jolly well get a biff. We were talking about Fullwood, and I mean to find out——"

"Look!" yelled Gulliver suddenly.

The door opened, and Ralph Leslie Fullwood stood there. He gazed into the common room with wild, bloodshot eyes, and it was some seconds before anybody spoke. Fullwood was a remarkable sight. His usual immaculate condition was conspicuous by its absence. He was mud-stained, dirty, torn, and bedraggled. His face was grimy, and his usually neat hair was a mere tumbled mop. And as he staggered into the room, he was at once surrounded.

"Fully!" gasped Bell thankfully.

"Great Scott! He's come back!"

"Fullwood!"

"But—but what's happened?" grasped Armstrong. "What the dickens have you been up to, Fullwood? How did you get yourself into this state, and where have you been all day? You're going to get the sack, you know!"

"Sack!" said Fullwood bitterly. "I'm goin' to get the sack, for bein' imprisoned by a gang of rogues, an' held captive in some rotten black dungeon? Thank goodness I got out of it alive!"

Handforth snorted.

"You rotter!" he said indignantly. "Turning up like this! I was just going to start my investigations, and within a few hours I should have rescued you."

"Don't rot, Handy—he's in a pretty bad way," said Pitt. "The best thing we can do is to rush him to the matron——"

"Hang the matron!" interrupted Fullwood, with some of his old assurance. "I'm all right now, but I've been through an awful time."

I was looking at him with mingled relief and worry. For his very appearance here proved one thing—one thing that made me glow inwardly. Nelson Lee had been successful! He had achieved his object, and Fullwood had gained his liberty. But what of the gov'nor himself?

I was almost too worried to listen to what Fullwood was saying—for I knew that Nelson Lee had given himself up in order to secure Fullwood's release. In other words, Nelson Lee was now in the hands of Fullwood's late captors.

"Let's hear the story!" said Gulliver eagerly. "Where have you been all the time?"

"What happened to you last night?" asked Bell.

"Out with it, Fully!"

For once in a way Fullwood was quite popular. He was the centre of all attention, and the crowd hung on his words. It was a novel experience for Ralph Leslie. And the effect was to revive him very considerably. He fairly glowed under the sensation he was causing.

"If you'll all keep quiet, I'll let you know the truth," he said. "Afterwards, I'm goin' to tell the police, and have these brutes hunted down."

"Never mind about that—tell us what happened!"

Fullwood considered for a moment.

"Well, last night I had to go to Banninton suddenly—after lights-out," he said. "A friend of mine was ill in bed, an' he telephoned for me to go an' see him——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Inventive genius coming to the fore again!"

"Make it a bit better than that, Fully!"

Fullwood looked round, flushing.

"Don't you believe me?" he demanded angrily.

"Well, hardly," said Pitt blandly. "You see, a few inquiries were made this morning, when you failed to turn up, and it unfortunately come out that you went to the Wheatsheaf Inn, to join a card party. Mr. Lee knows all about it, and you'll probably have a pleasant half-hour with the Head later."

Fullwood looked alarmed.

"Some cad sneaked!" he snarled, glaring at his own chums.

"Don't blame them—they couldn't help it," I said. "Mr. Lee was making careful inquiries, and it was absolutely necessary to know your movements, and your intended movements."

Fullwood scowled, and felt that he had made a very bad start. To be bowled out in a deliberate lie at the beginning was hardly a good augury for the rest of his story—which, he knew well enough, was fantastic.

"Well, I wasn't to know that that little jaunt of mine was public property," he said sourly. "I naturally didn't want to talk about it. Well, I'd just got through Bell-ton, when I saw a light in the road."

"What kind of a light?"

"It seemed like an electric torch," said Fullwood truthfully. "I decided to whizz by, and pedal like the deuce. But just as I got opposite, a black form shot out, and I was hurled to the ground. Then a cloth was thrown over my head, an' I was bound up."

"And didn't you see who your assailants were?" asked Doyle.

"Didn't have a chance," replied Fullwood. "I was marched away, more dead than alive, and the next thing I knew, I was in a room with black curtains all the way round. All I heard was a voice. An' my left foot was chained to a big ring in the floor."

There was an ominous silence. On the face of it, Fullwood's tale sounded far-fetched in the extreme. It was like a piece out of a romantic history of olden days.

"And then, I suppose, a chap appeared with a chopper, and threatened to carve your head off?" asked Pitt calmly. "Or perhaps a trapdoor opened in the floor, and a few Spanish Inquisitors appeared?"

Fullwood glared.

"It's true, I tell you!" he flared out. "Good heavens! Have I gone through all this, only to be suspected of lyin'?"

"Well, you started with a decent fib, so there's no telling what you're telling us now," said Watson bluntly. "You say you were captured, and you can't tell us who these chaps were, or what they were like."

"I tell you, I didn't see them!"

"Naturally," said Watson.

"What do you mean—naturally?" snapped the unhappy victim.

"You didn't see them, because they didn't exist!" replied Tommy. "My hat! If

you think you can fool us with a fake yarn like that, you've made a bloomer! The fact is, you've been on the razzle all day, and you faked up this unholy story to save yourself from being sacked."

"Hear, hear!"

The unfortunate Fullwood nearly went crazy. For once in his life he was telling the absolute truth, and it didn't improve his temper to realise that it sounded like a tissue of lies. But he grinned viciously with triumph when he realised that he would not have his unsupported word to rely on.

"You think I haven't got corroboration of this?" he asked harshly. "Well, I have! I can prove every word of it—an' the witness is a man whose word can't be doubted."

"Oh, draw it mild, old man!" said Armstrong. "Look here, where were you taken to?"

"Where was I taken to?"

"That's what I said."

"How the dickens should I know?" snarled Fullwood. "Haven't I told you that I was under a black cloth? Haven't I explained that the room I was in was draped with black? How could I see anythin'? I might have been in Edgemore, or I might have been on the road to Caistowe, or—or anythin'!"

"Oh, that's easy!" said Griffith. "It's a pity you couldn't think of something more plausible. This yarn's a bit too thin! If you tell it to the Head, you'll absolutely deserve the sack!"

"You—you disbelieving fools!" roared Fullwood. "Listen to this! The man who got me out of the clutches of those unknown beasts was Dr. Karnak!"

"Dr. Karnak!" echoed the juniors.

"Yes!"

"Oh, don't spoof us like that—"

"Spoolin' you, am I?" grated Fullwood. "Not half-an-hour ago Dr. Karnak came an' got me released."

"How do you know it was Dr. Karnak?"

"I was taken out of that room, an' the black cloth was put over me again," said Fullwood. "An' then I heard Dr. Karnak's voice—"

"Oh, only his voice?"

"Wait a minute!" said Fullwood grimly. "I was led out, and for a long time we went over the fields, an' then my captors took off that black cloth! I found myself out in the open, an' Dr. Karnak was there—a prisoner himself, with his hands bound behind him!"

"Oh, don't make it so steep!"

"Draw it mild, Fullwood!"

"I tell you he was there!" yelled the exasperated Fullwood. "He told me to come straight to the school, an' he advised me to say nothin'. I was a fool not to take any notice of him. He told me I'd be ridiculed!"

Morrow, of the Sixth, walked into the

room. For some moments he had been standing by the door, listening. His face was rather grim.

"So you've got back Fullwood?" he asked. "When did you say Dr. Karnak came and set you free from these remarkable captors?"

"About half-an-hour ago," replied Fullwood quickly.

"Are you sure?"

"I'll swear to it."

"Take my advice—don't," said Morrow curtly. "I happen to know that your story is nothing more nor less than a tissue of lies—"

"It isn't!" shouted Fullwood desperately.

"A tissue of lies, from start to finish," repeated Morrow, his brow growing black. "You young idiot! It's as clear as daylight that you've invented this yarn, just to excuse some spree or other. Fortunately, I'm able to nail the lie down at once."

"You can't—you can't!" gasped Fullwood. "It all happened—every bit of it."

"You young sweep!" thundered Morrow. "If this story of yours is true, how do you account for the fact that Dr. Karnak has been lecturing to the Sixth for the past hour and a half?"

CHAPTER IX.

ROUGH ON FULLWOOD!

Fullwood staggered.

"Dr. Karnak's been lecturin' to the Sixth?" he asked blankly. "Why, it's impossible! He couldn't be in two places at once—"

"I quite agree with you," said Morrow. "I've just come from the lecture hall, and Dr. Karnak finished speaking only five minutes ago! I've been listening to him for well over an hour. Do you still maintain that you saw Dr. Karnak out in the fields half an hour ago?"

Fullwood was so amazed that he could hardly reply. And the situation was undoubtedly rough on the unfortunate junior. His story was perfectly true in every detail, and yet here there was every evidence that it was a tissue of lies! His brain seemed to be in a whirl.

"It's a plot!" he said thickly. "I tell you Dr. Karnak was out there—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared with derisive laughter.

"Idiots—idiots!" screamed Fullwood. "I tell you it's true! Dr. Karnak released me, an' I saw him as clearly as I can see you!"

"Look here, my lad, we've had enough of this," said Morrow curtly. "You're simply calling me a liar—and I won't stand it! Fortunately, there are a dozen other Sixth Formers who can prove that Dr. Karnak has been lecturing for over an hour past. So your story won't hold water."

"Won't it?" snapped Fullwood, suddenly cooling down. "I'll tell you what! I'm goin' straight to Mr. Lee!"

"That'll improve things a lot!" said Pitt.

"I'm goin' straight to Mr. Lee, an' I'm goin' to tell him the whole truth," said Fullwood deliberately.

"Of course, if you tell him the truth, that'll be different," said Pitt.

"You can sneer—you can jeer!" panted Fullwood. "I shall tell him just the same as I've told you. And when Dr. Karnak comes in—"

"Don't be a young idiot!" said Morrow, his patience gone. "Don't I keep telling you that Dr. Karnak is in all the time?"

"I'm goin' to Mr. Lee all the same!" said Fullwood curtly.

"Don't!" I said, grasping his arm. "As a matter of fact, I don't think Mr. Lee's in just now. Better let it drop, Fullwood. In any case, wait until later. Go and wash yourself, and change—or, better still, go straight to bed, and leave everything till the morning."

I did my utmost to dissuade him, but he was firm. Since hearing his story, I was very anxious about the gov'nor. Nelson Lee had been bound! This meant that he was still a prisoner in the hands of those mysterious men!

I couldn't help feeling a little sympathetic towards Fullwood. For I, at least, know that he had been telling the truth. He had seen Dr. Karnak's counterpart, and he was not to be blamed for having made the mistake. And I wanted to stop him from going to the gov'nor's study, because I knew that Nelson Lee was not there. But he was determined.

"I'm goin'!" he said, between his teeth.

"All right—I'll come with you," I said. "But it's no good."

We hurried to Nelson Lee's study, with a number of other fellows streaming along behind. Morrow, in disgust, had gone off. Fullwood fairly burst into the gov'nor's study, his indignation growing.

Nelson Lee was sitting at his desk, writing!

In the doorway I nearly collapsed. I closed my eyes, blinked, and stared again. Yes, it was the gov'nor all right—sitting there as calm as you like, as though he had been thus engaged for hours.

"Well, Fullwood?" asked Lee quietly. "Perhaps you will explain the meaning of this noisy intrusion?"

As Lee spoke, he shot a quick glance at me, which I understood. Personally, I was so relieved that I could have shouted for joy. And I was amazed, too. How had the gov'nor worked this miracle?

Fullwood blurted out his story in full, and Nelson Lee listened.

"Of course, Fullwood you quite realise that this account of yours is entirely without support?" he asked quietly. "There is not a soul who can come forward and substantiate your extraordinary remarks?"

"There's Dr. Karnak, sir——"

"Nonsense," said Lee sharply. "Dr. Karnak has been in the school the whole evening—as a hundred people can confirm. I believe, Fullwood, that your story is true——"

"You believe me, sir?" asked Fullwood eagerly.

"I do—but, unhappily, you cannot prove it," replied Lee. "Therefore, your most sensible course will be to let the whole thing drop from this moment. Take no notice of the other boys, if they jeer at you. They cannot be blamed, for your tale is far-fetched and wild. Under the circumstances, I will excuse your conduct in attempting to join a very questionable party last night. You may go, Fullwood. Let this be a lesson to you not to break bounds in future."

Fullwood went, dazed. His one shadow of relief was that Nelson Lee credited his story.

And later, when he had time to think it all over, he considered that he was lucky to escape so lightly—for he was eligible for a sound flogging, for breaking bounds after lights-out.

And I was in Nelson Lee's study, eager and anxious.

"How did you do it, sir?" I asked tensely.

Quietly and easily, he told me of his adventures.

"But these fellows are poor crooks, when all is said and done," smiled Nelson Lee, in conclusion. "Indeed, they're not crooks at all—but just fanatical Egyptians who want to get hold of Dr. Karnak for reasons of their own. After Fullwood had fled

across the meadows, I started walking back with my captors. But in the meantime I had freed my hands—a fairly simple trick for an old hand like myself"

"Well, sir?" I asked eagerly.

"It took me but one moment to whip out my revolver, and to give those dusky fellows their marching orders," replied Lee. "They didn't wait. They knew that I was in grim earnest, and fled. And, if you want to know the truth, I fled, too. For I suspected that they had some secret weapons of their own, which they would use as soon as they recovered their wits. I raced to the school, got in through my window here, and removed my disguise in double quick time. I had only been sitting at my desk a bare minute when Fullwood burst in."

"My hat! That was smart work, sir!" I said admiringly. "And what now?"

"I hardly know, Nipper," replied Nelson Lee quietly. "Dr. Karnak, at all events, knows nothing of this night's happenings. He will undoubtedly hear rumours before long, but he will probably take no notice—for he knows perfectly well that he wasn't out this evening."

"And do you think there'll be more trouble, sir?"

"I'm afraid there will," replied Lee. "There is some fishy business here that I mean to investigate in grim earnest."

And, for the moment the affair was closed. But we had by no means finished with Dr. Karnak and those elusive, mysterious men of the East, who were lurking in the neighbourhood.

THE END.

Editorial Announcement

My dear Readers,

The mystery around Dr. Karnak deepens, for he moves in fear of some secret Egyptian sect who have traced his whereabouts to St. Frank's and are lying in wait to get at him. The awful Shape which had haunted the environs of St. Frank's is now known to be a malformed African native of unusual stature, who acts as a bodyguard to protect Dr. Karnak from his enemies. Many new developments in this absorbing series will be disclosed in next week's story, "THE SPELL OF THE MYSTIC!"

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Make a note of the name, POPULAR MUSIC AND DANCING WEEKLY, published every Monday at a price of 3d. only.

A REMINDER!

Those readers who are sending photographs of their school for the Mag. (see Scissors and Paste) should also enclose a print or good copy of the school badge and motto.

Your sincere friend,
THE EDITOR.



MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

By the Author of our St Frank's Stories.



No. 8. TRAFFIC REGULATIONS IN NEW YORK.

IN my article last week I went into some details concerning the street traffic of New York. And I made a reference to "one-way" thoroughfares. The very term itself is explanatory, but I think a few more details would be advisable.

These one-way streets in New York are apt to be confusing to the newcomer, and they are sometimes a bit of a bother to the old hand. On these streets the traffic is only allowed to travel in one direction, the result being that congestion is greatly diminished.

It is far easier to control these one-way streets in New York than it would be if a similar system were adopted in London. For in New York, where all the streets run parallel—with one another, the problem presents no great difficulties. For example, if you are travelling along Fifth Avenue, and wish to cut across town, you may find that 56th Street is only available for traffic going westwards. In this case, you have only to travel a few yards further on to 57th Street and this will probably be available for traffic going eastwards. So, you see, it works quite nicely.

Without these regulations the congestion would be appalling, for the motor traffic in New York is immense. I should like to see this one-way traffic rule adopted in London, particularly in such thoroughfares as Bond Street, where the roadway is narrow. But the problem would be to find a corresponding street for traffic flowing in the opposite direction. There are no such troubles in New York, where the roads are all criss-cross.

I noticed one curious fact about the New York roads which rather puzzled me at first. Most of the main streets are paved with wood, as in London, and when the roads are dry and clean, one can see thousands and thousands of bent and twisted French nails embedded in the wood blocks. At least, they look like French nails. In reality, they are broken scraps from non-skid chains, with which every motor-car is equipped during snowy weather.

As soon as ever snow begins to fall in New York every car driver brings out his chains and fits them on. Every motor vehicle with pneumatic tyres, including all the taxicabs, use these non-skid chains. They are absolutely essential, for the wheels would never grip the road otherwise. The snow does not always turn to slush, as it generally does in London, but remains frozen on the road. And even the slightest incline makes progress impossible to any motor-car that is not fitted with non-skids.

And these chains are used so extensively, as I have said, that broken fragments of them become embedded in the road surface, and every main thoroughfare literally has millions and millions of these scraps of steel.

The control of traffic on Fifth Avenue is quite unique, I think. At intervals there are high, imposing towers set in the centre of the road. They are quite beautiful structures, and really add to the stateliness of this world-famous thoroughfare.

A traffic officer is on duty in each tower. There are three enormously brilliant lamps—so brilliant, indeed, that the light from them is strong and powerful even in the brightest sunshine. When the red lamp is glowing all traffic on Fifth Avenue ceases, and the cross town traffic at once goes on its way. The red light is extinguished, to be replaced by a green. But the traffic on Fifth Avenue does not move. This green light is just a brief warning to drivers to be ready, indicating that the change is coming. The green light goes out and a yellow one appears.

And the traffic flows up and down Fifth Avenue continuously until the signals again change. And so it goes on throughout the day as regular as clockwork. There is never any confusion. But although the system is quite effective in the way of avoiding congestion, it has decided drawbacks for the motorist who is in a hurry. When one enters Fifth Avenue in a car he never expects to travel much faster than a walking pace, that is, of course, in the busy part of the day.

READ ARCHIE'S LATEST IN THIS NUMBER!

No. 9. Vol. 1.

Edited by Nipper.

January 26, 1924.



St. Frank's Magazine

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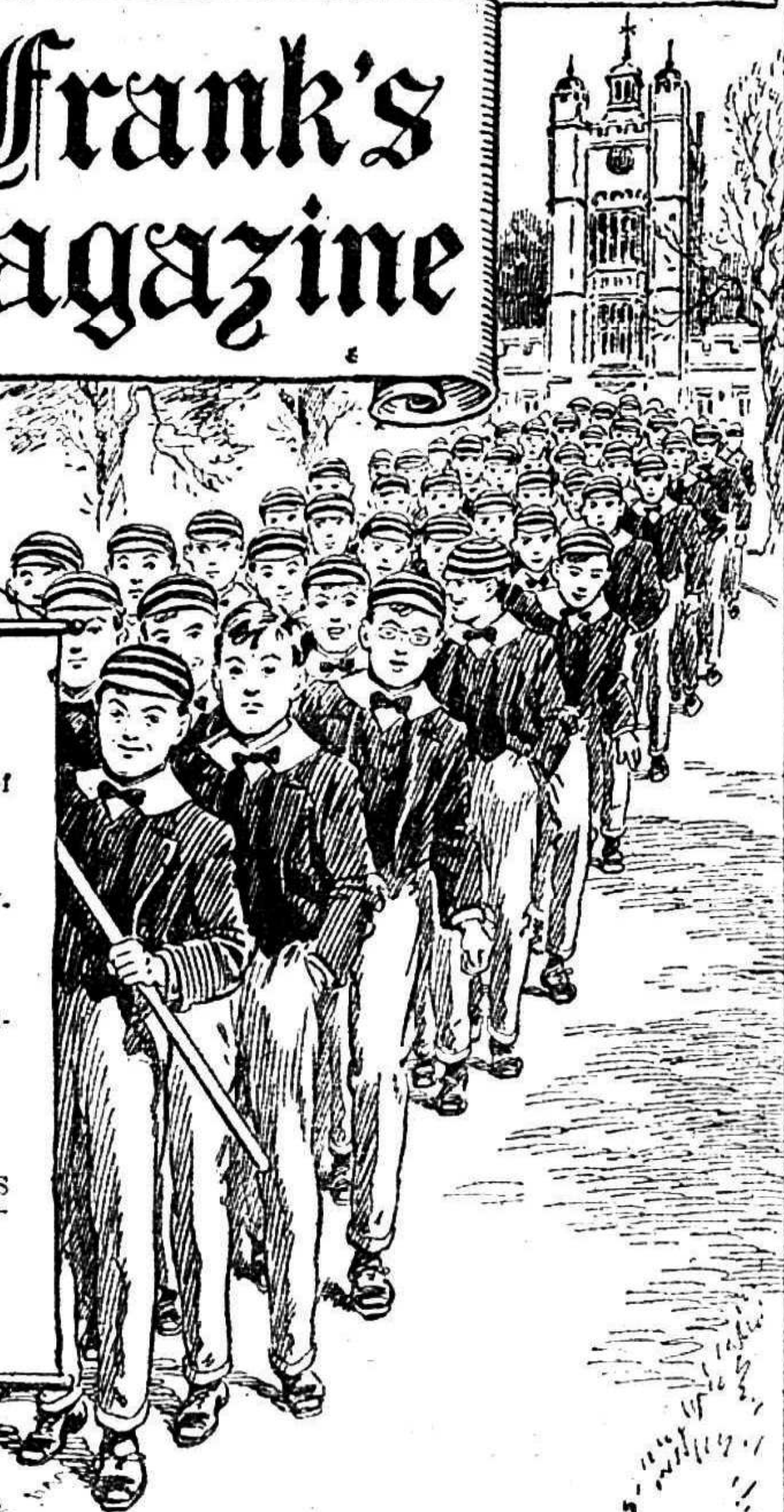
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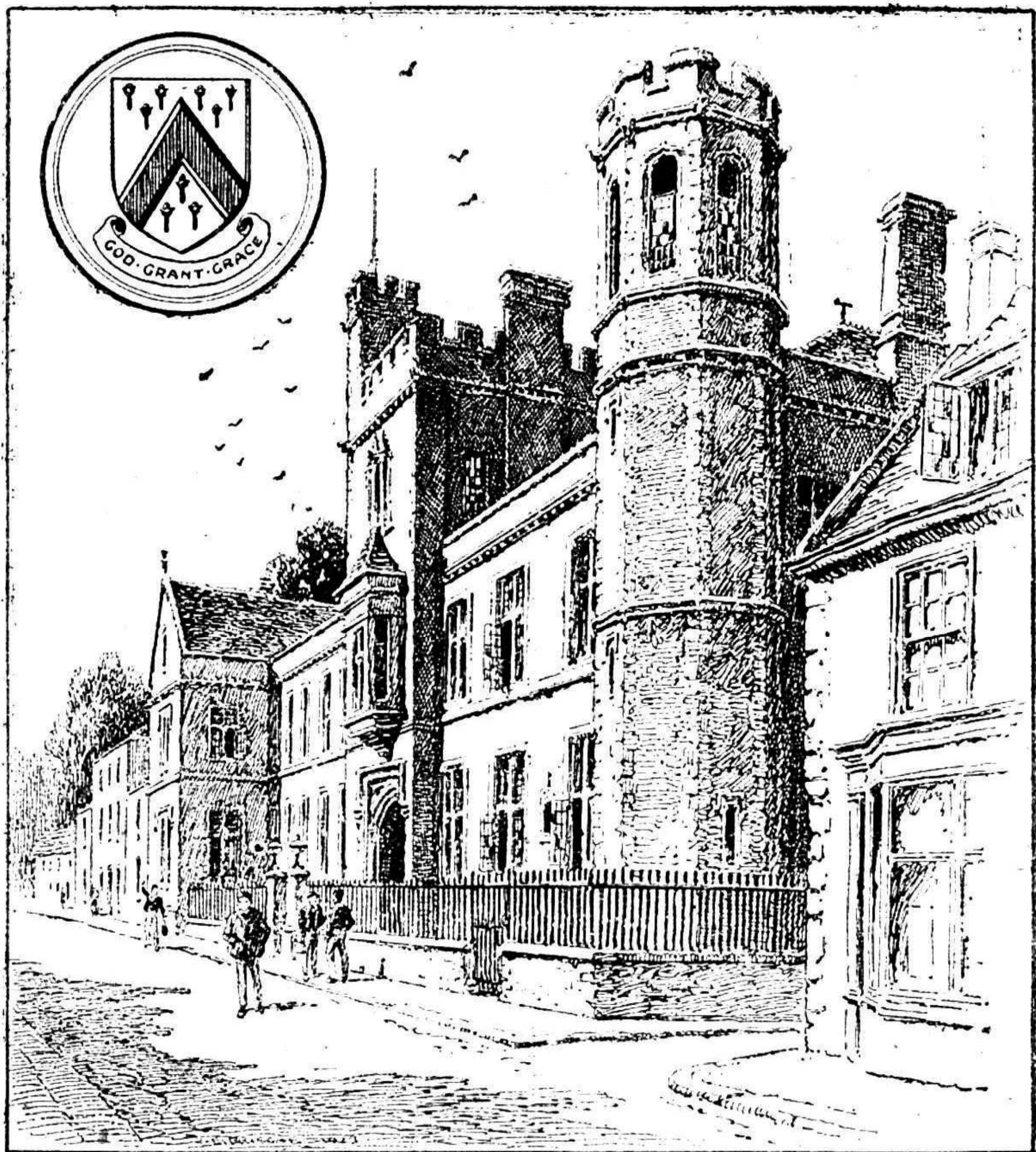
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OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

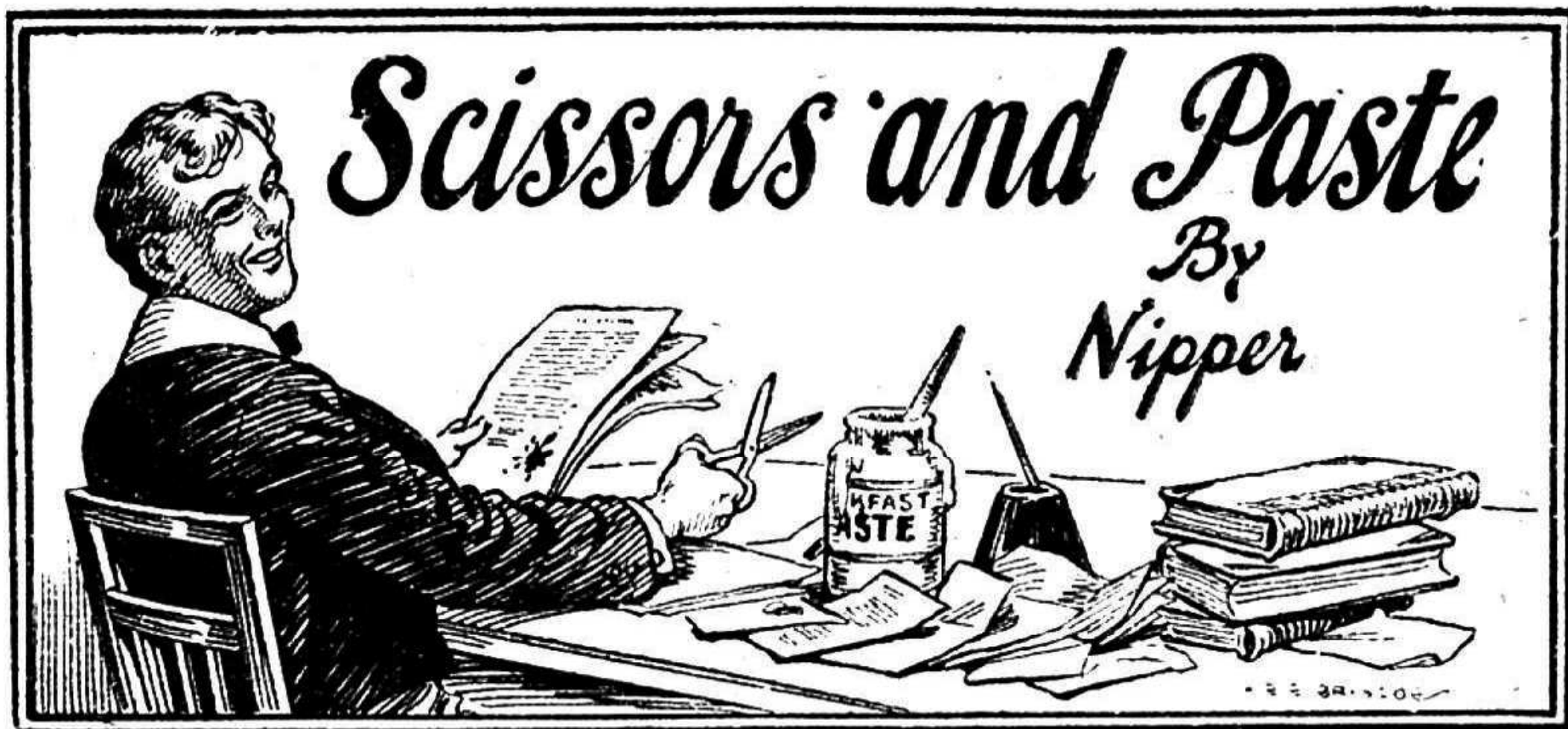
No. II. OUNDLE SCHOOL.



OUNDLE SCHOOL.

Founded in 1556, under the will of Sir W. Laxton, Lord Mayor of London, who left property in the City of London to the Grocer's Company for this purpose and for another school, known as the Laxton School. Until the 19th century Oundle School was a country grammar school. By this time the property greatly increased in value, enabling the Grocers' Company to add many new buildings to the school from 1883 and onwards. The school now ranks as a public

school, and accommodates 500 boys in ten houses. The other buildings include chapel, great hall, and library, and there are 90 acres of playing fields. The object of the school is to give a liberal and useful education according to the principles of the Church of England, offering special advantages to Modern Subjects and a high classical education for boys going in for a University career. The school motto is "God Grant Grace."



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

My Dear Chums,—You will observe that Archie has broken out again in the "Mag." This time it is an historical romance of the days of Cromwell. If Archie should sometimes stray away from historical facts to embellish his story, introducing Dick Turpin a century or so before that gentleman was born and other glaring anachronisms, I trust it will not interfere with your enjoyment of the story. When I pointed out these errors to Archie, he was quite ready to admit them, but he thought they rather improved the story, and talked about an author's licence, and all that rot. Handy thinks that Archie's licence, at any rate, ought to be permanently suspended for exceeding the limit.

PAINFUL PARODIES.

One of my numerous correspondents wants to know why I label Clarence Fellowe's weekly effusions "Painful Parodies." "Is it because they are painful to write," he asks, "or are they supposed to be painful to read?" My chum must surely know whether it pains him to read these parodies. It was really out of sympathy for our school poet that I call his parodies painful. As everyone knows, most poets—and punsters, for that matter, belong to the same species—receive more kicks than ha'pence. But then, of course, Fellowe simply asks for trouble, for whenever he speaks he introduces a rhyme almost every time.

TO CHUMS OF OTHER SCHOOLS.

Has your school appeared in the series of magnificent sketches by Mr. Briscoe, on page 2 of this Mag? If not, and you would particularly like to see your school featuring in this series, kindly send along a photograph or two with a few interesting facts about the school to the Editor of the

"Mag." c/o "The Nelson Lee Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4. Every care will be taken to ensure the safe return of photographs, whether used or not, within a reasonable time.

OFFER OF ORIGINAL SKETCHES.

I am not asking for these photographs for nothing, and I am making this unique offer. To every chum who sends me a photograph of his school, I will present the original pen drawing by Mr. Briscoe made from that photograph. At the same time, I do not guarantee that every photograph sent in will be used; neither can I promise exactly when any particular drawing from one of these photographs will be published. While sketches of the best known schools will be published first, I am not limiting the series to any one class of school. Every boys' school in the kingdom will be given a chance to appear in the "Mag." in due course.

OUR SPORTING ADVISER.

Mr. Clifford is getting busy with his first sporting "pow-wow" for the "Mag," and if all goes well, I may be able to publish it in our next issue. The first article will be on the subject of football, and will deal with the rules of this popular game. At the end of the article Mr. Clifford will put a number of posers, which will be answered the week following. Readers are invited to write to Mr. Clifford on any "footer" problem, addressing their communications to the Sports Master, c/o "The Nelson Lee Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4. Should the letter be of general interest, it will be quoted and answered by Mr. Clifford in his pow-wow.

Yours to a clinker,
NIPPER.

ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING

By HUBERT JARROW

WHEN you come to think of it, life's a queer thing. I mean, what is life? You get up in the morning, eat something, do a bit of work, and then eat something more, and do another bit of work, then eat again, and go to bed again. What I mean is, it just keeps going on.

Take this last week, for example. There's been absolutely nothing doing at all. In the Form-room it has been just the same old grind day after day, without any kick in it, as Adams would say. I mean, a chap gets rather bored.

It's awful to get bored. Once a fellow is absolutely bored he's never the same afterwards. He's always yawning, or something. Of course, there's no excuse for any chap who yawns without covering his mouth. It's really frightfully rude to yawn at all—unless you're alone. And then somehow you don't want to yawn. Queer. But that's how it is, I've noticed. Only on Tuesday, Glenthorne yawned by accident, and in two minutes everybody was doing it. Mr. Crowell was jolly sharp about it, and then he yawned, too. I mean, the complaint is absolutely catching.

And it's not the only complaint that's catching. Singleton got a cold on Wednesday, and he gave it to me. Not that I wanted it. Funny about these colds. A chap gives his cold to somebody, but he still keeps it himself. I mean, strictly speaking, it's impossible to give something away and keep it as well. But that's what happens with a cold. You can't get away from it.

And if you try to get away from it, the thing becomes worse. Some chaps say that the best way to treat a cold is to ignore it. That's all very well, but the cold won't ignore you.

There's nothing much worse than being ignored. I mean, just look what happened on Wednesday evening. I was standing against the gates with some of the other chaps, and Irene Manners happened to come along with two of her girl friends. They stopped and said good-evening and a few more words, but they didn't even look at me. They didn't mean to slight me, or anything, but it was pretty awful, all the same. It makes a fellow feel so rotten.

Which reminds me that Handforth bought some eggs on Thursday. Of course, Handforth was an ass; but all the same, these swindling tradespeople ought to be locked up, or something. Handforth thought the eggs were good, until he tripped up in the lobby.

It wasn't until Friday night that the odour had gone. And Handforth had to throw a good suit away. I mean, buying eggs like that comes pretty expensive, one way and another.

The only way to have really fresh eggs is to keep chickens. And that's a bit awkward at school. In fact, I don't think it would be allowed.

It's surprising how many rules and regulations there are. A chap mustn't do this, and he mustn't do that, and it comes a bit hard on a fellow who hasn't been used to these restrictions. Still, they're necessary, or there wouldn't be any discipline at all.

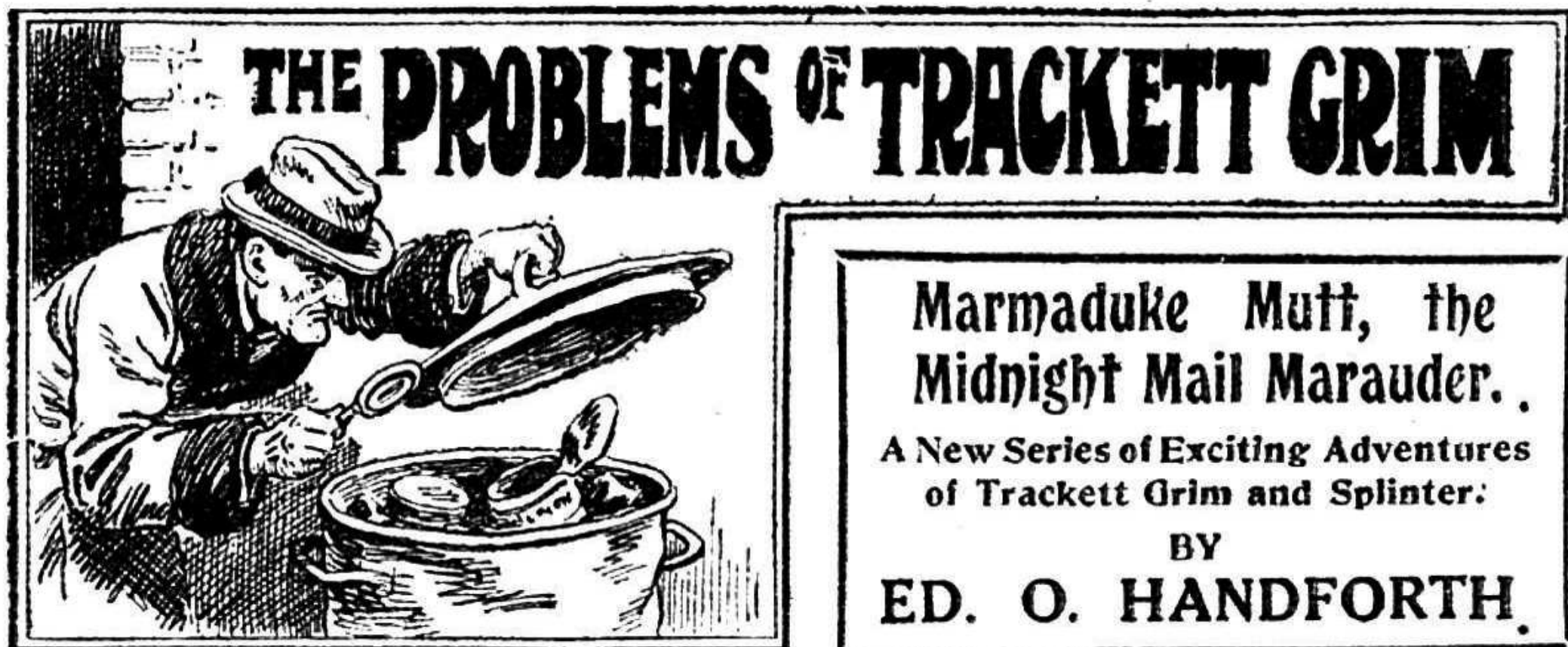
I mean, imagine what the Remove would be like if it wasn't compelled to get up when the rising bell went. Why, some chaps would stick in bed until noon. Archie Glenthorne wouldn't get up at all. And when it came to lessons, the Form-room would be simply a white elephant. There'd be no use for the thing at all.

I don't know who first discovered a white elephant—a real one, I mean. Personally, I've only seen dark coloured ones. And if our farmers' would only show a little initiative, they could do away with lots of these heavy carthorses. One elephant could do the work of a dozen horses, I should think. And just look at the saving in food. An elephant doesn't need oats or hay; he'll eat anything.

Human beings are a bit like elephants in some ways. Look at Fatty Little. If he only had a trunk and a couple of tusks, he'd do for the Zoo. And he'll eat anything, too. On Friday night I found him frying some squiffy sardines, and the smell was awful. But they didn't seem to hurt him a bit.

Personally, I like a bigger fish—something with some flesh on it. Now a nice slice of cod, served up with parsley sauce, is one of the best dishes you could think of, although, of course, filleted plaice—

(We'll find a place for that some other time.—ED., St. Frank's Mag.)



Marmaduke Mutt, the Midnight Mail Marauder.

A New Series of Exciting Adventures of Trackett Grim and Splinter:

BY

ED. O. HANDFORTH.

TRACKETT GRIM paced up and down his consulting-room with brisk, nervous strides. The cord of his dressing-gown trailed on the floor, but the famous criminal detective took no notice of this detail.

"The letter, you say, was stolen on the thirty-first ult?" he asked curtly.

Trackett Grim's client nodded, fascinated by his companion's gaze—by his sheer strength of will and intellect. There was a terrific amount of driving power in Trackett Grim's very personality.

"Yes, Mr. Grim," he said. "On the thirty-first ult!"

"Three days ago," said the detective. "Leave this case in my hands, Mr. De Broke. Come to see me again to-morrow

morning, and I will have your registered packet waiting for you. Enough! Let me think!"

The client crept silently away, and Trackett Grim charged up his huge pipe with shag, and smoked unceasingly for five hours. Then, with a cry of triumph, he dashed to a writing block, which was dimly visible through the fog.

Hastily, Trackett Grim scrawled some words, and then he touched a bell. Splinter came dashing in, only to reel back, nearly suffocated. The fumes in Trackett Grim's consulting-room were horrible.

"Fire!" shouted Splinter, in alarm.

"Fathead! It's only tobacco smoke!" roared Trackett Grim. "Look here! Take this paragraph to the editor of the

'Evening Moon,' and tell him to shove it in to-night's issue without fail!"

Splinter seized the message, and sped away.

MARMADUKE MUTT SCENTS A PRIZE!

In a squalid attic in Billingsgate, two men sat on opposite sides of a rickety table. On this table stood two bottles—one containing whisky, and the other containing a candle. Both men were reading the evening papers.

"Crikey, Bill!" said one of them. "More work for us!"

"Good!" said Bill. "The same lay as ever?"



In a squalid attic in Billingsgate, two men sat on opposite sides of a rickety table.



THE HOLD UP OF THE MIDNIGHT MAIL!

The midnight express was roaring over the dark, dismal countryside at sixty-five miles an hour. And then, suddenly, some loud explosions roared out. The engine driver jammed on his brakes, closed the throttle, and took out his clutch. The wheels shrieked and screamed as they skidded on the iron road.

The mail train came to a halt. For those explosions had been made by fog signals, and warned the driver that danger lay ahead. But it didn't. Danger lay actually on the spot.

For two masked men dashed up to the mail van, wrenched open the door, and strode in. The mail van was empty. And there, before the eyes of these crooks, lay

Suddenly one of the bags flew open, and Trackett Grim leaped out. "Hands up, you scum!" he thundered.

"Yes! Look at this 'ere!"

The man who spoke, and who pointed out a certain paragraph in the paper, was none other than Marmaduke Mutt, the master crook—the man who had been purloining postal packages for weeks. Mail train after mail train had been held up, and in every case Marmaduke Mutt had escaped with his booty.

He was a villainous looking miscreant, with a bulldog chin, huge fists, and eyes that absolutely glittered with fire. Anybody could see that he was a crook. And this attic of his was situated in the midst of a den of thieves. Every room in that house contained a celebrated criminal.

"By the ghost of Charles Peace!" rapped out Bill. "You mean the midnight mail?"

"Yes!" replied Marmaduke Mutt, tossing his cigar end away. "To-night, Bill, we bring off the biggest coup of our careers!"

For that paragraph in the evening paper mentioned that several mail bags would be included on the midnight mail from London to Rotherhithe, and that the bags would be filled with hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of Treasury notes. The paragraph also mentioned that no special guard would be taken.

Marmaduke Mutt and his accomplice got ready.

dozens and dozens of mail bags, all crammed with currency notes. They were so full that some of the notes were bulging out of the top.

"Look!" breathed Marmaduke Mutt. "This is our birthday, Bill!"

The whole thing was done so quickly that the engine driver and the guard knew nothing. Finding that no danger lay on the line, the train started again, and was soon roaring along at even greater speed than before.

And Marmaduke Mutt and his accomplice proceeded to get the mail bags quite near the door. Suddenly one of the bags flew open, and the two men staggered back. For Trackett Grim leapt out, carrying two revolvers.

"Hands up, you scum!" he thundered. "You're my prisoners!"

FOILED BY MARMADUKE MUTT!

Marmaduke Mutt recoiled, a hoarse cry on his lips. He went as pale as a piece of suet, and his eyes goggled like a goldfish.

"Trackett Grim!" he said faintly. "Curse you! The one man in the world I feared! Curse you, Trackett Grim; you've beaten me!"

"You bet I have!" said Trackett Grim scornfully. "My hat! Did you think you could whack me—the greatest detective in

the world? You pitiful ass! Hold still while I snap the bracclets on!"

But even as Trackett Grim was about to handcuff his prisoners, Marmaduke Mutt gave him a terrific push, and Trackett Grim flew out of the open doorway. The train was roaring along an embankment. Trackett Grim shot down like an arrow from a bow, and by wonderful luck he struck against the stretched tarpaulin which covered a haystack beside the line.

And so great was the force of Trackett Grim's fall that the rebound carried him up again in a wide arc, and he landed with a thud on the roof of the last carriage. Only his iron nerve saved him from being hurt.

TRACKETT GRIM ON THE TRAIL!

At that moment the mail train was whizzing over a great bridge. Far below, the river sped on its course. And the detective was staggered to see several bags shoot down from the train, and land accurately in a small boat, which could dimly be seen in the gloom.

"That boat," muttered Grim, "was waiting there on purpose!"

Just as he made this amazing deduction, two men jumped from the train, and landed in the water. Neither of them saw a slim, dark figure hurl itself down after them.

Swimming a few strokes, they climbed into the boat, and found the mail bags safe and intact. And they shook hands solemnly, and chuckled over the fate of Trackett Grim. And the mail train roared on into the night on its way to Rotherhithe, with the mail van empty and bare.

And then, suddenly, Bill gave a shout. For Trackett Grim was neatly climbing over the stern of the boat.

"Hands up!" he commanded. "This time I've got you!"

THE FAMOUS DETECTIVE'S TRIUMPH!

There was a short, brief struggle, and Marmaduke Mutt, the midnight mail marauder, was securely handcuffed. Bill, his confederate, preferred death to capture, and promptly committed suicide in the murky depths of the river.

An hour later, Trackett Grim marched his prisoner into the nearest police-station. The unfortunate crook had been unable to make a dash for liberty, because all the stolen mail bags were piled on his back, and it was as much as he could do to carry them.

And in one of his pockets Trackett Grim found that registered letter he had entered upon this case to seek. So, from every angle, the affair was a complete triumph. And from that hour onwards there were no more mail robberies.

Once again, Trackett Grim had rid the world of a dastardly miscreant. And Marmaduke Mutt was tried on the spot, sentenced to penal servitude for life, and that very night he was sent off to Holloway Prison, to serve his sentence.



PAINFUL PARODIES

PERPETRATED

By

Clarence Fellowe.

JOLLY IS OUR SOLLY!

Of all the chaps that are so smart
There's none so smart as Solly,
He runs the old exchange and mart,
And he is always jolly.
There's not a fellow in the school
That's half so 'cute as Solly;
He sells and buys just everything,
And he is always jolly.

His father sends him novelties;
He gets the chaps to try 'em,
And then he says they're second-hand,
And so they've got to buy 'em.
Oh, yes, he's up to ev'ry dodge,
A wide 'un is our Solly.
He does it all so smilingly,
And he is always jolly.

In lesson-time he'll stop his work,
And try to trade things dearly.
The master comes like any Turk,
And canes him most severely.
But let him cane until he aches,
It doesn't stop our Solly.
He comes up smiling ev'ry time,
And he is always jolly.

Of all the days that's in the week
He dearly loves but one day,
And that's the day that comes between
A Friday and a Sunday.
For then the chaps have all their cash,
And busy is our Solly,
He puts in overtime like steam,
And he is always jolly.

He buys a thing for half-a-crown,
And makes two shillings profit.
In fact, he does the fellows brown.
To him, my cap I doff it.
And yet he does it all so slick,
That none can catch out Solly;
He sells a thing in half a tick,
And he is always jolly.

When chaps are broke they go along
To Solly with their troubles.
He lends them cash without a word,
And worries burst like bubbles.
But when their pocket-money's due,
Near by you'll find our Solly.
He gets his cash with interest,
And he is always jolly.



E. Sopp's Fables

By
Edgar Sopp of the Fifth

No. 9.—The Fable of the Hustler and the Sluggard.

THERE was once a Hustler who was so full of Pep that he regarded all others as Dead from the Neck Up. And the name of this Peppy Guy, as he called himself, was Ulysses of Troy. He wasn't a Greek God, but an Honest-To-Goodness citizen of Troy, N.Y. And at present he dwelt in the midst of a Motley Throng known as St. Frank's Fellows.

It came to pass that this Hustler had Occasion to betake himself unto the neighbouring city of Bannington, bent upon an errand not entirely unconnected with the Inner Man. To be exact, Ulysses had ordered a supply of Graham Crackers from a grocery establishment in the town, and he was sure Tickled to Death at the thought of getting them.

Now, these Graham Crackers were renowned in his own far-off country as Nifty. Indeed, Ulysses frequently referred to them as the Cat's Whiskers, adding that English biscuits were Sure Punk by comparison.

And, behold, it happened that Ulysses went forth one evening upon his bicycle, and it further chanced that a Languid Youth named Glenthorne also went forth, bound for the same destination.

And Glenthorne was sociable, and suggested that they should Journey Together. At which the Hustler remarked there was Nothing Doing, adding that he was in a Dog-gone hurry, and that he had Gotta Show Some Speed. It transpired that the grocery establishment closed at Six Sharp, and the time was already Five Thirty. It was necessary for the Hustler to Hustle.

Thus, although the pair sallied forth from the Triangle together, the Languid One was rapidly left behind. For he Absolutely Refused, dash it, to exercise the old muscles unduly.

And the Hustler, remarking to himself that the proprietor of the grocery establishment was a Bonehead for closing so early, journeyed on his way in a state of Considerable Rush. And in his Enthusiasm to obtain the Graham Crackers he ventured upon a Short Cut.

And it came to pass that the Short Cut proved to be a Long Cut. For Ulysses found himself alone in the Wilderness of by-lanes,

and in a short time he had lost his Bearings. Again remarking that he had Gotta Show Some Speed, he proceeded to Hustle Some.

Now, the dusk was deepening, and Ulysses failed to observe the rutty, stony condition of the road surface. He tore down a hill, caught his front wheel in a deep rut, and came a Horrible Cropper. And, lo, when he came to examine his Jigger he found that Much Damage had been wrought. And Ulysses cried aloud in his anguish, asking the hedges What Did They Know About That.

By dint of Much Labour, he straightened the left pedal crank, and he found that the front wheel only scraped slightly. So he remounted, and proceeded to Hustle with even greater Determination.

And, behold, he who was Lost found himself again. In other words, he made the discovery that he was again on the Bannington road. And, the way being familiar to him, he rode like Mad. But he failed to Pick His Way through some recently laid flint-stones, and he piteously invoked the Love of Mike when he felt the Back Rim bumping upon the road.

However, he dallied not, but plugged on, despite the Flat Tyre. And his chagrin was great when he entered the outskirts of the town to observe that the time was Six Five. In a last desperate Effort, foolishly thinking that the shopkeeper might be Late, he tore along to the grocery establishment.

But the shutters were up, and the shop closed. And, lo, Archie was waiting there, cool, unflustered, and at ease. He held a parcel, which proved to contain the coveted Graham Crackers. And Glenthorne explained that he had arrived at Five Minutes to Six, and, failing to see the Hustler, he had inquired within the shop, and had purchased the Graham Crackers, knowing Ulysses' partiality for them. And the Hustler referred to a Hot Dog, and called Archie Some Little Kid.

MORAL: MORE HASTE, LESS SPEED! HE WHO HUSTLES ACCOMPLISHES LITTLE; BUT HE WHO PLODS ACCOMPLISHES MUCH.



JOLLY OLD CAVALIERS AND FRIGHTFUL ROUNDHEADS

A Tale of Oliver Cromwell's Days, when Knights
Were Priceless and All That Sort of Thing

By ARCHIBALD WINSTON DEREK GLENTHORNE



TWAS on the eve of Worcester field. That is to say, Oliver Cromwell and his Roundhead army were getting dashed restive, and meant to buzz about like anything, and start the good old battle.

The army of the King, known as Cavaliers, were simply littered about all over the countryside, waiting for the Commonwealth chappies to get busy. In fact, the troopers in the Cavalier front trenches were becoming dashed near to boredom. They hadn't shot a bally Roundhead for days.

The sun was shining somewhat pricelessly, and the summer air was filled with the humming of insects, the twittering of birds, and all that sort of rot. And along a dusty country lane came a poisonous cavalcade of Roundheads, led by Colonel Blood, of Oliver Cromwell's Headquarters Staff.

Now, it so happened that Colonel Blood had been whizzing hither and thither, and here and there, gathering spies together. And at the present moment he had collared a stunning-looking chappie, named Lieut. Reggie Faversham.

It was distinctly hard lines on Reggie, for the dear old soul wasn't actually a spy at all, but merely a luckless blighter who happened to be in the district, bent upon the ripping errand of a-wooing his lady love. This fair damsel happened to be the daughter of an innkeeper cove.

And Reggie's consternation can be imagined when he discovered that Colonel Blood meant to make a halt at the Sign of the Royal Oak—this same inn being the abode of the buxom wench whom he was dotty upon. The poor old tulip absolutely went white about the gills, and a glassy look crept into his eye department.

It's a pretty ghastly proposition when a chappie's girl sees him led along like a sheep to the slaughter, with irons hanging from various portions of his jolly old person.

But there you are—in those days things like this were so dashed common that the young ladies of England got absolutely used to it. But it was a bit of a shock for Reggie Faversham when he saw the fair Mistress Anne positively standing at the window, shedding sundry tears.

"Hold!" cried Col. Blood, leaping off his horse like a two-year-old, and giving the old nag into the care of an ostler. "Oddslife!

'Twill be tophole, methinks, to tarry here for a glass of the good old mead! Ho, land-lord! Whither art thou, thou son of a tub?"

"I be here, Master Blood—awaiting orders from your lips!" said the innkeeper, a-shivering with fright. "'Twas well I got a good stock of Bass and Worthington for my lord!"

"'Tis well!" quoth Col. Blood. "Rat me, man, but I'm bally thirsty!"

He swaggered into the inn, his sword clanking, his spurs jingling, and his top-boots looking pretty ghastly with dust. A foul-looking cove altogether, was Col. Blood, and he had been rightfully described by his men as one of those.

But ere the colonel had stepped into the taproom, on his way to the saloon bar, a fair vision in pink staggered into the offing, and proceeded to whizz forthwith into his presence.

"Stay, bold sir!" cried Mistress Anne, her distress being pretty awful for any chappie to gaze upon. "Wilt thou allow me speech?"

"Say on!" commanded Col. Blood pompously.

"My lover is in thy power!" sobbed the fair wench. "I mean to say, can't you give him up for my sake? Dash it all, have a heart, old dear! We were to be married on midsummer's morn—"

"Enough!" cried the colonel. "Suffish! Oddsdeath! Wouldst thou have me betray the Parliament? This Reggie chappie is my prisoner, and unless I hand him over to Oliver Cromwell, I shall have my head removed! Nay, fair damsel, it can't be done! Sorrow, and all that, but there it is!"

This was a pretty rotten blow for the fair maiden, and she started sobbing like the dickens, and hurled herself with considerable force into Reggie's arms. Not that Reggie minded. He was dashed glad to have an opportunity of hobnobbing with the damsel.

"Oh, I say!" he quoth. "Turn off the waterworks, old darling! There's no need to worry—I'll foil these Roundhead bounders. Oddshoddikins! Canst thou not trust thy own Reggie to shove it across them?"

"Ay, even so!" sobbed the maid. "But 'tis a sorry plight thou art in, Reggie!"



"Stay, bold sir!" cried Mistress Anne, her distress being pretty awful for any chappie to gaze upon. "Wilt thou allow me speech?"

Unless thou gettest a move on, they'll jolly well slaughter you!"

"Have no fear!" said Lieut. Reggie. "I am equal to biffing these blighters all over the show! However, methinks 'twere better not to discuss these things in the presence of Col. Blood!"

But the colonel was getting frightfully busy with a vast mug of the old brew, and was making the liquor vanish with true soldierly speed. In fact, the way he mopped it down was absolutely worth gazing upon.

In spite of his brave words, Reggie was all of a dither. He knew jolly well that, unless a few miracles happened, he'd soon be in Oliver Cromwell's dugout, and the sentence of death would be passed.

As a matter of fact, Reggie was booked for execution. He knew that he was going to be shot at dawn, and the old lad shivered slightly at the thought. No chappie

some that even Mistress Anne wilted somewhat.

"Stand!" commanded the newcomer, his voice ringing like a dinner-bell. "Let every man stand still, or, by my spurs, I'll run him through!"

Col. Blood staggered back, pretty startled. "Oddslife!" he roared. "Marry, but who art thou, perchance?"

"I?" quoth the newcomer mockingly. "When thou hearest my name you'll jolly well pass into a spasm of apoplexy! Behold—I am Dick Turpin, the celebrated highwayman of the York Road!"

"Dick Turpin!" said Col. Blood faintly. "Crush me, but this is not only frightful, but absolutely near the edge!"

Dick Turpin laughed, and strode forward looking as fierce as anything.

(This stirring tale will be concluded next week.)

TIMELY TOPICS

We are feeling rather proud of ourselves these days. The Mag. is so popular that some of the fellows have been talking about making a present to the Editorial staff. Thanks muchly. What we can do with most is another waste-paper basket.

* * *

We deplore the ignorance of Armstrong. When Mr. Crowell asked him what an aquarium was, he said it was a plaice where people skate. Poor fish!

Jack Grey has just taken up the absorbing hobby of fretwork, and he is so delighted with it that he begrudges the time spent on footer practice and prep. He's fairly dotty about this new pastime. Apparently, he's fretting when he is fretting, and fretting when he isn't.

* * *

They say that an apple a day keeps the doctor away. We know a better one than that. An onion a day keeps everybody away!

THE FORTUNE-TELLER

A Complete Story :: By CECIL DE VALERIE

"MY hat!"

"Whatever is it?"

"Must have mistaken the College for an Asylum!"

A number of juniors were dotted about the Triangle and stood grouped on the steps in front of the Ancient House. This was quite the usual thing at this time of day for it was just after morning school, and it was our habit to lounge in the fresh air till it should be time for dinner.

Handforth and Co. had just arrived as a queer figure suddenly appeared through the gates and made its way slowly towards the Ancient House steps.

It was no wonder we stared. For the figure was that of a man dressed in a most peculiar fashion. He looked as if he came from the East.

He had on a kind of flowing brown robe, pulled in at the waist with a silken girdle. His face was almost entirely covered by a great white beard which reached half-way down his chest. It was a dark brown face, and the eyebrows were thick and snowy white.

On his head the figure wore a bright red fez, on the front of which was worked in white a crescent moon with a star inside it.

"My—my hat!" gasped McClure, as the three members of Study D put in an appearance. "It must be Father Christmas!"

"Rot!" snorted Handforth. "Father Christmas doesn't really exist. He's an imaginary character."

"Quite right, Handy," said Nipper. "It's really Jack the Giant Killer!"

"You—you silly fathead!" roared Handy, glaring at Nipper. "He doesn't really exist either. He's only in a fairy story."

"Oh, very well," returned Nipper. "If you know so much perhaps you'll be good enough to tell us who he is."

"I can't tell you," replied Handy. "But I'll jolly well soon find out!"

He took a few steps towards the Eastern mystery man who had now come nearly up to the Ancient House.

"Hi!" he shouted. "What do you want. We don't allow beggars here!"

"Peace!" returned the mystery man in a soft voice. "I do not bring harm upon you."

"I should jolly well think you didn't," snorted Handy. "Who are you?"

"I am Hamid el Rassum," said the stranger still in the same soft but clear voice. "I am from a far country and I am a prophet, a seer. I have come to help one who is a scholar at St. Frank's."

"It's—it's a lot of rot!" muttered Hardy. "There are no such things as prophets."

"Think you not so?" answered the stranger with a nod of his head. "I will not argue. It must suffice that I have come to meet a scholar and him I shall meet. The great Chief of the Oojahs hath sent me, and him I shall obey, for he hath news for the scholar."

"It's all utter rot," shouted Handy. "And—"

"Wait a mo'," cut in Nipper. "Let the chap have his say. He apparently has come to see one of the chaps. What's his name?" he added turning to the old man.

"It is a great name my master," the old chap replied politely. "It is he of the big hands. One by name Handforth!"



"Hi!" he shouted. "We don't allow beggars here!"

"Wh—what!" gasped Handy, taking a step backwards.

"Even so," went on Hamid el Rassum. "You are he for whom I have crossed the wide seas with a message. I could tell it when I first set eyes upon thee!"

"My—my aunt!"

"Great pip!"

The fellows were crowding round now. At first they had listened without much enthusiasm. They thought the old man was some kind of beggar collecting money. But now they were all ears. They were thoroughly alert. At his last words they stared at Handforth with great interest.

And it was very plain that Handy was a bit upset.

"It's—it's utter bosh!" he gasped. "Hang it all, you're jolly well trying to pull my leg."

"Not so, my master," Hamid el Rassum went on in his smooth voice. "Thou art he for whom I have come all this way over the wide sea with a great message. If thou doubtest I will show thee by a token. What token wilt thou choose?"

"T-t-token!" gasped Handy. "I don't want any of your tokens!"

Handy thought a token was a kind of gift or charm that the old fellow had brought with him to distribute. But before he could say anything Nipper intervened.

"That's fair enough," he said. "I suppose you mean that you will give Handforth some message which will show you are genuine?"

"I mean," replied Hamid el Rassum, "that I will tell him things of the past, and things that he asks, that will convince him that I speak truly. Dost thou agree, Handforth?"

"Oh, very well," growled Handy. "You can go ahead if you like. But you'll jolly well never convince me whatever you say. It's all—"

"Ask me a question, then," interrupted the old man. "And I will answer it."

"All right," snapped Handy.

He thought hard for a moment. At first he could think of nothing. Then his mind cleared and he smiled.

"Tell me the number of my study," he asked.

"That'll do the old windbag in," he said

to himself. "He's sure to guess some silly number. He can't possibly know that all the studies have letters."

"A clever question," replied Hamid slowly. "But my master should know that he inhabits a study whose letter is a D."

"By gum!"

"One to the old bean!"

The ring of juniors was very much impressed. They looked at Handy eagerly.

"Somebody must have told him!" shouted the leader of Study D.

"It is not so. Ask me something else," went on Hamid.

"I know," yelled Handy. "Tell me the names of the chaps who share Study D with me!"

"That is more difficult," Hamid said slowly. "They are kind-hearted. They are long suffering. They have to put up with a lot—"

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"That's not my question, you—you fatheads!" Handy shouted triumphantly.

"Peace, my master," went on Hamid imperturbably. "Those who share your study are by name Church and McClure. And furthermore thou dost owe to each the sum of ten shillings."

Handy's jaw dropped and he shut his mouth, which had been open to frame another remark.

"Is that true?" asked Nipper.

"Er—yes," agreed Church, going rather red.

"Of—of course it's true," put in Handy.

"But I shall pay it back."

"He will pay it back to-morrow," added Hamid, who did not seem to have been listening. "For he will receive a remittance of money from home."

Handy's eyes goggled.

"It—it's like magic," he said faintly.

"It is magic," said Hamid. "So at last thou dost believe that I have come with a message for thee?"

"I—I suppose so," Handforth admitted. "Only it's such rot. I mean," he added hastily, "it would be utter rot if it wasn't true."

"Accepted, my master," returned Hamid. "But dost thou wish further proof that I do not boast when I tell my powers. Wilt thou now receive the message, or shall I tell what thou hast planned to do against



As he stooped in that position the right hand of Hamid el Rassum suddenly smote downwards upon Handy's bent form.

one, named Nipper, that inhabits Study C?"

Handy turned green, and Church and McClure backed into the doorway. Only that morning they had planned a raid on Nipper and Co.'s study.

"You—you utter——" began Handy. "I mean, tell me the message. I—I jolly well believe you!"

"It is good, my master," Hamid went on. "Then first thou must bow thrice to the sun, to show thou dost believe."

"Oh, rot," Handy roared. "I'm not going to bow to——"

"Shall I then give another sign?" asked Hamid. "Shall I tell all how that you have planned to creep under cover of dark into——"

"I—I'll bow to the sun," shouted Handy quickly.

As he spoke he nodded in the direction of the sun, which was gleaming faintly down upon the Triangle.

"That is not a bow," Hamid objected. "Thou must bend from the waist down!"

"Oh, all right, you—you madman!" growled Handy.

But he bowed, bending almost double. And as he stooped in that position the right hand of Hamid el Rassum suddenly smote downwards upon Handy's bent form.

"Coocoo! Yoooop! Yaroooh!" roared Handy, straightening up like a Jack-in-the-box, for the blow had been hard. "Who did that? I'll—— Why——" He suddenly caught sight of Hamid's outstretched hand. "Whv it's you—you utter heathen! I'll jolly well show you——"

Handy jumped at his assailant, and Hamid tried to dodge out of the way. But he was not quick enough. The next moment Handy's fist shot out and caught Hamid on the nose. Then, carried away by his rage, Handy made a sudden grab at his long beard—and it came away in his hand, revealing the well-known features of Pitt!

The fellows shouted with laughter, but Handy didn't see how funny it had been to spoof him. However, the bell rang before he managed to get hold of Pitt. On the way to dinner I asked him how he had known of Handy's little plans against Study C.

"He talks them over so loudly in his study," Pitt replied. "I happened to be next door and heard them through the wall. That was what gave me the idea of doing this stunt."

The stunt had been the greatest success—for everyone except Handy. It will be some time before he is allowed to forget Hamid el Rassum!

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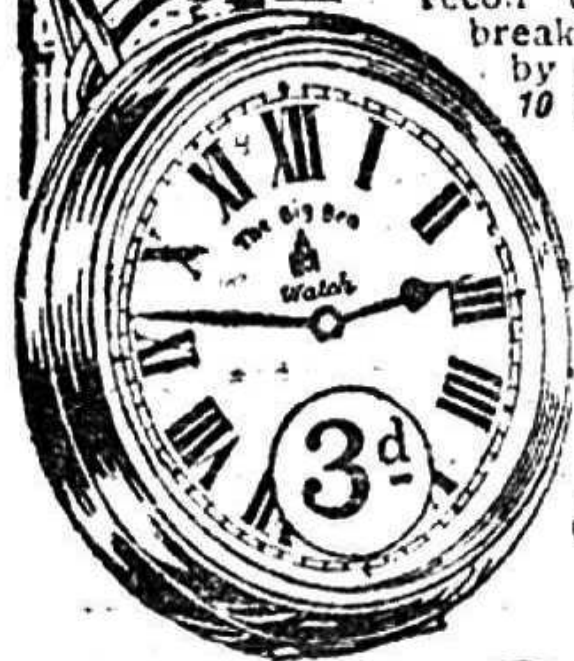
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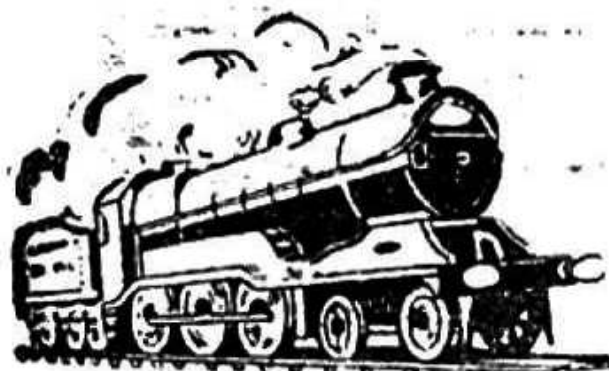
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